

"My wife saw the bird also from the same window and remarked on his colors. He remained in the mountain ash several minutes. I never saw him again, and have never heard that anybody else, other than my wife, saw him. I speak of him as a male. His plumage was very bright, and, of course, striking."

". . . I saw him in a great many different positions and he was near. With a view to checking up my own observation I called my wife to look at him and to describe to me his plumage. This was for the purpose of making the proof complete. She repeated the colors exactly as they looked to me. There can be no mistake in regard to them. . . "

Mr. Wardner is a very keen observer, always interested in birds, and there can be no doubt of the identification.—FRED H. KENNARD, *Newton Centre, Mass.*

**Courting Orioles and Blackbirds from the Female Bird's Eye-view.**—In 1923 the Baltimore Orioles arrived in Lexington, Mass., on May 13; a few days later I noted the following courting action:

A male Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) of strikingly brilliant plumage was singing loudly in a maple tree when a female Oriole took a long flight and alighted in the same tree. The male flew to her, placed himself directly before her, facing her at a distance of a few inches and here struck successively two attitudes; in one his body was nearly upright, straight and tall, in the other it was bowed downward and forward with the head at the level of the feet. The wings were held closely at the sides. In passing quickly from one attitude to the other, over and over again, he moved up and down with a sharp jerk, rather than in an easy sweeping motion, and he made a very short pause each time before changing direction.

This is a very simple motion, one may say—just an exaggerated bowing—not very different from the bowing, nodding, or swaying of many birds in the excitement of their courting displays. True enough, and it is not until we look at the action from the point of vantage of the female bird and see in our mind's eye, as nearly as we can, just what she sees, that we understand its significance.

In the first position noted above, the orange of the breast glows before her, and so near her that it fills a wide arc with blazing color. Then, as the male bird bends swiftly forward, and the head comes down, the orange is blotted out by black, as by a camera shutter, and immediately, as the bird continues to bend forward, out flashes the orange color again, now on the rump. Witnessed at close quarters, the appearance of this maneuver must be as the bursting out of a great sheet of flame, its instantaneous extinction into darkness, a flaring up again,—then darkness once more.

How different the courting of the Red-winged Blackbird! He makes good use of his ornamented wings, as the following notes show:

Late in May, 1915, I saw a male Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus*) paying vigorous attention to a female. She was on the ground; the male either on the ground or very near it. He faced

her with his wings partly spread and, although I was immediately in front of him, I could see practically the whole of his shoulder-patches. That the feathers forming the patch were elevated, I am almost sure, for if they had laid flat I could not have seen all of them unless the shoulders had been lowered and the tips of the wings somewhat raised,—and the wings were not in this position. Even from a distance of 50 or 75 yards the display of brilliant color was almost startling,—it seemed impossible that a Blackbird could make such a gorgeous show—but to the female viewing the display from only a foot away, it must have been dazzling—half the sky must have been shut out by fire.

That this display by the male of his secondary sexual characters constituted an actual courting maneuver was proved by the immediately subsequent action of the pair.

The Cowbird (*Molothrus ater ater*), like the Oriole, bows before the female; also like the Oriole his head is of a different color from his rump and breast. No great contrast to be sure—black and coffee-color—but perhaps by bowing for countless generations the head will take on a more brilliant color and the species will thereby gain finally as sharp a contrast as the Baltimore Oriole possesses now.—WINSOR M. TYLER, *Lexington, Mass.*

**A Blue Grosbeak Family in Southern Pennsylvania.**—The finding of a family of Blue Grosbeaks (*Guiraca caerulea caerulea*) on the line between Lancaster and Chester Counties as a matter of rare interest reaches beyond the ornithological circles of the immediate region. The accumulated evidence of a line of expert observers in Chester County since Townsend's day has produced only two or three records of the bird as a straggler there. About a hundred and twenty-five years ago John Bartram, the famous Philadelphia naturalist, reported the Blue Grosbeak as a summer resident of Lancaster County. The local bird students of the fifties and sixties seem to have listed the Grosbeak among the Lancaster County birds almost solely on Bartram's authority. To those of to-day the species had become little more than a passing tradition.

Clifford Marburger and I went to the Barrens of southern Lancaster County on July 12, 1923, to find the Prairie Warbler which we thought might be nesting there. A belt of serpentine extending into this part of the county from Chester County and nearby Maryland produces a soil of such thinness that the region resembles the New Jersey Pine Barrens in its sparse growth of post and barren ground oaks, pitch pine and red cedar.

We were working along the edge of the Barrens at the county line—the Octoraro Creek, when out of the evening bird chorus we caught a new voice. Fairly strong, clear and melodic, the song had in it the sprightly tones of the Indigo Bunting curiously combined with the softer warble of the Bluebird. A little cautious maneuvering and we had the songster in the fields of our binoculars. He was singing with head back and bill