

HOARY REDPOLLS AT HAWK MOUNTAIN

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During mid-afternoon of March 18, 1956 at the height of the three-day blizzard that lashed the Northeast, four Hoary Redpolls, *Acanthis hornemanni*, appeared among the swarms of birds seeking food at the Sanctuary headquarters. My wife, Alex Nagy, and I studied these birds, one a full-plumaged male, at very close range for more than an hour as they fed upon the catkins of the black birches. The next day at 2:30 p.m. the birds were back. We watched them within eleven feet as they moved restlessly in the low branches of the birch trees; I was able to obtain an excellent color photograph of one of them. We were impressed with the hoary character of their plumage, their snow-white underparts with negligible streaking on the flanks, and their very small bills.

During the birds' second visit a flock of 30 or more Common Redpolls, *Acanthis flammea*, appeared, but the four Hoarys did not mix with the newcomers. Thereafter the Hoary Redpolls returned each afternoon, usually shortly after 2:30 o'clock, and though their visits were brief they always afforded us views at extremely close range. Once, on March 22 at 5 p.m., we met up with the quartette of northerners a mile to the north of the house. Our last observation of the group was on March 23.

A few days later I examined the series of Redpoll skins in the collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and satisfied myself that our blizzard-borne visitants were indeed Hoary Redpolls, and doubtless the subspecies, *exilipes*.

Chandler S. Robbins of the Fish and Wildlife Service informs me that the only previous known occurrence of the Hoary Redpoll south of New York City is that of a bird collected by John H. Buçkalew in Maryland, opposite Assateague Island, on February 20, 1949 (*Auk* 67:251). The only other record of this species in Pennsylvania, so far as I know, is given by Todd (*Birds of Western Pennsylvania*) and concerns a sight record of the Hoary Redpoll at Presque Isle on January 9, 1934 by Charles S. Beardslee.