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Notes on *Metopothrix aurantiacus*.—The Orange-fronted Softtail, *Metopothrix aurantiacus*, of upper Amazonia has occupied an uneasy place in the ovenbirds, Furnariidae. Recently Feduccia (J. Grad. Res. Center, Southern Methodist Univ., 38: 61, 1970) has shown that on the basis of cranial characters, *Metopothrix* is definitely a furnariid, probably belonging in the subfamily Synallaxinae. Field Museum now has a specimen in juvenal plumage, previously undescribed, and three adults from Yaracocha, Peru. Through the kindness of Kenneth Parkes of the Carnegie Museum and Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee of the Academy of Natural Sciences I have been able to examine 12 other specimens from Colombia, Ecuador, and western Brazil. These include a second juvenal and an immature bird in postjuvenal molt. With this comparative wealth of material, it is possible to describe the early molts and plumages, and to discuss geographical variation.

Description of juvenal.—Upperparts dull olive, somewhat darker and duller than adult; forehead and forecrown, which are bright yellow in the adult, have the feathers yellowish at the base, appearing paler than the remainder of the upperparts. Underparts and sides of head dull olive-buff, each feather finely tipped with dusky, giving a dirty appearance, but showing as very fine barring on close examination. Wings and tail as in the adult, but greater wing coverts edged with olive buff instead of whitish olive. Eyes dark brown, beak black and flesh, feet yellow with gray scutes.

The ovenbird juvenal plumage has no single identifying characteristic, such as the spotting in the thrushes, Turdidae. Probably in most species the juvenal plumage fore-shadows that of the adult as it does in *Metopothrix*. The fine barring on the underparts occurs as a juvenal character in a number of species in both the synallaxine and philydorine ovenbirds, for example in *Sylviothorhynchus desmursii*, *Leptasthenura aegithaloides*, *Asthenes pyrrholeuca*, *Hylodyptes rectirostris*, *Pseudoseisura lophotes*, and *Philydor dimidiatus*. I have not been able to find any record of barring in juvenal Pipridae, the family in which *aurantiacus* was first described and to which it is sometimes considered related.

The Field Museum juvenal, a male taken 16 September 1969, is fully grown, but with some sheath remaining at the base of the central rectrices, and a few pinfeathers on crown and throat. A juvenal taken 17 December 1947 at Umbria, Putumayo, Colombia, is older, with the juvenal plumage worn and postjuvenal molt beginning. It has scattered adult feathers on the body, including a few yellow ones on chin and forehead. A young male from Hyutanahan, Rio Purús, taken 30 January 1922, is just completing postjuvenal molt into a plumage indistinguishable from the adult. The postjuvenal molt is incomplete, being confined to the body and possibly the tail. None of the young birds show any sign of wing molt. The Hyutanahan male is molting its tail, but in an irregular fashion; the 4th and 5th right rectrices are growing, one is missing on the left side, and the rest are worn. One cannot be sure if the tail is regularly renewed during the postjuvenal molt.

Among adults during the annual molt, the primaries usually molt in the normal

descending sequence from the 1st (innermost) to the 10th (outermost). Of the 12 adults 4 are in active molt and show this normal order, but 2 others show an irregular sequence. They are: CM 87629, ♀, Brazil, Rio Purús, Hyutanahan, 20 January 1922. Primaries: Right, 1 and 2 fresh, 3 to 8 worn, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ grown, 10 worn; left, 1 to 3 fresh, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ grown, 5-8 worn, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ grown, 10 worn. FMNH 286608, ♂, Peru, Yarinacocha, 16 September 1969. Primaries: Right, 4, 5, and 9 very fresh, rest slight wear; left, 1, 4, and 5 very fresh, rest slight wear.

The fact that these irregularities are more or less symmetrical in both specimens makes it improbable that they are due to the adventitious loss and replacement of feathers. They may be related to age, that is the first replacement of the primaries may be irregular, but beyond the postjuvinal molt there is no way to age specimens precisely by external characters.

Feduccia (*ibid.*, p. 62) states that his specimen of *Metopothrix* had the tips of the rectrices without barbs. This is not true of the freshly grown rectrices in either young or adults, which are barbed to the tip in all specimens. The normal rectrices vary from rounded to somewhat pointed, and with wear might have a bare spine at the tip; this is not evident in any of the available specimens. While many species of Synallaxinae have the tips of the rectrices bare, hence the common name of spinetail, this is a variable character, and many species within *Synallaxis* itself have the tail feathers normally rounded.

Peter Hocking collected the Yarinacocha specimens, and as nothing has been recorded of *Metopothrix* in life, his field notes are of interest: "These birds like insects, though they seem to be tanagers. They were feeding on small black ants on the tips of Mango branches when I collected them. In other habits they are also similar to *Thlypopsis sordida*." Hocking also says (*pers. comm.*) that there are several family groups in the area of Yarinacocha in September of 1969, but he has not seen them there at any other time. Their twittering calls and feeding habits are very much like *Thlypopsis sordida*, which they also resemble closely in color.

There appears to be some geographical variation in both color and size within the species. Peruvian birds have the throat and forehead palest yellow, while those from São Paulo de Olivença on the upper Solimões have them almost orange; Colombian and Rio Purús birds are intermediate in this respect. The Rio Purús specimens seem smaller than those from the remainder of the range; wing lengths are ♂ 54, ♀ 55, compared to 6 ♂ 58-60, 4 ♀ 54-57. Possibly the difference is due to missexing of the Rio Purús male. I thank Dr. Parkes for bringing to my attention the additional specimens of *Metopothrix* and suggesting the possibility of geographical variation.

Material examined.—FMNH: Peru, Yarinacocha—2 ♂, 1 ♀, 1 juv. ♂; CM: Brazil, Rio Purús, Hyutanahan—1 ♂, 1 ♀, 1 im. ♂; Rio Solimões, São Paulo de Olivença—1 ♂, 1 ♀; ANS: Colombia, Putumayo, Umbria—2 ♀, 1 juv. ♂, 3 unsexed; Ecuador, Alto Napo, La Concepcion—1 ♂.—MELVIN A. TRAYLOR, *Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois 60605*. Accepted 25 Jun. 71.

A case of interspecific homosexuality in geese.—Collias and Jahn (Auk, 76: 478, 1959) reported Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) that did not pair normally often formed unisexual pairs; this appeared true for both males and females. An unusual variation of homosexual pairing occurred during the 1968 breeding season at Carver Park, Minnesota, where the Hennepin County Park Reserve District maintains a breeding population of Giant Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis maxima*). Here a pair bond was formed between a male Canada Goose and a male Snow Goose (*Chen hyper-*