

THE SPECIES AND SUBSPECIES OF THE FRINGILLID
GENUS *PASSERELLA* SWAINSON

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AN ANALYSIS of variation in the Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*), based primarily on a study of internal structure, and an examination of material in other closely related species have resulted in the conclusion, among others, that *Melospiza* Baird (1858) is so closely related to *Passerella* Swainson (1837) as to belong properly in the same genus. Accordingly, it has been proposed (see Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., 30, 1928, p. 367) that *Melospiza* be merged with *Passerella*, the latter name having priority.

A considerable amount of evidence of a varied nature has been given (*loc. cit.*, pp. 261-2, 286, 291, 363-5, 367-8) which supports this conclusion. A brief summary of the facts which bear upon this question follows:

The two genera were established without their authors having sufficient material to determine properly the relation existing between them.

No constant differences in external structure could be found in the published diagnoses of the genera except with respect to length of outer toe compared with middle toe, and that character is highly variable in both groups; in fact the range in each group is equal to, or greater than, the hiatus between them.

There is no constant difference in coloration. Even the possession of the characteristic grouping of spots in the center of the breast is common to both groups.

The distribution of the two groups indicates an intimate relationship, as has been shown by Swarth.

The two groups have many common features as regards migratory habit, although the song sparrows tend to be more sedentary than the fox sparrows.

In respect to habits there is:

- a. Close similarity in habitat choice, closely related races in both preferring stream sides.
- b. So close similarity in songs that it is difficult to distinguish between some races.
- c. Close similarity in type of nest and choice of nest site.
- d. Similarity in eggs so close that they are nearly indistinguishable.

There is an almost complete intergradation in all the characteristics examined in the structure of the skull.

The extraordinarily great geographic variation exhibited by each of these groups is a characteristic which markedly separates them from any adjacent group of sparrows.

Should workers in systematic ornithology agree that the genus *Passerella* be constituted as herein suggested, new combinations of names for several races will be necessary. The names that have been proposed within the four species in the genus and which may prove worthy of recognition are given in the following list:

Genus *Passerella* Swainson

Subgenus *Helospiza* Baird

Passerella georgiana (Latham)

Passerella lincolni *gracilis* (Kittlitz)

Passerella lincolni *lincolni* (Audubon)

Subgenus *Melospiza* Baird

Passerella melodia acadica (Thayer and Bangs)

Passerella melodia adusta (Nelson)

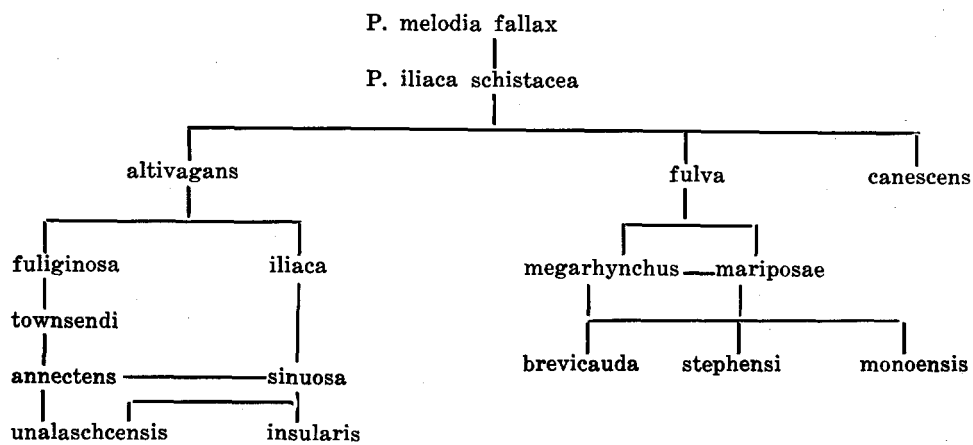
Passerella melodia atlantica (Todd)

Passerella melodia beata (Bangs)

Passerella melodia caurina (Ridgway)

- Passerella melodia clementae* (C. H. Townsend)
Passerella melodia cleonensis (McGregor)
Passerella melodia cooperi (Ridgway)
Passerella melodia coronatorum (Grinnell and Daggett)
Passerella melodia fallax (Baird)
Passerella melodia fisherella (Oberholser)
Passerella melodia goldmani (Nelson)
Passerella melodia gouldii (Baird)
Passerella melodia graminea (C. H. Townsend)
Passerella melodia heermanni (Baird)
Passerella melodia inexpectata (Riley)
Passerella melodia insignis (Baird)
Passerella melodia juddi (Bishop)
Passerella melodia kenaiensis (Ridgway)
Passerella melodia mailliardi (Grinnell)
Passerella melodia maxillaris (Grinnell)
Passerella melodia melodia (Wilson)
Passerella melodia merrilli (Brewster)
Passerella melodia mexicana (Ridgway)
Passerella melodia micronyx (Grinnell)
Passerella melodia morphna (Oberholser)
- Passerella melodia pusillula* (Ridgway)
Passerella melodia rivularis (W. Bryant)
Passerella melodia rufina Bonaparte
Passerella melodia saltonis (Grinnell)
Passerella melodia samuelis (Baird)
Passerella melodia sanaka (McGregor)
Passerella melodia santaecrucis (Grinnell)
Passerella melodia semidiensis (Brooks)
- Subgenus *Passerella* Swainson
Passerella iliaca altivagans Riley
Passerella iliaca annectens Ridgway
Passerella iliaca brevicauda Mailiard
Passerella iliaca canescens Swarth
Passerella iliaca fuliginosa Ridgway
Passerella iliaca fulva Swarth
Passerella iliaca iliaca (Merrem)
Passerella iliaca insularis Ridgway
Passerella iliaca mariposae Swarth
Passerella iliaca megarhynchus Baird
Passerella iliaca monoensis Grinnell and Storer
Passerella iliaca schistacea Baird
Passerella iliaca sinuosa Grinnell
Passerella iliaca stephensi Anthony
Passerella iliaca townsendi (Audubon)
Passerella iliaca unalaschcensis (Gmelin)

Since the alphabetical arrangement of names in the list given above can not indicate any degree of relationship between races it may be desirable to present a diagram to show my own ideas of the relations which obtain between the subspecies of *Passerella iliaca* and between that species and *P. melodia*. The races *schistacea* and *fallax* have been chosen to head the diagram not because there are reasons to believe that these two represent the original or oldest subspecies in their respective species, although that is possible, but because they appear to be the races of the two species which are most closely related. The lines in the diagram connect races which, it seems probable to me, are most closely related. Incidentally, this diagrammatic arrangement illustrates the difficulties that may be encountered in any attempt to show relationship by columnar arrangements of names.



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