

"THE LAST WORD OF A BLUEBIRD AS TOLD TO A CHILD":

"As I went out a Crow
 In a low voice said Oh,
 How do you do?
 I just came to tell you
 To tell Lesley (will you?)
 That her little Bluebird
 Wanted me to bring word
 That the north wind last night
 That made the stars bright
 And made ice on the trough
 Almost made him cough
 His tail feathers off,
 He just had to fly!
 But he sent her Good-bye
 And said to be good
 An wear her red hood,
 And look for skunk tracks
 In the snow with an axe
 And do everything!
 And perhaps in the spring
 He would come back and sing!"
 -----Robert Frost

A WHO-DONE-IT?:

"This last month saw the local group help a Great-horned Owl get back on its feet and into its natural environment. One Sunday evening, I got a call from Peggy Acord saying that she had a Great-horned Owl in a box in her garage and wanted to know if I could do anything for it. So Monday morning I loaded up a large cage and drove into town.

The owl was in excellent shape and his injuries, if any, were not known. After transferring the owl from the box to the cage, I drove back out to the ranch. When I unloaded the cage, the owl, who had been very quiet, began flapping both wings and using both feet quite well. I placed the cage in our feeder area and left the owl to quieten down. The owl spent the afternoon watching the squirrels come and go from the feeder. About dark I opened the main door to the cage, but the owl just sat and looked out. I tipped the cage slightly and the owl spread his wings. When one wing hit the open door, his head pivoted immediately from the screened side opening and focused on the open area. After a couple of seconds of looking, the owl gave a leap and flew across the creek into a large cottonwood tree where it stayed until dark.

We noticed our first Juncos and White-crowned Sparrows at the feeder on the morning of Nov. 6. We also have some night-time visitors. The first was a raccoon with a withered hind leg, now called Gimp. We thought to supplement his diet of scratch feed with some canned dog food. A skunk got wind of this 'goodie' and now comes in to feed also.

While on a photographing and sketching trip to the Kirtser ranch along the Canadian on the 28th of Oct., we saw one Golden Eagle, 39 Redheads, 4 Canvas-

backs, and one Pied-billed Grebe. There were also lots of Turkeys.

On the 4th of Nov., I saw 11 Sandhill Cranes flying over the ranch and the day before on the 3rd of Nov., about 500 Canada Geese flew over very high. On Nov. 7th there were 2 Brown Creepers at the feeder."

- Jim Jokerst.

BUFFALO LAKE IN MID-OCTOBER:

As illustrative of what birds can be found at the Buffalo Lake Wildlife Refuge in mid-October, the following is a list of the species seen there by Kenneth Seyffert on 10/22: Great-blue Heron (1); Mallard (abundant); Gadwall (common); Pintail (abundant); Green-winged Teal (abundant); Blue-winged Teal (common); American Widgeon (abundant); Shoveler (common); Redhead (60); Lesser Scaup (10); Sharp-shinned Hawk (4); Cooper's Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (1); Swainson's Hawk (1); Golden Eagle (2 - one of which was an immature); Marsh Hawk (1); Bobwhite (67); Sandhill Crane (41); American Coot (200+); Killdeer (25); Black-bellied Plover (1); Greater Yellowlegs (21); Lesser Yellowlegs (1); Dunlin (1 - by and large in winter plumage but black of belly still present though spotted with white); Long-billed Dowitcher (13); Semi-palmated Sandpiper (common); Western Sandpiper (1); Marbled Godwit (3); Sanderling (1); American Avocet (7); Ring-billed Gull (4); Franklin's Gull (200+); Mourning Dove (4); Barn Owl (1); Belted Kingfisher (1); Red-shafted Flicker (4); Ladder-backed Woodpecker (4); Horned Lark (common); Barn Swallow (2); Brown Creeper (1); Winter Wren (1); Long-billed Marsh Wren (2); Rock Wren (2); Mockingbird (2); Hermit Thrush (5); Swainson's Thrush (1); Mountain Bluebird (1); Townsend's Solitaire (1); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (5); Loggerhead Shrike (2); Myrtle Warbler (2); Audubon's Warbler (47); Western Meadowlark (common); Red-winged Blackbird (abundant); American Goldfinch (2); Rufous-sided Towhee (2); Savannah Sparrow (1); Vesper Sparrow (4); Oregon Junco (3); Chipping Sparrow (8); White-crowned Sparrow (18); Swamp Sparrow (2); Song Sparrow (7);

This list of 63 birds is not bad birding for a seemingly barren land and the avid birder could find still more for his or her list by entering a different habitat such as provided by Palo Duro Canyon. This same observer was in the canyon the previous day and saw, in addition to a number of those listed above, the following: scaled Quail (12); Golden-fronted Woodpecker (3); Black-crested Titmouse (2); Common Bushtit (17); Bewick's Wren (4); Canyon Wren (2); Robin (26); Golden-crowned Kinglet (1); Orange-crowned Warbler (1); Cardinal (2); Rufous-crowned Sparrow (3). To and from the canyon he observed on the prairie a Sparrow Hawk and a Burrowing Owl, while within the city limits of Amarillo he saw

House Sparrows, Blue Jays (2), a House Finch, and Starlings. That is a total of 30 species of birds in two days that could easily have been found in one, and if the observer had really hustled, still more could have been added. We invite comparisons with other localities on a like date.

Some other interesting observations of this birder at Buffalo Lake were Ring-necked Duck (15); Field Sparrow (2), Sage Thrasher (1), Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (9), Rough-legged Hawk (1); Ferruginous Hawk (1), Stilt Sandpiper (20), all on 10/15, while on 10/29 the number of Ring-billed Gulls there had increased to 112 and the Franklin's Gulls to 1000+, and there were 10 Eared Grebes and a Brown Thrasher and a Slate-colored Junco present. Peggy Acord reported an Osprey at Lake Tanglewood on 10/20, and said the Mountain Bluebirds had arrived there on 10/21. A Grey-headed Junco and Brown Thrasher have been back-yard visitors at her place. On 11/5 Kenneth Seyffert reported a Pigeon Hawk and an Eastern Kingbird at Palo Duro Canyon, and he saw 14 Tree Sparrows and 16 female Buffleheads at Buffalo Lake. Believe you me, 16 female Buffleheads feeding in a row is a charming sight! On 11/11 he reported a Blue Goose along with 110 Canada Geese at Elysian Fields, while in the fields nearby the McCown's Longspurs were abundant and there were 5 Chestnut-collared Longspurs. The following day he saw at least 20 Snowy Grebes at Buffalo Lake along with the first Common Merganser of the Fall, and a lace Nashville Warbler.

SOME MORE GOOD FINDS:

One of the more rare sightings of a species of bird in this area was made by Rena Ross on 10/29. At a feeder in her yard at 2805 S. Travis a Sage Sparrow appeared and lingered long enough to be seen also by Esther Waddell and Thelma Cox. This points up the moral that for good birding you don't necessarily have to go tromping the boon-docks to find them. Some of the Accidentals shown on our Check-list are there because a birder chose to stay home, had a pair of binoculars handy, and was patient.

On 10/28 Kenneth Seyffert had the good fortune to find 15 Horned Grebes at Elysian Fields. While this bird is listed as an irregular winter visitant in this area, when it does appear it is usually singly. To see 15 at one time, and to watch them closely through a scope, is an exciting experience.

Even more exciting to him, possibly because it was a lifer, was the presence of a Common Loon at Buffalo Lake on 11/12. On that calm, sparkling, crisp morning he watched the bird off and on as it fed in the middle of the lake off Cottonwood Cove. To add more lustre to the day, there were 3 Western Grebes present along with 1 Bonaparte's Gull!

A PROMISING COMPROMISE ON THE REDWOODS (From Audubon Conservation Guide):

A new proposal passed by the Senate

Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs has rekindled hope for a Redwood National Park this session. It is a true compromise; not entirely satisfactory to any of the parties concerned, but much better than no park at all.

The new park would consist of two main units, one in the Mill Creek region to the north (the area that has been favored by the Administration and that was endorsed by the National Audubon Society), the other in the Redwood Creek section to the south (choice of the Sierra Club and the Metcalf-Cohelan bill), plus a strip of redwoods along the coast connecting the two units. The compromise area would add up to about 50,000 acres.

Although the National Audubon Society would have preferred a different park, it has gone on record from the start as backing any proposal that would be effective in saving the redwoods. Likewise, the Sierra Club is supporting the compromise, although the plan is far short of what that organization recommended. And with the Senate backing of Sen. Kuchel, California Republican, and Sen. Jackson, Washington Democrat, momentum for the park is beginning to build again.

And Congress still has time to improve it; if there is enough public demand, the plan can be expanded and passed.

WHIPPLE WARBLINGS:

"Highways were happyways for me this summer as the road finally led to the Kirtland Warbler's hometown of Mio, Michigan. Mio is the center of an 11-square mile area devoted to the care and pampering of the Kirtland Warbler. Our first stop was at the office of the Oscoda County Weekly News where we introduced ourselves to Mr. Courneyer, owner of the paper. When he learned we had come from Texas to see the Kirtland Warbler, he looked us over from head to toe, shook his head and commented, 'I just don't understand people who travel all those miles just to see a bird!' But understand us or not he was most gracious and helpful. He played his tape of the Kirtland Warbler's song. This is a most unusual warbler song. It has a clear, ringing, straight forward quality to it. Different from any of the twiping songs of other warblers I have heard. We listened to the tape for quite some time as Mr. Courneyer insisted that knowing the song would aid us in locating the bird. Next he volunteered to come with us on our bird hunt! So after an impatient stop at the National Forestry office to get a permit to roam the area, we were on our way. The drive took us through a lovely, green jack pine forest area. The loveliness changed when the road made a sharp turn. Here was desolation, the green pines were gone and only blackened trunks remained. This was the first step in the care and pampering of Kirtland Warblers, project Pop-Corn. It is a controlled burn area. The jack pine has been deliberately burned so that the pine cones will release their seeds. In about

By burning this burned over area will produce jack pine of the right size to provide nesting sites for these rare birds. It was planned that about every 5 years a square mile of jack pine will be burned so as to keep a supply of young growth.

Further into the nesting area we found another step for the care and pampering of this bird. In a clearing were several very large traps baited to attract the cowbirds who parasitize the nest of the Kirtland. This project has met with some success as the day we were there about 50 of the trouble makers were in the traps.

Locating the bird itself was very simple ---if you know how! Mr. Courneyer had us drive into an area with some small jack pine and much shrubby undergrowth. Here he started his tape of the Kirtland Warbler's song. It wasn't long before that taped call was answered. We walked in the direction of the call. I was unbelieving, was it really going to be this easy? Well, it was --- just that easy! We followed the song and found a pair of warblers. They posed in the branches of a jack pine, wagged their tails and sang. There we stood watching and listening. It wasn't long before the song of our pair was echoed by another bird off in the distance. I was tempted to see if I could locate that bird. But watching our show-off pair was too good to leave. After we had looked, ejaculated, exclaimed and looked some more, we had to be on our way. But that summer day in the Kirtland Warbler's territory will be another high spot in my birding career."

- Katherine Whipple.

WHAT THE FIDDLER BIRD AND ROBIN SAY:

"What is that bird we hear singing now - or whistling - one low note and several high notes?" I asked. (The teacher, walking in the Green Mountains, has fallen in with a schoolgirl.)
"A fiddler bird, the teacher calls it," was the response. "The teacher says he says, 'Here I come fiddling, fiddling'; and the children at school they say it says, 'Rejoice and be glad', and the teacher says the robins say, 'Ephraim skillet, the sky is skillet, scour it bright, scour it clean.'"

The fiddler bird, or white-throated sparrow, to which we had been listening, exists most parts of New England only in the spring and autumn migrations, but it is a summer bird in the mountains.... Some fancy it cries, "I, I, peabody, peabody," whence comes still another of its names--- peabody bird.

-New England and Its Neighbors-

Henry Thoreau was of the opinion that the white-throated Sparrow sang "Poor, Sam Peabody, Peabody", but, he said, the peoples farther north claim it says "Oh, My Canada, Canada".

CALENDAR:

Nov. 20 - Monthly Society Meeting.

December - Annual Christmas Bird Count in the Palo Duro Canyon. Please be at the November meeting to aid in the selection of the date on which this count is to take place.

PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBER MEETING:

As of this writing, your Program Chairman regrets to report that none of the plans for a program for the November meeting have materialized. Please do not let this deter you from attending the meeting as there are a number of important business items that need everyone's attention in resolving.