Notes on the vocalizations of Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*)

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In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the different races of Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*). We also try to quantify the extent of any vocal differences using the criteria proposed by Tobias *et al.* (2010), as a support for taxonomic review.

We have made use of sound recordings available on-line from Xeno Canto (XC) and Macaulay Library (ML).

Song of all races is structurally similar, a series of strident notes with increasing pace, gradually changing from well-separated notes at first to a stuttering end.

Races can be grouped in the 'Northwest group'(*rufivirgatus*, *ridgwayi* and *crassirostris*), the 'Yucatan group'(*verticalis* and *rhyptothorax*) and the 'Pacific group' (*superciliosus*, *sinaloa*, *sumichrasti* and *chiapensis*) (sonograms of song for these groups in Attachment 1).

The 'Yucatan group' seems to have the most distinct song: the sequence of notes decreases in pitch towards the end (gradually reducing max. frequency) or there is a sudden switch to a different note with lower max. frequency (although this has also been noted occasionally in e.g. Oaxaca birds)(score 1-2). Furthermore, note shape is somewhat more complex, with clear bends visible on a sonogram vs. almost straight lines in both other groups (score 1). When applying Tobias criteria, this would lead to a total vocal score of at least 2.

The 'Pacific' and 'Northwest group' are probably not safely told apart.

Remark: XC28952 from C Honduras with song like Olive Sparrow suggests there may be an undescribed taxon there, unless it is an aberrant song of Green-backed Sparrow A. *chloronotus*, unlike other recordings of Green-backed Sparrow from Honduras and elsewhere.

This note was finalized on 24th May 2016, using sound recordings available on-line at that moment. We would like to thank in particular the many sound recordists who placed their recordings for this species on XC and ML.

References


Recommended citation

Attachment 1: Examples of song of the three groups of Olive Sparrow *Arremonops rufivirgatus*

“*rufivirgatus group*” (*rufivirgatus*, *ridgwayi* and *crassirostris*)
“Pacific group” (*superciliosus, sinaloae, sumichrasti* and *chiapensis*);
“Yucatan group” (*verticalis* and *rhyptothorax*)