

The Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club was founded to increase knowledge and appreciation of birds through education, research, preservation and conservation, and to provide public awareness of birds and their role in the environment - all of which remains our goal and purpose to this day.

Unless otherwise noted, events are held Retzer Nature Center, S14 W28167 Madison Street, Waukesha, WI 53188

Retzer Nature Center is located about 4 miles west of

Waukesha, near the end of Madison Street.

## Let's Go Birding!

- April 29 - Badertscher Preserve
- May 6 - Bird Count @ Retzer
- May 13 - May Count
- May 20 - Monches Woods
- May 27 - Vernon Marsh
- June 4 - Beulah Bog
- June 9 & 10 - Bio Blitz at Fox River Park

# THE GOSS HAWK

Volume 1, issue 7

April 23, 2017

## The Story of Peter, Charles, Tom & Fred

(Based on the Reminiscences of Peter G. Weber, Charles Sontag and Tom Soulen)

A Moment from the Archives from Club Historian Jennifer Tyskiewicz

It was the most delightful birding trip of my teen years! S. Paul Jones took Chuck and myself (Peter), on a meandering back roads jaunt to Horicon Marsh in late summer. Years later, memories of rural, small-town Wisconsin come back to me from that trip.

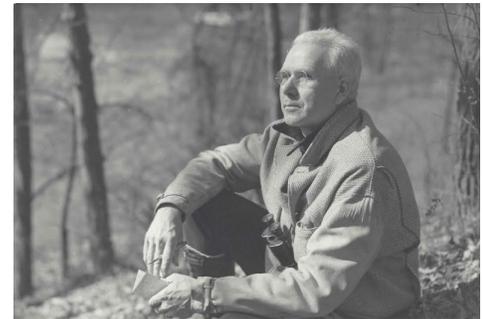
Once we arrived at Horicon, the shorebirds and wetland birds were so spectacular that I was inspired to paint a mural of it on the wall of my room! Can you imagine my folks allowing me to deface the walls of our home!!

Anyway, I made them proud

when the Milwaukee Sentinel Sports Page published an article about my Horicon Marsh mural. The entire mural was so large....or my attic room so small....that the photographer had to step out onto the roof to get all of the mural in one shot! For all I know, that mural may still be on the walls of that room in Waukesha! (See photo of Peter G. Weber working on the mural).

A memorable night....my first Woodcock "roading" experience at the rural Kettle

Moraine home of Paul and Em Hoffman prior to a B.F. Goss Bird Club meeting. I was quite impressed with the Woodcock display....and the evening became even more memorable when I was elected as the club's Recording Secretary that (Four Boys cont. on page 3)



S. Paul Jones in the field

## Waukesha May Count - 5/13

The Goss Bird Club is one of a few remaining groups in the state that still conducts a May Count. Our count is conducted in the same 15 mile diameter circle as our Christmas Bird Count. The count will take place on May 13. If you would like to join any of the groups, contact the section leaders listed here!

1. OPEN 262-542-0313 Waukesha/Fox River
2. Jasonn Weber 262-796-9896 Phantom Lake/SE Area
4. Jim Toft 262-544-6584 Vernon Marsh
7. Mike Fort 262-968-3276 No. Prairie/Genesee/Wales
8. Anne Moretti 262-965-3860 South Kettle Moraine
10. Jennifer Tyskiewicz 262-786-0172 Retzer Nature Center
13. Sandy Pearson 262-968-9846 Nagawicka/Pewaukee Lake Area
14. Wally Hahn 262-547-1004 Dousman Area/

## Walk the Wauk with The Goss Hawks

This spring the Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club is joining forces with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, and other partners to raise support for statewide bird conservation programs and our own bird-related activities. We are doing this through the fifth annual **Great Wisconsin Birdathon**, which aims to raise at least \$75,000 for our state's breeding, migrating, and wintering birds.

The Goss Bird Club, or **The Goss Hawks** as we will be known for the birdathon, have created a Birdathon team that will be hiking 35+ miles of the Ice Age Trail as it winds through Waukesha County. Between April 15 and June 15 we'll find as many bird species as possible. Details of our walk and our birding results can be found at our team page on the Birdathon website. Go to [WIBirdathon.org](http://WIBirdathon.org), click on the Donate tab, and search for The Goss Hawks.



**Goals for The Goss Hawks are to see 150 bird species and raise \$ 1,000.** Half will support our local bird projects and half will support eight statewide programs that help meet the year-round needs of Wisconsin's birds. Local projects we intend to support are building and installing benches at local nature trails, sponsoring nest box trails, and other projects for birds and birders throughout Waukesha County.

**Join us on the Trails!** The trail is broken up into 28 segments ranging from .62 to 3+ miles. Habitat varies from open prairie to oak savannah to pine forest and even some urban sections. To help the team complete the walk, claim a section and start birding! If you don't feel like taking your own section, partner up! Or join on a section with birders who have more advanced skills. This is a great opportunity to hone your ID skills as you hike the trail and enjoy the outdoors while raising funds for the birds in our state and for the bird club! To grab a section, contact Tim Hahn ([thahnbirder@gmail.com](mailto:thahnbirder@gmail.com))

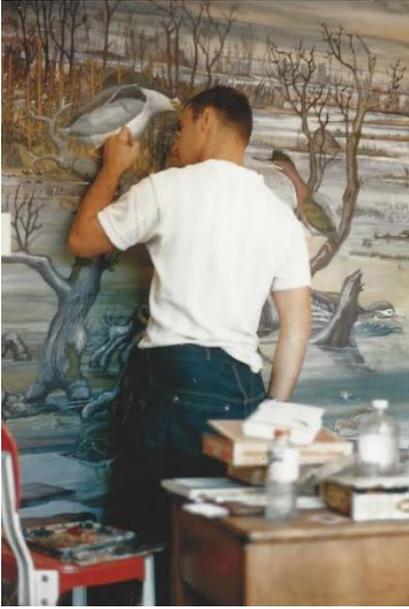
**Help us help our birds by pledging or donating to The Goss Hawks!** You can contribute a set amount or pledge per species. To donate online, go to our team page and make a tax-deductible donation. To donate offline provide a check or cash to our club treasurer Paula Stich.

[WWW.WIBIRDATHON.ORG](http://WWW.WIBIRDATHON.ORG)

Click Donate and search for the Goss Hawks.



**“Four Boys” continued**



**Peter Weber painting a mural of Horicon Marsh on his bedroom wall**

night.....the highest office I had ever held at the time....and since!

With the four of us boys in attendance at B.F. Goss Bird Club meetings, we soon drew the attention of the man who would take over as our ornithological (and “life-in-general”) mentor.....an enthusiastic birder and licensed bird-bander by the name of Robert “Bob” Adams. Under Bob’s tutelage, we were soon helping to band Sparrows, Towhees, Catbirds, Thrashers and Warblers in our Waukesha “backyard.”

We felt great responsibility as we gently

handled the birds. And, recording the data made us feel very important and helpful. We also learned.....painfully, how hard Cardinals and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks could bite!

Fred and I will never forget the “Nocturnal Swallow-Banding Caper!” On a late summer’s night, Bob Adams took us along to help him band roosting Bank and Rough-winged Swallows at a sand pit north of Waukesha. Bob instructed us to shine our flashlights in each burrow, and scratch with our finger at the burrow entrance. And, sure enough.....out came the Swallows....up to a dozen per burrow!!

We were stuffing Swallows into every available pocket in an effort to band as many as possible. Caught up in our task and losing track of time, we finally stopped about midnight when we ran out of bands!

**Bob Adams in June 1958 using a “drip trap” to catch birds for banding.**



Back at my house, my mom, who had thought that we were going out for a “short jaunt” with Bob, was beyond distressed by our tardiness. (Note: in the 1950’s, cell phones were a long ways from being invented!). There were stern reprimands from my mother to all involved.....including Bob...when he finally dropped us off. For weeks thereafter, I was reminded about the “staying-out- unreasonably-late” incident!

An upside to this caper: we continued to band at several sand pits in the next several years, and at a pit near Pewaukee Lake, we relocated a Swallow we had banded some years before and some miles away! We felt it was like finding a needle in a haystack!

**SUMMER CLUBBING!**

In years past, the bird club has been somewhat dormant throughout the summer. This summer, we hope to have a bit more involvement than years past. While most folks are rather busy with family and other social events, we still hope to have some birding fun as a club.

- June 24th we are planning to kayak/canoe from the Fox River Park into the Vernon Marsh.
- August 13th the WSO will visit Horicon Marsh, and Goss Club members often join them for this field trip.
- Stay tuned to news from the WBBA II - We have 15 blocks in Waukesha County, and most still need coverage. With enough effort most could be complete by the end of this summer. Contact Tim Hahn directly if you want to learn how to volunteer for the project!

# Birding With a Purpose

## The role of the bird survey in conservation, and how we can play a role!

The onset of spring in the northern hemisphere triggers one of the planet's great phenomena - the migration of billions of birds from their tropic and southern "wintering" grounds to their breeding grounds in the temperate, sub-arctic, and arctic climates. One of the great joys of being a bird watcher is heading out the door on a beautiful spring morning to see and hear all the birds migrating to or through our area.

Performing this migration is not easy for our birds. They face many perils each day along their route including predators (both native and non-native), natural and artificial barriers, and the risk of not being able to find enough food. Much of the reason for that last reason is due to habitat loss, either from the development of or reduction in quality of remaining natural areas. Birds require massive amounts of calories to complete their migration, and to consume enough calories there must be sufficient habitat in which to find their food.

How much habitat is needed? Well it's certainly more than is available! With so many of our birds declining in population, it's evident that habitat loss is a major threat to birds. To keep our birds around, we need to know what sort of habitat they prefer and keep as much of it around or create more of it. And the first step to any habitat management program is to determine which species are using the habitat we still have available.

To accomplish this, we must take surveys of the birds that are present, and then repeat the same surveys over time, thereby creating trends that show us how the birds are fairing. Are they increasing? Decreasing? If so, what plants do they rely on? Are there changes to the habitat available to them in these same spots? The answers to all these questions are what property managers use to make decisions for maintaining and creating stop-over and breeding habitat for birds.

So what can we do to help? Club members of all experience levels have participated in bird surveys for decades. You may think that one needs to know all the birds to add value to the survey, but that is not true! Great learning can take place while surveying birds, especially when partnering with birders who have participated in years past.

### JOIN THE FUN IN ONE OF THESE SURVEYS THIS SPRING!

- **May 6** - The club will join with Retzer in conducting a survey of birds on the grounds of the nature center. This will help naturalists going forward in determining how they manage the habitat.
- **May 13** - The club will conduct our annual May Count, finding as many species as possible, and the results will be submitted to the WSO to see how we compare with other May Count circles.
- **June 9 & 10** - Waukesha County Parks and the Milwaukee Public Museum will conduct a BIO BLITZ at Fox River Park in Waukesha. This full scale biological survey includes all flora and fauna, with the avian survey being conducted by members of the Goss Bird Club! Spence provided basic info about this event in March. Stay tuned for future updates with more info on how to join in!
- The **Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II** is a repeat of the atlas conducted in the late 1990s. Over 1300 blocks throughout the state are surveyed to take a snapshot of the status of 230+ species that breed here. Several club members have already participated in this survey, and hopefully many more will in the remaining three years of the project. Check with Tim Hahn to see how you can participate!