

BANDING REDPOLLS AT PATTEN, MAINE

BY E. O. GRANT

PREVIOUS to this winter I have watched Redpolls (*Acanthis l. linaria*) come to my orchard every winter, where they feed on tree-lice or oyster-shell scales, and during this period I have tried several kinds of bait. These efforts resulted in capturing only two birds, which accidentally got out of my gathering cage and accordingly were not banded.

On March 12, 1926, I called on a man living three miles from Patten, and as I approached an old deserted barn I saw him sitting on the snow with about a hundred Redpolls all about him. He said, "I have had the best time for the last half hour that I ever had. A man that would harm one of those little birds ought to get the pen." He said that they had been all over him and that one sat on his knee for over a minute. The baiting of the birds here happened in this manner: Some one had taken a load of loose hay out of the barn and the Redpolls were eating in the chaff that the wind had scattered about on the snow. That night there was a scattered string of Redpolls nearly three miles long in the road along which the hay was hauled to a barn next to my house. The next day I obtained a liberal amount of hay chaff, got out my government trap, and before night I had six of this species captured and banded.

From this date (March 13th), I banded some every day that weather conditions permitted until I got 175, banding the last on April 24th. On April 25th, not a bird was to be seen. My best day's work resulted in banding twenty-two birds, and they were all taken in one government trap. I could easily have banded at least five hundred had I had the time.

All the Redpolls but one possessed a bright poppy-red crown cap. There were several variations in the amount of red in the plumage and its distribution. These variations I believed to be determined by differences in age and sex, though I failed to identify the females.

During their stay with me of about six weeks, I was unable although examining repeats to note any plumage changes even up to the date of their departure for the North in a body, April 25th.

Among the more than five hundred Redpolls wintering about my station, it was not difficult at a distance of ten feet to pick out occasional Greater Redpolls, which, in addition to their

greater size, appeared browner on the sides than their lesser ally.

On one occasion a Shrike entered the trap and killed four of the birds. These were sent to Mr. Edward H. Forbush, who, with Mr. John A. Farley, identified them, three as the Lesser and one as the Greater Redpoll (*Acanthis l. rostrata*). The birds were sexed by Mr. James L. Peters, who reported the Greater Redpoll to be a male. The birds were presented to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Patten, Maine

REVIVAL OF JUVENAL HABITS

BY CHARLES L. WHITTLE

THOSE banders who concentrate their birds at feeding places and traps located close to their homes have an excellent opportunity to observe certain habits among birds and at the same time are often able, in the case of banded birds, to determine the age and sex of the birds having such habits. Knowledge of this sort may be important. I have in mind the not unfamiliar habit some birds possess in the spring, even before mating has taken place, of fluttering their wings and begging for food in exactly the same manner that birds just out of the nest are accustomed to do. In cases where our New England birds do this, say in early April, they are commonly believed to be females, and in some cases they no doubt are, a common example being the White-breasted Nuthatch. Accompanying this behaviour, in case of the Purple Finches (*Carpodacus p. purpureus*), the birds often utter the same double note, or hunger call, given while on the nest and for a short period immediately after they leave it. This recrudescence of the ways of babyhood is of great interest and significance in that similar calls are given at such times by several species, and often identical ones, indicating, I believe, as would be expected on evolutionary grounds, that nesting calls are highly primitive in character.

The Purple Finch perhaps affords banders the best opportunity to study these habits, and at the same time their relations to the age and sex of the birds having them. In early July, in southern New England, young Purple Finches fre-