

EVENING GROSBEAK KILLS HOUSE SPARROW*

ETHEL COCKWILL, Fort Qu'Appelle,
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On 5 January 1982, my husband and I observed what we consider to be rather strange behaviour in the bird world. Every year we maintain several bird feeders in our yard in Fort Qu'Appelle. Our regular winter visitors are chickadees, nuthatches, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Evening Grosbeaks, Blue Jays and House Sparrows, with other transients from time to time.

On this particular day I had just come in from replenishing the feeders when we noticed a female Evening Grosbeak fluttering in the snow in the middle of the lawn. Our first thought was that it had hit the window, which is not uncommon, but as we watched we realized that it had a sparrow down and was beating it with the wings and pecking it on the head and neck. This went on for several minutes, until the sparrow appeared to be dead. At this point the grosbeak picked it up and flew away with it. There were no other marks in the snow, just the one hole, so the grosbeak must have either carried the sparrow there or forced it down from the air. They do feed together on the feeding tray and occasionally a grosbeak will chase a sparrow away, but one has never been so vicious as in this episode. Our late friend and neighbour, the well-known birdwatcher and author, Manley Callin, thought this was unusual enough to be reported.

THIRD SASKATCHEWAN SIGHT RECORD OF LEAST TERN**

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On 27 July 1982, at Rowan's Ravine on the east side of Last Mountain Lake, we observed two small terns feeding actively along the marina from 7 to 7.30 p.m. They were from 25 to 125 m from us, and looked exactly like the adults pictured in Robbins' *A Guide to Field Identification, Birds of North America*. At a distance, further out on the lake, were numbers of both Common and Forster's Terns, obviously larger in size and with very different, forked tails. The smaller terns nearby had flared but not deeply forked tails, more like a "fish tail." Neither bird was seen the following day.

We returned to the same place 24 June 1984, also at 7 p.m. This time there was a single small tern, flying back and forth. During about 30 minutes it made only four dives into the water. This bird was from 50 to 125 meters distant. We were even more certain of the identification than we had been in 1982.

* From the files of the late Manley Callin

** The above item was found in Callin's files. Rowan's Ravine is of course west of the area covered by Callin's book. Callin noted that the nearest known nesting site of Least Terns was a colony on an island in the Missouri River near Bismarck, where Robert N. Randall found five nests with eggs on July 2, 1972 (Houston, *American Birds* 26:869-872, October 1972).