

Evening Grosbeak (EVGR)

Coccothraustes vespertinus

Description

Evening Grosbeaks are boldly coloured songbirds (16 - 22 cm long), with a large greenish-yellow bill. Adult males have a bright yellow body with black tail and wings, bright white wing patches, and a dark brown head with a bright yellow stripe above the eyes. Adult females and juveniles are less brightly coloured; they have a mostly gray-brown plumage with some yellow on the neck and sides, and black and white mixed on their wings and tail. Chicks in the nest have dark skin with white down over their entire body, and a yellow bill.

Known and potential breeding habitat

Evening Grosbeak breeding habitats include open, mature mixedwood forests. These forests are typically dominated by fir and spruce species. In Newfoundland, breeding evidence has been observed from 20 May to 12 September. Confirmed breeding has been reported in Gander.

Detection Tips

Habitat

During breeding seasons, Evening Grosbeaks prefer habitats that are dominated by fir species and white spruce. These forests typically have abundant spruce budworm. Outside of the breeding season, this bird depends on seed crops from firs and spruces in the boreal forest, but also seeks seeds and fruit from ornamental trees or bird feeders.

Vocalization

The calls of Evening Grosbeaks are distinctive, loud, and unmusical. Their unmistakable single-note calls are their most common form of communication during the winter and breeding season. Unlike other songbirds, they do not frequently make complex vocalizations.

Behaviour

Evening Grosbeaks live in gregarious flocks during the nonbreeding season, which are reduced to small groups during the breeding season. They show low aggression, and do not defend feeding territories. They feed heavily on seeds, and roost individually or in flocks in the late



Photo By: Denise McIsaac



Forest



COSEWIC Ranking:
Special Concern



NL Designation:
N/A



Finches, Euphonias, &
Allies

Photo By: Andy Art on Unsplash





Female Evening Grosbeak.
Photo By: Vernon Buckle

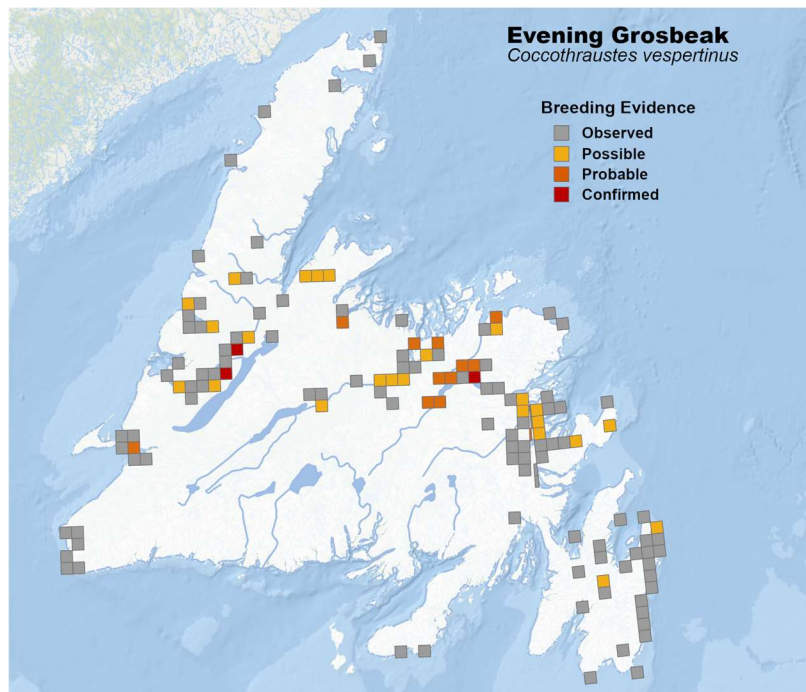
afternoon. They fly in undulating patterns, and move mainly by hopping when feeding on the ground. Males use displays without vocalizations to court females. This includes crouching with their breast almost touching the ground, wings spread downwards, and head back.

Nesting

The nests of Evening Grosbeaks are made primarily of small twigs and roots, and lined with grasses, lichens, rootlets, and pine needles. They are built almost entirely by the female immediately after arriving on breeding grounds. Nests are around 12–14 cm in diameter and are placed primarily in trees 5–35 m above the ground. Nest selection is highly influenced by food availability, especially the local abundance of spruce budworm. Females usually lay 3 to 4 eggs per clutch, with incubation starting after the second egg is laid. Incubation is performed entirely by the female, while the male forages nearby and feeds the female through regurgitation. Eggs are light blue to blue-green with brownish-purple blotches. Both the male and female feed hatchlings insects and seeds. Chicks leave the nest 2 weeks after hatching, and remain within 20m of the nest for 2–5 more days. By 3 months old, fledglings are adult-sized and integrated into flocks with adults.

Breeding Evidence

Likely breeding evidence for Evening Grosbeaks includes an adult in a suitable nesting habitat in nesting season (H), singing males (S), pairs in a suitable nesting habitat in nesting season (P), courtship displays (D), nest building (NB), nest containing eggs (NE), adult carrying food for young (CF), adults entering or leaving a nest site (AE), and recently fledged young (FY).



Evening Grosbeaks (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) were detected in 40 squares in Newfoundland during the past ten years (2011–2021). Breeding was confirmed in 3 of these squares.