

within the tropics, our northern species were undoubtedly among the prisoners, and, with the throngs of other migrants, acquired the habit of pushing each spring towards the receding barrier, returning in the fall to a more congenial clime. But being a stronger and hardier class, these birds soon became aware that there was for them no necessity for a southern journey as extended as their allies were obliged to take.

Evidently the migratory habit, once so strong, is becoming dormant among some species, and only upon the sudden occurrence of intense cold is it awakened sufficiently to exert any influence whatever over the more rugged northern species.

Exceptional movements certainly occur, but owing to the high ornithological interest and conspicuousness of these northern species—coming at a time when other bird-life is absent—their movements are oftener recorded and are much more noticeable than similar ones among our commoner birds at seasons when each patch of woodland is filled with the notes of its hundreds of feathered occupants.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SONG SPARROW FROM THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF THE UNITED STATES.

BY H. W. HENSHAW.

IN 1874 I collected several Song Sparrows in the southern portion of Arizona, which appeared to differ remarkably from those obtained to the northward in various portions of the Great Basin. Being under the impression that these specimens represented merely the extreme degree of variation of the interior race, they were labelled *fallax* and passed by. Since then I have seen other specimens from this region, and especially a series of twenty-one collected, at my request, at Tucson by my friend Mr. E. W. Nelson. From a comparison of all these with the very extensive series of Song Sparrows from the interior of the United States, contained in the National collection and in my own Museum, I am satisfied that there exist two well-defined races in the Great Basin, where hitherto there has been supposed to be but one. One of these is, of course, the *fallax* of Baird. The

other I propose to describe as new. An examination of the type, to ascertain to which form the name *fallax* applies, reveals the fact that the type of *fallax* is from Tucson, and that it represents the fall plumage of what is really the older though least known form. In other words, the name *fallax* is to be restricted to the form inhabiting our southern border — Arizona and New Mexico — leaving the bird of the Great Basin at large outside of Arizona and New Mexico to receive the new name. The following is a description of the form:—

Melospiza fasciata montana, var. nov. MOUNTAIN SONG
SPARROW.

♂ *Adult* (No. 11222, Coll. National Museum, Fort Bridger, Utah, June 18): Crown, occiput, rump, and exterior surface of wings umber-brown; crown striped medially with ashy gray; sides of neck, nape, and superciliary stripe ashy; feathers of dorsum black centrally, umber-brown exteriorly, making strongly marked longitudinal streaks; feathers on back margined more or less with gray. Tail-feathers above light umber-brown, much darker along the shaft. Tertiaries margined externally with whitish. Under parts grayish white; breast and sides streaked heavily with dark umber-brown; a heavy sub-malar stripe of same tint.

DIFFERENTIAL CHARACTERS:—*M. montana*. Above umber-brown with margins of feathers gray, giving a strong grayish aspect to the plumage; back streaked with blackish brown; streakings below blackish brown.

M. fallax. Above chiefly bright reddish brown; back streaked with a darker shade of the same; streaks below reddish, *not black*; size smaller.

Fall specimens of *montana* are browner, with the markings generally less distinct, *i. e.*, more diffused. The black streaks of the back are always present.

The geographical limits of *fallax*, as restricted, cannot at present be given. I have seen specimens from Camp Grant and the Gila River, Arizona, while about Tucson it is the common form. It probably occupies in summer almost the whole of Arizona and New Mexico.

Concerning the presence of the two forms about Tucson, Mr. Nelson writes, under date of March 18, that the local race (*i. e.*, *fallax*) had been in full song for over a month, and dissection reveals every evidence of the near approach of the breeding season. The other bird (*i. e.*, *montana*) had already left for the north without singing, and without exhibiting signs of sexual excitement.

It thus appears that about Tucson *montana* is a winter visitant only, while *fallax* is a constant resident.