



BENJAMIN F. GOSS BIRD CLUB

THE GOSS HAWK

March 17, 2019

Volume 3, Issue 6

Inside this issue:

The Goss Hawks Fly Again!	1
WINC is 25!	2
Dear Ben Goss....	2
Take Five with... Don & Christine	3
Conservation Congress Meets April 8	4

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 at Retzer Nature Center, located about 4 miles west of Waukesha, near the end of Madison Street.

**S14 W28167 Madison St,
Waukesha, WI 53188**

The Goss Hawks Fly Again in 2019 Teaming up with Waukesha Cty Parks for Reforestation!



The Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club is once again joining forces with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, WBCI, and the WSO to raise money in support of statewide bird conservation. Our team The Goss Hawks (get it? Ben Goss Club Goshawk?) gets the added benefit of being a participating organization, so we receive half of the funds we raise for local causes!

Overall, the 2019 state-wide goal for the birdathon is to raise \$90,000. The last time we fielded a birdathon team was 2017, when we were a top-five fundraising organization, bringing in over \$1,300! And as a participating organization, we received half of that to use for local causes. Our goal is to repeat that effort in 2019.

This year, The Goss Hawks will be teaming up with Waukesha County Parks to benefit their reforestation in the parks. The money we raise will be used to purchase trees and materials to expand the county forests. Places such as Fox River Park, which already contain excellent forest remnants, will be bolstered with new trees to expand habitats for nesting birds and other wildlife.

Participation in the birdathon involves two aspects – birding and fundraising.

The fun part is the birding. Just as a walk-a-thon is about walking, a bird-a-thon is about birding. Waukesha County Parks has identified a number of parks and greenways where our birding expertise can be utilized to determine what birds are and aren't there. All you have to do is sign up for one of the parks or greenways, and then visit the park at least once, or many times, from April 15th to June 15th. Document the birds you see and hear, and report them to Tim Hahn,

who will compile the team list.

The fundraising can be whatever you want to make of it. If you want to donate, that's great! If you have friends and family who wish to donate, even better! Send them the link below, and they can donate using a credit or debit card. The bird club can also accept cash or check, which can be forwarded to club treasurer Paula Stich.

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 enjoy the outdoors while raising funds for the birds in our state and our home county!



**Waukesha County
Park System**

To grab a section, sign up at a club meeting or contact Tim Hahn (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:

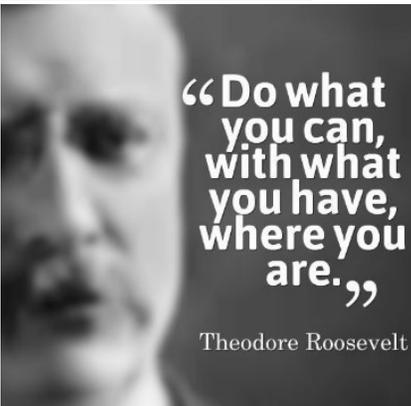
wibirdathon.dojiggy.com/gosshawks

Parks

Fox Brook Park	Fox River Park
Menomonee Park	Minooka Park
Mukwonago Park	Muskego Park
Naga-Waukee Park	Nashotah Park
Retzer Nature Center	Monches Park
	Ryan Park

Greenways

Pewaukee River	Ashippun River
Spring Brook	Fox River



“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”

Theodore Roosevelt

WINC TURNS 25!

Believe it or not, Wildlife in Need Center (WINC) in Oconomowoc is turning 25 this year! In celebration they will be hosting various events, culminating with an **anniversary celebration JULY 20TH.**

Upcoming WINC Events:

March 24th: Pancake Breakfast and “Baby Shower”

April 6th: Annual Banquet @ Legend of Brandybrook

For more info visit www.helpingwildlife.org



Dakota the Great Horned Owl (photo by Ryan Hill)

A Moment from the Archives with Jennifer Tyskiewicz

“Dear Ben....I have many questions and I need to know the answers.....I read your column in the Waukesha Freeman every month....”

Thus, the B.F. Goss Bird Club took on the role of writing an “advice” column for the lovelorn of the birding community, who had become smitten with their backyard birds.

This column appeared for some months in the Waukesha Freeman during 1939. It would always contain a headlined article, said to have been “prepared” by the members of the bird club, followed by several bird-related questions and answers, and concluding with a list of “birds seen” in Waukesha County during that past month.

Some of the article titles were such as, “Scarlet Tanager is Brilliant Target: But, Its’ Mate Wears Coat of Olive Green,” in a reference to the fact that this bird was once hunted for its’ lovely feathers, with “boys and men with guns and sling shots annually taking their toll on them;” “Tiny Warblers Arriving Here;” and “Not All Sparrows Unwanted: White-throated Species Has a Sweet Song.”

Questions that were posed and answered had to do with many facets of birdwatching, such as identification:

“What is the large brown bird in my currant bushes, with a long tail that reminds me of a Mockingbird?”

Answer: “It’s a Brown Thrasher.”

What is the bird with the deep blue back and white underparts that is trying to get into the opening of my wren house?

Answer: “A Tree Swallow...and we suggest that you whittle the hole a bit larger to accommodate this valuable bird.”

Other questions had to do with bird habits and habitats, such as: **“Does the Nuthatch remain in Wisconsin throughout the year?”**

Answer: “The White-breasted does, but the Red-breasted is a migrant.”

“Where can I see Wild Geese?”

Answer: “Drive west from Elkhorn about 4 miles on Highway 15. After passing a long row of Evergreen Trees on the right, take the first turn to the right. Go about one mile or until you come to a small pond on the left.” (Can you imagine!)

Some questions involved birdwatching equipment, such as

“What kind of glasses are recommended?”

Answer: “8 x 30 are used by many bird students.”

Something tells me that the person answering the questions may have been the same person posing the questions....but, this Q & A format, combined with an article and a list of birds seen in the county, added up to an interesting column...and no one was the wiser, except for maybe the owls!



Don and Christine freezing at the rim of a foggy Grand Canyon. 12/31/12

Take Five with.....

Christine and Don Reel

Christine Reel is the Goss Bird Club Secretary. She and Don have been club members for 27 years, so it's about time we got to know them better!

The beginning

It was January 1992, and our kids were outgrowing the need for us. Don and I searched for an activity that would excite and challenge us in our post-parenting years. Enter birding and the first bird on my life list: American Coot.

Of course I had been aware of birds, just not aware of birders or birding until my boss convinced me that it would be a great fit for us. My dad loved nature, and together we watched chickadees swirl around us at our cabin in northern Marinette County, and we were thrilled to hear whip-poor-wills serenade from the cabin's roof – at least for the first hour of the night. (A few years ago, Don and I went back to that area on an early summer night. We turned the corner onto a gravel road and were stopped instantly by the glowing eyes of a dozen and more whip-poor-wills jumping up from the road surface to grab insects. A magical experience indeed!)

The birding groups

That first year we rapidly came to understand that we wanted to join other birders in the quest for birds and knowledge. Someone at Retzer Nature Center told us to contact Bob Adams, who gave us information about the Goss bird club. We joined immediately and went on an April bird walk in Minooka with the club. Someone glanced into a treetop and identified a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. I was skeptical – how could she possibly know what that little flitting sweetheart was – I could hardly see it – it didn't stay still long enough. (I've been corresponding secretary of the bird club since 2010 and recording secretary since the fall of 2017.)

We joined WSO about that time too, to become part of and support the work of the state's premier birding organization. In 1996 we jumped at the opportunity to manage the WSO Bookstore, which we did until 2002. Shortly after we retired from the bookstore, I became WSO's treasurer, in which capacity I served until 2013. I have continued serving WSO as treasurer emeritus, and I am currently treasurer for several of WSO's projects.

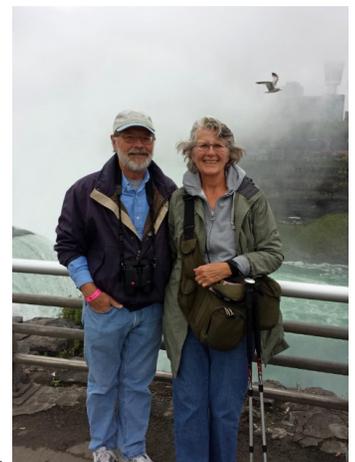
The birds

One of our favorite aspects of birding is the focus it gives our travels. We have gone birding (and geocaching) in all 72 counties of Wisconsin, in 49 states (all but Hawaii), and in three other countries (Canada, Mexico, and Costa Rica). Trying to focus on highlights makes my head spin. But here are some:

- Military Macaws flying through the valley below us in Mexico, their elegant tails flowing behind
- A tiny female Ruby-throated Hummingbird flitting from flower to feeder and back to flower in our yard
- A male Blackburnian Warbler's flashy throat in Fox River Sanctuary
- Innumerable Scissor-tailed Flycatchers on fence posts along the highway through Oklahoma
- Hundreds of thousands of Sandhill Cranes awakening noisily along the Platte River in Nebraska on a late-March pre-dawn morning – and hundreds awakening just as noisily in a marsh along Wisconsin's Trumpeter Trail near Babcock
- A Winter Wren's haunting song ringing without end from a wooded streamside in Burnett County
- Sweet Red-breasted Nuthatches at our winter feeders
- All three species of rosy-finch on a wintry day at the top of Sandia Crest in New Mexico
- Thousands of raucous kittiwakes nesting on a cliff rising straight out of the ocean in the waters off Alaska

The travels

In Florida, Merritt Island is an outstanding national wildlife refuge created in part as protection for the facility from which NASA's rockets and space shuttles have been launched. We usually approach Merritt Island from the west, but since we were north of the refuge and the map showed a road into the refuge from the north, we merrily drove south on that road. Well, the road doesn't actually give you access to the refuge. In fact, it doesn't give the public access to anything. We came upon a guard shack with heavily armed military personnel. One stood off our right front bumper, avoiding making eye contact, with his rifle pointed toward the ground but entirely at the ready; another monitored us from inside the building; and the third told us we needed to turn around. Believe me, we obeyed him!! (continued on page 4)



Don and Christine visiting Niagara Falls in 2014.



(continued from page 3) Another happier happening in Florida occurred when we were looking for Mangrove Cuckoo. According to all reports, we were in the right place but of course the cuckoos were silent and hiding. However, we did spot a thrush on the roadside. We stopped to figure out what kind of thrush it was. Don touched me on the arm and quietly asked what that buff-breasted bird in the mangroves was. Aha! Mangrove Cuckoo!! Of course that lucky sighting doesn't begin to balance out the uncountable times we totally missed whatever we were searching for.

In Arizona, winter is real along the rim of the Grand Canyon. It was a cold New Year's Eve day, and at the park entrance a ranger warned us that we wouldn't be able to see the canyon, much less the birds. And he was right: the unimaginably huge canyon seemed to be filled with fog. The fog could have been hiding a mountain for all we could see. But as we walked along the rim, the winter sun began to burn through the fog, and the gorgeous canyon slowly revealed itself. We didn't see a condor – in winter, we know, they are likely to be out of sight along the canyon bottom – but we had an experience that was more moving than anything we expected.

Don and Christine taking in the Sandhill Crane migration along the Platte River in 2017



*****REMINDER*****
Monday April 8th is the Spring Hearing
For the Wisconsin Conservation Congress



The **Wisconsin Conservation Congress** (WCC) is a citizen-elected board that gathers the opinions and feelings of the state's citizens. The WCC relays the opinions of voters to the Natural Resources Board so they can make decisions regarding rules and legislation that better align with the opinions of the state's people.

Each April, the WCC holds Spring Hearings where citizens can make their voice heard by casting a non-binding vote and give testimony. Topics range from proposed rule changes requiring legislative action to advisory questions relating to fishing, hunting and wildlife management in Wisconsin.

Many of the questions on the 2019 questionnaire address issues such as hunting, fishing, funding, and general wildlife issues, and you're free to skip any questions for which you do not hold an opinion. But there are several questions each year that are especially important to birders, and this year is no different.

- Question 51 asks if **you would support the DNR in reducing the daily bag limit on Long-tailed Ducks until population research is completed.**
- Question 70 asks if **you support the WCC, the NRB, and state legislature to provide adequate funding to manage, maintain and develop public lands to their full potential for the residents of the state of Wisconsin.**
- Questions 85 and 86 ask if **you support the WCC working with the NRB, DNR, and state legislature to implement a ban on lead ammunition and fishing tackle.**

While the Goss Bird Club does not have an official position on any issue, we do encourage all of our members to attend the meeting and cast your vote for any and all issues which you feel are important.

The hearing in Waukesha County is **Monday, April 8th** at Waukesha West High School, and it starts **promptly at 7:00! Voters will not be admitted after that time, so get there early!** Doors generally open 45 minutes early. ****NEW FOR 2019**** – Online voting will be permitted for 72 hours following the start of the hearing. This will allow participation by citizens who cannot attend the meeting in person. A link to the voting portal will be on the DNR website starting at 7:00 on 4/8, accompanied by voting instructions and an FAQ section. Visit **dnr.wi.gov** and search **"spring hearings"**. Keep in mind that voting for delegates on the WCC must be done in person at the spring hearing.