

## THE REDPOLLS WENT TO THE EAST

By Timo Tallgren

My earlier article (EBBA News, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 30-31) on the Common Redpoll (Acanthis flammea flammea) of Finland did not give a completely clear picture of the magnitude of the invasion of 1965. Such a strong invasion has not occurred for at least 25 years. At Pasila in Helsinki, I estimated from 1500-6500 Redpolls daily but I am sure that in reality there were many more birds because they were moving continuously during the day. For example, on Oct. 12, I estimated about 6,000 birds; I ringed 836 but during the day I had only eight controls (repeats? -Ed.). I did not catch any bird in the afternoon which I had ringed in the forenoon. This shows clearly that the birds must have been much more numerous than I estimated, perhaps 10,000-15,000. Consequently, there were hundreds of thousands of birds on the move.

In 1965 in Finland, 12,513 Common and 79 Arctic Redpolls (Acanthis hornemanni) were ringed. All were caught with nets. Of Redpolls we have received 45 recoveries (0.36%) of which 8 came from Finland, 36 from the Soviet Union and one from Sweden, but the last was ringed in 1964.

It is well known that there are many races of the Redpoll in Eurasia. During the invasion we had in Finland, in addition to the Common Redpoll, the so-called "Great Redpoll" (Acanthis flammea holboelli). This is a little bigger in size and the bill is two to three millimeters longer than that of the Common Redpoll. From where this race is native is unknown, but because the specimens of this race occurred mostly in the beginning of the invasion, it could mean that they have nested in Finland. Another matter that became certain, was the hybridization between the Common and the Arctic Redpoll. There occurred by dozens different degrees of hybrids especially at the end of the invasion. Many were by sight like the Arctic Redpoll with a high short bill, very light color and white belly but with no white at all in the rump. Other birds would have very much white in the rump but otherwise were dark on the belly and head. It would have been interesting to get more information on the races of Redpoll, but unfortunately there was no time to measure and weigh birds. I was alone and there were "too many birds!"

Of the 3,790 Redpolls I ringed myself at Pasila (60°12' N, 24°56' E), I have received 13 recoveries as shown on the table on the following page.

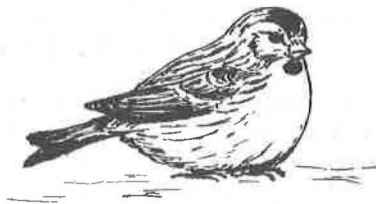
I might mention that our most distant recovery was from Omsk (55°00' N, 73°20' E), only some 1200 km. (750 miles) from the Mongolian border. However, most of the birds were recovered west of the Ural Mountains. The speed of migration has varied considerably. Some Redpolls have wandered nearly 70-80 km. a day during two months, but the majority had lower speed, some 30 km. a day. This is perhaps dependent upon the difference in the strength of wander-activity of the birds. The migration in question seems to be some kind of "death invasion" for the reason that the entire mass of

birds has disappeared without any returning here again. During the last winter we have not had a single recovery of Redpolls banded in 1965. The remnants of the migration seem to have vanished somewhere in northern Asia.

Table 1 - Recoveries

<u>Date Ringed</u> (1965)	<u>Date Recovered</u>	<u>Location of Recovery</u>
Oct. 9	Oct. 23, 1965	USSR, Starja Russa
Oct. 12	Nov. 1, 1965	" Gorki
Oct. 15	Jan. 21, 1966	" Kalinkovitch
Oct. 15	Jan. 27, 1966	" Kromy
Oct. 17	Jan. 22, 1966	" Burli
Oct. 8	Jan. 20, 1966	" Verkhne-Gurovo
Oct. 26	Dec. 23, 1965	" Leningrad
Oct. 27	Jan. 15, 1966	" Cherdakly
Oct. 26	Dec. 8, 1965	" Kirsanov
Oct. 15	Feb. 9, 1966	" Arzamas
Oct. 15	Jan. ? - 1966	" Semenovka
Oct. 7	Feb. ? - 1966	" Suzemka
Oct. 17	Feb. 1, 1966	" Chernovtsy

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#### REQUEST FOR COLOR SLIDE LOANS

Mr. Marshall T. Wiebe, the Executive Director of the Audubon Society of the State of Connecticut, writes that he is preparing a slide presentation on bird banding for use as an educational program, and he requests any EBBA members who are willing to do so, to lend him slides showing various aspects of bird banding. He goes on to say, "I would have duplicates made and return the originals to members who contributed them. I feel certain that many banders have slides of banding activity which would be of great value. I will appreciate any assistance you are able to provide."

Slides should be sent to Mr. Wiebe at: 2325 Burr Street, Fairfield, Connecticut 06430.