

At a Glance . . .

April 1983 Photo

If you identified April's bird as a junco, you are to be congratulated even though you are wrong, for this was also the first choice of several experts who were consulted about the picture. Although no one sent in a correct identification, the entries were very interesting.

"April's bird is out of habitat again, but definitely a junco. Light bill and white outer tail feathers are the best field marks."

"Everything but the bill says 'junco' (white under tail, dark eye). Maybe the 'bill' is due to the camera angle. Anyway that's our uncertain guess."

H. B. Kane's handsome picture, dated May 18, 1947, is titled "Scarlet Tanager Male and Apple Blossoms." This print was pulled from the Massachusetts Audubon files to check the identification, and it proved to be one of a series of photos of this bird, several of the negatives being more readily recognizable. The junco-like appearance of the bird probably resulted from the use of a flashbulb set-up, the same effect that is produced by bright sunlight glinting off the dark wing of a crow, making it appear silvery or white. The Scarlet Tanager is so readily recognized by its brilliant plumage that one pays little attention to the bill. As stated by the uncertain, but very perceptive, contestant quoted above, all "but the bill" seems right. Moreover, the bill cannot be ignored, and in this birdwatcher's opinion (probably biased by foreknowledge), the bill of the pictured bird says "anager."

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Photo by Hal H. Harrison



Courtesy of the Massachusetts Audubon Society

Can you identify this bird? Identification will be discussed in next issue's *At a Glance*. *Bird Observer* will award a PRIZE to the reader who submits the most correct answers in 1983. Please send your entry on a postcard to Bird Observer, 462 Trapelo Road, Belmont, MA 02178 before the answer is published in the next issue.

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