

sports & outdoors

AN LYJ?

Birders often speak of 'LBJ's – Little Brown Jobs, a sometimes endearing term for all the sparrows and their kin we have to identify. Identifying LBJs can separate serious birders from those of us who only like birds that have a little pizzazz.

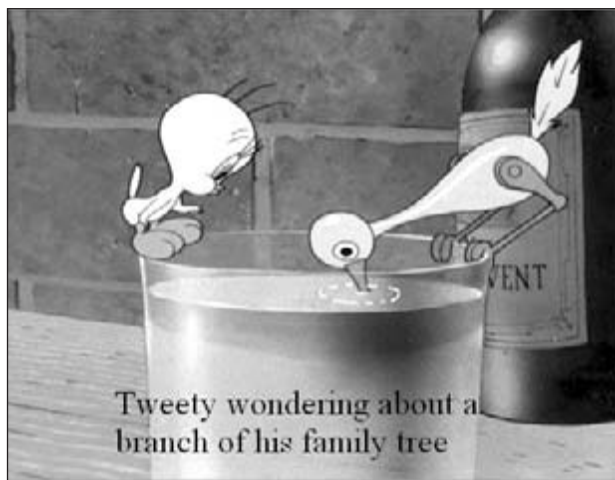
I must confess, I'm writing this column at the behest of a non-birding fan who faithfully proofs and nit-picks my column every week. So in the spirit of Halloween here is his favorite bird – the Tweety Bird. I'm calling it an LYJ – a Little Yellow Job!

Tweety's call is one of the first I learned as a child – "I tawt I taw a puddy tat!" And it still rings true in my ears. Actually I'd call that phrase more of a contact note. I recall Tweety's full song to be, "I'm a sweet little bird in a gilded cage. Tweety's my name but I don't know my age!" Another of his vocalizations is in the spirit of Jack Webb and Dragnet. "This is the city. 3 million people, 300,000 cats. I'm a bird. I live in a cage. My name – Tweety."

Strangely enough, although Tweety doesn't know his age, we do know it. He's just one year younger than I. Warner Brothers artist Bob Clampett created him back in 1942, and like so many birds, he had a different name at first, "Orson." Not only did he have a different name, he was also PINK not yellow. The color had to be changed because moviegoers complained that he appeared naked!

Tweety's first adversary was not Sylvester the cat. Instead he had to contend with two felines, named Babbitt and Catstello, who were patterned after dear old Bud Abbott and Lou Costello of 'Who's on First?' fame. The title of the movie, "A Tale of Two Kitties." It took a subsequent artist Friz Freleng to pair Tweety with his life-long adversary, the black and white, lisping Sylvester. That first cartoon from 1947 won Warner Brothers their first cartoon Oscar. Tweety was little more than a hatch-year bird and he was already a star.

Things just kept getting better though. Mel Blanc,



BIRDS OF NANTUCKET

by Kenneth Turner Blackshaw

who provided Tweety's voice, recorded a hit song in 1951 "I Tawt I Taw a Puddy Tat!" Tweety has become part of America's cultural literacy. We know Tweety Bird kind of like we know the Red Sox play in Boston. But do you really know Tweety?

Tweety is small, very yellow, orange legs, big orange feet, and a huge head that is bigger than his body. He has lovely blue eyes with long lashes. Tweety's strange shape makes you think he was on steroids long before it was fashionable.

People who know birds and cartoons have identified Tweety as an American Singer Canary, two thirds Roller Canary and one third Border Canary. All our domestic canaries relate back to a finch from yes, the Canary Islands, *Serinus canaria*. Interestingly the Canary Islands weren't named for these birds at all. There were fierce wild dogs there and 'Canary' comes from the Latin word for dog.

When I was growing up we always had one of these lovely yellow canaries singing in its cage in our home on Chestnut Street. Singing in canaries is sex-linked. Only males do it. Since Tweety often sings, he must indeed be a 'he.'

Did Tweety ever make it to Nantucket? He sure did. He made all my early birding 'year lists' because he was often the subject of the wonderful cartoons played before the main features at the Dreamland Theater. But his visits to our island were always too brief. He never nested or showed up on a Christmas Bird Count. For that matter, Tweety seems to be a bit of a 'one-off' creature. I've never seen another like him so the gene pool is dreadfully small – no mating, no eggs.

But Tweety does appear to have a close relative nonetheless – Woodstock, Snoopy's friend in Charles Schultz's wonderful Peanuts comic strip. He is considerably younger, not appearing until 1967. Schultz later commented that Woodstock was actually named for the rock festival in Woodstock, NY.

Tweety's popularity is still vast. With cable TV and the cartoon channel you can see him almost every day. He was the subject of a U.S. Postal Service commemorative stamp in 1998 that was the year's top-selling stamp. On the web, one can stumble on "Tweety World" where you can buy among other things, 'Chia Tweety,' a little Tweety head that will sprout green 'hair' to cover his little yellow bald pate.

My friend and our sports editor, Steve Sheppard, commented he'd heard a rumor that Tweety had a 'canarial' disease called 'chirpies' and it was 'untweetable.' Perhaps that rumor started when someone saw Tweety with green hair. Anyway, you all have a happy Halloween and keep an eye out for LYJs. Remember to thank Warner Brothers for creating this entry for your cartoon bird list. ■

George C. West creates illustrations for these articles. If you enjoy 'social' birding, join the Nantucket Bird Club at 8 a.m. Sundays in front of Nantucket High School for a two to three hour birding trip. Call 228-1693 for more information. To hear about rare birds, or to leave a bird report call the Massachusetts Audubon hot line at 1-781-259-8805. Ask Ken a question at: kenandcindy1@comcast.net.

DOLPHINS RELAY CARNIVAL RESULTS

Saturday, Oct. 27 at the Nantucket Community Pool

Nantucket 224, Marshfield 204, Willy's East 142, Team Turbo 92, Sandwich 74

Nantucket took 8 first places in the 22 race event.

FIRST PLACE FINISHES

Boys 9-10 100 yard Medley Relay: Gus Day, Xander Raith, Tyler Wheeler, Will Pittman – 1:22.62

Girls 11-12 200 yard Medley Relay: Sophie Davies, Olivia Rand, Alexa Crosby, Ashley Wilson – 2:22.91

Boys 11-12 200 yard Medley Relay: Miles Geddes, Henry Blackwell, Jack Decker, Jackie Trudel – 2:25.65

Mixed 11-12 200 yard Freestyle Relay: Miles Geddes, Olivia Rand, Ashley Wilson, Jack Decker – 2:00.06

Mixed 13-14 200 yard Freestyle Relay: Cara Garufi, Alexa Dragon, Theresa Head, Merrill McCluskey – 1:56.97

Mixed 11-12 200 yard Breaststroke Relay: Alexa Crosby, Sumner LeBaron-Brien, Olivia Rand, Jack Decker – 2:41.02

Mixed 13-14 200 yard Breaststroke Relay: Robin Gottlieb, Alexa Dragon, Cara Garufi, Merrill McCluskey – 2:43.52

Mixed Age 225 yard Breaststroke Relay: Catherine Goode, Isabelle Roberts, Olivia Rand, Cara Garufi, Riley Wynn – 3:26.54

TEAM RECORD

Boys 11-12 200 yard Medley Relay: Miles Geddes, Henry Blackwell, Jack Decker, Jackie Trudel – 2:25.65

Next meet is a dual meet against Willy's East on Nov. 18 at 11 a.m.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with MGL Chapter 131, Section 40, and pursuant to Regulation 310CMR10:05, et seq., and with Nantucket By-Law Chapter 136, Section 3D, the Nantucket Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday November 7, 2007 at 4:00 p.m., in the Town Annex Conference Room at 37 Washington Street to consider the Notice of Intent filed by Richard and Catherine Mack to allow for the construction of a cottage with associated well, septic system and landscaping within the buffer zone to a bordering vegetated wetland at 181 Polpis Road, Assessors Map 45, Parcel 4.

NANTUCKET CONSERVATION COMMISSION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with MGL Chapter 131, Section 40, and pursuant to Regulation 310CMR10:05, et seq., and with Nantucket By-Law Chapter 136, Section 3D, the Nantucket Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday November 7, 2007 at 4:00 p.m., in the Town Annex Conference Room at 37 Washington Street to consider the Notice of Intent filed by Randolph G. Sharp Jr. to allow for the replacement/construction of two dwellings, construction of a boat house, pool and accessory landscaping within the buffer zone to land under the ocean, a salt marsh and bordering vegetated wetland and in land subject to coastal storm flowage at 14 Tennessee Avenue, Assessors Map 60.1.2, Parcel 6.

NANTUCKET CONSERVATION COMMISSION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with MGL Chapter 131, Section 40, and pursuant to Regulation 310CMR10:05, et seq., and with Nantucket By-Law Chapter 136, Section 3D, the Nantucket Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday November 7, 2007 at 4:00 p.m., in the Town Annex Conference Room at 37 Washington Street to consider the Notice of Intent filed by Barry & Judy Alpert to allow for the construction of an addition to an existing house within the buffer zone to a vegetated wetland at 9 Stuarts Way, Assessors Map 29, Parcel 906.

NANTUCKET CONSERVATION COMMISSION