



Evening Grosbeaks. Drawing by Leslie A. DeCoursey.

streaking on the other redpolls. The stripes were the width of a line drawn with a fine tip pen. At first, we thought the rump was completely white and the white extended fairly far up the back. Later, we saw two or three faint marks on the rump near the tail. However, you had to look long and hard to notice these marks at all. One thing we were positive about was that the undertail coverts were completely white. There were no marks there at all, not even faint marks, as seen on the lower rump.

The redpoll stayed on the feeder for about five minutes. We waited another three hours, but it never returned. Since our bird never had any Common Redpolls with it on the feeder at the same time, we were unable to make a direct comparison concerning bill size and shape. But our overall impression was that our bird's bill was smaller, with a "pushed-in" look. Bixby saw this bird again two days later in the company of several Common Redpolls. He believed our bird's bill was smaller than the other redpolls and confirmed the "pushed-in" look we had seen.

I have seen two Hoary Redpolls with large winter flocks of Common Redpolls in Duluth, Minn., and the tour leaders from WINGS pointed out Hoary Redpolls when I was in Alaska. Our DuPage County bird looked as good as the Hoary Redpolls I have seen farther north. The field guides and articles I have on Hoary Redpoll identification (Balch 1978, Granlund 1994) agree on field marks, but disagree on which is most important.

Madsen, Bixby, and I think the pure white undertail coverts, the almost white rump, the very pale back and overall coloring, and the smaller bill make our bird a good candidate for being a Hoary Redpoll. Our description is on file with IORC.

The downside of all this is that now I will have to listen

to "I told you so!" from Bixby concerning both Harris' Sparrow and Hoary Redpoll. I guess it's worth it.

— Alan Stokie 174 E. Kathleen Dr.,
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Editor's note: Field identification of Hoary Redpolls is extremely difficult. Even if a suspected Hoary Redpoll is in the hand, bill measurements in combination with other plumage characters often have to be taken to make an identification conclusive. Birders should try to obtain photographs of all suspected Hoary Redpolls in the state. Birders are also urged to read the articles on Hoary Redpoll identification by Balch and Granlund.

110 Evening Grosbeaks in southeastern Illinois

The only remarkable thing about 3 February 1994 was the weather forecast. Despite a bitterly cold dawn, the temperature would eventually reach 50 degrees F. under sunny skies, a welcome change after the recent sub-freezing days. My husband, Gary DeNeal, went outside early to tend the feeders and count the Evening Grosbeaks (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) that had brightened our yard (and our psyches) since 1 January 1994 with their tropical yellow, white, and black plumage. The females and immatures are more drably-colored resembling gigantic female Eastern Goldfinches. The bill is stout, conical, and straw-colored until spring, when it changes to a striking apple green.