

bust child decided to leave. As it spread its wings to fly away the weakling brother fell to the ground. Kind hands rescued it, the torn nest was carefully drawn together and it placed within, for we supposed, of course, the mother would come to feed it, but she did not. All day it lay without food. That night a rain came, and the next day it seemed chilled and almost life-

less. Flowers were placed near it that it might find food within—if it would. Another cold night passed, and we thought the life of the little one would be ended, but when the warm sun came it raised itself, stretched first one wing then the other, and with a last look at its human friends darted away to be lost in bird-land.

The Oregon Song Sparrow.

BY WALTER K. FISHER.

MR. Joseph Grinnell has generously placed at my disposal a series of fourteen curious dark song sparrows collected by Mr. Edmund Heller at Crescent City, California, and along the coast of southern Oregon. A comparison of the series with some excellent unworn examples of the Mendocino, rusty, and sooty song sparrows in the National Museum and Biological Survey collections proves that the form is undescribed, as Mr. Grinnell thought when he forwarded me the specimens.

Melospiza cinerea phæa new subspecies.

OREGON SONG SPARROW.

Type, ♂ ad., No. 4974, Coll. Joseph Grinnell; Gardiner, mouth of Umpqua R., Oregon, Dec. 1, 1901; collected by Edmund Heller.

Subspecific characters.—Intermediate in size between *Melospiza cinerea cleonensis* and *M. c. morphna* but darker than either; in general color and markings nearly identical with *Melospiza cinerea rufina*, but much smaller. Measurements of type in millimeters: wing, 68; tail, 65; exposed culmen, 11; depth of bill at base 6.5; tarsus 22.5.

Distribution.—Immediate vicinity of coast from Rogue R. to Yaquina, Oregon.

Measurements of type series compared with *Melospiza cinerea rufina*, *M. c. morphna*, and *M. c. cleonensis*.

phæa:

| | | | Wing. | Tail. | Culmen. | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Crescent City | ♂ | Sept. 15 | 61. | 58. | 10.5 | |
| " | ♂ | " | 62. | 60. | 10.5 | |
| " | ♂ ad | " | 62.5 | 61.5 | 10.75 | |
| Goldbeach, Or. | ♂ ad | Oct. 10 | 64. | 65. | 11. | |
| " | ♂ | " | 61. | 61. | 11. | |
| Gardiner, Or. | ♂ ad | Dec. 1 | 65. | 60. | 11. | |
| " | ♂ ad | " | 65. | 60. | 11. | |
| " | ♂ ad | " | 68. | 65. | 11. | |
| " | ♂ | " | 65. | 65. | 11. | |
| " | ♂ | " | 67. | 65. | 11. | |
| Yaquina, Or. | ♂ | Oct. 31, '94 | 62. | 62. | 11. | |
| Average 11 ♂ ♂ | | | 64. | 62.4 | 11. | |
| Goldbeach | ♀ | Oct. 10 | 65. | 63. | 11. | |
| " | ♀ | " | 63. | 60. | 11. | |
| Gardiner | ♀ | Dec. 1 | 61. | 61. | 10. | |
| " | ♀ | " | 63. | 60. | 11.5 | |
| Average, 4 ♀ ♀ | | | 63. | 61. | 11. | |
| <i>rufina</i> : average, | 5 ♂ ♂ | | 72.1 | 70.1 | 12.4 | (Ridgway) |
| " | 13 ♀ ♀ | | 67. | 63.5 | 12.2 | " |
| <i>morphna</i> : " | 20 ♂ ♂ | | 67.8 | 66. | 12.9 | " |
| " | 13 ♀ ♀ | | 65. | 63. | 12.4 | " |
| <i>cleonensis</i> " | 13 ♂ ♂ | | 61.7 | 59.9 | 11.9 | " |
| " | 9 ♀ ♀ | | 59.4 | 58.1 | 11.9 | " |

In some respects the Oregon song sparrow is a remarkable form. It is darker than the races north and south of its range, and duplicates in coloring the sooty song sparrow of the Sitkan District. The races along the coast seem thus to alternate light and dark. But while *phæa* is nearly identical with *rufina* in color, it is conspicuously smaller, and the ranges of the two are separated by several hundred miles.

The present form occupies a strip along the coast from the northern limit of the redwoods (?) or at least from Rogue River north to Yaquina. The specimens from Crescent City are probably migrants as the breeding birds seem nearer *cleonensis* (tho not precisely typical). The area of intergradation between *cleonensis* and *phæa* is probably small, extending perhaps from Crescent City to Chetco R. (northern limit of *Sequoia sempervirens*). Lack of specimens prevents the exact determination of the limits of *phæa* at the north.

I am indebted to Mr. Robert Ridgway and to Dr. C. Hart Merriam for the use of specimens and types in the collection of the National Museum and in that of the Biological Survey.

Winter Observations on the Colorado Desert.

F. S. DAGGETT, PASADENA, CAL.

FROM Oct. 27 to Nov. 16, 1901, I spent at the American Girl Gold Mining Co.'s camp, located in the Cargo Murchacho Mts on the Colorado Desert, five and one-half miles northeast of Ogilby, Cal., and some sixteen miles west of Yuma, on the Colorado River. The westward trend of the river below Yuma, however, brings the stream within eleven miles of camp to the southeast.

From a bird standpoint, or any other, for that matter, it is a most uninviting spot. The camp is located in a dry gulch formed by ridges of barren rock north and south of it. At one time the wash at the bottom of the gulch supported a few stunted palo verde, iron wood and mesquite trees, but they have long since been cut for fuel. The only water obtained is from a pipe line reaching the Colorado River eleven miles away. The pipes are carefully watched for leakages so the birds have scant supply from that source, but a floating board in the reservoir at the end of the pipe line furnishes a possible watering place. I often saw them at the tub in the horse corral and about the seepage at the end of the kitchen drain. Another place, and a most deadly trap it proved judging from the

dead birds floating on its surface, was the cyanide tanks, two in number, containing a strong solution of cyanide of potassium. Birds that essayed to quench their thirst at this fount toppled over dead in an instant.

When I arrived in camp I found several American pipits, three intermediate sparrows (*Z. l. gambeli*) and another variety of sparrow too soaked by solution for identification, besides many that rested on the bottom of the tank. The most common and the only resident bird, the rock wren, seemed to avoid this danger entirely, it being attractive only to thirsty migrants. That there is a migration across the desert is evident from the fact that such birds, as mentioned above, are found so far from their natural environment. A small horse and a larger mule corral, with its scattered hay, offers some attraction for birds in the way of seeds and grain, but only once did I see them take advantage of it, when three juncos were seen on the ground near the baled hay at daylight one morning.

There were about a dozen rock wrens (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) about camp. They were very tame in the vicinity of building, wood and lumber piles, but very wary and secretive among the