

## ATTRACTING EVENING GROSBEEKS

By Trudy Smith

After reading the article in EBBA NEWS concerning Evening Grosbeaks (Ebba News, 20:90) it prompted an urge to relate my recent experience.

The first flock of Evening Grosbeaks, approximately 125 to 150, made their appearance on our premises on October 15, 1957. For some reason they did not find the sunflower seeds in the bird feeders near the house so they did not stay long. Instead, they made their way into town and the valley, a distance of three miles away, where they have been reported daily since.

On Thanksgiving Day, at nine o'clock in the morning, the manager of our Great Atlantic and Pacific grocery store, before leaving with his family for a seventy-mile trip to "grandma's", stopped in at the store to double check the refrigeration unit. Upon leaving, on the cement walk before him lay a male Evening Grosbeak. The bird, while conscious, was limp and showed no signs of emotion or fear as he picked it up. Being familiar with my activities as a bander, he traveled six miles in the opposite direction of his intended trip to bring the grosbeak to me for doctoring. We are convinced that the bird had flown against the large plate glass window of the store knocking himself temporarily unconscious.

I placed it carefully in a large canary cage in a quiet, dark corner for about an hour at which time we, too, were going on a ten-mile trip to my in-laws for Thanksgiving dinner. The drinking cup was filled with water and a handful of sunflower seeds (which it never touched) scattered on the tray and in the seed cup. By this time, the grosbeak was stirring around and had managed to get on to a perch.

Since we had planned to be gone for the day, I decided to take the cage along to watch the outcome of its injury, if any. The cage was kept covered and in the back seat of the Oldsmobile for another hour or so. By that time, the grosbeak had apparently recovered from shock and showed signs of more activity so I placed the cage outside on a porch railing in front of a double window for easy observation from within doors. About fifteen or twenty chickadees and a White-breasted Nuthatch hammering at the suet log and sunflower seeds in my mother-in-law's feeder were the only other species in sight.

Shortly afterwards, signs of complete recovery were evident for the grosbeak began its finch-like chirp, pacing around and scolding unmercifully to be released. I decided to finish my turkey before venturing outdoors again. Meanwhile, its continued noise "Clee--ip,

clee--ip, clear" rang down through the orchard and across the golf course to the conifer pines and the ears of the rest of its flock, for the next time I looked out of the window, imagine my surprise to see all of a hundred and more grosbeaks all over the place -- on the porch railing, in the trees, on the ground, in the bushes and shrubs and some were close against the cage peering, chirping and seemingly sympathizing with the unfortunate victim.

It was a most spectacular and amusing scene. All the more so since there had been no Evening Grosbeaks in that particular locality previously this year. Unless by mere coincidence, it would otherwise seem that the cries of the captured bird aroused the attention of its flock to the rescue. Banded and released, it followed them back to the hemlock grove - a welcomed "thanksgiving", I am sure!

Ridgway, Pa.

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## NUPTIAL FLIGHT OF A NORTHERN HORNED LARK

By Christella Butler

While I was calling for my daughter on the Neshaminy High School grounds last March 23rd, I noticed two strange birds and walked slowly toward them. They were not very afraid to be approached and would fly up for only a short distance. Sometimes they would fly off only to circle around and come back to the same spot. They were busy feeding on the ground -- occasionally uttering call notes -- and the male did some singing. I identified them as a pair of Northern Horned Larks.

We watched them for a long time. Sometimes the female would gather bits of nesting material and then abandon it to go back to feeding. Suddenly the male took off straight up into the air. He went straight up like a rocket, using his wings to boost himself higher and higher until he was just barely visible to me. Between boost his wings were folded at his sides.

When he reached his summit he flew about for a short time, then folded his wings and plummeted to earth, opening his wings only a moment before landing on the macadam road. I believe he did a bit of singing as he flew about before his return to the ground, but he was so high the sounds were faint. I had my eyes on the male all the time, but when he landed I noted the female sitting on the ground watching.

I cannot find an account of such a flight in any of my books, and I am wondering if anyone else knows if I am right in assuming this to be a nuptial flight.

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