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E B B A N E W S

Eastern Bird-Banding Association News Letter

APRIL - 1952

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THE EASTERN BIRD-BANDING ASSOCIATION

EVENING GROSBEAKS

Mrs. Marie Dumont of 311 Pompton Turnpike, Pequannock, N. J. gives us the following bit of information:

"I recently had the pleasure of visiting a Mrs. E. V. Guenter of Butler, N. J. and seeing at close hand a flock of between 60 and 75 Evening Grosbeak feeding on the ground just outside her sunporch window. Mrs. Guenter informed me that they have been coming in two flocks, one of about 25 and another close to 70 and from Monday to Saturday ate up \$1.75 worth of Sunflower seeds. At first the females outnumbered the male by 5 to 1 but the day I was there the male birds predominated by a small margin. It was a beautiful sight. The birds seem to feed mostly during the morning hours. I was there from 9 to 11 and if any come to feed during the afternoon or early evening it is only a few, perhaps 5 or 6. Where they spend the rest of the day she has never been able to discover but every morning they are sure to come back. This has been going on for weeks now.

"Another interesting fact is that I have been able to band 3 Red-breasted Nuthatches at this Station this year. We never, to our knowledge, had any of these visiting here until last winter when one was taken in our traps and that is all we ever saw of it. However, this winter 2 of the banded birds were with us over a period of two weeks. The White-breasted is with us all the time. Tree Sparrows have not been around this section the past few years. Previously we took close to a hundred or over a winter. Often wonder what became of all the Tree Sparrows."

GROSBEAKS OBSERVED FEEDING YOUNG

An excerpt from the Evening Grosbeak Survey News, March 1952, reads as follows:

"Since 1948 a pair of Evening Grosbeaks has nested near our home every summer. The first year the male and female appeared

alone nearly every day for a number of weeks and towards the end of July appeared with 4 young. I would say that they were just beginning to fly and that they were about half the size of the older birds.

"We have a wild cherry tree by our front porch and it is very interesting to watch the parent birds arranging the young to be fed. Both parents start picking the cherries; they crack the cherry pits with their beaks, then feed the young the kernels. You can actually hear them crack the pits.

"I have watched them many times from a window about 10 feet from the tree. They took no notice of me at all, but kept right on feeding the young. They come back every day until the cherries are gone. I believe it is the same pair that nests here every year because they follow the same procedure and don't appear to be the least bit frightened. I have never found their nest, even though I have watched them many times. They never appear from the same direction.

"My father states that he saw 3 pairs at his camp about 9 miles from Riley Brook last summer. He says that they were around where salt had been put out for the deer.

Mrs. Patience Larlee
Plaster Rock
New Brunswick, N. J."

* * * * *

A word of caution has been received from Dr. Paul Bartsch, Gunston Hall Road, Lorton, Va., relative to the article on Evening Grosbeaks which appeared in our last issue of Ebba News; namely, that the dull colored birds should not be listed as females only, since the young male Evening Grosbeak wears the plumage of the mother and may therefore easily be mistaken for a female. Dr. Bartsch also tells us that he has had close to 200 at a time at his feeding station, where they devour a gallon of Sunflower seeds every day. He is more than halfway

through his fourth hundred pounds of Sunflower seeds for the season!

VISITATION FROM RARE HOUSE FINCHES THRILLS AREA ORNITHOLOGISTS

Mrs. Willis Geis, 66 Hendrie Ave., Riverside, Conn. sent us the following interesting item which appeared in their local newspaper: (Since this was written Mrs. Geis has reported 10 at her feeder on Hendrie Ave. She banded one.)

Bird watchers in eastern Greenwich these days are very much excited by the presence of a strictly western bird in their midst. The House Finch, a bird common from California to central Texas was discovered by Mrs. Lawrence C. Chamberlain at her feeder on Old King's Highway, OG, shortly after Christmas. The flock has grown from six to twenty and seven others have been banded by Mrs. Edward Easton at her home on Riverside Ave.

Ornithologists from many surrounding communities have come to see them. The House Finches have been most obliging about appearing for their regular meals, sunflower seed preferred.

The story behind the bird's sudden appearance is given by Roger Tory Peterson in "Birds Over America." He writes that in 1940 dealers had brought the birds in large quantities to New York, calling them "Hollywood Finches," and when the law got after them for caging wild birds, those left in their stores were released. Peterson wondered if any would establish themselves in the east. A few were seen on Long Island five years later. One was reported in Bedford and one in Armonk but the present flock seems to be the largest known.

Curator Paul Griswold Howes at the Bruce Museum has a male House Finch in his new collection of Arizona Desert Birds. Once seen it is easy to distinguish from its nearest eastern cousin, the Purple Finch. Richard H. Pough in the Audubon Bird Guide gives this identification: "The male color is generally a brighter and purer red than that of the Purple Finch but is more restricted in area. The best character is the heavy brown streaking of the lower under part.

In the female and young the less streaked, gray-brown back and less contrasting head pattern are generally diagnostic."

Keep your eyes open and you may discover you have a House Finch in your feeder too!

Mr. Patrick K. Garland, Demarest, N. J. reports banding the following for the year 1951 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31) mostly week-ends. Operating 10 of his 15 traps 1,105 birds were banded, representing 37 species, with 74 returns and 3 recoveries. Also trapped were the following: 270 English Sparrows, 15 Chipmonks, 3 Grey Squirrels, 2 Cats and 1 Rabbit. (Cats and Sparrows were destroyed, the others liberated elsewhere.)

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|----------------------------|----|
| Fox Sparrow | 34 | White-crowned Sparrow | 3 |
| Slate-colored Junco | 275 | Rose-breasted Grosbeak | 1 |
| White-throated Sparrow | 222 | Wood Thrush | 2 |
| Song Sparrow | 6 | Cardinal | 4 |
| Tufted Titmouse | 6 | House Wren | 1 |
| Black-capped Chickadee | 23 | Sparrow Hawk | 2 |
| Bluebird | 1 | Sora | 1 |
| Downy Woodpecker | 10 | Maryland Yellow-throat | 1 |
| Red-winged Blackbird | 98 | Black and White Warbler | 3 |
| Cowbird | 61 | Redstart | 3 |
| Chipping Sparrow | 8 | Ovenbird | 3 |
| Starling | 101 | Black-poll Warbler | 2 |
| Brown Thrasher | 26 | Nashville | 1 |
| Catbird | 10 | Magnolia Warbler | 2 |
| Blue Jay | 99 | Black-throated Gr. Warbler | 2 |
| Towhee (Red-eye) | 47 | Myrtle Warbler | 24 |
| Mourning Dove | 13 | Hermit Thrush | 3 |
| Robin | 1 | Pine Siskin | 2 |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | 4 | | |

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