

A NEW OVENBIRD FROM THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

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IN THE course of identifying a collection of breeding birds from northern Georgia we were impressed with the distinct appearance of the Ovenbirds at this southern extremity of their breeding range in the eastern United States. A critical examination of over 30 breeding birds revealed the fact that a well-marked subspecies was represented, its characters being as follows:

Seiurus aurocapillus canivirens, new subspecies

Southeastern Ovenbird

Type.—Adult male, United States National Museum No. 342053, Fish and Wildlife Service collection; Margret, Fannin County, Georgia, July 5, 1929; collected by Thomas D. Burleigh, original number 476.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Seiurus aurocapillus aurocapillus* (Linnaeus) of the northeastern United States and Canada, but upper parts paler and grayish green rather than bright green. In this respect it suggests *S. a. cinereus* A. H. Miller of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, but is greener and noticeably less gray above, and the ochraceous-buff of the crown is brighter. From *S. a. furvior* Batchelder, of Newfoundland, it differs in lacking the definite brownish tinge of the upper parts, and in having the markings on the upper breast and sides paler.

Geographic distribution.—Breeds in the southeastern United States from eastern Virginia and West Virginia south to northern South Carolina, northern Georgia, and northern Alabama. In winter south to the West Indies and Quintana Roo.

Remarks.—Superficially this southeastern race of the ovenbird more closely resembles breeding birds from the Rocky Mountains than it does the nominate race. The grayish wash of the upper parts is not so intense as in *cinereus* so the suggestion of green is more noticeable, but in comparison *aurocapillus* is much brighter green above than *canivirens*. Miller (1942. *Condor*, 44:185–186) noted that in a series of eastern birds that he compared with his new race several approached closely the least gray individuals of *cinereus*, and he interpreted these few gray birds as variants of the eastern population rather than as examples of his Rocky Mountain race. These specimens have not been examined in connection with the present study, but they probably were from the southeastern United States, and thus he was justified in hesitating to call them *cinereus*. Birds from western Maryland and Pennsylvania are intermediate in their characters, but closer to *aurocapillus* than to *canivirens*. No

positive breeding birds have been examined from the District of Columbia and adjacent areas in Virginia and Maryland. Eight spring examples seem to be referable to *aurocapillus*, while 6 are like *canivirens*. Thus, from the available evidence, the region around the District of Columbia is either one of intergradation or the 6 spring examples of *canivirens* represent the breeding form and the other 8 birds seen are migrants of *aurocapillus*.

In describing the races from Newfoundland and from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, neither Batchelder nor Miller designed the breeding populations to which the name *Seiurus aurocapillus aurocapillus* should be restricted. It seems desirable, therefore, that this be done at this time. *Motacilla aurocapillus* was described by Linnaeus (1766. "Systema Naturae," 1:334) and was based on Edwards' plate and text (1758. "Gleanings of Natural History," 5:91, pl. 252) and on Brisson's description (1760. "Ornithologia sive synopsis methodica," 3:504). It appears that Brisson based his description on Edwards, and that the specimen from which Edwards made his plate was obtained "at sea, in November, 1751, by the late Tho. Stack, M. D. and F.R.S. in his Voyage to Jamaica, as the ship lay becalmed, about eight or ten leagues distant from Hispaniola" (Edwards, *loc. cit.*). Edwards further stated that he received two specimens of the "golden-crowned thrush" from William Bartram of Pennsylvania, which confirmed his opinion that they were "birds of passage." In the collections in the U. S. National Museum, 18 ovenbirds were examined from Haiti. Fifteen of these are typical of the breeding populations of the northeastern United States and eastern Canada, the upper parts being bright green with no suggestion of a gray wash. The remaining three clearly resemble the breeding birds of the southeastern United States. It seems, therefore, that the more northern mainland race is definitely commoner in Haiti in migration than is the southeastern form, and that it should be designated as the nominate race with a breeding range from Nova Scotia south to Pennsylvania.

An examination of material from the western United States indicates that *cinereus* has a much larger breeding range than that given in the original description by Miller. In addition to one example from the type locality, we have studied breeding birds from Glasgow, Leedy, Ekalaka, and Fort Keogh, all in Montana. We have also examined six birds from North Dakota (Fort Rice, Oakdale, and Bismark), two from Wyoming (Bear Lodge Mountain), and one from Missouri (Independence, June 20, 1857).

Although Miller (*loc. cit.*) states that one example from Edmonton, Alberta, is referable to *aurocapillus*, we have seen a specimen from Fort Chipewyan (May 29, 1901) and another from the Slave River (June 10, 1901) which seem referable to *cinereus*. However, an immature in fresh fall plumage from Fort McMurray (Aug. 10, 1903) does not seem referable to either of the two

races expected in northern Alberta. Neither Godfrey (1950. *Canadian Dept. Resources Development Bull.*, 120:72) nor Rand (1948. *Natl. Mus. Canada Bull.*, 111:75) could definitely identify, racially, a small series of birds from southern Alberta and southern Saskatchewan. Additional material and study is needed to determine what race or races breed in Alberta and other prairie provinces of Canada.

Newfoundland breeding specimens from Notre Dame Bay, Badger, Greenwood, and Bonne Bay are all typical *furvior*. Three breeding birds from Tompkins, in extreme southwestern Newfoundland, likewise, are typical *furvior*, as are two May examples. However, two other late May birds from the same locality are inseparable from typical *aurocapillus*. Four fall specimens from Tompkins and Doyles are representative of *furvior*, but a September 8 (1946) example from Tompkins, and two birds which struck the lighthouse at Cape Anguille in the same region in the fall are like typical *aurocapillus*.

With the evidence available from specimens, we are not certain if these spring and fall examples of *aurocapillus* are birds which wandered north from the normal breeding range of *aurocapillus* in Nova Scotia, or if they represent breeding populations from the area about Tompkins, the latter being one of intergradation between *aurocapillus* and *furvior*.

BREEDING DISTRIBUTION of the new race *canivirens* is based on specimens examined in the U. S. National Museum and Fish and Wildlife Service collections from the following localities:—*Georgia*: White Co. (Tray Mtn.), Young Harris, Darien, Decatur, Atlanta, Smyrna, Blood Mtn., Margret, Athens; *North Carolina*: Asheville (Bent Creek), Murphy, Hayesville, Clinton; *Tennessee*: Carter, Parksville, Copperhill, Crossville, Sullivan Co. (Shady Valley), Cosby; *West Virginia*: Pocohontas Co. (Cranberry Glades), Randolph Co. (Cheat Bridge); *Kentucky*: Cooperville, Wayne Co. (Rocky Branch), Lynch; *Alabama*: Aniston; *Virginia*: Belle Haven, Eastville.

MIGRATION of the various races of the Ovenbird may be indicated by identifications of the following specimens taken outside of their known breeding range:—

(*S. a. canivirens*) *Cuba*: Guanajay; *Jamaica*: Moneague; *Puerto Rico*: Vieques I.; *Haiti*: Port au Prince, Little Cayemites; *Virgin Islands*: St. Thomas; *Bahamas*; *Quintana Roo*: Cozumel Island; *Florida*: Key West and Gainesville; *Mississippi*: Horn Island, Deer Island, and Gulfport.

(*S. a. furvior*) *Sinaloa*: near Mazatlán; *Bahamas*: New Providence and Abaco; *Leeward Islands*: Antigua; *Mississippi*: Ariel and Deer Island; *Louisiana*: New Orleans; *North Carolina*: Asheville (Bent Creek) and Statesville; *Georgia*: Athens; *Maryland*: Baltimore and Montgomery Co. (Sligo Branch); *Virginia*: Fairfax County, Shenandoah National Park, and Oakton; *District of Columbia*: Washington Monument; *Pennsylvania*: Rochester; *Ohio*: Painesville; *Ontario*: Toronto.

(*S. a. aurocapillus*) *Panamá*: Chiriquí; *Costa Rica*: Guanacaste (Hacienda Santa Marta); *Guatemala*: Petén (Remate); *British Honduras*: El Cayo; *Caribbean Sea*: Swan Island; *Tabasco*: Teapa; *Veracruz*: Tres Zapotes and Conejo; *Sinaloa*: Mazatlán; *Nuevo Leon*: Monterrey; *Jamaica*: Long Hill; *Haiti*: Cerca La Source, Little Cayemites, Tortuga

I., Caracol, Cahobas, La Gonave, Hinche, Pie de Macaya, Gonave I., Jeremie, and St. Raphael; *Bahamas*: Nassau; *Puerto Rico*: near Mayaguez, N. Guanica Lagoon, Anasco, Guanica, Río Piedras, Cayey, and Culebra I.; *Leeward Islands*: Antigua; *Virgin Islands*: St. Croix (Anna's Hope); *Florida*: Brevard Co. (Padgett Creek); *Mississippi*: Gulfport; *Nebraska*: mouth Platte River; *Georgia*: Athens and Harlem; *North Carolina*: Asheville (Bent Creek); *West Virginia*: Enon.

(*S. a. cinereus*) *Nebraska*: Camp Sheridan; *Chihuahua*: Mesquite (=Mosquito) Springs; *Sinaloa*: Mazatlán; *Yucatán*: Temax.

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