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We Catch the Wind- Poem

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contributing towards the Partners in Flight International Bird Conservation Program's efforts to "keep common birds common." Working in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion of southern Oregon and northern California, and beyond, Klamath Bird Observatory provides information to help federal, state, and local land managers better protect and enhance bird populations and their habitats. Klamath Bird Observatory also reaches out to local communities and schools, connecting people with science and conservation. To learn more about Klamath Bird Observatory, visit www.klamathbird.org or call (541) 201-0866.

We Catch the Wind

By Susan Craig

On overcast mornings, we open the nets.
It's quiet and dark, the grasses are wet.
Before the sun rises we hear the first notes.
Suspended like ghosts, small passerines float.

From the dawn sky they tumble, all manner of birds
-As the soft net enfolds them we work without
words.

Red, yellow and blue ones - birds
common and rare.

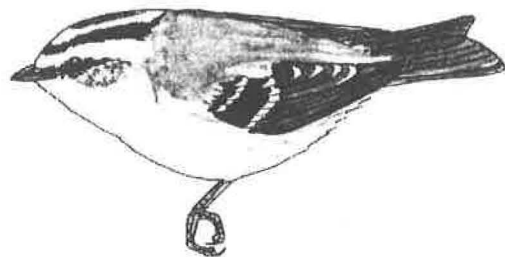
Old ones and young ones with plumage so fair.
Kinglets and thrushes, warblers and wrens -
We're delighted to see them, just like old friends.
We measure and weigh them (remember to band!)
Then opening fingers, release from the hand.

All over the world, we pluck birds from the sky.
We leave warm beds and families, and shoes that
were dry. And once in a while we pull down the
prize -The one bird that brings a bright spark to our
eyes.

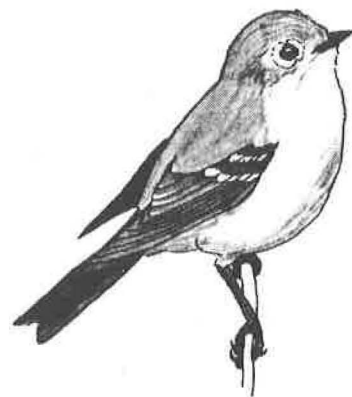
Maybe a Red Knot with bracelet so worn.
Maybe a hummingbird, lost and forlorn.
Perhaps it's a falcon from some foreign land
Blown off her course and into our hands.

With wingbeats so sure, from our grasp they fly
And thus they return to the care of the sky.
Migration will take them to lands far away.
Winter is coming - with us they can't stay.

Creatures of wind, creatures of air -
Flying through weather both wretched and fair.
From the sky we are given these prizes to band,
Catching the wind right here in my hand.



Golden crowned Kinglet



Ruby crowned Kinglet

Drawings by George West