

THE GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By A. J. VAN ROSSEM

In the course of cataloging a collection of birds recently donated to this institution by James Stevenson, certain peculiarities shown by a breeding Golden-crowned Kinglet from the San Bernardino Mountains recalled to mind similar birds which previously had been examined from the central and southern Sierra Nevada, the San Gabriel Mountains and Mount Pinos. These had been tentatively identified as *Regulus satrapa apache*, a race then autotypically unknown to me, on the basis of large size and lighter coloration as compared with *olivaceus* of the Pacific northwest. Through the courtesy of Dr. L. B. Bishop, the Los Angeles Museum, the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, the San Diego Natural History Museum, and Mr. George Willett, it has been possible to examine a fairly adequate series of *apache* (including the type) and also of the nominate race, *satrapa*, from the eastern United States. The Dickey Collections contain abundant material representing *olivaceus*, although many additional specimens have been examined in the collections enumerated above. It is now apparent that birds from southern California bear little resemblance to *apache* other than that they approach that race in size. A description of their distinguishing characteristics and other pertinent remarks follow.

Regulus satrapa amoenus, new subspecies

Sierra Golden-crowned Kinglet

Type.—Male of the year in complete, fresh, postjuvinal plumage; number 12993, Dickey Collections; collected at Lake Audrain, Eldorado County, California, August 19, 1923, by A. J. van Rossem.

Subspecific characters.—Larger in all dimensions than *Regulus satrapa olivaceus* Baird of the Pacific Northwest. Similar in general size to *Regulus satrapa satrapa* Lichtenstein of eastern North America and *Regulus satrapa apache* Jenks of southern Arizona, but bill longer than the former and slightly shorter than the latter. Coloration lighter and brighter than that of any previously described race: compared with *olivaceus*, lower back and rump close to "Warbler Green" instead of "Olive Green"; nuchal area paler and more ashy (less olive) gray; central crown patch of females and yellow portions of crown patch in males "Citron Yellow" or "Light Greenish Yellow" instead of "Wax Yellow" or "Stronian Yellow"; sides of head paler, with dark postocular mark obsolescent and superciliary stripes more prominently and more purely white; underparts paler (more like *satrapa* and *apache*) and lacking much of the buffy or olive wash present in *olivaceus*.

Range.—The Sierra Nevada of California, from Sierra County southward, Mount Pinos and the San Bernardino Mountains, and probably the San Jacinto Mountains. Apparently resident.

Specimens examined.—*Satrapa*, 30 from eastern United States; *apache*, 14 from Arizona and New Mexico; *olivaceus*, 56 from Alaska, British Columbia, western Washington, Oregon, and northern California south to central Siskiyou County (breeding), Alameda County (winter), Kern County (Piute Mts., winter), and Los Angeles County (winter); *amoenus*, 26 from Sierra, Eldorado, Mono, Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties.

The species *satrapa* is distinct from the Old World *Regulus regulus* and *Regulus ignicapillus*. Although several attempts have been made to link *satrapa* with *regulus* the efforts do not seem to have met with complete success. It is suggested to those taxonomists who are obsessed with the notion that every geographic representative must be regarded as conspecific with *something* that they try a merger with *ignicapillus*. Lichtenstein originally compared *satrapa* with the latter species and his inferential guess at relationship would seem to be at least as good as the more recent one.

On the basis of characters of long bill and highly colored crown patch *apache* is a perfectly valid race, although otherwise it resembles *satrapa* far more closely than it does *olivaceus*. In the original description by Jenks (Condor, 38, 1936:239-244), this

was brought out clearly in the table of comparisons and in the "key," although Jenks, because of geographical considerations, compared it primarily with the latter race. The type series, most of which has been examined in the present study, is not in good condition for color comparison, but two males in the San Diego Natural History Museum from the White Mountains of Arizona, and a male and female in the Bishop Collection from Reserve, New Mexico, are so close to *satrapa* in general coloration as to be almost indistinguishable. Indeed, Dr. Bishop had so labelled the latter, previous to the description of *apache*.

Winter specimens from the lowlands of southern California have not been examined, although the species has several times been recorded from that area. I would rather expect them to be *olivaceus* since that race is known to be migratory. However, the only concrete instance of occurrences in southern California is a specimen in the Dickey Collection (number G-87) taken at the head of Bear Cañon, altitude 7000 feet, in the San Gabriel Mountains, on March 3, 1919, which is typical in color and in measurements (wing, 52 mm.; tail, 40) of *olivaceus*. Coastally, the southernmost winter specimen of that race examined is one taken at Berkeley, on November 27, 1903 (Loye Miller Collection).

The mensural differences between the several races of the Golden-crowned Kinglet are small, but they are remarkably uniform and, in combination with color characters, it is only rarely that a doubtful example is found; at any rate, such has been the writer's experience with the hundred-odd specimens examined at this time. Eight specimens from Idaho are excepted from this observation; they seem to be a little brighter colored than typical *olivaceus* but are similar to that race in size.

In the following table the wing measurements are very close to the results obtained by Jenks (*loc. cit.*). The tail measurements are shorter than his, presumably because of a different system of measurement. In the present case they are taken from the point of insertion of the central pair of rectrices to the tip of the longest rectrix. All measurements given here are taken from males.

24 *olivaceus* from Washington, Oregon, and northwestern California:

Wing, 52-55 (54.0); tail, 38-41 (40.4).

8 *apache* from southern Arizona and New Mexico:

wing, 56-58 (57.1); tail, 41-44 (42.2).

16 *amoenus* from California:

wing, 55-57 (56.3); tail, 40-45 (42.0).

The bills of these birds are too small for accurate measurement. I do not obtain the same figures as those recorded by Jenks for much the same material in the case of *apache*, and to avoid confusion neither his nor my measurements are cited. Visually, the bill of *olivaceus* is the smallest, that of *apache* the longest, and that of *amoenus* is intermediate but nearer to the second.

Dickey Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, California, February 5, 1945.