

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

An Exceptional Finch Flight on Long Island's North Fork

We all observed that this fall's migration was a good one for Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, etc. However, 8 November, 2020 in my yard in Northville (in the eastern section of Riverhead along Long Island Sound) was quite unprecedented. By 7:00 a.m. my husband and I noticed that the yard, front and back, was full of Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches, all freely mixing together. These actively feeding birds were on stalks of showy goldenrod and rough goldenrod, and New England asters, as well as all over the grassy ground and in every feeder on the property. By the best guess and fairly accurate counting we concluded we had about 500 birds in tight concentrations. This immense, hungry flock must have come in over Long Island Sound on the calm, clear night that just passed as we did not have anything like this the day before. Did they all fly together overnight from Canada and New England?

Obviously, finding agreeable food and favorable conditions abounding, they stayed in force through the day. These birds were so thick on the ground we had to shoo them away from the feeder areas so as not to step on them. They drained the feeders several times, as well as feasting on seed on the ground. They had no fear of us or our dog and unfortunately the dog stepped on one siskin which did not move out of the way. We assumed most of these birds had never seen people before; you could walk right up to them and pet some of them as they were feeding. Of course, I partook of the privilege of doing so several times, as I couldn't help myself! These birds started to leave the yard area by about 4:00 p.m. The next day none were in the yard; apparently they had moved on overnight again. I consider this a very exciting event, which we were fortunate to observe, witness and document with photographs (see photo, p. 52)—and one we will probably never see again, at least not in numbers like these!

MaryLaura Lamont, Northville, NY



Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches, Northville, *Suffolk*, 8 Nov 2020 © MaryLaura Lamont. See note on p. 14.



The Common Redpoll above the Hoary Redpoll shown here was thought to represent the regionally rare and poorly documented subspecies *Acanthis flammea rostrata* ("Greater Redpoll"), based on its large size, large bill, heavy streaking, and extensively dark face. From the east spit at the mouth of Braddock Bay, *Monroe*, 19 Nov 2020, © Dominic Sherony.