



Gay Lotharios of the Wild

BY VANCE J. HOYT

THE COURTSHIP displays and tender ways of animals in love are various and curious, sometimes utterly fantastic; but they all possess in common one predominating trait: gay Lothario must somehow by "a thousand graces," arouse the ardor of his ladylove before he can win her charms. Even in the wild, love isn't based on sexual attraction alone. To an amazing degree, romance plays its emotional part.

Like us humans, some wild suitors promote their courtship by presenting presents to the loved one. Many male shore-birds bring fish to the female to arouse her interest. Johnny Wren presents gifts of twigs to demure little Jenny, which speaks plainer than words his tender feelings. The male waxwing is likely to display his gallantry by offering to his heart's desire some kind of small fruit as a love gift. If she accepts it and does not eat it, he has won. Then he settles down by her side on a branch and the two pass the love token back and forth between them in a trance of ecstasy.

Every feathered lover has his own peculiar way of courting. The snipe slides in circles, dancing like a fairy in the loveliest way imaginable, as he bows and pleads in a most convincing manner; the brilliant and talented ibis seats himself in a graceful position before the one he would have for his mate; while cranes have a regular serenade, and a cake-walk as grotesquely amusing as our own.

During their display some birds actually kiss. Ravens, kingfishers and guillemots hold each other's bill in tender embrace. The male puffin approaches the female and nibbles daintily at her bill. Storks court by facing each other and noisily clapping their big red beaks together. As they become increasingly impassioned, the tempo of their bill-clapping quickens.

Johnny Penguin is one of the most picturesque wooers of the feathered folk. He singles out the girl of his choice and wins the right to court her by using his flappers to knock the wind out of any possible rival.

Once the right to court her is won, he picks up a pebble and drops it at her feet. If the female takes up the pebble, Johnny's marriage proposal has been accepted.

All through nature the love affairs of the wild ones are replete with artful antics, fantastic rituals and sly ruses for winning a mate. The male sea horse, who possesses a pouch for brooding the family eggs, tempts the female by displaying his empty pouch. Repulsed by one female, he will try another until finally one responds by depositing her eggs in his sack for him to hatch and care for the young to follow. Some male spiders make known their suit by plucking the strands of a female's web. If Miss Spider is in the mood for romance she may accept him; if not, she will ignore his overtures or devour him as a tasty tidbit.

THE MALE of a certain crab on the Pacific Coast, known as the uca, has a singular ritual for exciting the female. I have watched this crab at high tide retire into his burrow in the sand, but always at low tide he emerged to display his alluring vestments. In a quarter to half an hour he changed from his usual drab hue to brilliant colors. His carapace became pure white, the big claw bright orange and the legs red. Then approaching the female, he began waving his gaudy-colored claw, beckoning with it and dancing around her in an enticing manner. If she allowed him

to approach her, there was mutual stroking of legs. Finally, overwhelmed, she meekly followed the male into his burrow.

The courting of the wild turkey is not only a matter of wooing but also a contest of bluff and challenge. As soon as the males hear the call of the female they rush to the spot and, whether or not the hen is in sight, fan out and erect their tails, draw their heads back on their shoulders, lower their wings with a quivering motion, and strut about in a pompous manner, at the same time emitting a series of puffs and stopping now and then to charge another male. Thus they work up fierce battles among themselves until the mightiest gobbler routs all rivals.

The rare umbrella bird of Central America is quiet and inconspicuous most of the year. But during the mating season the male begins its booming call that can be heard for miles. As it does so, a hidden sack on its throat swells until it is the size and color of a huge red tomato with a long tassel hanging from it. During this display the tassel vibrates wildly from side to side as a sort of charming love gesture. Beau Brummel really puts on a snazzy show for the girls.



The nuptial dance plays a very important part in the mating habits of some animals. It was always a delightful experience for me to watch the beautiful and interesting love dance of the

prairie sage cock of our western plains and foothills. He would strut about like a soldier on parade with his fan-like tail gracefully spread, his neck poised in the most approved military style. Thus, with wings stiffened and arched to the ground like the sails of a boat, he marched, strutted, drummed, wheeled, and uttered deep guttural and altogether unlovely sounds until some lonely female accepted him for better or worse.

SOME YEARS AGO, I accidentally witnessed the nuptial dance of a pair of black snakes, which proved to be the wildest and most startling animal love-making I'd ever seen in nature. At first the male kept crawling slowly after the female, his tongue darting in and out against her. This went on for some time, increasing in speed until the two snakes, instead of crawling, were racing wildly about, gliding over boulders, up into bushes and down again, as if they had gone mad. Finally the male, overtaking the female, wrapped his neck about her with the speed of lightning and drew himself along her body.

In this position the two continued their dance with their bodies close together, first one and then the other on top, heads held the same distance off the ground. Presently



the female suddenly reared the forward third of her body. The male immediately followed suit and the two posed with their heads close together. After this they continued to move about for some time, preserving the same general figure in spite of their motion. The entire dance continued for fifteen minutes or longer before the two moved off, apparently to mate later.

Males of some butterflies charm and persuade the female with a love potion. Whenever a passing species comes near the male, he sprays the visitor with his perfume. If it turns out to be a female of his own kind, she may settle on the ground and allow him to alight near her. If she does, he goes into his dance, jerkily running around her, rapidly opening and closing his folded wings. This action fans his scent toward her until she literally swoons with rapture.

Even the octopus is not immune to the tender emotions of love. In sight of a prospective mate, waves of color will sweep over him until he is blushing like a bashful swain.

But to win the approval of the female is not always an easy task. Feminine coyness plays its part. The female likes to discourage the male, even as she slyly "leads him on"; for in animal courtships, as well as human, nothing seems to be quite



so stimulating as a little resistance or a bit of a chase.

With some species, the female is definitely the aggressor in flaunting her charms to win the attention of the male. Female monkeys are natural born "vamps," and will go to any length in order to keep on the good side of the dominant male.

THE FEMALE red phalarope marine bird does all the wooing; then after she has won the male's affection, she browbeats him into the job of caring for the hatching of the eggs and the chicks later. When the female European field cricket succumbs to the serenade of her court-ing troubadour, she makes doubly sure that his philandering days are over. After she has accepted the fervent musician, she destroys his fiddle so that never again can he play for the favors of any rival.

Miss Scorpion, however, is the classic example of the proverbial saying, "The female is more deadly than the male." After winning her confidence by a long series of lover's allurements, her beau finally wheedles her into taking a "wedding stroll" with him. With claws outstretched and clasped, and tails prettily arched over their heads, the couple saunters about with measured steps. The male always leads the way by walking backward, never taking his eyes from those of Miss Bluebeard as they dawdle along the way, seemingly lost in love's sweet dream.

On several occasions I have

watched the wedding ceremonies of the scorpion, and always the sly male succeeds in leading his seemingly coy bride to his dwelling place in some small cranny among the rocks. Then he cautiously, but with firmness, escorts her into the bridal chamber. But, the next morning, on investigation, I always found only one of the pair present; and she was considerably larger, having roundly feasted on her wooer.

In some instances love in the wild is a rugged game—it really gets rough. All the horned and antlered Sir Lancelots are wicked fighters during the rutting season. Likewise, so are the members of the cat tribe.

Members of the weasel family, such as the mink, ferret and weasel, are savage and vicious murderers during the mating season. Almost crazed with passion, the male goes prowling for females. When two males encounter each other, they lunge at the throat or jaw of the other, their bodies whirling and straining in combat. The first one to lose the death-grip dies almost instantly in a flood of blood.

The amorous antics of the humpback whale are by far the noisiest love affair in creation. As a gentle prelude to the act of mating, the bull "booming" whale, some 70 feet in length, gives himself violent slaps with his huge pectoral fins.

Then, swimming side by side, the two giant lovers will interchange affectionate pats with their long fir that resemble distant cannonadin'

william henry chamberlin reviews

the income tax: root of all evil

by frank chodorov

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THE great Russian historian, V. O. Kluchevsky, who possessed the gift of eloquent expression, summed up the plight of the Russian people under the Moscovite Tsars in this striking phrase: "The state swelled; the people shrank." This is a familiar working of cause and effect under a powerful, centralized state, proved by the experience of the French people in the time of Louis XIV, of the Germans under Hitler, of the subjects of the later Roman Emperors.

Frank Chodorov, who possesses a rare capacity for considering financial and economic problems in the light of permanent moral and philosophical values, sees the United States threatened by this same danger of an octopus state sucking out the vitality and lifeblood of its sub-

jects. Chief instrument for this suction is the Federal graduated income tax, which, to Mr. Chodorov, is the root of all evil.

In a short treatise that can easily be read in an evening, the author makes a powerful case for the proposition that the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1913, struck a powerful blow at the principles of individual opportunity, states' rights and a federal government of limited and defined powers

which are written into the American Constitution. Mr. Chodorov is an absolutist in his convictions. No ten per cent reduction in income tax levies for him. He calls for the repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment, believing that nothing less drastic will undo the evil consequences of having

