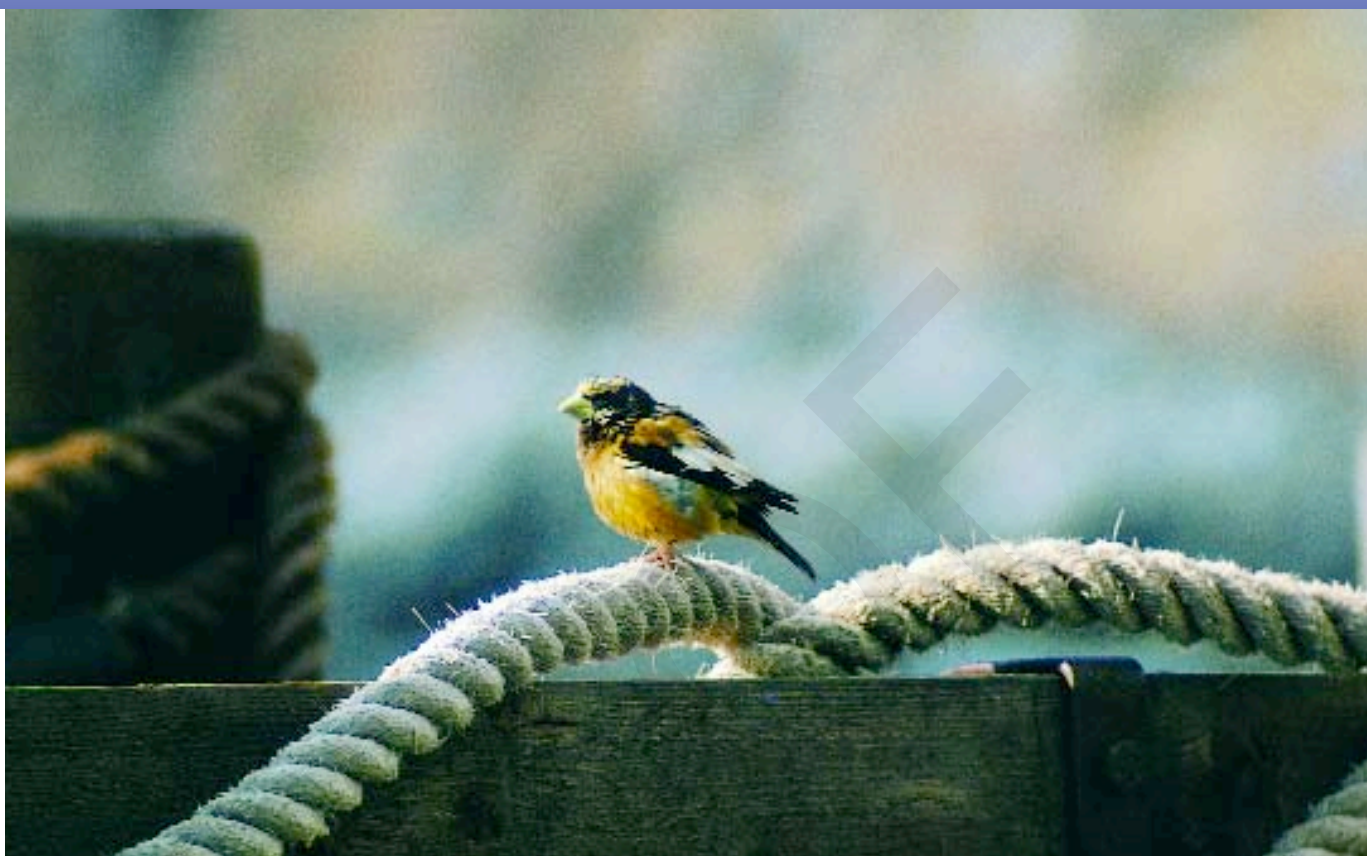


# Evening Grosbeak

SV Category A

*Hesperiphona vespertina* (W Cooper)

*H. v. vespertina* (Cooper) †



Evening Grosbeak, St Kilda (Outer Hebrides), March 1969 © Nick Picozzi

**Records:** 2  
**BBRC**

## World range and taxonomy

Nearctic. Three subspecies. Nominate *vespertina* breeds from Alberta to New England; *brooksi* from British Columbia south to California and Wyoming; and *montanus* from Arizona to Mexico. Outwith the breeding season the species is nomadic, and is found from British Columbia to Nova Scotia and south throughout USA to Mexico. Most birds winter within northern USA and southern Canada.

## Habitat

Breeds principally in boreal coniferous forest, occasionally in other habitats such as mixed woodland, but commonly moves into suburban gardens in winter. Where vagrants have a choice, the garden bird-table may be preferred, as was the case for one Scottish bird, although the other frequented a barren offshore island.

## Scottish records (2)

**1969 Outer Hebrides** St Kilda, adult ♂, 26 March (N Picozzi) (*BB* 64: 189-194; *BS* 2: 63-64).

**1980 Badenoch & Strathspey** Nethy Bridge, adult ♀, 10-25 March (H Marshall) (*BB* 74: 491).

## Comment

An unprecedented movement, involving exceptionally large numbers of nominate subspecies Evening Grosbeaks, occurred in eastern North America during the 1968/69

winter, immediately preceding the discovery of the bird on St Kilda (Outer Hebrides) by Nick Picozzi (Picozzi 1971, 1999). Its scruffy appearance was entirely consistent with the state of many early spring males in the native range. An extensive investigation by BOURC found no evidence of any Evening Grosbeaks being offered for sale as cage birds, so the record was accepted as the first for Britain. The Nethy Bridge (Badenoch & Strathspey) individual visited a garden bird table for over a fortnight. It was photographed by H Marshall and is the only other accepted British record.

Both were found in March, not a month traditionally associated with American vagrants. However, Evening Grosbeaks are nomadic outside the breeding season, with occasional eruptions that may involve movements throughout the winter, while the main return movement is in April (*BWP*). The only other European records are of males in Norway in May 1973 and May 1975. Although the subspecific identity of European birds has not been determined, there is very little likelihood of wild birds originating from other than the nominate population, and the photographs of the Nethy Bridge bird indicated this subspecies (Rogers *et al.* 1981).

## Additional reference

Lewington *et al.* (1991).

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