

BANDING REPORT: EURASIAN SISKIN
IN ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

by Russell T. Norris, Rockport

At 11:30 A.M. on May 5, 1983, I noticed an unusual appearing bird in a mist net just outside my banding office window. Upon removing the bird from the net I soon realized that it was a species unknown to me. However, as I examined the bird, its close resemblance to the Pine Siskin (Carduelis pinus) in body shape was evident. My next reaction was that this might be some aberrant form of the native siskin.

It is my policy to confer with Massachusetts Audubon Society and the Manomet Bird Observatory whenever there appears to be some doubt as to the identity of birds captured at this station. Fortunately I was able to reach Christopher Leahy in Lincoln, and after I described the bird's plumage to him in some detail, he identified it as the Eurasian Siskin. A later call to Trevor Lloyd-Evans at the Manomet Bird Observatory further confirmed the identification, and by checking details of plumage with the "Identification Guide to European Passerines" by Lars Svensson, it was determined to be an after hatch year (AHY) male. Later in the day, Chris Leahy visited Rockport to see the bird and confirm his identification. Also P. William Smith of M.B.O. traveled to Rockport and took several color photographs of the bird.

The bird was in brilliant plumage with yellow-green as the predominant color. The crown and chin were black with a bright yellow-green breast and rump. The flanks were heavily streaked with brown. Black streaks on the back were not as prominent as several illustrations would seem to indicate. The bird had distinct gray-green cheek patches. There was a distinctive broad yellow-green wing bar, and the rectrices were bright yellow-green almost to the tips.

The plumage of this bird was in excellent condition with no signs of wear or molt. The feet were in good shape. The bird was fat and very active. We could see no indication of it having been caged. The bird was banded with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service band #1610-44740. Its wing chord was 71 mm. and it weighed 13.5 grams. It was released at the point of capture in Whale Cove, about one mile southeast of Rockport center.

No attempt has been made to review the literature for other records of the Eurasian Siskin in North America, but P. William Smith has provided me with several references which include the male bird captured at a banding station in Kittery, Maine in 1962 (The Auk, 80:201, 1963). Two or three other individuals of this species have apparently been observed in New Jersey and Massachusetts although I do not have the details.