

flock apparently of 50-60 changes constantly, apparently as birds pass through. However, in both 1970 and 1972 some of the birds which arrived in January remained with me and were the last to leave in June. In 1970 we saw juveniles, and banded one so suppose they bred locally, but they disappeared soon after the young were fledged.

I had two birds documented in migration: #105-79192, banded by Mrs. Elizabeth Garry, 14 April 1963, in Waban, Massachusetts and recorded by me here on 9 May 1963; and #123-95499, banded here on 21 February 1972, and retrapped by Mrs. Glenn Metcalf in Plainfield, Vermont on 22 April 1972. Both of these birds were obviously headed north. I have had none return to my traps in a different year.

Redpolls

Redpolls (*Acanthus flammea*) are another species that are very irregular winter visitors in this area. Their season is much shorter than the siskins, as they are apt to appear about the middle of February, and disappear about the middle of April. They have come to my traps and been banded in six years in the following quantities:

1956:53, 1960:296, 1962:35, 1969:1, 1970:195 and 1972:266

These birds are fun to band, again coming into the traps in groups of 10-25, and repeating frequently, but so far I have not heard of one of mine reported from elsewhere, and none have returned in a different year.

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Kennard's first paper appeared in EBBA News November 1972 issue, Vol. 35, page 263-267)

A FEEDER TIP

By Robert P. Yunick

This past winter a friend introduced me to the use of Niger thistle seed as bird food. It worked so outstandingly that I thought other banders who are not familiar with it would be interested to know about it. It is a tiny black seed somewhat resembling grass seed in size and shape. Birds such as goldfinches, siskins and redpolls which have a difficult time with sunflower seeds are attracted to this seed in great number. The seed is very manageable in size for them and they appear to relish it, and definitely favor it over sunflower seed. My experience with Purple Finches, which are alleged to like this seed, has indicated that they almost always take sunflower seed in preference to thistle.

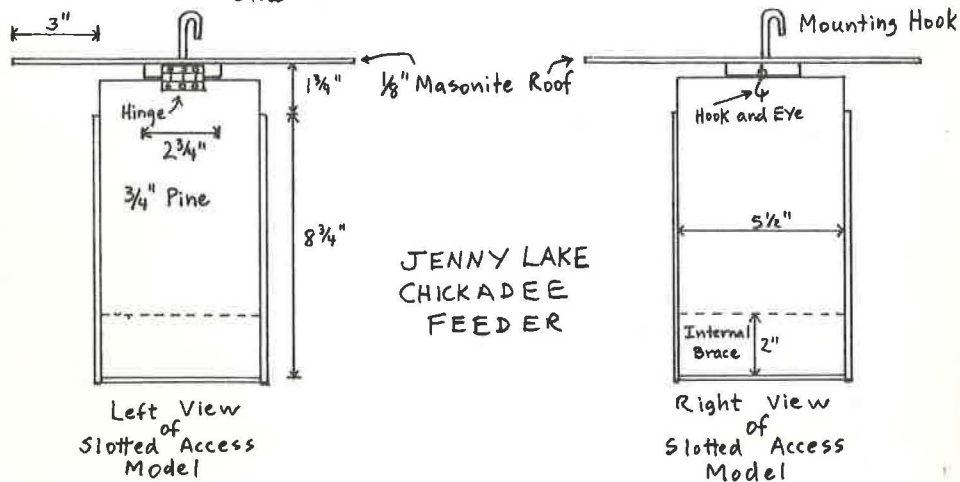
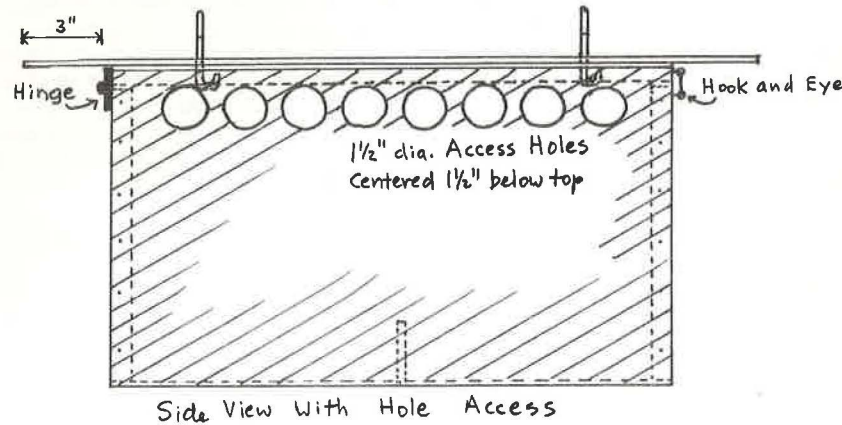
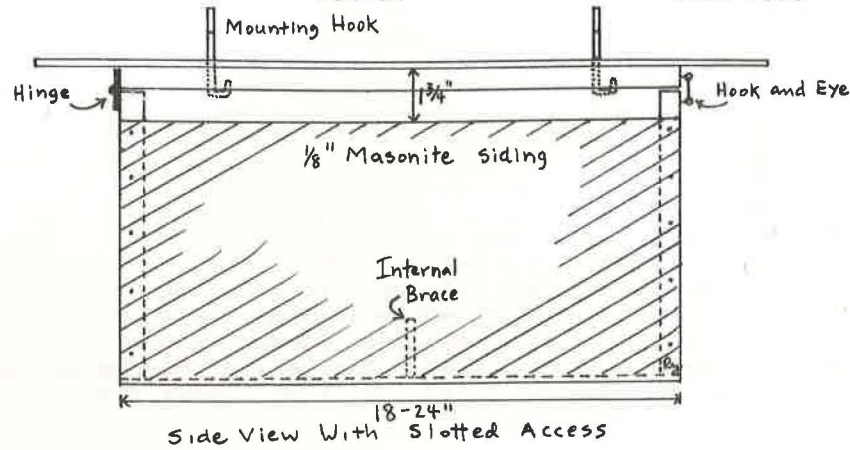
The seed is available in most feed stores in bulk on special request. Years ago it was a fairly common item, but fell into disrepute because of its tendency to sprout on lawns. Some stores carry it regularly in three-pound polyethylene bags at the rather dear price of \$1.69. By buying it in a 50-pound bag, it is available locally for 30¢ per pound. One pound goes a long way. During this past winter I used a little over 100 pounds and feel that this seed contributed substantially to the banding of over 2400 redpolls and siskins.

In the spring the season's spillage sprouted, but it did not create any real problem. The lawn mower controlled it, and I am told by a nurseryman that because the plant is tropical in origin, it will not winter over. Mine never got that far, for after about the third or fourth cutting, the sprouts disappeared. Give it a try and I think you will be pleased with the results.

A CHICKADEE FEEDER

Robert P. Yunick

At most banding stations where banders rely on the attraction of birds to feeders, attention is usually focused on attracting large numbers of birds to facilitate trapping. Only occasionally does one desire to exclude one or more species in order to concentrate on a selected species for study. I was confronted with this situation this past winter when it became apparent that I would have to take action against the all-too-common Evening Grosbeak in order to have Black-capped Chickadees to band. The following is a description of the problem and how it was solved successfully by the design of a special feeder. Since I have heard several feeder operators mention how they wish that they could limit grosbeak activity at their feeders, I thought that other banders might have a similar interest



and could benefit from this experience.

At our summer camp where we feed large numbers of birds, it became a matter of interest to band the chickadees and nuthatches on a year-around basis to study changes in their population. I had planned on visiting camp every two or three weeks through the fall, winter and spring to stock the feeders, and when possible, to spend an hour or two banding. Due to the large winter influx of Evening Grosbeaks, I found that despite my efforts to put out more feeders, and to visit them more frequently, I could not keep up with the grosbeaks. At the peak of the season, the feeders were empty one week after filling even though I had increased my feeder capacity to 60 pounds of sunflower seed! This consumption was in addition to 25 pounds per week that a neighbor who resides year around was feeding only 300 feet away. A new approach to an assured food supply was needed, for I knew that I could count on an abundance of birds if food were available. As an example of their abundance, on March 19, 1972 when the feeders had been stocked the day before, and the chickadees were at their peak, I took 72 of them in three and one-quarter hours with one six-meter net (44 birds/net hour)!

The solution to the problem rested on making the seed less accessible so that none but the least assuming chickadees and nuthatches would venture after it. This was done by constructing the feeder shown in the accompanying drawing. The feeder is simply a rectangular box with ends of three-quarter-inch pine and sides of one-eighth-inch tempered Masonite with a Masonite roof which limits access to the box. The oversized wire protects the contents from snow. The feeder hangs from a wire.

The top is hinged on one end and hooked on the other for easy opening for loading and emptying. The Masonite sides are glued along the seams with epoxy glue, and a two-inch brace is glued to the base and sides to prevent bulging of the sides and bottom when the box is full. One-quarter inch holes in the bottom provide ventilation.

The volume of the box may be varied by altering the dimensions. As shown, every linear inch filled to the top of the side contains 0.62 pounds of sunflower seed. I have three such feeders totalling about 34 pounds representing a two- to four week supply of seed. The feeder is maintenance free and continues to function regardless of snow accumulation.

Very soon after I put out the first one I made, the chickadees were streaming into it. The jays and grosbeaks have not attempted to use it. In time, however, red squirrels found the feeders and were able to negotiate the 1 3/4-inch slotted opening. For this reason, the accompanying drawing shows an alternate design which uses 1 1/2-inch access holes instead of a slot.

In the latter case, the side panel is cut $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches high compared to only $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches in the slotted model. The holes are centered $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches below the top and two inches from one another.

One other way to eliminate interference from the squirrels is to pipe mount the feeder rather than hang it from a wire. A pipe flange attached to the base would allow connection to a pipe mounted in the ground. An aluminum flashing skirt of about one-foot width tacked to the bottom perimeter of the box will prevent access by squirrels and other quadrupeds which can climb the pipe.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

I would like to express my appreciation to the persons who have so generously donated their time and efforts to make this issue a success. Now, if only we could keep this up, to assure a bumper-crop of papers and notes for other issues of the News, which are still ahead of us.

This is it! We've reached (or are about to, in April) our 50th Anniversary. We sprang up from a handful of banders, led by Dr. Allen, in 1923, and our ranks have swelled to a great number of active field-workers, banders and birders. Our magazine began as an eight page bulletin; 50 years later, it has been enriched in size and content. Circa 300 different authors have contributed by communicating, to make it so. Issues, however, need not be large, to be interesting. I find the early issues, in their own right, as interesting, as any of the later editions which are larger and contain a more varied menu.

I would therefore like to dedicate this issue to our founder, the late Arthur A. Allen (1885-1964).

The Editor

We recently heard of the passing of Selena Burdge in October 1972. She was a Park Naturalist at Island Beach State Park and an EBBA member for 2-3 years, even though she was not a bander. It was largely through the efforts of Selena Burdge and Kit Price, that an invitation was extended to EBBA to hold its 1973 annual meeting at the Island Beach State Park area.

The Editor

MIMESIS IN BLUE JAYS

By A. Ogden Ramsay

Some years ago I found that Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) can acquire a perfect imitation of the human "wolf whistle". (Ramsay, 1972). To study this matter further, on June 2 1972, I took three young Blue Jays from their nest when they were four days old and before their eyes were open. Each hour as I fed them, I made this same whistle to them. I continued to do this until July 1. Some weeks later when they first began to sing, I observed that they occasionally incorporated these same notes with their song. Only once were these notes ever heard in the reverse order. Four days later these notes were also given as an oft-repeated call note and this was a permanent acquisition. All during August, I whistled a different series of notes to them several times a day: "How dry I am". Once one was recorded as he repeated this. However, this series of notes was very rarely heard and did not become incorporated with their song, nor did it ever appear as a call note.

These experiments were recorded on tape and the birds were banded and released on September 1, 1972. I had hoped that they would remain in the vicinity so that I might see if any of their progeny would acquire these notes, but I have not heard them since September 4th.

Ramsay, A. O. 1972. Mimesis in hand-reared Blue Jays. *Bird-Banding*, 43:214-215.

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