DESCRIPTION OF A NEW MEADOWLARK FROM SOUTHWESTERN MEXICO.

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DURING the progress of a taxonomic review of the genus *Sturnella,* it has developed that the subspecies of *Sturnella magna* which breeds in southwestern Mexico, from Sinaloa south to Michoacan, is quite distinct from either *S. m. lilianae* Oberholser,[1] which breeds to the north in Sonora and Chihuahua; *S. m. mexicana* (Sclater),[2] which occurs to the east in Vera Cruz; or *S. m. alticola* Nelson,[3] which breeds to the south in Oaxaca.

Because of the unusual tone of golden or rich orange that suffuses the yellow of its breast, it seems fitting to name this new Meadowlark

Sturnella magna auropectoralis subsp. nov.

JALISCAN MEADOWLARK.

Type.—♂, adult.—Field Museum No. 12860, collected May 5, 1902, at Tuxpan, Jalisco, Mexico, by George F. Brenninger; in slightly worn breeding plumage.

Subspecific Characters.—This form is most closely related to *S. m. lilianae* of the northern plateau region of Chihuahua, Sonora, central and southern Arizona and New Mexico, and southwestern Texas; and to *S. m. alticola* of the southern Mexican and Central American highlands.

It agrees with *S. m. lilianae* in having the third rectrix (from without) entirely or almost entirely white; in the unusual tone of golden orange of the breast, which is veiled with pale saffron in the winter plumage; in the whiteness of its cheeks in the breeding plumage; in the shortness of the tarsometatarsus and tail, when compared with those of the other races of *S. magna;* in the size and shape of the jugular crescent, which is relatively shallow; and in the close restriction of the yellow to the throat region.

It differs from *lilianae* in having much darker upperparts, the interscapulars being dominantly black with relatively smaller distal spots and bars of brown; in having the bars on the middle pair of rectrices and on the upper tail-coverts usually heavily confluent instead of isolated; and in its shorter wing.

[1] Oberholser, H. C. Sci. Pub. Cleveland Mus., 1930, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 103–104. (Huachuca Mts., Arizona).

[2] Sclater, P. L. Ibis. 1st series, III, 1861, p. 179. (Jalapa, Vera Cruz, Mexico.)

[3] Nelson, E. W. Auk, 1900, Vol. XVII, pp. 266–267. (Ocuilapa, Chiapas, Mexico.)

This western subspecies is similar to *S. m. alticola* in the dark coloration of its upperparts; in the solid black shaft markings of its upper tail-coverts, a pattern which is conspicuously different from the spotted or barred one exhibited by most specimens of *lilianae;* and in the confluence of the bars on the middle rectrices.

It differs from *alticola* in having the third rectrix white (in plumages following the first post-nuptial molt), whereas that of *alticola* is usually more or less bordered with black; in the more orange tone of its yellow breast, and the heavier and more extensive saffron veiling over this yellow in the winter plumage; in its shallower crescent; in the closer restriction of the yellow to the throat, *alticola* often having this color extending on the cheeks; in its white instead of grayish white cheeks; and finally, in its different proportions,—i. e., its relatively longer wing, shorter tail and tarsometatarsus and slightly shorter culmen.

Description.—Adult ♂, breeding plumage.—Lateral crown stripes black, usually streaked narrowly with olive wood brown; cheeks whitish; interscapulars largely black, with distal spots or bars of brown (coffee to burnt umber); upper tail-coverts with confluent black shaft markings; the black bars on the middle pair of rectrices usually heavily confluent on a background of grayish brown (cracker brown); the third rectrix (from without) almost invariably white, unmarked with black on the basal portion of the inner web for birds in their second breeding plumage or older, but usually marked lightly for birds in their first winter or breeding plumage; throat, breast and abdomen bright golden yellow tinged more or less strongly with orange; yellow not extending on the cheeks; black jugular crescent relatively shallow; sides and flanks buffy white, often tinged with pale saffron; bill with the upper mandible blackish, the lower mandible with a bluish cast; legs and feet pale brown (tanbark) in dried specimens.

Adult ♂, winter plumage.—As in breeding plumage except as follows: Cheeks buffier due to veiling; interscapulars showing a distal spot of brown which is usually more or less plainly broken into two or even three bars; the interscapulars and tertiaries without the broad cream white edging which usually characterizes those of *lilianae;* the black jugular crescent veiled with cream buff and yellow in fresh plumage; the breast, sides and flanks heavily veiled with pale saffron, which, overlaying the golden yellow, gives it a decided orange-pink tone; bill browner, with little or no bluish cast.

Adult ♀, breeding plumage.—Slightly browner above than the male; crown stripes usually more streaked with brown; yellow of the underparts decidedly paler; jugular crescent smaller and occasionally partially veiled; bill browner.

Adult ♀, winter plumage.—As in the breeding plumage except as follows: The interscapular pattern is clearly visible in fresh plumage, and the underparts are much more heavily veiled with pale saffron This veiling is heavier and persists longer in the ♀ than in the ♂.

Measurements.—Adult males, in millimeters.

	Wing	Tail	Tarsus	Culmen
Average of 12 *auropectoralis*.....	116.05	67.51+	40.76	30.90
" " 39 *lilianae*.....	119.49	73.30	39.55	31.42
" " 45 *alticola*.....	110.48	74.69	43.19	30.53
" " 10 *mexicana*.....	104.45	69.50	41.12	29.63

Adult females in millimeters.

	Wing	Tail	Tarsus	Culmen
Average of 4 *auropectoralis*.....	105.02	61.97	37.62	29.02
" " 11 *lilianae*.....	105.65	63.64	36.70	28.43
" " 21 *alticola*.....	98.2	65.32	38.73	28.53
" " 3 *mexicana*.....	97.15	67.00	39.60	29.50

Distribution.—Breeds in the mountain meadows, plateau and coastal grass-lands of southwestern and central Mexico, from the states of Michoacan and Guanajuato west and north to Jalisco and Sinaloa.

The breeding season is apparently coincident with that of *S. m. lilianae* and *S. neglecta* of the southwestern United States; that is to say, from late February to July.

The migratory movements of this form are probably quite restricted. Winter specimens have been taken as far north as Mazatlan, Sinaloa. The large flocks of wintering *S. magna* observed by Beebe[1] at Chapala, Jalisco, were doubtless of this subspecies.

Remarks.—Specimens of *S. m. auropectoralis* which were examined in the course of this study bore the names, "*S. m. mexicana*," "*S. m. alticola*," "*S. magna*," or "*S. ludoviciana.*"

Ridgway[2] referred to examples of this subspecies as *S. m. mexicana* (Sclater), and gave the measurements of eleven Mexican specimens which agree with those of *auropectoralis*. It is clear that Ridgway was mistaken in applying the name *mexicana* to this long-winged race instead of to the small, short-winged Meadowlark of Vera Cruz and Tabasco. Sclater, in his description, made specific mention of the "inferior" dimensions of *mexicana*. The true *mexicana*, Ridgway included under *inexpectata.*

Although long classified with *mexicana*, *auropectoralis* has its nearest relative in *lilianae*, which it probably preceded, differing from the latter chiefly in its shorter wing, smaller body and darker coloration. These differences are doubtless correlated with its more tropical environment.

In breeding plumage, *auropectoralis* and *alticola* are not strikingly

[1] Beebe, C. W. Two Bird Lovers in Mexico, 1905, pp. 114–116, 392.

[2] Ridgway, R. Birds of North and Middle America, 1902. Vol. 2, pp. 362–363.

different. The genetical gap between them is apparently considerable, as they show decided differences in body proportions, as well as in color pattern.

These three subspecies, *alticola, auropectoralis* and *lilianae* probably have come from the same highland stock. Genetically speaking they are widely separated from *S. neglecta,* which likewise occurs in the Mexican plateau region.

The degree to which these three races are isolated from each other remains to be learned. They may intergrade as do *S. m. hoopesi* and *S. m. argutula,* or they may be isolated by some distributional barrier, as are *S. m. hoopesi* and *S. m. lilianae.*

Specimens which may represent intergrades between *alticola* and *auropectoralis* have been collected in the state of Puebla, Mexico.

For the use of the specimens upon which this study was based and for other courtesies, the writer wishes to express his gratitude to the following persons and institutions:

Rudyerd Boulton, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago; Dr. Herbert Friedmann, United States National Museum, Washington; Dr. F. M. Chapman and John T. Zimmer, American Museum of Natural History, New York City; James L. Peters, Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge; W. E. Clyde Todd, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh; Dr. J. Grinnell, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley; and Dr. J. Van Tyne, University of Michigan Museum, Ann Arbor.

He is also deeply indebted to the Board of Fellowships in the Biological Sciences of the National Research Council for its support of his research on the genetics and cytology of birds and to the Department of Zoology, Texas University, for its helpful coöperation during his studies. The data for the present paper were gathered during the progress of studies on the genetical relationships of the Meadowlarks.

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