

THE EVENING GROSBEAK. :

A VERY rare and beautiful bird has in considerable numbers lately visited this part of the country making the trees look gay with their beautiful plumage.

On the authority of Thomas R. Jones, it is called the "Evening Cherry Hawfinch" (*Hesperiphona vespertina*). It inhabits the almost unexplored northern parts of North America and has rarely been found east of the Saskatchewan. A few instances are recorded of their having been seen and a few specimens obtained in Western Ontario, but they have never before been found so far east as Kingston. Doubtless they have been induced to visit this section through the exceeding mildness of the winter weather.

By the Indians, this bird is called the sugar-bird. The name of "Evening Grosbeak" may have arisen from the popular belief that their song is only heard in the twilight, although in fine weather it may be heard during the day time.

These birds are about seven and a half inches long, not quite so robust as the pine Grosbeak, who is also visiting us just now in large numbers. They seem to be of a social disposition, as they are rarely to be seen except in companies.

The male is a very showy bird, with his body of yellowish olive and greenish yellow, his bright golden underwing and tail coverts, his wings of black and white, golden forehead with line of gold extending back over the eyes, all the various colors being so blended as to greatly enhance the beauty of the whole coat. He has a large strong yellow beak and slender feet.

The dress of the female is not so bright as that of the male, but she is perhaps more prettily marked on the wings and tail.

They seem to feed chiefly on the buds of the pine and spruce trees, but we observe them in search of the seeds of the cones of those trees and we have seen them eating red cedar berries, and they are said to consume the larvæ of the black ant.

Their cry when in search of food is of a melancholy sound, differing much from the sound of any other bird we have ever heard.

This bird we reckon as among the greatest rarity in our collection.

Fine mounted specimens may be seen with Mr. Stratford, taxidermist, Kingston.

Cataraqui, Ont., January 28, 1890.

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