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INCURSIONS OF THE EVENING GROSBEAK IN NORTHEASTERN OHIO, 1860-1967¹

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The Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) was not listed by Kirtland (1838 and 1839) in his *Report on the Zoology of Ohio*. Neither was it mentioned by him in his list of the fauna found in the Cleveland area (1852), although other winter visitors are listed based on ten years of observations. Kirtland reported the Evening Grosbeak for the first time in 1860 in the *Ohio Farmer* (Kirtland, 1860). In 1882 Wheaton wrote that this was the only record for Ohio. Williams (1950) reviewed all published and unpublished records of the Evening Grosbeak up to that time in his *Birds of the Cleveland Region*. He characterized this species as a rare and irregular winter visitor.

Beginning with 1954 I have issued annual reports on the Evening Grosbeak in northeastern Ohio, comprising 14 counties (Dexter

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1957, 1959, 1961, 1964, 1965, 1967). This paper will review winter incursions since 1860 utilizing data from all available sources, and will review my banding records of recent years. Information has been obtained from personal field records and those of my friends in the Cuyahoga Falls Audubon Club, Portage County Nature Club, and the Kirtland Bird Club, and from the following publications: *The Cleveland Bird Calendar*, *Bulletin of the Cleveland Audubon Society*, *The Ohio Cardinal*, *Wayne Nature Club Field Notes*, *The Redstart*, *Ohio Bird Counts*, *Audubon Field Notes*, *Inland Bird-Banding News*, and the *Evening Grosbeak Survey News*. Also, records were obtained from the papers published by B. M. and M. S. Shaub (1957; 1963).

Figure No. 1 shows the number of annual locality records reported between 1860-1967. It must be kept in mind that in recent years there have been more field observers covering a larger area and with better reporting. In spite of such differences, the chart probably reflects quite accurately the pattern of incursions, since any incursion of significant size of these conspicuous birds would likely be detected by someone.

The first Ohio record was made in 1860 in the Cleveland area. No other was reported for 30 years, then sporadic records appeared over the next 54 years.

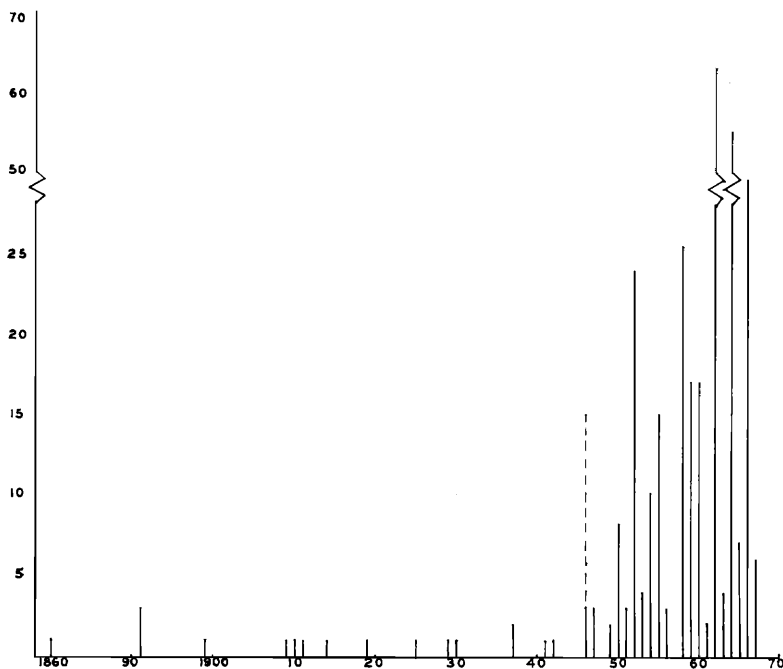


Figure 1. Incursions of the Evening Grosbeak in northeastern Ohio, 1860-1967. Bar graphs show number of locality records compiled for each year.

Roscoe J. Webb of Garrettsville, Ohio, wrote to a fellow naturalist, Almon Rood, on 17 January 1922 that, "I suspect that the Evening Grosbeak came to Warner's, 'six miles from Youngstown.' It seems to be observed about every 30 years, first in 1860, then in 1890, and now in 1921. In *Michigan Bird Life*, Barrows thinks it is extending its range eastward. If so, it may eventually come to us from the west, as the cardinal came from the south, but only as a winter visitor." The first major incursion took place in the winter of 1945-46. While only three localities were published, Evening Grosbeaks were abundant from 18 November to 12 May with single counts up to 125 (Williams, 1950). Undoubtedly many localities in northeastern Ohio had Evening Grosbeaks that winter. The second major incursion took place in 1951-52, with 24 localities being reported between 7 November and 27 May. The third major incursion was in 1955 with 15 locality records. In the period of 1958-60 there were three consecutive years of sizeable incursions, which is unusual since most years with a large incursion are followed by years with very few records.

In 1962 the greatest incursion to date took place with 63 localities reported. At peak abundance Dr. R. C. McKay counted 130 at one time at his bird feeder in Brecksville. Evening Grosbeaks were present that winter between 28 October and 19 May. Two years later, the second greatest incursion took place in 1964 with 54 localities reported. Dr. McKay counted up to 110 at one time that winter. They were present in the area between 8 September and 18 May. In 1966 20 localities were reported. The Evening Grosbeak appeared very early in the season, but the numbers were never very large and the birds did not remain very long in any one locality.

Over the period of 108 years, 34 winters had records and 74 winters were without records. While there has been no regular pattern, the greatest abundance and the greatest number of locality records have occurred approximately every other year in recent years.

BANDING OF EVENING GROSBEAKS IN NORTHEASTERN OHIO

A total of 133 Evening Grosbeaks (48 males and 85 females) was banded in my study of this species. These bandings took place in nine localities of five counties in northeastern Ohio between 1952 and 1964. Three repeats were taken, but no returns are known to date. Four recoveries have been made, as follows: No. B2-64505, a female, banded 10 February 1952 at Brecksville, Ohio, was recovered and released 28 March 1953 at Lexington, Massachusetts, by P. C. Reed. No. 512-45848, another female, banded 27 February 1960 at Hinckley, Ohio, was trapped and released 11 October 1961 in the Conway area of New Hampshire. No. 512-45849, a male, was banded the same day at Hinckley and subsequently trapped and released 22 January 1962 near Kalamazoo, Michigan, by Mrs. George Leonard. No. 602-46868, another male, banded 22 February 1964 at Brecksville was killed by a cat 28 May 1964 at Richibucto, New Brunswick, Canada, and was

reported by R. J. Blanchard.

One foreign retrap has been made: No. 55-118185, a female, banded 5 May 1956 at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, by Fred Smith was retrapped by me and released 13 April 1958 at Brecksville, Ohio.

The first summer record for the Evening Grosbeak in northeastern Ohio was made by Frank Irmiter on 14 July 1962 when he found a single male at Charlestown in Portage County. According to Mrs. Doris Speirs (personal communication), the Evening Grosbeaks were not known to nest in Ontario before 1944. The breeding range seems to be extending southward as well as more frequent and larger incursions into the United States over the past 20 years. Possibly we can look forward to more frequent and extensive incursions with the possibility of eventual nesting in northeastern Ohio in the future.

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