

species for research. I thank Lawrence Blus for his helpful comments and editorial assistance.

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**An erythristic specimen of the Rufous-sided Towhee.**—The occurrence of chestnut or partly chestnut feathers in the normally black plumage of the pileum of the Rufous-sided Towhee, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*, is not unknown. The variant appears in hybrid populations between *P. erythrophthalmus* and *P. ocai* and in populations of *erythrophthalmus* influenced by introgression from *ocai* in central Mexico (Sibley, Univ. California Publ. Zool., 50: 109, 1950; Sibley, Evolution, 8: 252, 1954; Sibley and West, Condor, 60: 85, 1958; Sibley and Sibley, Auk, 81: 479, 1964). Both Dickinson (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 197: 273, 1952) and Sibley (1954) reported a low incidence of chestnut on the crowns of Rufous-sided Towhees in populations in the United States and Canada.

On 3 June 1968 I collected a first-year male (testes: right, 9.0 × 9.0 mm; left, 11.5 × 7.0 mm) Rufous-sided Towhee on its territory in Piscataway Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey (AMNH No. 792678). The specimen is unique in the extent of chestnut and rufous in its plumage, and is unquestionably an erythristic form. Measurements place it in *P. e. erythrophthalmus* (Dickinson, 1952). Feathers on the crown and occiput are broadly tipped (distal one-quarter) with chestnut and black basally. The forehead bears fewer chestnut-tipped feathers. Overall the effect is a distinct chestnut cap only a little less complete (black present) than that found in pure *ocai*.

Unlike other partly chestnut towhee specimens reported in the literature where the color is restricted to the pileum, the present specimen has chestnut-tipped feathers on parts of the body and wings as well. Contour feathers tipped with chestnut are most prominent on the breast, lower back, and upper tail coverts, where they produce a spotted and blotched effect. Regions with a few chestnut-tipped feathers,

or with a faint suffusion of rusty on otherwise black barbs, include the upper back, throat (mostly black), malar region, auriculars, and the side of the neck. The rump is uniformly black. Chestnut also appears prominently on the tips of the greater and middle secondary coverts forming two incomplete wing bars. The specimen is also unusual in having more rufous on the white underparts. Rufous is prominent on the upper abdominal region as well as on the sides and flanks where it is characteristic.

Sibley (1954: 288) raised the question of the origin of chestnut color in the black plumage of male Rufous-sided Towhees north of the hybrid and introgressive zones in Mexico. He presented data suggesting that the incidence of this variant is not related to proximity to hybrid populations in central Mexico, but that it appears in local populations throughout the range of the species. The present specimen provides some support for this view. The extensive distribution of chestnut on the wings and body cannot be accounted for by hypothesizing introgression from either distant or nearby *ocai* populations.

The further possibility that the chestnut color is due "to the occasional expression of 'ancestral' genes" (Sibley, 1954) is enticing though unproved. If so, ancestral populations of modern *erythrophthalmus* must have had rufous or chestnut on the body and wings as well as the crown (chestnut cap). This theory is supported by the existence of other specimens of male Rufous-sided Towhees with reddish-brown-tipped feathers on various parts of the body. I found two such specimens collected in the New York City area at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH No. 367970 and AMNH No. 60539). The former specimen has many reddish-brown-tipped feathers on hindneck, interscapulars (especially prominent), breast, scapulars, secondary coverts, and upper tail coverts. The feathers so marked are fresh and unworn. The second specimen shows conspicuous reddish-brown only on the back, but also has a few white feathers with rufous tips on the upper abdomen.

The relative rarity of specimens with chestnut in the black plumage of the body, compared to those with the color in the pileum only, suggests that the chestnut cap was lost more recently than chestnut color on other parts of the head and body. The specimen also supports the hypothesis that the two melanins producing black and chestnut may be so similar chemically that a point mutation could produce the aberrant chestnut variant *de novo*.

I collected the specimen while studying towhee populations in New Jersey supported by a grant from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund of the American Museum of Natural History and an NSF Ecology Training Grant GB-3343 from Rutgers University.—JON S. GREENLAW, *Biology Department, C. W. Post College, Greenvale, New York 11548*. Accepted 27 Apr. 72.

**White-crowned Sparrow parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbird in western Washington.**—During 5 years of study (1967–71) of the Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow, *Zonotrichia leucophrys pugetensis*, in the lower Puget Sound region of western Washington, mainly on Camano and Whidbey Islands, I examined more than 100 active nests and a larger number of fledglings attended by one or both parents. The only case of Brown-headed Cowbird, *Molothrus ater*, parasitism I found was of a White-crown nest in a fencerow at the unusual height of 127.0 cm above ground in new growth in an area of especially high cowbird abundance on Camano Island. This nest contained three White-crown and one cowbird eggs when found on 29 May 1968. The three sparrow eggs were laid by a banded female (No. 016-158306), originally caught in a mist net at 09:10 PST on 16 May 1968