

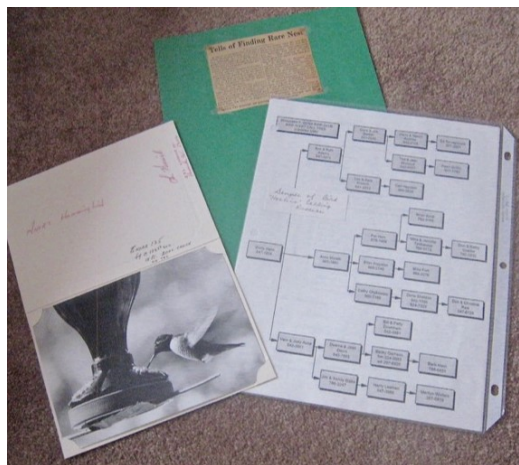


## Learning of Unusual Sightings in Times Past

A Moment from the Archives with Historian, Jennifer Tyskiewicz

In our “modern” days of being able to connect with each other via our various device and being able to access club information using the Internet, it is hard to imagine how our members ever managed to communicate unusual sightings over our 92-year history!

After all, this kind of technology has only been around for 20 years or so ...and you can't expect a rare bird to hang around a tree or a fence post waiting for you to get to a phone (booth or otherwise) to alert all of your birding colleagues



This photo shows the club's “Bird Alert Call Tree” as described in the accompanying article. The newspaper article, read about in the Waukesha Freeman or in letters to club members, tells of the first-discovered Wisconsin nest of the Hoebell's Grebe (Red-necked Grebe), that was located in April 1938 by member, S. Paul Jones, near Fish Lake in northwest Dane County.

Information about the Anna's Hummingbird, (photo by Lee Kranich), was communicated to club members via the “Call Tree,” when the late-staying and unusual bird was spotted at a feeder in Wales, Wisconsin in November, 1990.

to the species and location!

Or worse yet, you may recall the story that I related at a meeting last year, taken from the club minutes of the early 1940s, in which the Goss club was sending letters back'n'forth to the “Jeffersonians” to set up a time when they could come and look at a flock of Pine Siskins in our neighboring county. By the time all of those letters were written and delivered ...well, I wonder how that all worked out for them?!

I'm certain that the bird club members started using phones soon after that time period, but you had to actually have someone answer the phone in their home or at their office before you could begin to communicate any sighting information. That often meant having to “place a call” again and again until someone finally arrived home and “picked up.” And, one would hope never to have the phone picked up in their absence by a young son/daughter, who wouldn't have the slightest interest in getting the correct location information for the \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in with unusual bird) that their birding friend was calling them about!

The advent of answering machines in the 1980s improved our communication greatly, as one could now leave a message of an exciting sighting to be listened to whenever the absent resident returned from working, shopping, being on vacation or just being in the yard or in the bathroom.

The WSO Hotline came into being in the 1980s as well, and this definitely made for a big improvement in communicating bird sightings. Interested birders could call in at their convenience to hear a recorded message of recent notable sightings from around the state. Most club members didn't leave to drive anywhere in Wisconsin without first checking “the hotline” in case there was something of interest at their destination or along the way! I recently called the Hotline while writing this article - 414-352-3857 - but, found that the “number has been disconnected.” Woe is me. ...the good old days!

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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**

## Take Five with.... Ed Hahn

**You were a contributing member in the WSO for several years. Why did you enjoy being a part of the state's largest birding organization?** My position on the WSO board was Youth Education Coordinator. I was involved in selecting recipients of our youth grant twice a year. Being able to provide up to \$250 for children to use to learn about birds was one aspect of my position I enjoyed. I also was able to promote support for the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee. We began providing financial support for the summer "I Spy Birds" camp. The last couple of years I served, the WSO provided over \$2,000 toward their camp. I also worked with organizations to obtain one of our Bird Monitoring Kits. These were the bigger programs I was involved with while serving on the board.

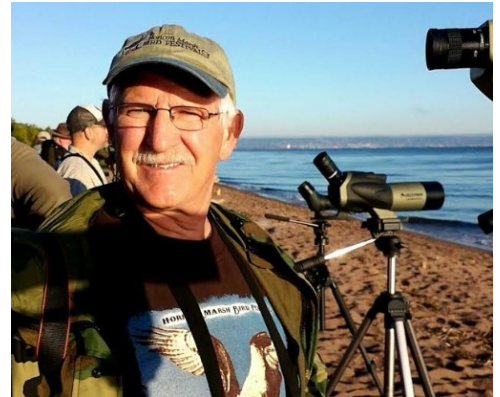
**What was your "spark" bird, and how did it cause the "spark"?** I grew up in Valentine, Nebraska. The Western Meadowlark was fairly common and was one of the few birds I could identify. After becoming interested in bird watching in Wisconsin, I began to notice the Eastern Meadow Lark. It is one of the

birds I look for at the Watertown Municipal Airport where I work. So, the Meadowlark is the bird that I think fits as a spark bird for me.

**Where is your favorite nature spot?** I grew up on the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge 5 miles west of Valentine, NE. I remember running through the woods as a child. There were elk, antelope, a herd of 300+ bison, and even numerous prairie dogs. Fort Falls was nearby, and Smith Falls, the highest waterfalls in Nebraska, was only a few miles away. A variety of small animals could be found. Along with the Western Meadowlarks one could sometimes see Upland Sandpipers. The local swimming hole was about 100 yards from our

**How did you come to join the Goss Bird Club?** Living in Watertown I had started attending meetings at the Horicon Marsh Bird Club. After going fairly regularly I finally became a member there. I enjoyed meeting up with Tim to go birding. After a while I started attending a few of the Ben Goss meetings, and finally decided to join and become a member.

**What is your most enjoyable birding memory?** This would have to be a road trip with Tim to the west coast. We had daily destination goals, but did have numerous stops to scan for local birds along the way.



**Ed attending Jaegerfest at Wisconsin Point in Superior, WI**

Since I was relatively new to birding there were several life birds for me. Stops included the Badlands and Yellowstone, but also stops to identify birds seen while just driving down the road. The trip to the coast and seeing the Pacific Ocean was really enjoyable. We headed south from Oregon down to California and then headed back east on our way back to Watertown.

**What is the regular birding event you most like attending?** I have enjoyed attending the WSO annual conventions. One aspect I like is the variety of locations where it is hosted. This has provided opportunity to bird in parts of Wisconsin I don't regularly go. I enjoy the field trips and the variety of birds we have the opportunity to see.

(continued from page 1) In the early 1990's, our Goss club organized a "Bird Alert Call Tree," which was used from 1991 - 2001. It was updated annually to accommodate new members or remove members who no longer wished to be contacted or to be responsible for calling others.

The club president's name and phone number was listed at the far left of the sheet, with all interesting reports called into that person, who in turn, called 3 members ...who called 2 or 3 members ...who called 1 or 2 members ...and so on and so forth ...until all 39 members had been notified. (See photo).

In the 2001 iteration of the "Bird Alert Call Tree," 14 of our members were identified with both phone numbers and TA-DAH! - email addresses! So, we were finally into "modern" technology....and as they say, the rest is history!