

what might be observed as "normal" predation, as in the incident of the Huachuca Mountain Kingsnake. On days when summer rain storms were heavy, the Preserve's nature trail, directly below the nest, was closed to prevent anyone from inadvertently causing the female to abandon the nest and leave the eggs or nestlings exposed to weather. In addition to closing the trail during rain storms there was also a limit placed on the number of people using the trail at any given time.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank for their cooperation all those persons noted in the text as contributing data. Appreciation is due Mason E. Hale of the National Herbarium for his identification of the lichen used to camouflage the Berylline Hummingbird nests.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- MARSHALL, JOE T., JR. 1957. Birds of pine-oak woodland in southern Arizona and adjacent Mexico. *Pacific Coast Avifauna* 32:1-125.
- SHEPPARD, JAY M. 1968. Berylline and Violet-crowned hummingbirds in Arizona. *Auk* 85(2):329.
- VAN ROSSEM, A.J. 1945. A distributional survey of the birds of Sonora, Mexico. *Occasional Papers of the Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University* 21:1-139.

*Authors' addresses:* James O. Anderson, P.O. Box 5702, Bend, OR 97701. Gale Monson, 8831 N. Riviera Drive, Tucson, AZ 85704.

The February challenge featured this small bird, photographed just after it flew from a Date Palm in a southern botanical garden. Can you identify this bird to species?

## Answer to Snap Judgment 7

KENN KAUFMAN



From the viewpoint of a standard "field marks" approach, this would be a nightmare i.d. problem: we can see no wing pattern, no head pattern, actually no pattern at all; this is just a little bird with some streaks on the underparts. How to identify it?

An essential first step in so many identification problems is to place the bird in the correct family. This bird is a warbler, as indicated by its evident small size, compact body, short tail, and particularly by the thin, pointed bill. To carry it a step further, the bird belongs to the genus *Dendroica*, since the only other North American warblers with streaked underparts are the Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia* (which would have a distinctive face pattern in all plumages) and the waterthrushes and Ovenbird of the genus *Seiurus* (which would appear more elongated in body shape and would lack the deep notch in the tail and the fine point to the bill).

Having the bird narrowed down to genus it might seem we have reached an impasse, since so little can be seen of the plumage pattern. However, it is worth taking another look at those streaks on the underparts. From this low angle of view we can determine that the streaking is really quite extensive: long continuous streaks running from the chest far down the sides and flanks and across most of the breast, with something of a gap down the center of the underparts. The only *Dendroicae* that we might expect to display so much streaking are Palm *D. palmarum*, Cape May *D. tigrina*, Yellow-rumped *D. coronata*, and perhaps Magnolia *D. magnolia* or Prairie *D. discolor* warblers.

At this point the identification should become a simple one for anyone who knows all these warblers in the field, because among these species only the Cape May has such a short tail and such a spiky point to the bill. Actually, we brought up this very subject — the shape of this species — in the preceding issue, at the top of page 25. At least one reader (astute Stuart Tingley, who needs no extra clues for warbler identification) spotted this giveaway; if you noticed it, give yourself an additional five points for perception.

We couldn't resist giving away the identification in another way as well: by mentioning that the bird came out of a Date Palm. In the southern U.S., no birds are more typically associated with palms than the Yellow-throated Warbler *Dendroica dominica* (which was clearly not our Snap Judgment bird) and the Cape May Warbler. (The Palm Warbler, by contrast, is usually on or near the ground.) The Cape May in the photograph, one of the few ever recorded in Arizona, laid claim to a Date Palm in the Boyce Thompson Arboretum and spent November and December 1978 chasing away Gila Woodpeckers *Melanerpes uropygialis* and Curve-billed Thrashers *Toxostoma curvirostre* — a rare spectacle, indeed.

This photograph of the boisterous **Cape May Warbler** was taken by Kenneth V. Rosenberg.