

THE EVENING GROSBEAK IN ALABAMA

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The Evening Grosbeak, *Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina*, has either ignored Alabama during its past winter travels, or it has been very secretive, because it has remained in obscurity until January 20, 1958, when it appeared in Gadsden, Alabama. The first bird was seen in the yard of Mrs. William Bates, who called the writer to identify the grosbeak.

Following the first record, Mr. and Mrs. Bates and the writer kept careful records of the appearance of the birds. They also banded, photographed the birds and saved the dropped tail feathers of one bird. These feathers were sent to Dr. Ralph Chermock for deposit in the University of Alabama bird collection. In Table 1, the numbers of birds observed, trapped and banded, are listed.

The first banding was done on March 2. The writer caught two males that day in a small two-cell trap. The first male dropped his tail feathers. These were those sent Dr. Chermock. Before the birds left Gadsden, the writer had trapped and banded a total of five males and one female. Of these, three males and one female were trapped again as repeats.

The largest flock of grosbeaks in Gadsden, 1958, was seen on February 25. This flock was on a newly seeded lawn, across the street from the Bates' home. It was a mixed flock of about 50 birds. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bates observed the grosbeaks.

The ratio of males to females observed showed an interesting variation. The flocks seen throughout most of the period were predominately males. Toward the end of the bird's winter residence, more and more females appeared in the flocks until they finally equaled the males and then became more numerous than the males. The size of the flocks did not change radically so that the varying ratio of males to females represented either the movement of other groups of grosbeaks into and out of Gadsden or the females tended to remain in a slightly different habitat until late in the season.

The movements of the birds into and out of the Bates' yard presents a uniform pattern. They appeared only in the mornings. Never were they seen in the yard after one o'clock in the afternoon.

Evening Grosbeaks must have been at a number of

additional places in Alabama also. Mr. Bates observed a male near Wedowee, Randolph County, on April 10. An article in the newspaper from Livingston, Sumter County, reported that Mr. Jenkins Jackson saw a flock of 15 on his farm.

The last grosbeak to be seen in Gadsden in 1958, was a male observed on April 23. Interestingly enough, the first grosbeak for 1959 has appeared in Gadsden on January 6. Let's hope visiting Alabama will get to be a habit with them.

Table I. Record of Evening Grosbeaks Observed, Trapped and Banded at Gadsden, Alabama, 1958.

Date	Observed			Banded		Repeats		Remarks
	Males	Fem.	Mixed	Males	Fem.	Males	Fem.	
Jan. 20	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	First Record.
Jan. 26	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	2-3 seen each day for the next 10 days.
Feb. 24	3	2	---	---	---	---	---	Seen in yard across the street.
Feb. 25	---	---	50	---	---	---	---	Seen in yard across the street.
Mar. 2	5	2	---	2	---	---	---	Tail feathers sent to Chermock
Mar. 3	11	4	---	2	1	---	---	
Mar. 4	---	---	18	---	---	---	---	
Mar. 5	---	---	---	---	---	1	1	Small flocks seen daily next two weeks.
Mar. 23	---	---	---	1	---	2	---	
Mar. 25	3	8	---	---	---	---	---	
Mar. 26	6	5	---	---	---	---	---	
Mar. 27	3	8	---	---	---	---	---	
Mar. 31	8	8	---	---	---	---	---	
Apr. 1	4	5	---	---	---	---	---	
Apr. 2	2	3	---	---	---	---	---	Many more in tree tops.
Apr. 4	3	4	---	---	---	---	---	
Apr. 23	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	Last bird seen.
Totals	---	---	---	5	1	3	1	