

NEW RACE OF *SPINUS TRISTIS* FROM THE
PACIFIC COAST.

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL.

Spinus tristis salicamans, new subspecies. WILLOW
GOLDFINCH.

Winter Plumage:—Similar to corresponding plumage of eastern *S. tristis*, but browner with much broader wing-markings. In these respects it thus resembles *S. t. pallidus*, but is easily distinguishable by its extreme darkness.

Type, ♂ ad., No. 575, Coll. J. G., Pasadena, California, Dec. 21, 1895. Above dark olive-tawny; rump lighter; sides and flanks shaded with color of back; under tail-coverts white, tinged with tawny; throat gamboge yellow shading into dull green on middle of breast; abdomen pure white; sides of head like throat, excepting the ear-coverts which are of the color of the back. Wings and tail black; white skirtings of the tail-feathers scarcely exceeding those of *S. tristis*, but the markings on the wings much extended. Greater wing-coverts broadly tipped with white, forming a bar across the closed wing .18 of an inch wide; median coverts also broadly white tipped; lesser coverts olive-green; primaries narrowly tipped, and secondaries and tertiaries broadly tipped and outwardly margined with white. The white markings of the wings more or less tinged with tawny. Bill chrome yellow at base, dusky-tipped.

The female in winter plumage is similar to the male, but the black of the wings and tail is less pure, and the throat is duller colored; bill dusky.

Summer Plumage:—In this plumage the male is scarcely distinguishable from *S. tristis*; the black cap is, if anything, not so extended, and the yellow is not so pure and intense as in the eastern form. The white edgings of the wing-feathers are often entirely worn off, so that the wing is left with barely a trace of white. Bill, in life, darker, almost ochraceous. The wing and tail average shorter, and the bill bulkier.

The female in breeding plumage is readily separable from the eastern bird by its much darker color. The female *S. tristis* is brightly tinged over the whole breast with yellowish green, while the female *S. t.*

	Wing.	Tail.	Culmen.	Gonys.	Bill from Nostril.	Depth of Bill.
¹ Average of 15 ad. ♂♂ of <i>Spinus tristis salicamans</i> from Pasadena, Cal.	2.76	1.97	.39	.32	.33	.27
Average of 15 ad. ♂♂ of <i>Spinus tristis</i> from Washington, D. C.	2.87	2.05	.36	.30	.31	.25

¹ Measurements are in inches.

salicamans is dull greenish yellow on the throat, becoming still dusker anteriorly. Even juveniles of the Willow Goldfinch just from the nest are deeper and darker colored than those of *S. tristis* proper.

Habitat.—Pacific Coast, from Washington to Southern California.

This geographical race seems as well pronounced as many others of the dark Pacific Coast forms. As might be expected, specimens from Oregon and Washington in winter plumage are slightly darker and browner than Southern California birds; but as the Willow Goldfinches are of a wandering disposition, and at least slightly migratory in the northern part of their habitat, this variation is not great.

The habitat of *salicamans* seems to be perfectly divided southerly from that of *pallidus* of the Great Basin. The Colorado Desert and the high Sierras form a broad territory from which I have seen no records, and which cannot be regularly crossed. The only specimens of an intermediate character are from the northern part of the Great Basin, where they seem to combine in part the characters of *tristis*, *pallidus* and *salicamans*, and are hardly referable to either. Several specimens of the latter from California show a considerable extension of the white on the inner webs of the tail-feathers, but so do occasional eastern birds.

I have examined 175 Goldfinches from nearly every State; the winter birds vary greatly in respect to the tone of coloration, but as this species is more or less migratory throughout its range, it is hard to draw any lines. Specimens from Texas (Fort Clark, Coll. E. A. Mearns) in particular, are light colored and grayer than any others, though showing no pronounced tendency toward *pallidus*.

If I judge rightly from specimens at hand, the spring moult of the Eastern Goldfinch takes place during two or three weeks in April. In Southern California, however, the spring moult in many individuals of *S. t. salicamans* begins in January and extends far into May. Thus a series of specimens taken from January to May, presents every gradation of plumage from winter to full summer, but none entirely in one or the other. They frequently breed early, before the spring moult is completed. I have adult males, taken with sets of eggs in April, that possess but a few of the bright yellow feathers, and the black crown is but imperfectly indicated. In certain tracts of feathers, I have

reason to believe there is a marked color change without moult or abrasion. The wing- and tail-feathers are moulted but once a year, in August and September.

The Willow Goldfinch is a characteristic inhabitant of the willow copses which border the marshes and sluggish streams of the lowlands. In summer, in Southern California, it is confined almost exclusively to these localities. But in fall and winter it gathers in small flocks and haunts the sunflower patches on the mesas, and even the mountain cañons, feeding on the buds and seeds of the sycamores and alders.

I am indebted to Mr. Robert Ridgway of the National Museum for suggestions in regard to this paper, and to the authorities of the National Museum for the loan of a series of *S. tristis* for comparison.

a THE SITKAN KINGLET.

BY WILLIAM PALMER.

THREE adult summer Ruby-crowned Kinglets, collected by Mr. Joseph Grinnell near Sitka, Alaska, and two others, a spring male and an immature, collected at the same place by Fred. Bischoff, differ so much from many specimens of *Regulus calendula* with which I have compared them as to be worthy of separation by name.

Regulus calendula grinnelli, subs. nov. SITKAN KINGLET.

Differential Characters.—Above sooty dark olive (similar to *R. obscurus*) darkening to blackish along sides of vermilion crown patch. Beneath, throat and breast dusky gray; abdomen whitish tinged with yellowish. Bill slenderer at tip and broader at base than in *calendula* and laterally indented in the center. Wings with dark parts nearly black. Size between *R. calendula* and *R. obscurus*. Type, adult ♂, No. 160931, U. S. Nat. Mus. Collection (No. 1161, J. G. Coll.). Collected by Joseph Grinnell, June 23, 1896, Sitka, Alaska.

Immature [♂].—Above rich brownish olive, much darker than in *calendula* of same age. Beneath brighter than in same. Size smaller with longer and more slender bill. Wings darker with narrower and yellower bars. No. 45928, U. S. Nat. Mus. Coll., Sitka, 1866; Fred. Bischoff.



Grinnell, Joseph. 1897. "New Race of *Spinus tristis* from the Pacific Coast." *The Auk* 14, 397–399. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068475>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/87800>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068475>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/88034>

Holding Institution

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Sponsored by

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.