

*The Condor*  
Volume 105, No. 4  
November 2003 C.E.  
Abstracts

## FEATURE ARTICLES

### DO MELANIN- OR CAROTENOID-PIGMENTED PLUMAGE ORNAMENTS SIGNAL CONDITION AND PREDICT PAIRING SUCCESS IN THE KENTUCKY WARBLER?

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Manuscript received 10 April 2003; accepted 25 July 2003.

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*Abstract.* Yellow and red feathers pigmented by carotenoids can signal a bird's condition and are important to both female choice and male-male competition. Melanin-based ornaments are thought to be less effective than carotenoid ornaments as indicators of condition, though their signal function is still relatively unstudied. We examined both carotenoid and melanin-pigmented feather ornaments in a single species, the Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*). Both males and females of this species have melanin-pigmented ornamentation (black crown, black face) and carotenoid-pigmented ornamentation (lemon-yellow undersides). Melanin-pigmented plumage patches were larger in males than females, and males had brighter breast plumage, with a larger ultraviolet component, than females. Among males in the wild, individuals in better condition had more extensive black caps and faces, but not brighter-yellow breasts. Males with larger black caps were more likely to attract mates. This work demonstrates that, in a species with both melanin- and carotenoid-pigmented plumage, melanin-pigmented ornaments can signal condition, and that a melanin-based signal can explain variance in mating success.

*Key words:* *Oporornis formosus*, *pairing success*, *reflectance spectra*.