

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* with an extra wing flight-feather

D. BIGAS & J.L. COPETE

Abnormal numbers of flight-feathers in the wing have rarely been reported, especially for passerines. On 10th September 1992 an adult Tree Sparrow undergoing a complete moult was caught at Delebre (Tarragona, NE Spain); it had an extra flight-feather in both wings. These feathers were probably secondaries in active growth, each inserted between the innermost secondary and the outermost tertial. Therefore, in each wing this bird showed 20 flight-feathers, rather than the 19 shown by most passerines.

Key words: Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*, additional secondary, NE Spain.

David Bigas. Ges Avall, 24. 08570 Torelló (Barcelona).
 José Luis Copete. Museu de Zoologia. Ap. 593. 08080 Barcelona.
 Rebut: 28.12.92; Acceptat: 18.01.93

Stresemann (1963) and Melville (1985) reported abnormal numbers of wing flight-feathers for several non-passerine species. More recently, this anomaly has been extended to passerines (Bertolero et al. 1992, Copete et al. 1992). However, the phenomenon remains underdescribed and more reports are needed to know the true extent of the anomaly.

The Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* presents ten primaries (with the outermost vestigial), six secondaries and three tertials (Ginn & Melville 1983). From 10th August to 31 October 1992 a ringing campaign was performed at the Canal Vell (Delebre, Tarragona, 40.44N, 00.47E). On 10th September an adult Tree Sparrow which had previously been ringed was caught; it was undergoing a complete moult, with a moult score of 51 in both wings (following notation of Ginn &

Melville 1983; see Table 1). This is a normal score for this month in this species (Deckert 1962, Myrcha & Pinowski 1970, Ginn & Melville 1983). The two outer secondaries were in growth with S3 to S6 still not replaced, and between these and the tertials there was another secondary in growth (Table 1). All feathers were inspected carefully, but no feather showed any anomaly in the place of insertion.

The shape of secondaries is different from that of primaries, and this bird had a normal number of primaries. It appears that the additional feather was S7, so it showed an abnormal succession in the pattern of moult in this species (Ginn & Melville 1983). This type of additional feather was found in both wings (with a slight difference in the moult score). Therefore, this bird had 20 flight-feathers in each wing, and as in other

Wing	T	T	T	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Right	2	5	5	3	0	0	0	0	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	2	0	0
Left	2	5	5	4	0	0	0	0	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	0	0

Table 1. Moul't score of both wings. T: tertials, S: secondaries, P: primaries.

Tabla 1. Puntuación de muda de cada ala. T: terciarias, S: secundarias, P: primarias. (Wing = ala; right = derecha; left = izquierda).

records (Bertolero et al. 1992, Copete et al. 1992) the additional feather was a secondary. •

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Parc Natural Delta de l'Ebre and the Institute Vogelwarte Radolfzell sponsored the ringing campaign. We are grateful to them.

RESUMEN

Un Gorrión molinero *Passer montanus* con una pluma de vuelo extra en el ala.

Raras veces se han descrito números anormales de plumas de vuelo en el ala de los passeriformes, aunque recientemente han aparecido algunos casos (Bertolero et al. 1992, Copete et al. 1992). El Gorrión molinero *Passer montanus* presenta 19 plumas de vuelo en el ala, como la mayoría de passeriformes europeos (Ginn & Melville 1983). El 10 de septiembre de 1992 fue capturado un ejemplar adulto (previamente anillado) de esta especie en el Canal Vell (Deltebre, Tarragona) con una pluma de vuelo extra en cada ala. Probablemente esta pluma fue una secundaria en desarrollo insertada entre la secundaria más interna (S6) y la terciaria más externa (T1), pues mostró una sucesión anormal del patrón de muda en esta especie (Ginn & Melville 1983). Como los registros reseñados (Bertolero et

al. 1992, Copete et al. 1992) la pluma adicional también fue una secundaria.

REFERENCES

BERTOLERO, A., GUSTAMANTE, L., FIGUEROLA, J. & RIERA, X. 1992. An anomaly in the number of secondary feathers in the Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*). *Buñll. GCA* 9: 17-18.

COPETE, J.L., COPETE, L.M., DOMENECH, J. & SENAR, J.C. 1992. A case of a Serin (*Serinus serinus*) with an extra secondary. *Ring. & Migr.* 13: 177-178.

DECKERT, G. 1962. Zur Ethologie des Feldsperlings (*Passer m. montanus* L.). *J. für Ornithologie* 103: 428-486.

GINN, H.B. & MELVILLE, D.S. 1983. *Moult in birds*. Tring: BTO.

MELVILLE, D.S. 1985. Further examples of abnormal rectrices and a case of an extra primary. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 105: 95-96.

MYRCHA, A. & PINOWSKI, J. 1970. Weights, body composition, and caloric value of postjuvencal molting European Tree Sparrows (*Passer montanus*). *Condor* 72: 175-181.

STRESEMANN, E. 1963. Variations in the number of primaries. *Condor* 65(6): 449-459.