

If you can answer yes to all three questions, kindly notify Mr. Willet T. Van Velzen, c/o Bird Banding Office, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

58 Steamboat Landing Road, South Amboy, New Jersey

1964 WORKSHOP SESSION ON  
WINTER FINCHES AND MISCELLANEOUS SPECIES  
Reports by Robert L. Pyle

Since illness prevented Alex Bergstrom from attending this year's EBBA Annual Meeting, his scheduled Workshop program on Winter Finches was placed in the capable hands of Bert Murray, and was combined in a single program with Jim Baird's discussion of Miscellaneous Species.

Bert discussed the group of finches, including Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, Redpoll, Pine Grosbeak and House Finch, which are likely to spread more widely through EBBA territory in winter. For the first three species, which EBBA banders handle in greater numbers, he presented interesting diagrams comparing the varying timing with which males assume the brightly colored adult plumage. In Evening Grosbeaks, this occurs in the first autumn, after the postjuvinal (or first prebasic) molt. In the Goldfinch, males retain a dull plumage through the first winter, then acquire the bright body plumage with the prenuptial (prealternate) molt the next spring. Thereafter, males alternate between a dull basic (winter) plumage and a bright alternate (summer) plumage. In purple finches, the male remains dull through the first winter and also through the following summer since there is no prenuptial molt the first spring. Not until the second prebasic molt (second autumn) or later does the bright plumage first appear; but once acquired the bright plumage is retained permanently.

Further discussions of winter finch plumages are contained in Alex Bergstrom's article in the 1964 Workshop Manual, and in Eleanor Dater's paper on goldfinch plumages given at the Saturday morning scientific session.

Jim Baird's thorough and practical discussions of determining a bird's age by extent of skull ossification have become a fixture of EBBA Annual Meetings. This year Jim (the temptation is strong to nickname him "Bonehead") spoke on this topic at the Saturday morning meeting, but the subject came up for further discussion during his Workshop program on Miscellaneous Species. In addition, Jim displayed his expert and comprehensive knowledge of bird morphology by giving numerous pointers and answering many questions on identification, ageing and sexing. Among the points brought out at at least one session were the following:

CLOACAL PROTUBERANCE: Very distinctive in spring male chickadees, titmice, and song sparrows, etc. Not distinctive in catbirds.

IRIS: The very last part of the bird to assume the adult color. Generally, the upper fore part of the iris is the last to change.

BLUE JAY: Mouth lining is pale in immatures. It becomes black in mid-fall, or occasionally later.

NUTHATCH, both WHITE-BREASTED and RED-BREASTED: Males have black caps, females have gray caps, from ten days of age onward.

BROWN THRASHER: Immatures have brownish eyes until early September. A straw-colored eye is definitely immature; a chrome yellow eye in fall may be immature or adult.

SCARLET TANAGER: White under wing coverts; beak shorter and heavier.

SUMMER TANAGER: Yellow under wing coverts; beak longer, not so heavy.

DICKCISSEL: Dull birds closely resemble dull House Sparrows, but the shape of the tip of the tail feathers is distinctive. In dickcissels, it tapers moderately to a sharp point. In House Sparrows it is cut off virtually square, with a little rounding on one corner.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK: The pink wing linings on immature males are yellow in the immature females.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK and RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE: The black pigment in first year feathers is less stable, and thus fades quicker. The primary coverts and the primary tips exposed to the air and sun become faded, while unexposed portions of black feathers remain black. These feathers are retained for the first year, and thus can be a very distinctive mark of subadult males.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO: Difficult to age or sex, but generally speaking birds with wings longer than 75 mm tend to be males, and those with wings shorter than 75 mm tend to be females. The eye is gray in juveniles, gradually becoming reddish. The upper fore part of the iris is the last to become reddish.

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#### ROBERT PYLE'S PRIZE TRAP

EBBA members who attended the Banquet at this year's Annual Meeting will recall the very fine one-cell Potter trap generously given to me as "second" prize in the bird-guessing contest. Thus it might be of interest to relate the follow-up story about the first bird that trap caught for us. We did not put the trap to use right away, but a couple of weeks