

## NOVEMBER 1-14, 2015 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EAST VIEW

### WHAT BIRDS CAN EASTVIEW EXPECT TO SEE THIS WINTER? 2015–2016

Let's start with an edited summary of the Winter Finch Forecast put out by Ron Pittaway of the Ontario Field Ornithologists from Toronto, Ontario Canada. Of course his forecast is primarily for Canada, and the northern states in the lower 48. Because many movements of finches and northern birds are dependent on food supply during winter, it is important for birders to know what is going on in Canada; what is the available seed crop from various trees and what is the condition of Canada's spruce/fir forests relative to the spruce bud worm.



Pine Siskin, *Spinus pinus* Photo © Dick Harlow

Generally, he expects that we could see **White-winged** and **Red Crossbills**, along with **Pine Siskins**, at our Nijar feeders. This is primarily due to spruce seed being heaviest in eastern and western North America, but not in northern Canada.



Red Crossbills, *Loxia curvirostra*  
Photo © Bird Watcher's Digest

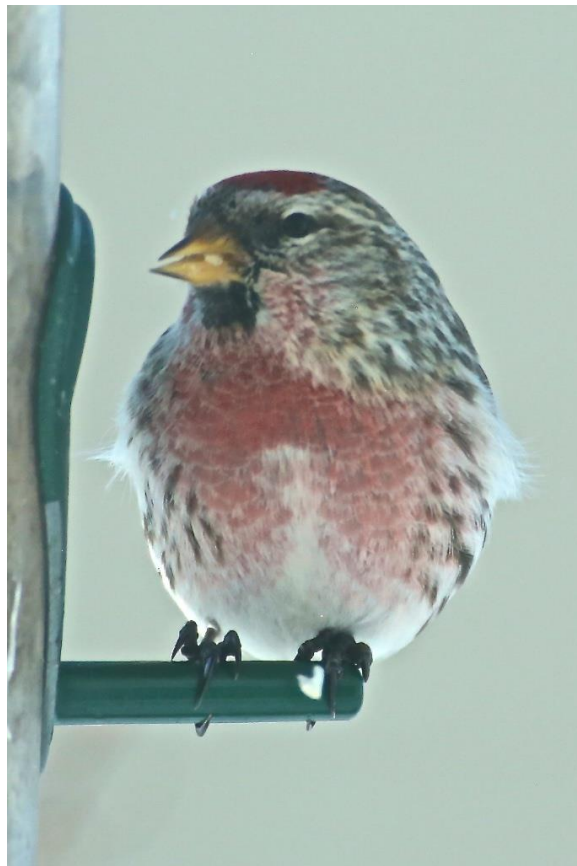
Because the Mountain Ash berry crop is low in Canada, we should see some **Pine Grosbeaks**, either at our feeders or at our berry trees.

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Pine Grosbeak, *Pinicola enucleator*  
Photo © Euclid.nmu.edu

Notice the pinkish-red color of the male, fairly striking with white wing bars. The females are not red; they are dull gray on back and breast, yellowish-green on the head and back of the neck.



Common Redpoll, *Acanthis flammea*  
Photo © Dick Harlow

**Common Redpoll**, should be here again this winter. I had Redpolls at my feeders on Deer Meadow Drive from the second week in January and every week until the end of the second week in April. They like hulled sunflower seed as well as Nijar.

**Hoary Redpoll**, *Acanthis hornemanni*, the rare larger and lighter colored redpoll, is usually found in low numbers mixed in with **Common Redpolls**. Although rare, it is always a possibility when watching Common Redpolls at the feeder. **Hoary Redpolls** have very little striping on their sides so that the sides and belly look almost white. Their backs however have brown striping that is lighter than a Common Redpoll. The Hoary appears larger and paler and should stand out amongst a flock of Common Redpolls.

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**Purple Finch, Male, *Carpodacus purpureus***  
Photo © Wikipedia



**Purple Finch, Female, *Carpodacus purpureus***  
Photo © Wikipedia

**Purple Finches**, from Canada should be coming down to the New England states as the seed crop is low in Canada. When trying to decide whether you are looking at a **Purple Finch** or a **House Finch**, look at the tail. In a Purple Finch it is distinctly either forked or notched, whereas in a House Finch the tail is flat or squared off. **Purple Finches** prefer Sunflower seed at feeders.

**Evening Grosbeak**, is a large showy grosbeak, especially the males, and could be seen here in Vermont this year. I used to band, (putting marked F&W aluminum rings on their legs), many Evening Grosbeaks in the 1960's and 70's. If they come to our feeders this winter they will be a beautiful and wonderful addition to our winter birds.



**Evening Grosbeak, Male, *Coccothraustes vespertinus***  
Photo © Wikipedia

During the 60's and 70's the population of Evening Grosbeaks took a down turn in their breeding area due to the lack of spruce bud worm, which they eat; but now the population is recovering because of the increase in spruce bud worm. It is expected that small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks will visit the northern New England

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states. Evening Grosbeaks seem to prefer black oil sunflower. However, they used to devour the seed from my striped sunflower feeders.

There is a good possibility we could see **Bohemian Waxwings**. The berry crop is low in Quebec, but excellent in Newfoundland. There will be a southern and eastern movement of small flocks of **Bohemian Waxwings** searching for winter berry food.

There are several identification marks to look for when trying to distinguish a Bohemian from our common Cedar Waxwing. Bohemians are larger, have a grayer back, and have yellow on the outer edges of their primaries. There is no yellow on the outer primaries of the Cedar Waxwings. In my mind the single most important characteristic to look for is their rusty brown under-tail coverts of the **Bohemian Waxwing**. **Cedar Waxwing** has white under-tail coverts. When in doubt, look for those under-tail coverts.



**Bohemian Waxwing, *Bombycilla garrulus***  
Photo © allaboutbirds.com

**The above edited report is produced each fall as a courtesy to North American bird enthusiasts.**

### GOOSE VIEWING AREA

#### ADDISON

**Pictures taken early morning of November 3, 2015**



**(1) Snow Geese at the Goose Viewing area, Rt. 17 Addison**  
Photo © Dick Harlow



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Picture 1 shows the large, 3,000 – 5,000 flock of Snow Geese at the Goose Viewing area on Rt 17 in Addison. This picture was taken at 500X, so this flock is some distance in back of the goose viewing area. However, the geese moved closer and started to feed on the corn-harvested field very near the road by the goose-viewing platform.



**(2) Snow Geese at the Goose Viewing area, Rt. 17 Addison**  
Photo © Dick Harlow



**(3) Snow Geese at the Goose Viewing area, Rt. 17 Addison**  
Photo © Dick Harlow

Picture 3 is a close view of geese feeding on corn next to the fence beside the parallel dirt road that runs by the Goose Viewing Platform.

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**The following is a summary of the Winter Birds we could see here at EastView:**

### **Stalwart Northerners**

Black-capped Chickadee

White-breasted Nuthatch

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Downy Woodpecker

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Hairy Woodpecker

American Goldfinch

Purple Finch (GM Locals)

Blue Jay

Cedar Waxwing

### **Fairly Recent Vermonters**

Tufted Titmouse

House Finch

Northern Cardinal

Red-bellied Woodpecker

### **Transients from the North**

Pine Siskin

Purple Finch (Canada)

Common Redpoll

Hoary Redpoll

Pine Grosbeak

Red Crossbill

White-winged Crossbill

Bohemian Waxwing

### **Top 6 Visitors to our Bird Feeders**

Black-capped Chickadee - sunflower

Downy Woodpecker - suet, sunflower

Mourning Dove - ground seed

Wh-breasted Nuthatch - sunflower, suet

Dark-eyed Junco - ground seed

Tufted Titmouse - sunflower, suet

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## Weather Tidbits

**November 1-14, 2015**

All Measurements taken at solar noon (1130 EST).

### PRECIPITATION

**Precipitation was: 9.2 mm or 0.4 inches.**

**Overcast Days: 8**

### WIND

**Highest wind: 34 MPH, 6 & 7 Nov. Direction: South**

**Average Wind speed: Nov 1-14: 3.5 mph,**

**Dominate Wind Direction: South**

**Days w/wind gusts 20-29 MPH: 7**

**Days w/wind gusts 30 MPH or greater: 2**

### TEMPERATURE

**Mean Temp: 11.1 C<sup>0</sup> 52 °F**

**High Temp: 25.0 C<sup>0</sup> 77 °F**

**Low Temp: -0.8C<sup>0</sup> 30 °F**