

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

This month's cover features the work of an artist who has contributed artwork to *Bird Observer* for the first time. Wildlife art is a relatively new field for Richard Salvucci of Brighton, Massachusetts. His earlier work included a children's book, two fully illustrated books for adults, and many book covers. A visit five years ago to an exhibit coordinated by the Society of Animal Artists and held at Boston's Museum of Science opened a door to a new world. Since then, Richard has really only wanted to paint or draw animals, particularly birds. His greatest satisfaction comes in attempting to capture the individual personality of any animal in a painting or drawing.

Richard's work has appeared in the *Sanctuary* magazine of the Massachusetts Audubon Society (MAS) and in the Manomet Observatory newsletter. He has exhibited at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, the Prestige Gallery (Canada), the Norman Rockwell Museum, Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, and the MAS Broadmoor and Marshfield sanctuaries. The National Alliance for Animal Legislation commissioned him to create a drawing of two chimpanzees, which was presented to Dr. Jane Goodall as an award for her life's work. In 1995 he won third place in a "remarque" (drawing) contest sponsored by Wildlife Art magazine. This year the American Birding Association invited Richard to exhibit at their national convention in Park City, Utah. His work is also represented by the following galleries: The Aves Del Sol Gallery in Kerville, Texas, and The Nature Gallery in West Boylston, Massachusetts.

M. Steele

AT A GLANCE *June 1996* _____ *Wayne R. Petersen*

In keeping with the nesting season, June's mystery photo once again shows a bird at a nest. In the last issue, the nest characteristics of an Acadian Flycatcher were useful in identifying the bird. This month, however, the nest is somewhat less useful as an identification aid.

What the picture shows us is a small, heavily streaked bird with a thin pointed bill, prominent wing bars, a dark face patch, and a pale streak on the crown. Actually, the shape and pointedness of the bill and the delicate form alone are enough to reveal that the bird is a wood-warbler of some sort. But which one?

As a starting point when looking at wood-warblers, and sparrows as well,

try concentrating on the head and face pattern. Pretty nearly all species in these groups can be identified by head and face pattern alone. Using this approach, there are four notable features on the head of the mystery bird: an unstreaked white (?) throat, a black face patch, light crescents above and below the eyes, and a light patch on the crown.

Among the regularly occurring wood-warblers in Massachusetts, several exhibit a prominent dark face patch, but most of these can easily be eliminated on the strength of other obvious features that do not fit the mystery bird. Such warblers include Golden-winged, Cape May, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, and Common Yellowthroat. Check your field guide to see why. This only leaves Magnolia and Yellow-rumped warblers to choose from because no other New England wood-warblers have distinctive dark faces like the individual in the photograph.

Having narrowed the choice down to the Magnolia or Yellow-rumped warbler, the identification is simple. Only the Yellow-rumped Warbler has a light (yellow) crown patch, the feature from which it derives its Latin name, *Dendroica coronata*. As further backup to this identification, notice the white wing bars and heavy streaks on the back, breast, and flanks.

The Yellow-rumped Warbler in the photo is a male, which is not surprising given that most wood-warbler males participate in the feeding of their young. In Massachusetts Yellow-rumped Warblers are fairly common breeders in the higher hills of the western part of the state, are abundant spring and fall migrants, and are variously common in winter on the Cape and Islands.



Yellow-rumped Warbler

Photo by Hal H. Harrison. Courtesy of MAS.

AT A GLANCE

Photo by Hal H. Harrison. Courtesy of M.A.S.



Can you identify this bird?

Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.

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