

White-winged Crossbills at Lorain Feeder

John Pogacnik

I thought it was incredible when a white-winged crossbill first appeared at my yard feeder January 10, 1981. But then it never left. First the days passed and then the seasons changed, once: Spring and then twice: Summer!

Why did it stay? Food, shelter? I don't really know. It was an immature bird (Male). Does that explain it? Then the unbelievable occurred. A second immature male white-winged crossbill joined it on June 1, 1981, and stayed for eight more days until June 9, 1981, when suddenly both were gone as if I had never seen them at all.

The birds did not appear injured. They were in their first winter plumage. I have not found this plumage adequately depicted in any book. If you replace the red of the adult male with solid yellow, lightly streaked, and retain only that part of the black eyestripe with the downward hook at the end farthest away from the bill, you have the appearance of these birds. The birds were a bit larger than the 60+ house finches which were also at my feeder during this period. (Perhaps the occurrence of these other finches lured these birds.) They fed mainly on sunflower seed, but also fed heavily on thistle. How it was able to extract the thistle from the bag, I don't really know.

The first bird was surprisingly tame. On March 2, I caught and banded it. It sat calmly in my hand and made no effort to bite me. I recaptured it once March 12, and three times March 24. On the 24th, each time I caught it, I gave it a sunflower seed. Upon release, it immediately flew up in a tree and ate the seed, then back to the feeders. It usually ate peacefully with the other birds but at times would open its beak and charge them. During the first week of May, this bird was constantly pulling on different strings as if to gather nesting material. Red crossbills have remained in Ohio until June, but white-winged crossbills generally leave in early to mid-April. Will they return?

John Pogacnik
6359 North Humphreys
#127
Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449

OHIO BIRD BANDERS MEET

On Saturday, March 21, 1981, about 30-40 bird banders from around Ohio gathered at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Dr. Hal Mahan, Director of the museum was in charge of the program. The group was given an "inside" tour of the museum which was very informative and exciting.

Various banders shared their experiences and some of their techniques. Kathleen Klimkiewicz presented a program with color slides on the use of molt in ageing birds. This was the highlight of the meeting for most of the banders.

The main purpose of the meeting was to possibly organize an Ohio Bird Banding Association. The objective of this group would be to share ideas and conduct training workshops. Mrs. Marie Morgan, Akron, was elected Chairperson and directed by the group to set up another meeting/workshop in August or September. At this meeting, a formal organization may be established. The tentative site is Columbus.