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An interesting winter with Evening Grosbeaks

Lawrence R. Pharo

This past winter in Whiting, NJ, proved to be my most interesting winter yet with Evening Grosbeaks. The first birds arrived on 12 December 1976 and, as usual, were looking for their favorite food, sunflower seeds. From that date until 12 April 1977, I banded a total of 1,192 Evening Grosbeaks.

As all banders who have banded grosbeaks know, there is a problem with the birds removing the bands. I did not realize the extent of the problem until I started working with black dye. There were several cases in which I placed a band on a marked bird, only to have the band removed again. After noticing the bands which were being removed most often were the latest bands issued by the BBL, I decided to use two hundred older bands that I had left. Surprisingly, the older bands seemed to hold on better. I contacted the BBL supply clerk regarding my discovery in the hope of acquiring more of the older bands. The only older bands in stock were the pre-opened kind which I then ordered. Immediately upon receipt of these bands I began using them. In only a short time, the rate of removal began dropping off sharply.

The older bands seem to have a slightly greater metal content than the latest issue. One can feel the difference when opening and closing the bands. I am of the opinion that the only way to stop Evening Grosbeaks from removing them is to incorporate a harder alloy into the bands when manufactured.

Another interesting fact I would like to note is, that of the thirteen grosbeaks I trapped with foreign bands, five of the thirteen had bands which were



spread apart and just about holding on. Some of these birds had been banded for several years. They apparently don't give up easily in their attempt to remove the bands.

The accompanying charts show the birds banded and the foreign birds trapped.

Birds banded	
December	141
January	643
February	198
March	198
April	12
Total	1192

Sex data	
Females	755
Males	437

Date Banded	Date Trapped	Banded by and Location
12-24-75	01-13-77	Dr. N.R. Whitney, Savoy, SD
11-08-74	01-12-77	H.R. Hanson, Walker, MN
02-15-70	01-28-77	Dr. M.A. Byrd, Yorktown, VA
03-18-76	03-21-77	Dr. M.A. Byrd, Yorktown, VA
12-24-76	02-10-77	Mr. & Mrs. G. Loery, Litchfield, CT
01-15-76	03-04-77	Mr. & Mrs. G. Loery, Litchfield, CT
01-31-76	01-30-77	Ken Hodgdon, Cumberland, MD
03-28-74	01-28-77	Mrs. E.B. McGregor, Forest, NY
04-12-74	01-27-77	Mrs. R.W. Patterson, Trenton, ME
01-04-73	01-05-77	E.C. Clyde, Jr., Effingham, SC
02-23-75	01-01-77	Mrs. G.C. Metcalf, Plainfield, VT
03-01-76	12-31-76	Raccoon-Ridge Bird Obs., Beavans, NJ
01-22-77	04-11-77	H.R. Spendlow, Marlton, NJ

Lakewood Ave., Whiting, NJ 08759