

County: Bard, 5 (including the type); Potholes, 19; 8 miles east of Picacho, 1; Colorado River opposite Cibola, 2. Riverside County: Blythe, 1; Riverside Mountain, Colorado River, 1. Arizona: above Bill Williams River on Colorado River, 1. *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii nuttallii*: Nevada, 6; Utah, 2; Mexico: Sonora, 5; California (localities east of the Sierra Nevada and from the range of *hueyi* in migration), 63; Arizona, 31; Montana, 1; Kansas, 3; Texas, 10 (including the types of "*nitidus*"). *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii californicus* Ridgway: California (west of the Sierra Nevada and coastal slope of southern California), 40.

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, December 24, 1927.

NOTES ON THE SYSTEMATICS OF WEST AMERICAN BIRDS. II

By JOSEPH GRINNELL

THE POOR-WILLS OF LOWER CALIFORNIA

ACCUMULATION of specimens of *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii* from Lower California shows the presence of three races within that territory: (1) that of the northwestern section, chiefly on the Pacific slope north of latitude 30°, which can properly be covered by the subspecific name *californicus*; (2) the race of the Colorado Desert at the extreme northeast, an excellent form upon which the name *hueyi* is bestowed by Mr. Dickey on a preceding page of the present issue of THE CONDOR; and (3) a race resident in the main part of the peninsula, south from about latitude 30°, for which the name *nitidus* has been used by Brewster (1902) and by Thayer and Bangs (1907). The name *nitidus*, however, cannot be used for this third race. As Dickey has just shown, it was based on specimens (from Texas) representing *nuttallii* proper in probably a light phase of coloration. It seems therefore in order to name the Lower California peninsular race, which I now do.

Phalaenoptilus nuttallii dickeyi, new subspecies. San Ignacio Poor-will.

Type.—Male adult, no. 50820, Mus. Vert. Zool.; San Ignacio, latitude 27°, Lower California; May 17, 1927; collected by Chester C. Lamb; orig. no. 7669.

Diagnosis.—Among the poor-wills in general, all races of *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*, size small and general tone of coloration dark. Similar to *Ph. n. californicus* in degree of general darkness but decidedly smaller, and with black areas on the individual feathers of scapulars, top of head and chest greatly reduced, in this respect resembling *hueyi*; terminal white of lateral rectrices greater in amount than in *californicus*; light portions of general color scheme much darker than in *hueyi* or *nuttallii*, tinged with clay color rather than "frosted"—in this respect darker even than in average *californicus*; dark barring on posterior lower surface much more extensive and heavier than in *hueyi* or *nuttallii*.

Measurements.—Of type: wing, 130.0 mm.; tail, 80.8. Of two other adult males, from San Ignacio and near Calmalli, respectively: wing, 129.0 and 133.3; tail, 79.2 and 83.2. Compare with measurements given by Ridgway (Birds N. and Mid. Amer., VI, 1914, pp. 549-550) and by Grinnell (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol 12, 1914, pp. 141-142). The latter's "*nitidus*" of course equals *hueyi*.

Remarks.—Statements of general distribution, with details of fact, are set forth in my "Summation" of Lower California ornithology now in press. I have studied the type and co-type of Brewster's *nitidus*, from Nueces River, Texas (now nos. 213076-77, Mus. Comp. Zool.). They are characterized by having the lower abdomen buffy, only obsoletely barred, the lower breast predominantly "frosty", and the upper surface very silvery; wing-length in male, 140 mm., in female, 135. They are thus quite different from *dickeyi*.

I take pleasure in selecting to designate the new race of poor-will here described, the name of one who not only has identified himself with the study of the group of

birds concerned, but has served importantly both in his own work and indirectly as he makes possible work by others, in raising and holding high the standards of systematic ornithology.

THE SAN DIEGO PLAIN TITMOUSE

Material now available representative of the plain titmouse in a series of localities along most of the way from the Sierra San Pedro Mártir in Lower California to San Diego County, Upper California, and thence northward, shows that a mistake was made in bestowing a new name on the subspecies having its differentiation center in the Sierra San Pedro Mártir. (See Grinnell and Swarth, Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 30, 1926, p. 164, where *Baeolophus inornatus affabilis* is named, with type from Concepción, 6000 feet altitude, in those mountains.)

Ridgway's *Baeolophus inornatus murinus* was described (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., xvi, 1903, p. 109) from Nachoguero Valley, a locality visited by Mearns on the Mexican boundary survey with which he was connected and situated a few miles below the line not far southwest from Jacumba. I had always assumed that birds from there would naturally fall with the subspecies belonging to the San Diegan subfaunal district; but this proves not to be the case. Under the auspices of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Mr. Chester C. Lamb was commissioned to visit Nachoguero Valley for the express purpose of obtaining topotype series of the several vertebrates described from there. This he did the past fall, obtaining a splendid series of the plain titmouse in fresh annual plumage. While this series is not quite extreme of the San Pedro Mártir race, it is in characters on that side of the median line in the belt of intergradation between the San Diegan race and the San Pedro Mártir one. This outcome makes it necessary to use the name *murinus* for the latter subspecies and to propose a new name for the San Diegan race—which I now do.

Baeolophus inornatus transpositus, new name. San Diego Plain Titmouse.

Type.—Male, no. 38685, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Mount Wilson, Los Angeles County, California; December 12, 1896; collected by J. Grinnell; orig. no. 1828.

Characters.—As compared with *B. i. inornatus*, slightly larger and grayer, bill much heavier. As compared with *B. i. murinus*, browner, decidedly less leaden gray in cast of coloration; bill and feet less blackish, rectrices and remiges brownish rather than plumbeous.

The concept of these subspecies thus remains exactly as set forth by Grinnell and Swarth. But, as not infrequently happens, the locality whence came the type upon which the earliest name was based lies between the metropolises of the two forms distinguished; and, to repeat, in this case fresh-plumaged topotypes prove to be nearer the southern race than the northern.

THE SAN DIEGO BEWICK WREN

For much the same reasons as with the plain titmouse, a shift of names becomes necessary among the Bewick wrens. Grinnell (Auk, XLIV, 1927, p. 72) described *Thryomanes bewickii carbonarius* with type from San José, latitude 31°, at the west base of the Sierra San Pedro Mártir. The type of Oberholser's *T. b. charienturus* (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XXI, 1898, p. 435) was a Mearns-taken specimen, of date June 5, from Nachoguero Valley, in extreme northern Lower California a few miles southwest from Jacumba, San Diego County, Upper California. Fresh fall examples now at hand from exactly that locality show themselves to be, not as I had heretofore assumed they would be, of the San Diegan district race, but almost indistinguishable from the San Pedro Mártir race. Hence it becomes necessary to use the name *charienturus* for the "Sooty Bewick Wren" of the San Pedro Mártirs and to invent a new name for the race of the San Diegan district—which I do as follows.

Thryomanes bewickii correctus, new name. San Diego Bewick Wren.

Type.—Male, no. 38287, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California; September 17, 1897; collected by J. Grinnell; orig. no. 3149.

Characters.—As compared with *T. b. drymoecus*, dorsal tone of coloration decidedly lighter, "warmer" brown, light bars on tail paler, and tail longer (*fide* Oberholser, *loc. cit.*, p. 438); as compared with *T. b. charienturus* (= "*carbonarius*"), dorsal coloration paler, warmer brown, "ground" of wing and tail feathers brown rather than sooty, and bill and feet brown rather than blackish (as per Grinnell, *loc. cit.*).

Oberholser remarks upon a "fine series" from Pasadena as exemplifying his "*charienturus*", though noting slight departures from his type. I select as the type of *correctus* one of that very series from Pasadena!

THE ROCK WRENS OF LOWER CALIFORNIA

Under the name *Salpinctes gadeloupensis proximus*, Swarth (CONDOR, XVI, 1914, p. 215) described a supposed new race of rock wren from San Martín Island, Lower California. This island lies near latitude 30° on the Pacific side of the peninsula less than four miles from the nearest point on the mainland coast. The basis was a single specimen which appeared to Swarth, with the limited material than available to him, much more like *gadeloupensis* than *obsoletus*. This led him to propose the trinomial name constituted as above.

In 1925, the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology came into the possession of a series of 24 adult and juvenile rock wrens from San Martín Island, as also a few specimens from the adjacent mainland. First of all, the peculiarities of the type of *proximus* showed themselves extra-ordinary for that locality, especially as to length of bill, the character of most significance. Said type, now before me (no. 27079, Mus. Vert. Zool.) is in much worn plumage. This accounts in some measure, I think, for the seemingly great length of bill; for the feathers about the base of the bill, especially those on the forehead, shorten, even retreat in a sense with wear, thus "exposing" more of the culmen for measurement. Better than the culmen, therefore, is the dimension bill-from-nostril, that is, interval between anterior margin of nostril and farthest end of culmen. This in the type of *proximus* is 16.3 millimeters; in four other adult males from San Martín Island, 14.5, 14.1, 13.9, 13.4. It is to be granted here that the type in question shows, in fact, quite as long a bill as some specimens of *gadeloupensis*. As to peculiarities of color, those of the type of *proximus* are, I think, due chiefly to wear, which in this genus reduces grays and brings out the fundamental barring obscured in the fresh plumage. Some of the San Martín summer-taken specimens show new feathers on the dorsum and these are extreme in grayness.

Secondly, a study of the material acquired in 1925 showed without a doubt that the rock wrens of the adjacent mainland of Lower California, in the San Quintín (or San Pedro Mártir) subfaunal district, are identical in characters down to the last detail with those from San Martín Island. Furthermore, judging from fresh fall birds, I thought these showed good differences from corresponding birds of Upper California. These differences in the materials compared consisted of an appreciably grayer or slatier tone of color on head, back, wings and tail, in the "San Quintín district" birds, both adults and juvenals, and in a seeming tendency toward longer bill in them. On this basis I have for two years carried the heading *Salpinctes obsoletus proximus* in my Lower California manuscripts as applying to "the subspecies occupying the San Quintín district."

But since 1925 material has kept coming in, both from various parts of Lower California, and from elsewhere within the general range of *Salpinctes*; and furthermore I have had opportunity of examining the collections of rock wrens in several large Eastern museums (see Grinnell, Condor, xxix, 1927, p. 165). Swarth's (*loc.*

cit., p. 216) comments upon the "great variation shown in series of *Salpinctes obsoletus*" become now more emphatically pertinent than ever.

To come to a quick conclusion, the differences at one time thought by both myself and Swarth to suffice for recognizing a subspecies "*proximus*", now, just as in the case of the supposed race "*pulverius*" (see Grinnell, *loc. cit.*), seem at best mere "tendencies"—elusive, subject to recurrence in individuals almost anywhere within the range of the species. For example, the gray "bloom" of the Lower Californian birds is shown quite indistinguishably by some fresh fall birds just obtained from San Miguel Island, Upper California. Under the circumstances, therefore, I now consider the best course to refer the rock wrens of the entire territory of Lower California, save Guadalupe Island, to *Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*. The Guadalupe Island race is good, of course, but the trinomial, *Salpinctes obsoletus guadeloupeensis*, should be used for it, because increased material shows that individual variation in various respects quite bridges over the once supposed gap in characters between that insular form and the continental race.

Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, January 15, 1928.