

**A xanthochroistic male Purple Finch.**—On 13 February 1978, Mrs. Jimmy E. (Gunter) Anderson called to tell me of an unusual bird at her feeder in Cushing, Payne County, Oklahoma. She described the bird as resembling an adult male Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) except that its plumage was bright yellow in those places where the normal color should have been rosy.

The next morning, Berniece Frichot, Anderson and I observed the oddly colored bird in a hackberry (*Celtis* sp.) not far from the feeder. All of us noticed that its head, nape, and throat were "orange-yellow," its rump "buffy yellow" (color names from Chromatic Hexagon in Palmer, R. S., ed., 1962, Handbook of North American birds, Vol. 1, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Connecticut, insert following p. 4). Otherwise, the coloration was normal — back brown, flanks with light streaking, and wings brownish. Several times we had the opportunity to compare it with typical males as they fed nearby.

Desmond Isted, Charlene Anderson, James Brooks, and Robert Farris also studied this unusual finch at the Anderson feeder on 16 February and several photographs were taken that day. On 19 February, as Elizabeth and Kenneth Hayes, Eleanor Sieg, and Robert Farris viewed the bird in bright sunlight, they detected a slight wash of rust on its dull golden throat.

Color aberrations are most commonly seen in the form of albinism or melanism. In birds, these abnormalities may be the result of atypical feather structure, anomalous pigment expression, or some combination of both. When yellow color appears, the term applied is xanthochroism. A detailed discussion of this complex but intriguing subject was given by J. P. Hailman in a recent issue of the Florida Field Naturalist (Vol. 12, pp. 36-38, 1984). J. K. Terres described it as follows: "Xanthochroism (xan-THOK-row-ism) is an abnormal yellow of the plumage, very rare in the wild, but more common among captive parrots. It is thought to result from the loss of dark pigment (melanin) in the feathers which allows the yellow carotenoid pigment to dominate over the light-produced and reflected blue" (1980, Audubon Society encyclopedia of North American birds, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, p. 98). Even though xanthochroism among Purple Finches is mentioned infrequently in the literature (see Blake, C. H., 1955, Notes on the eastern Purple Finch, *Bird-Banding* 26:102-103), banders occasionally encounter "female plumaged" individuals (i.e., females of any age or first winter males) with yellow rumps and/or scattered yellow crown feathers among populations of Purple Finches wintering in Oklahoma (W. A. Carter, pers. comm.). Most published accounts refer to birds exhibiting patches of yellow feathers rather than cases where the male's "rosy" coloration is wholly supplanted with yellow, as described above. The plumage variation reported in this note thus appears to be not only a first for the state, but also a very rare occurrence.—Deloris Isted, 2950 Woodward Boulevard, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114, 14 April 1978.

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