

LOST IN A PECULIARLY UNIQUE NEIGHBORHOOD

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As an intrepid birder, I often go wandering around in the woods. Although I hardly ever get lost, sometimes I do get temporarily disoriented.

One time I was hopelessly befuddled. The entire morning was spent fumbling around in a dense forest looking for a way out. Finally, just before lunch, I came out of the woods and saw a narrow road. It was not heavily traveled because weeds were growing quite vigorously down the center and even completely across in spots. Nevertheless, I figured if I followed it, sooner or later I would wind up someplace. I chose the downhill direction because that might have a greater probability of connecting with a more heavily traveled road.

As I walked along, I got in some birding. Along a wet thicket I heard, "Fee-bee'-oh...Fee-bee'-oh..." Aha, Alder Flycatcher! As I went a little farther, just past some old wet brushy pastures I heard, "Fitz-bew...Fitz-bew..." Aha, Willow Flycatcher! I stopped and looked through my binoculars and enjoyed some great views with my telescope. But, as I went along, I became puzzled by the lack of any other birds. Not even a Common Yellowthroat or a Black-capped Chickadee. Not even a pesky American Crow or the raucous squawks of a Blue Jay. As I ambled along, mile after mile, all I ever heard was "Fee-bee'-oh...Fee-bee'-oh..." and "Fitz-bew...Fitz-bew..."

The farther I walked, the hungrier I grew. Fortunately, a couple of jelly donuts were stashed in my backpack. I chomped into one, but eager anticipation abruptly shifted to outraged disappointment. Instead of jelly, there was just a barren cavity. "Pshaw!" I exclaimed, only to be admonished by "Fee-bee'-oh" and "Fitz-bew". "Everything snaps back to the average", I reassured myself, so maybe the next donut will have an extra dollop of jelly; I hoped. Nope. No such luck. That one was also devoid of jelly. This obviously was not an average day. "This must be an omen" I muttered, only to be endorsed by "Fitz-bew" and "Fee-bee'-oh". Disgruntled and hungry, I trudged on.

"Where the hell am I?" I wondered. "This is such a strange place. When I get out of here I will have to locate it on a map and take the Chenango Bird Club here for a field trip. No one would believe that there is a road where only two species of birds exist."

As I covered more miles, the road got progressively narrower. It became just a single file path. Nevertheless, I continued, still hearing only "Fee-bee'-oh" and "Fitz-bew".

Then, at last, after all this walking, it finally dawned on me where I was. The empty donuts should have alerted me. They were an unambiguous diagnostic field clue to the genus. Of course, I was walking on Flycatcher's Trail.

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