

House Finch

At least 10 different House Finches visited feeders almost daily between August 19 and November 23. They included 1 adult male, 2 adult females, and 7 young, of which at least 3 were males.

Details as follows:

The feeders were located about 8 1/2 feet and about 20 feet from the observer.

Adult male: Slightly smaller than a House Sparrow with a short conical beak. Intense red coloring on rump and throat and breast area. Band of red on head, extending across forehead above beak and eyes back to nape. Crown, brown. Back, streaked brown. Brown streaking on white sides, flanks, and undertail. Belly, white.

Adult female: Size and beak same as male. Face, brown without white eyebrow stripe or other facial markings. Brown streaking on lighter brown forehead, crown, nape, and back. No red on rump. Brown streaking on tan throat, breast, belly, and sides. Dark brown streaking on white flanks.

Young: Similar to female with lighter streaking on underparts and lighter streaking on tan flanks.

Young male #1: First seen in October. Similar to adult male, but red coloring less intense.

Young male #2: Seen at same time as adult male and young male #1. Red coloring less intense and less extensive than young male #1.

Young male #3: First seen in November. Only red coloring was on the rump.

Numbers were determined as follows:

Between August 24 and September 9, young with down on the head were seen. The highest number at one time was 4. By September 9, the down had been lost.

After September 9, more young with down were seen. The highest number of these at one time was 3.

The timing of the downy headed appearing showed 2 different adult females. Also during late October and early November, before the young developed full adult plumage, the adult male was often accompanied by 2 adult females.

Never more than 1 adult male was seen at any one time.

Other observations:

In June, an adult male, adult female and 1 young were seen. There were probably several young, but there was never more than 1 young here at any one time.

Several times during Purple Finch migration, a female Purple Finch and a female House Finch were at the feeder at the same time. The heads and bodies of the House Finches were distinctly smaller and slimmer than those of the Purple Finches.

We began feeding safflower seeds on November 14 to discourage House Sparrow competition. Until then, the House Finches had been eating sunflower seeds. Within a day after the safflower seeds were put out, the Finches were eating them almost exclusively with few visits to the sunflower seed feeder.

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