

ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Executive

Frank Smith
1 Century Drive
Scarborough

Frank T. Lovesy
220 Gowan Avenue
Toronto

Sec.-Treas.

W. J. Wasserfall
22 Roycrest Avenue
Willowdale

Editor

J. Woodford
233 Roehampton Ave
Toronto 12

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A Study of Some of the Physical Characteristics of Adult
Evening Grosbeaks (Hesperiphona vespertina)

By
James Bayley

During the fall and early winter of 1957 I gave some consideration to the idea of starting a study on the physical characteristics of some species of bird. Naturally this bird would be some species which could be readily trapped and which would return to the trap regularly. I settled on the Evening Grosbeak as I understood that they came willingly to feeding stations and were not easily disturbed by trapping and banding.

The grosbeaks came to Brockville early in the fall and, contrary to other Ontario centres, they remained throughout the winter. By the middle of December they had established a pattern of coming to my feeding station and it appeared that there were several flocks around town.

Banding operations began on January 3, 1958 and continued to March 15, 1958. The measurements taken were those of the bill, tail, tarsus and wing. The bill was measured from tip to junction of bill and skin, the tail from tip of longest feathers when bunched together to the root of those feathers, the tarsus from the outside of the bend of the middle toe to the out side of the bend at the heel, and the wing from the bend of the wing to the tip of the primary feathers.

The weights were recorded for only 46 individuals as the scales were not obtained until after the study had begun. The birds were placed in paper tubes and the whole weighed, after which the paper was weighed and its weight subtracted.

There was no definite schedule of banding operations but usually trapping took place around 8 a.m. or 12 noon. On several occasions however full days were devoted to trapping and banding. In all cases birds were banded and measured immediately following their being trapped. A mist net was used for trapping 15 of the birds and the rest were caught in a covered feeder with a drop door.

A total of 206 birds were trapped and banded, 24 were re-trapped once, 4 were re-trapped a second time, and 2 were re-trapped a third time. Fifty-nine of the sample were female and 147 were male.

The tables of measurements which follow will show the distribution by sex and will show the range of measurements. All measurements are in millimetres and all weights are in grams.

♀ means female and ♂ means male. ind. stands for individual.

Bill

♂ range	15-20	♀ range	16-19
Most frequent	44 ind. 17	Most frequent	26 ind. 17
	65 18		19 18
	25 19		

Tarsus

♂ range	22-27	♀ range	22-27
Most frequent	75 ind. 24	Most frequent	31 ind. 24
	51 25		18 25

Tail

♂ range	65-80	♀ range	66-77
Most frequent	9 ind. 70	Most frequent	7 ind. 71
	17 71		9 72
	26 72		7 73
	22 73		7 74
	20 74		
	18 75		
	10 76		

Wing

♂ range	103-117	♀ range	100-113
Most frequent	14 ind. 105	Most frequent	11 ind. 104
	15 106		10 105
	20 107		10 106
	19 108		8 107
	16 109		
	13 110		
	22 111		

Weight

♂ range (35 ind.)	54.0 -70.6
Most frequent	12 ind. 58.6 -61.9
	10 62.0 -64.5
	8 65.0 -69.0

♀ range (11 ind.)	52.1-69.3
Most frequent	4 ind. 60.4-61.9
	4 62.0-64.2

Conclusions

The size of this sample is probably too small to allow us to say that the results accurately depict what is common for the species unless the frequency in one size is overwhelmingly great. For example the size of the bill appears to be normally 17 or 18 mm. The tail and wing measurements are not so constant, possibly due to moult. The sample of weights is probably too small to be of much significance.

Recoveries from Starlings Banded at Vineland, Ontario

by

G. H. Dickson

For sometime I have been banding Starlings at Vineland, Lincoln County, and I thought some of the recoveries might be of interest. Two things are possibly noteworthy. One is that Starlings seldom return to the same trap. Only four times out of the 1775 banded has a Starling gone back into the same trap. Two have been taken a few days later in other traps about a mile away, while 2 others we caught later in the season. Another banded on August 4, 1954 was again trapped April 12, 1957.

When Starlings are released after being banded, they fly away in a straight line. If weak they may only go a few hundred yards, but a newly caught bird will continue out of sight.

The second feature is the wide area of recovery - Alabama, Ohio, Louisiana, Texas, and Ailsa Craig, Ontario. The 24 recoveries from outside points is possibly as good as one should expect from this type of bird.

<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Date banded</u>	<u>Place recovered</u>	<u>Date</u>
44-213596	Jul 4, 1954	Reported Ransomville, N. Y.	Jul 14, 1947
44-213518	Jul 5, 1945	Killed Honeoye Falls, Monroe Co. N. Y.	May 1946
44-213546	Jul 6, 1945	Reported Farmdale, Ohio	Jun 10, 1946
44-213742	Jul 11, 1945	Shot at Clarence, N. Y.	May 29, 1946
44-213756	Jul 11, 1945	Accidentally destroyed Ont. Hospital, New Toronto, Ontario	Jun 29, 1946
44-213764	Jul 12, 1945	Reported Franklin, Texas	Jan. 15, 1946
44-218163	Jul 19, 1946	Shot Sulphur, Louisiana	Jan 3, 1947
44-218244	Jul 21, 1946	Found dead Ailsa Craig, Ontario	Mar 27, 1947
502-82074	Jul 17, 1954	Killed Hartselle, Alabama	Feb 8, 1956
502-82380	Aug 6, 1954	Found dead at Hamilton, Ontario	Jun 15, 1955
502-87062	Jul 11, 1956	Found dead, Fairborn, Ohio	Oct 28, 1956

Relatively few are re-trapped. The following have been retaken.

44-213674	Jul 13, 1945	Different location	Oct 26, 1945
44-213999	Jul 19, 1945	" "	Oct 19, 1945
44-218420	Jul 18, 1946	Same trap	Jul 22, 1946
44-213705	Jul 7, 1945	Different trap 1 mile away	Jul 8, 1945
44-213198	Jul 19, 1946	" " " "	Jul 26, 1946
502-82267	Aug 4, 1954	Retrapped	Aug 12, 1957

Members News

Les Gray, Hamilton - In the last week of May and the first few days of June Les banded 150 shorebirds - including 100 Semipal Sandpipers, Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Least and Spotted Sandpipers and 2 White-rumped Sandpipers. Lately he has been banding large numbers of Redwings.

Russ Rutter, Huntsville - Many of the birds which by-passed Point Pelee and Toronto must have headed straight for Huntsville. Russ banded close to 1000 birds in the spring - 255 Juncos, 102 White-throats and 153 White-crowns. On May 15 he banded 103 birds in his backyard.

Walter Nickell, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. - Cooperated with OBBA's spring program by banding for 5 days at East Harbor State Park in the Marblehead Peninsula of Ohio. From May 14 to 18 he banded 90 birds of 20 species.

Willi Mackay, Toronto - The Mackays have moved into a new house, which is in an ideal location for a banding station. Willi spent many hours at Ajax during the spring and plans to do the same during the fall.

Bert MacLaren, Hamilton - On Sunday May 27, 1958 Bert banded 170 birds, 110 of them Bank Swallows. In 6 days he banded 450 birds at Hamilton.

Doug Dow, London - Doug is returning to school so his activities may be curtailed - however he insists he will be at Point Pelee most week-ends during the fall.

Frank Lovesy, Toronto - Frank concentrated on swallow banding and again banded over 1000 Banks and a few Barn. Frank also banded 4 Mockingbirds near Toronto.

The Editors' Basket

A combination of unfortunate and unavoidable circumstances have regrettably delayed this number of the Newsletter (originally due in April). It is hoped that future numbers will come out more or less on time.

Articles, like the two in this issue are needed (badly). Members are asked to send short reports of their current activities to the Editor so that the members news section may be larger and more complete. Notes on special techniques or methods would aid our fellow members in avoiding mistakes we have made. Send all correspondence regarding the Newsletter to:

233 Roehampton Avenue
TORONTO 12, Ontario