

A KEY TO FALL PIRANGA TANAGERS  
 -FEMALES AND IMMATURES  
 By Thomas H. Davis

	WESTERN	SCARLET	SUMMER
Underwing coverts	>95% show some yellow.	white	yellow
Back	grayish olive-green, contrasts with paler head and rump giving a 3-zoned "saddle" effect.	head and back greenish-olive, blending into paler upper tail coverts.	olive-brown to a warm orange-brown.
Wing	two wingbars, anterior yellowish, posterior whitish. HY males have blackish or dark gray lesser coverts with prominent yellow or greenish yellow edgings.	AHY females show no wingbars; HY birds rarely with two wingbars (<2% specimens examined)-but HY males have black lesser coverts, without edgings.	no wingbars.

Comment: Identifying Summer Tanagers (*P. rubra*) should pose no great problem - at a glance their backs have a brown to orange-brown tone and further examination will reveal under wing coverts that are entirely yellow, or orange-yellow. Tanagers with wingbars are more difficult. Western Tanagers (*P. ludoviciana*) always have them, Scarlet Tanagers (*P. olivacea*) sometimes do. In seven years' fall mist-netting on Long Island I have twice handled Scarlets possessing wingbars equal to those of a Western and have also once seen such a bird which I judged to be a Scarlet by the lack of contrast to its upperparts. In the same period I once banded a Western; it was found dead following a snowstorm and confirmed as an immature female (specimen at American Museum of Natural History, N.Y.). Roberts' Manual for the Identification of the Birds of Minnesota (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1955) mentions that juvenile Scarlet Tanagers do have wingbars. Normally they are lost during the partial post juvenile molt, before they migrate. Sometimes, however this molt is incomplete and occasional birds are found with one or two wingbars, the anterior yellowish, the posterior whitish. Although juvenile Summers also have wingbars neither the writer or Ken Parkes has ever seen a migrant that retained them. The "saddle" effect that I cite as a clincher to a Western's identification is neither mentioned or depicted in any of the "field guides" I own - notoriously poor banders' references, most of them merely starting points to an identification.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Kenneth C. Parkes of the Carnegie Museum for reading my initial draft and passing critical comment on it. Dr. Parkes pointed out to me how "bollixed up" the plumages of our Piranga Tanagers are in the existing literature, and this group's strong tendency toward variant pigment freaks. Unfortunately, gathering and preparing all the available data was beyond my time limitations and not entirely within the scope of this article - a key for differentiating the confusing fall (and wintering) birds.

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#### Catching Meadow Pipits (*Anthus pratensis*) with a Tape Recorder

In 1966, a small Dutch Ringing Group, Mr. Koning, Mr. van Spanje and Mr. Vader, operating in the dunes some miles south of Zandvoort, discovered that it was easy to decoy Meadow Pipits to their clapnets by playing the song of this species with a tape recorder.

The trapping area of the clapnet is 10 x 3.8 meters. Two rows of turfs with high grass are placed in this area. In one of the rows a loudspeaker is hidden.

This speaker is connected to a recorder in a hide. The recorder has an output of one Watt. The song of the Meadow Pipit is taken from a record, the best phrases being repeated after each other on the tape, so that the recorder plays unceasingly the song of the Meadow Pipit.

Most of the birds land beside the net and then walk to the loudspeaker. The clumps of high grass are necessary partly to hide the speaker, but more to attract the birds. Meadow pipits do not like short grass (they prefer to creep in high grass). Catches are usually 1-5 birds, sometimes more. In Holland, the trapping period is August-November. The peak is the last week of September-first week of October. The best time of day is 08.00-13.00.

Normally a Dutch fowling yard along the coast catches 30-40 Meadow Pipits in one autumn. Now they catch with one clapnet 2000 in 70 days. With a 6 m. long clapnet I trapped in my own garden, 200 kms. inland, 314 pipits in 14 days during October 1969. That the influence of this trapping method for ringing purposes is important may be seen from the concluding table. (Continued on page 239)

#### BABY BLUE JAY WITH BARRED ALULA - Dorothy Briggs

On July 18th, 1971, a "local" Blue Jay was brought to me. This baby had been found in a garage, alive. It could sustain flight for only about six feet. The tail had just begun to grow out. The tibiotarsal joint of the left leg was extremely swollen, which apparently affected the flexor muscles, so that the toes of that foot were useless.

The most amazing thing about this bird was the fact that one alula was plainly barred.

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