

OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTONA NEW HOUSE FINCH FROM THE PALOUSE
COUNTRY OF THE NORTHWESTERN UNITED
STATES

BY JOHN W. ALDRICH

During the course of studying the geographic variation of the birds of Washington State, I have noted a marked racial difference in the house finches resident in the eastern part of that state from adjoining populations on the coast and in the Great Basin. This differentiation seems to be general and constant in the population of house finches occupying the Palouse prairie region of the Columbia plateau, north of the Blue Mountains of Oregon, and between the Cascade Mountains on the west and the Rocky Mountains on the east. So different are these birds in all sex and age plumages and so circumscribed is their range, that it appears to me they should be considered as a distinct subspecies that may be characterized as follows:

***Carpodacus mexicanus sordidus*, new subspecies**
Palouse House Finch.

Type.—No. 395960, U. S. National Museum (Fish and Wildlife Service Collection); adult male, Pullman, Washington, July 12, 1948; T. D. Burleigh, original number 11199.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Carpodacus mexicanus grinnelli* of western Oregon and California, but slightly darker and much more grayish, less brownish, above and below; also less of the reddish wash on back and neck, and red of head, rump, throat, and breast more restricted and deeper less orange in tone, being near spectrum red or carmine rather than scarlet red. It differs from *C. m. solitudinis* of the Great Basin region in Nevada to an even greater degree by reason of being much darker as well as more grayish and the reds purer and deeper, less scarlet. The combination of characters gives a relatively dusky appearance when compared with other races.

The females differ in the same way as the males from *grinnelli* and *solitudinis* with respect to the brown markings which are more grayish, less brownish, and particularly as regards the ventral streaks which are heavier and darker than in either of the other two races. There is no significant size difference from either of the above-mentioned neighboring forms.

Measurements.—Adult male (14 adult, spring and summer specimens); wing, 77-80 (78.2); tail, 57.5-62 (60.0); exposed culmen 9.5-11 (10.3);

MAR 17 1949

tarsus, 15-18 (16.8); middle toe, without claw, 14-15.5 (14.6). Adult female (6 adult, spring and summer specimens): wing, 72.5-75.5 (74.4); tail 55.5-60 (57.3); exposed culmen 9-10.5 (9.8); tarsus 15-18 (16.8); middle toe without claw, 12.5-15.5 (14.1).

Distribution.—Permanent resident in eastern Washington (east of the Cascade Mountains) and northwestern Idaho; probably also adjoining portions of intermontane British Columbia where the species occurs. Specimens of *Carpodacus mexicanus sordidus* have been identified as follows:

Washington—Eureka, Walla Walla Co., Nov. 3, 1941, ♂; Pullman, Apr. 30, 1942, ♂, Dec. 12, 1947, ♂, July 12, 1948, ♂ (Type); College Place, Feb. 18, 1937, ♂, Apr. 8, 1937, ♂, Oct. 17, 1937; Kiona, Oct. 18, 1916, ♀, Dec. 9, 1919, ♂, Dec. 11, 1919, ♀, Dec. 11, 1919, ♂, (Juv.); Wallula, Mar. 27, 1937, ♂, Apr. 2, 1939, ♂; Wenatchee, Apr. 29, 1934, ♀, July 9, 1933, ♂, Aug. 29, 1934, ♂, Apr. 12, 1934, ♀; White Bluffs, Nov. 1, 1941, ♀; Yakima, July 6, 1936, ♂; Clarkston May 11, 1948, ♂; Gibbon, May 18, 1934, ♀; Wenas Valley, Yakima County, Cleman Ranch, Sept. 22, 1917, ♂ (Juv.); Zillah, Mar. 8, 1919, ♂; Wawawai, June 12, 1937, ♂ (Imm.), June 12, 1937, —(Imm.), June 12, 1937, ♀ ? (Imm.), Mar. 9, 1941, ♀; Roosevelt, Oct. 29, 1941, ♀, Dec. 18, 1942, ♀, Dec. 18, 1942, ♂; Harrah, Oct. 25, 1945, ♀ (Juv.), Oct. 25, 1945, ♂ (Juv.), Oct. 25, 1945, ♂.

Idaho—Troy, June 25, 1948, ♀; Lewiston, Dec. 18, 1947, ♂; Moscow, Jan. 30, 1948, ♀, May 8, 1948, ♀, Dec. 2, 1947, 2 ♀, Dec. 16, 1947, ♂, July 7, 1948, ♂, Jan. 11, 1948, ♂, Jan. 21, 1948, ♂, June 15, 1948, ♂, June 17, 1948, 2 ♂, Aug. 6, 1948, ♀, July 14, 1948, ♂, July 22, 1948, ♂, ♀ (Imm.), July 27, 1948, ♂, July 15, 1948, ♀ (Imm.), ♂ (Imm.).

For the loan of pertinent comparative material, acknowledgment is made to Charles R. Conner Museum, State College of Washington; Walla Walla College; State Museum, University of Washington; Mr. John B. Hurley, Yakima, Washington; Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California. For a good series of breeding specimens of this new subspecies from the vicinity of Moscow, Idaho, and Pullman, Washington, I am indebted to the diligent collecting of Thomas D. Burleigh of the Fish and Wildlife Service, who is now stationed in that area for the purpose of making an intensive study of the birds of Idaho.



1949. "A new house finch from the Palouse country of the north-western United States." *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 62, 29–30.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/110822>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/49495>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: Biological Society of Washington

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

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>.