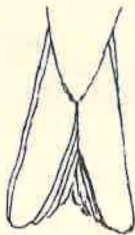


A LITTLE KNOWN FIELD MARK IN CARPODACUS
by C. K. Nichols

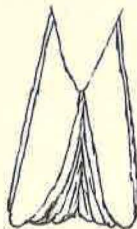
(From the Linnean News-letter, May 1954, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 2, as furnished by EBBA Secretary, Eleanor Dater, March 1956)

With the extension of the range of the House Finch (Carpodacus mexicanus in the New York city area, the methods of distinguishing this species from the Purple Finch (Carpodacus purpureus) have frequently been debated. Some of the diagnostic characters that have been named are frequently rather indefinite and puzzling and have led to some uncertainty.

When the House Finch in this area was first recognized I had a chance to compare the species with the Purple Finch and was at once impressed by the marked difference in outline of the tail-tip of the two birds; that of the Purple Finch was rather deeply notched while that of



C. purpureus



C. mexicanus

the House Finch was square or slightly rounded. This characteristic could be noted at a considerable distance.

I was surprised that the popular manuals on bird identification made no mention of this character although, in well-made skins, the museum specimens showed it clearly. Checking back in Ridgway, Bulletin 50, this difference is shown in the drawings of the tails of the finches but the distinction is not mentioned in the text. It may be that other authors have noted the character but I have found the difference emphasized only in one work, "Animal Life in the Yosemite" by Grinnell and Storer. A comparison of the terminal margin of the tails of the two species is shown in the accompanying sketches. --C.K.Nichols, 212 Hamilton Road, Ridgewood, New Jersey.

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