

AGING AND SEXING AMERICAN REDSTARTS IN THE FALL:A note of caution

To further bear out the distinct possibilities of Orange-Males, I have found that birds with 2- Orange-medium, and 3- Orange-large HY-Males have the outer edge of the outermost primary orange. It is rather difficult to see and in passing this can easily be overlooked. Careful examination and proper light are essential to reveal true colors at this point.

In birds presumably Female, I find that the outer edge of the outermost primary is a pale yellow, thus making it even more difficult to detect.

Colors can change dramatically when they are viewed under different and therefore inconsistent light sources.

--Mrs. Roger W. Foy, Box 164, Ship Bottom, N.J. 08008.

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CHIN SPOTS IN LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH

On 19 May, 1974, I encountered a Louisiana Waterthrush with a very finely spotted chin. The Superciliary was white with a faint tinge of buff.

Upon searching the literature, I found in Dwight (1900, New York Academy of Sciences/reprint in press) that a Louisiana Waterthrush in First Winter plumage has a finely marked chin, flecked with tiny grayish tips. This bird was accompanied by another Louisiana which lacked these spots, which according to Dwight, is indicative of the First Nuptial plumage. Both birds were captured early in the morning along the Cannonball Trail in northern New Jersey's Ramapo Mountains at Camp Glen Gray (Boy Scouts of America).

While this field characteristic is nothing new, I wish to caution persons who do not regularly observe and/or handle this species that this plumage could occur (May is admittedly late for a bird to have this particular plumage) and that it is possible to cast a shadow of doubt on its identity. Most books state that the Louisiana's chin is devoid of spots.

Not having had too much experience with this species, I called it "AHY" but possibly it should have been "SY" since these spots are only indicative of the First Winter Plumage according to Dwight. Can anyone shed some light on this for me? Additionally, this bird had a brood-patch and is, according to Wood, a female. --F.Schaeffer, 84-55 Daniels St, Jamaica, N.Y.

MABEL GILLESPIE

Charter Member

Mrs. John A. (Mabel) Gillespie had just mailed us her biographical sketch and accompanying photo when the news of her passing reached us a fortnight later.

Mabel was born in Boston. She attended Mount Holyoke College where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa. She started out in history and mathematics, then took a course in zoology. Of this she wrote: "I took the zoology course, and went right off the deep end. Took additional courses in that field."

"My husband studied forestry, and was much better than I in identifying birds. We started banding in 1922 near our home in Philadelphia, going to the New Jersey coast and into Delaware to band young of eagles, ospreys, great blue herons, hawks, gulls, terns, skimmers, and barn owls. At my parents' home on Martha's Vineyard, we banded during vacations."

It has been my good fortune to know Mabel for a long time. I first met her on the Vineyard when, during my high school days I spent an entire summer on the Island. Needing assistance in bird identification, the staff of the Vineyard Gazette, in which Mabel wrote a nature column, directed me to her house at Oak Bluffs. It has been my privilege to continue my association with her as an EBBA member and as Editor. Mabel Gillespie has written some of the finest book reviews that graced the pages of our publication under the "Books for Banders" column she chaired for a very long time.

Mabel belonged to NEBBA, EBBA, and WBBBA. On the Vineyard, she was honorary director (formerly Vice President) of the Vineyard Conservation Society; she was Trustee of the Felix Neck Wildlife Trust; a member of the Cape Poge and Wasque Reservation of the Trustees of Reservations of Massachusetts. She belonged to many other popular organizations, enjoyed freelance writing for many news tabloids.

We all regretted that she was unable to attend the EBBA 50th Anniversary meeting at Island Beach where she was honored for her many faithful years of service to the organization. (FSS)

