

GENUS XVII.—COCCOTHAUSTES, *Briss.* GROSBEEK.

Bill of moderate length, extremely robust, almost as broad as the head, not compressed, conical, pointed; upper mandible rather broader than the lower, with the dorsal line slightly convex, the ridge indistinct, the nasal sinus extremely wide and short, the sides rounded, the edges simply arched and a little inflected, the notches almost obsolete, the tip a little deflected; lower mandible with the angle extremely short and wide, forming the fourth of a circle, the dorsal line straight, the sides at the base and in their whole length convex, the edges involute, the tip acute; nostrils basal, round. Plumage blended. Wings of moderate length, pointed, the outer three quills nearly equal, the second longest. Tail of moderate length, emarginate. Tarsus short, compressed, with seven scutella; toes moderate, hind toe stout, broad beneath; outer toe a little longer than the inner, and adherent at the base. Claws moderate, or rather stout, arched, compressed, acute. Upper mandible concave beneath, with three prominent lines.

---

 EVENING GROSBEEK.
† COCCOTHAUSTES VESPERTINA, *Cooper.*

PLATE CCVII.—MALE, YOUNG MALE, AND FEMALE.

This fine species of Grosbeak was first introduced to the notice of ornithologists by Mr. WILLIAM COOPER, who published an account of it in the Annals of the Lyceum of New York. Mr. SCHOOLCRAFT observed a few individuals, in the beginning of April, 1823, near the Sault Sainte Marie in Michigan, from which the species was traced to the Rocky Mountains. Dr. RICHARDSON mentions it as a common inhabitant of the maple groves on the Saskatchewan plains, whence "its native appellation of Sugar-bird." The



female remained utterly unknown until it was obtained by Mr. TOWNSEND, who found this Grosbeak abundant about the Columbia river, and procured a great number of specimens, several of which are in my possession. The following note from him contains all the information respecting its habits that I can lay before you.

“Columbia river, May 27, 1836.—The Evening Grosbeak, *Fringilla vespertina*, is very numerous in the pine-woods at this time. You can scarcely enter a grove of pines at any hour in the day without seeing numbers of them. They are very unsuspicious and tame, and I have, in consequence, been enabled to procure a fine suite of specimens. The accounts that have been published respecting them by the only two authors to whom I have access, Mr. NUTTALL and Prince BONAPARTE, are, I think, in many respects incorrect. In the first place, it is stated that they are retiring and silent during the day, and sing only on the approach of evening. Here they are remarkably noisy during the whole of the day, from sunrise to sunset. They then retire quietly to their roosts in the summits of the tall pines, and are not aroused until daylight streaks the east, when they come forth to feed as before. Thus I have observed them *here*, but will not say but that at other seasons, and in other situations, their habits may be different. They are now, however, very near the season of breeding, as the organs of the specimens I have examined sufficiently indicate. They appear fond of going in large bodies, and it is rare to see one alone in a tree. They feed upon the seeds of the pine and other trees, alighting upon large limbs, and proceeding by a succession of hops to the very extremities of the branches. They eat, as well as seeds, a considerable quantity of the larvæ of the large black ant, and it is probable that it is to procure this food that they are not uncommonly seen in the tops of the low oaks which here skirt the forests. Their ordinary voice, when they are engaged in procuring food, consists of a single rather screaming note, which from its tone I at first supposed to be one of alarm, but soon discovered my error. At other times, particularly about mid-day, the male sometimes selects a lofty pine branch, and there attempts a song; but it is a miserable failure, and he seems conscious of it, for he frequently pauses and looks discontented, then remains silent sometimes for some minutes, and tries it again, but with no better success. The note is a single warbling call, exceedingly like the early part of the Robin’s song, but not so sweet, and checked as though the performer were out of breath. The song, if it may be so called, is to me a most wearisome one: I am constantly listening to hear the stave continued, and am as constantly disappointed. Another error of the books is this,—they both state that the female is similar to the male in plumage. Now, this is entirely a mistake: she is so very different in colour and markings, that were it not for



the size and colour of the bill, and its peculiar physiognomy, one might be induced to suppose it another species. The specimens in possession of Mr. LEADBEATER of London, and from which Prince BONAPARTE drew up his descriptions, must have been all males."

Male, 8, wing  $4\frac{3}{4}$ . Female,  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , wing  $4\frac{1}{4}$ .

Michigan. Columbia river. Saskatchewan. Common. Migratory.

FRINGILLA VESPERTINA, Cooper, Ann. Lyc. New York, vol. i. p. 220.

EVENING GROSBEAK, *Fringilla vespertina*, Bonap. Syn., p. 113.

EVENING GROSBEAK, *Fringilla vespertina*, Bonap. Amer. Orn., vol. ii. pl. 14.

COCCOTHAUSTES VESPERTINA, *Evening Grosbeak*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 269.

EVENING GROSBEAK, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 594.

COCCOTHAUSTES BONAPARTII, Lesson, Young Male.

EVENING GROSBEAK, *Fringilla vespertina*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 515; vol. v. p. 235.

#### Adult Male.

Bill of moderate length, extremely thick, conical, pointed; upper mandible with the dorsal line very slightly convex, the sides rounded, the edges sharp, overlapping, with a slight sinus close to the acute tip; lower mandible with the angle very short and broad, the dorsal line straight, or very slightly concave, the back very broad, the sides rounded, the edges inflected, the tip acute. Nasal sinus extremely short and broad; nostrils round, basal, concealed by short reflected bristly feathers.

Head large, roundish-ovate; neck short; body moderately full. Feet short, of moderate strength; tarsus short, compressed, with seven anterior scutella, and two plates behind forming a sharp edge; hind toe large, outer toe somewhat longer than inner; claws rather large, moderately arched, much compressed, acute.

Plumage full, soft, blended, the feathers oblong. Wings rather long, broad, abruptly pointed; the outer three primaries almost equal, the first longest; outer secondaries emarginate. Tail of moderate length, rather narrow, emarginate, of twelve rather narrow feathers.

Bill yellow; iris hazel; feet flesh-colour, claws brown. The upper part of the head and the occiput are brownish-black, bounded anteriorly by a broadish band of bright yellow across the forehead, and laterally by a streak of the same, passing over the eye; the stiff feathers over the nostrils black, as is the loreal space. The cheeks, hind neck, and throat, are dark yellowish-olive, and that colour gradually brightens until, on the outer edges of the scapulars, the rump, the axillars and inner lower wing-coverts, the abdomen and lower tail-coverts, it becomes pure yellow. The smaller wing-coverts, alula, primary coverts, three outer secondaries, outer web of the next, and



the bases of the inner secondaries, black; as is the tail; six of the inner secondaries, inner web of the next, and inner margin of the rest, as well as their coverts white, the basal part excepted.

Length to end of tail 8 inches; wing from flexure  $4\frac{3}{4}$ ; tail 3; bill along the ridge  $\frac{10}{12}$ , along the edge of lower mandible  $\frac{11}{12}$ ; tarsus  $\frac{9\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ ; hind toe  $\frac{5}{12}$ , its claw  $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ ; middle toe  $\frac{8}{12}$ , its claw  $\frac{3\frac{3}{4}}{12}$ .

#### Adult Female.

The adult female, which is here figured and described from a specimen obtained from Mr. TOWNSEND, and marked "Black Hills, Female, June 3, 1824," wants the yellow band on the forehead, the streak of the same colour over the eye, the black line along the basal margin of the upper mandible, and the large patch of white on the wings. The bill and feet are as in the male, but paler. The upper part of the head is dark brownish-olive; the cheeks lighter; the hind neck, back, and scapulars light brownish-grey, with a slight olivaceous tint, shaded into brownish-yellow on the rump. The wings are black; a portion of the edge of the wing, the tips and part of the margins of the secondary coverts, a concealed band on the basal part of the primaries, the outer three excepted, and the edges of all the quills toward the end, white, which is broader on the secondaries, and forms a band on them. Tail-coverts black, tipped with a triangular spot of white; tail-feathers also black, with a white spot on the inner web at the tip, eight-twelfths long on the outermost feather, gradually diminishing towards the central feathers, which are slightly tipped. Throat greyish-white, margined on either side by a longitudinal band of black, from the base of the lower mandible, and ten-twelfths in length; the lower parts yellowish-grey; abdomen and lower tail-coverts white, axillars and some of the lower wing-coverts yellow.

Length to end of tail  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches; wing from flexure  $4\frac{1}{4}$ ; tail  $2\frac{10}{12}$ ; bill along the ridge  $\frac{9\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ .

#### Young Male.

The young male bears a considerable resemblance to the female, differing chiefly in wanting the black bands on the throat, and in having the upper parts much lighter, and the lower more yellow. Bill yellow; iris hazel; feet flesh-colour, claws dusky. Head and cheeks light greyish-brown, the rest of the upper parts of a paler tint, slightly tinged with yellow on the margins. The wings and tail are black, as in the female, and similarly spotted with white, but tinged with yellow. The lower parts are yellowish-grey, the sides of the neck and the axillars pale yellow, the abdomen and lower tail-coverts white.

The young male has been described as the adult female by Mr. SWAINSON in the *Fauna Boreali-Americana*, and has been made a distinct species by



M. LESSON, under the name of *Coccothraustes Bonapartii*. The Prince of MUSIGNANO, it is observed, has erred in stating that "no difference of any consequence is observable between the sexes; though it might be said that the female is a little less in size, and rather duller in plumage."

---

GENUS XVIII.—PYRANGA, *Vieill.* SUMMER RED-BIRD.

Bill of moderate length, robust, tapering, compressed toward the end, acute; upper mandible with its dorsal line declinate and considerably convex, the ridge rather narrow, nasal sinus very short and wide, the sides convex, the edges sharp, slightly arched, with a festoon about the middle, the notches distinct, the tip very slender, declinate; lower mandible strong, with the angle short and rounded, the dorsal line straight, the sides convex, the edges direct, the tip acute. Nostrils basal, round. Head ovate; neck short; body compact. Tarsus short, with seven scutella; toes rather small, the first moderate, the outer slightly longer than the inner, and adherent at the base. Claws moderate, well arched, much compressed, laterally grooved, acute, those of the first and third toes equal. Plumage soft and blended; distinct bristles at the base of upper mandible. Wings rather long, with the second and third quills longest, the first little shorter. Tail of moderate length, emarginate. Upper mandible concave, with three longitudinal ridges; tongue somewhat triangular, convex above, with the point thin-edged and lacerated; œsophagus dilated about the middle; stomach broadly elliptical, small, its lateral muscles rather small; epithelium thin, longitudinally rugous; intestine short; cœca extremely small. Inferior laryngeal muscles four on each side, but very small.





*Evening Grosbeak.*

1 Male 2 Female 3 Young Male.



Audubon, John James. 1841. "Evening Grosbeak, *Coccothraustes vespertina*, Cooper. [Pl. 207]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 3, 217–221. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319320>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/124835>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319320>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/319320>

**Holding Institution**

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

**Sponsored by**

Biodiversity Heritage Library

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: NOT\_IN\_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.