

THE EVENING GROSBEAK.

(Coccothraustes vespertina.)

By C. J. YOUNG.

The readers of THE OTTAWA NATURALIST who are interested to any extent in our birds, will learn with interest that a migration of evening grosbeaks has occurred this winter in Ontario. This bird always creates an amount of interest, partly by reason of its rarity and beautiful plumage, and partly because its summer home and breeding habits are still but imperfectly known.

It visits Ontario at long intervals; this year it has been seen in pairs and small flocks in the neighborhood of Kingston, Ont.,—even within the city limits. A beautiful male was procured by Mr. E. Beaupré on Feb. 23rd, which I saw in the flesh shortly after it was shot. A pair was secured out of a flock at Cataraqui during the same week, and birds had been observed at Williamsville during January. In each case they were feeding on the seeds of the Manitoba maple (*Negundo aceroides*), a tree that only of late years has assumed sufficient proportions in Ontario to bear fruit. It will be interesting to learn whether this bird has been observed elsewhere in Ontario during the present winter.

The evening grosbeak is a rare bird everywhere, though of more frequent occurrence in the west than in the east. It was first described by Mr. William Cooper, of New York, from a specimen obtained by Mr. Schoolcraft near Sault Ste. Marie in April, 1823. The next specimen recorded was obtained in the month of August in the same year by Major Delafield, north-west from Lake Superior. From that time to the present the bird has been occasionally recorded in Canada, but as far as I know there is no record of the discovery of the nest except from the United States.

According to the late Mr. McIlwraith, of Hamilton, Ont., the first report of its appearance in the settled parts of Ontario was in the year 1866, when in the month of May two were obtained by the late Dr. T. J. Cottle at Woodstock. The next record was in 1871, when they were observed in the spring near London, Ont.