

purple. But if the spotting extends to the lower tail coverts, it is usually indistinct.

FINCH

The House Sparrow is noticeably sleeker, with the body build of an American Tree Sparrow (Spizella arborea). The males are not necessarily "brighter red" than the Purple Finch, as is often stated. Their reddish coloration ranges all the way from tawny or orange, through rose and old rose, to something akin to "raspberry". We have trapped as an immature, banded, and retrapped as an adult male one individual so heavily colored that it could be identified only by the culmen, streaking and retrices. Red is usually lacking or obscured on the crown and nape, leaving the forehead contrastingly redder and brighter. The culmen is markedly convex (in both sexes), giving the species an aquiline or "Roman nose" profile. The tail, with retrices of almost equal length, appears square-ended. The males are consistently streaked on their dusky - not creamy white - flanks, and heavily streaked on the under tail coverts. Immatures are buffier, both above and below, than adults, but their most characteristic feature is the duskiness of the ground color of the underparts, including the tail coverts, coupled with heavy, longitudinal streaking. The shape of the streaks and their conspicuousness on the under tail coverts should be decisive.

It will be interesting to see whether natural selection or adaptation to climactic conditions results in the emergence - as in the Song Sparrow - of distinguishably darker races in the humid Northeast and in the still more humid coastal regions of Washington and British Columbia, to which the House Finch has recently spread.

The House Finch is extraordinarily adaptable and therefore presumably a mutable species, with a tremendous biological capacity. Except for game birds introduced as sedentary targets, the House Finch is the first avian exotic to establish itself in eastern North America since the Starling. It is therefore the first since banding became widespread. Banders have a unique opportunity to contribute to knowledge of the species' behavior in its new habitat.

Tamaroneck, N.Y. (Cant) and Riverside, Conn. (Geis)

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MANAGING NETS IN THE WIND

The July-August 1959 issue (page 82) of EBBA NEWS has a suggestion for using split-shot to keep nets properly set in the wind. An improvement on this is suggested by Cyril T. Wolfing of Alden, N.Y. who writes: "I remedied the problem of nets and wind by stretching my nets in the cellar and then with a tube of Duco cement I tacked the net to the shelf strands about every 1 1/2 feet on all four shelves. It takes only a tiny drop at each tacking area and the added weight for an entire net wouldn't equal one split BB shot (as was suggested in EBBA NEWS). The tiny droplet of cement tends to form a sphere and minimizes the tendency to catch itself on other strands - no more so than the knots at the intersections of the individual strands."

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