

## ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

Long-time subscribers to *Bird Observer* are very familiar with Barry Van Dusen's work. Barry continues to garner international acclaim for his artistry. Recently he was elected as a full member to the international Society for Wildlife Artists. Barry will be doing a one-man exhibition at the New England Wildflower Society, Garden in the Woods, in Framingham, Massachusetts, from June 3-June 30, 1996. Barry can also be reached at 13 Radford Road, Princeton, Massachusetts 01541.

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### **AT A GLANCE** *April 1996* \_\_\_\_\_ *Wayne R. Petersen*

This month's mystery species is a tough one. The first challenge is to place the bird into the correct family. A quick inspection might suggest that the bird is some species of flycatcher, wood-warbler, vireo, or possibly even an oriole, except that the nest is all wrong for an oriole. How about a Pine Warbler? The bird has a smooth unstreaked back, white wing bars, and the appearance of some white around the eye, all features that fit a Pine Warbler. However, the rather long bill appears to have a slight hook at the tip (not a wood-warbler feature); it does not show any trace of white spots in the tail (although these could be concealed); and there appears to be an excessive amount of pale edging to the folded tertials and secondaries for any of the Massachusetts wood-warblers. But perhaps most importantly, the bird's nest is not saddled into a dense tuft of pine needles, a characteristic practically as reliable for Pine Warblers as any plumage feature.

Although a few other wood-warblers may look somewhat similar to the pictured bird, only the Cerulean Warbler shares the combination of wing bars and unstreaked back shown in the photograph. However, the Cerulean Warbler has a prominent eyebrow stripe and would appear smaller and more compact. It also builds a neat cup nest, very unlike the sloppily constructed nest shown in the photograph.

The vireo species having wing bars can variously be eliminated because of their thicker bill shape, different head pattern (i.e., spectacles or eye rings), and iris color. Also, vireo nests tend to be neat cups saddled in a fork and trimmed with lichens, moss, and spider webs. They tend to be tidy, not messy like the pictured nest.

We are left with flycatchers as a possible family for the mystery bird.