

First Canadian Record of the Black-throated Sparrow

On June 8, 1959, Miss Anne Miller, age 7, while playing in a cabin clearing at Murtle Lake in remote Wells Gray Park, British Columbia, discovered a strange bird feeding on the ground. After noting that it was a sparrow with a black throat and a white line over the eye she went to the house and told her mother who suggested that Anne look it up in a bird book. Soon she was so sure that only one picture, that of a Black-throated (Desert) Sparrow fitted her bird that her mother, Mrs. Hettie Miller, investigated and found that Anne was right. Mrs. Miller collected and prepared the specimen and has kindly donated it to the National Museum of Canada. It is an adult male Black-throated Sparrow, *Amphispiza bilineata deserticola* Ridgway, the first record of the species for Canada. The fact that the first Canadian specimen was discovered and correctly identified by a seven-year-old girl, augurs well for the rising generation of ornithologists!

Murtle Lake is in a heavily forested valley, the floor of which has an elevation of some 3500 feet. About the lake are rounded mountains reaching up to 8000 feet. Climatically the area is characterized by frequent rainfall in summer and heavy snowfalls in winter (R. Yorke Edwards and Ralph W. Ritcey, *Can. Field Nat.* 73:21, 1959). The Black-throated Sparrow frequented a small clearing in the heavy forest. Its stomach contained insects (apparently mainly Diptera) and bits of gravel.

Other evidence of unusual occurrences of this desert-inhabiting species in the late spring of 1959 is recorded by H.M. Du Bois (*Condor* 61:435, 1959), who reports its presence in no less than three separate localities in the humid part of southwestern Oregon, and Thomas Rogers (*Audubon Field Notes* 13:390, 1959), who records another from Baker, Oregon, May 17-May 19, 1959.

I am grateful to Mrs. Hettie Miller for the privilege of recording this interesting occurrence and to Dr. R. Yorke Edwards, Department of Recreation and Conservation, Victoria, B.C., who first drew my attention to the record.

W. Earl Godfrey

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