

other birds, reducing the time required at available water. This is important, as most predators are known to ambush their prey while drinking.

Curve-billed Thrasher: Some thrashers are secretive birds, difficult to observe, but not the Curve-billed Thrasher. Bold and inquisitive, it runs in the open and calls "whit-wheet!" from prominent perches. In parts of the Southwest it has adapted to advancing civilization almost as well as the mockingbird. Curve-billed Thrashers may even thrive in the middle of cities, as long as they can find a few cholla cacti in which to place their nests.

Pinyon Nuts: In the American Southwest, people and many species of wildlife, have used the seeds of the Pinyon Pine as a food source. In such arid, desert regions where wood is in short supply, the Pinyon Pine has also been an important source of fuel. For centuries the nutty taste of pine seeds has been enjoyed by many cultures throughout the world. Their shells have been found in excavations of Greek and Roman ruins. They were included in the diet in ancient Mediterranean societies. Today, commercial gatherers harvest thousands of pounds of Pinyon nuts each year for distribution to food stores and gourmet restaurants.

Saguaro Fruit: After a saguaro flower growing on a saguaro cactus has been pollinated, it begins its transformation into a fruit. Complete ripening takes approximately 30 to 40 days. Dried flowers often remain attached to the ripening fruit. Near the end of the ripening period, the bright red fruits begin to split open. Inside are approximately 2000 tiny black seeds. Both the flesh and seeds are consumed by animals and humans.

Chuckwalla: *Sauromalus ater* is the name presently given to all Chuckwallas living in our Southwestern Deserts. These large, plump lizards have loose folds of skin around the neck and shoulders. They have a thick blunt tail and grow 11 to 18 inches long. These diurnal lizards emerge in the morning and, before seeking food, bask in the sun until its optimum body temperature of 100 - 105 degrees F. is reached. Strictly herbivorous, it eats fruit, leaves, buds and flowers. When the Chuckwalla senses danger, it scurries between rocks and lodges itself tightly in crevices by inflating itself.

NARRATOR 1: Once a desert woman chased a Fringed-toed Lizard into a hole in her garden. She grabbed a shovel and began to dig the lizard out. Instead, she dug out a pot of gold.

NARRATOR 2: The woman was overjoyed with her luck! She called to her husband and only son. When they saw the pot of gold, they danced all over the desert sand, threw golden coins a Brittlebush, and shouted,

MOTHER/SON/
NARRATOR 4/FATHER: "We're rich! We're rich!"

NARRATOR 3: Then the wife said,

WIFE: "We must keep this good fortune a secret. There isn't enough gold here to share with all our greedy kinfolk, and we have greedy kinfolk from here to the rainforests."

NARRATOR 3: The husband and son agreed.

NARRATOR 4: But the next day the son could not keep his tongue quiet and told everyone at school about the pot of gold. Soon everyone in town knew.

NARRATOR 1: Finally, word reached the husband and wife that kinfolk from as far away as the rainforests were headed their way.

NARRATOR 2: The wife said to her husband,

WIFE: "Don't worry dear. I have a plan!"

NARRATOR 2: Then she told her husband all about it.

NARRATOR 3: The next morning the wife called to her son and said,

WIFE: "My boy, we have received bad news. This very night there is to be another Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War and we need to be prepared for it."

BOY: "Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War!"

NARRATOR 3: cried the boy.

BOY: "What is that, and have we had one before, and darn it all, whatever shall we do?"

WIFE: "The last war was fought before you were born,"

NARRATOR 4: answered his mother.

WIFE: "Now, you must follow my instructions carefully. Do just as I say, or the Ladder-backed Woodpeckers will surely peck the hair from your head and use it to build nests in our Cottonwood trees. When the time comes, you must hide in the flat roofed shed. Your father and I will lock the door and board the windows. Your hair will be saved!"

BOY: "Sounds wacky to me, but I'll do it."

NARRATOR 4: When the time came, the farmer and his wife led their son to the flat roofed shed, put him safely inside, locked the door, and boarded the windows. Then the wife yelled,

WIFE: "Oh, no. Help! It's time for the Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."

NARRATOR 1: The wife took a long heavy stick from an ironwood tree and began to pound on the sides of the shed.

NARRATOR 2: She pounded this way and that way, no matter which way, as long as there was enough noise. Then the wife yelled,

WIFE: "Oh, no. Help! It's time for the Silly-Willy, Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."

NARRATOR 3: The wife ran into her kitchen, brought out the washtub, and banged upon it with a wooden spoon.

NARRATOR 4: Her husband let out the dog, who chased the cat around the Jumping cholla. There was banging, growling, hissing, and squealing. Then the wife yelled,

WIFE: "Oh, no. Help! It's time for the Sticky-Wicky, Silly-Willy, Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."

- NARRATOR 1: Desert critters from near and far heard the noise and decided to investigate. Bighorn sheep came down from the rocky slopes above.
- NARRATOR 2: Coyotes and coatis mixed, mingled, and ran around the flat roofed shed. Bleating, growling, chattering, barking, and howling sounds filled the air.
- NARRATOR 3: The coatis banged on the sides of the shed with their long tails. Then the wife yelled,
- WIFE: "Oh, no. Help! It's time for the Sticky-Wicky, Silly-Willy, Bangy-Wangy, Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."
- NARRATOR 4: More critters appeared. A Roadrunner ran in circles in front the flat roofed shed.
- NARRATOR 1: Quail, Turkey Vultures, Barn Owls, Red-tailed Hawks, and Mourning Doves, fluttered from fence post to rooftop, clucking, hissing, squeaking, cooing, and scratching. A Curve-billed Thrasher cried out "whit-wheet, whit-wheet, whit-wheet".
- NARRATOR 2: After a while, all noise stopped and the critters drifted away. The wife unlocked the door of the flat roofed shed and said,

WIFE: "You can come out now. The war is over and your hair is saved!"

NARRATOR 3: The boy was delighted to learn his parents had survived the Sticky-Wicky, Silly-Willy, Bangy-Wangy, Very-Scary, Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."

NARRATOR 1: The next morning the family went for a hike through a nearby canyon. When they stopped for a picnic lunch, the boy and his father sat on one side of a large rock while mother sat in the shade on the other side.

NARRATOR 2: Suddenly, the mother pulled a packet of pinyon nuts from her knapsack, threw it over the rock and into her son's lap.

BOY: "Well, this is wacky! How did these pinyon nuts get here?"

NARRATOR 4/
FATHER: "Oh, they must have come here on the wind. To think we have lived to see the day when pinyon nuts blow in on a breeze. That's almost as wacky as the Sticky-Wicky, Silly-Willy, Bangy-Wangy, Very-Scary, Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."

NARRATOR 1: The boy ate the nuts. Next the mother pulled some saguaro fruit from her knapsack and threw the fruit over the

rock and into her son's lap.

BOY: "Well, this is wacky! How did this saguaro fruit get here?"

NARRATOR 4/
FATHER: "It must have blown in on the wind. To think we have lived to see the day when saguaro fruit drops from the skies! That's almost as wacky as the Sticky-Wicky, Silly-Willy, Bangy-Wangy, Very-Scary, Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."

Narrator 2: The boy split the fruit open and ate the red plup. It tasted a bit like strawberries. After lunch they headed home and came upon their neighbor's barn at the side of a dusty road.

NARRATOR 3: The man and his wife could hear a Barn Owl hissing inside the barn. The boy heard it too, and said,

BOY: "That's a wacky sound! Is it someone whispering?"

NARRATOR 4/
FATHER: "Why I do believe that's the sound of a giant Chuckwalla carrying off our neighbor's wife! To think we have lived to see the day when a Chuckwalla has his way around here! That's almost as wacky as the Sticky-Wicky, Silly-Willy, Bangy-Wangy, Very-Scary, Great-Gila Monster, Wacky-Woodpecker War."