

**BENJAMIN F.
GOSS BIRD
CLUB**

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, S14 W28167 Madison St. Waukesha, WI 53188

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

**UP-COMING
EVENTS**

- April 23
Daryl Christensen Update—Kirtland's Warbler Recovery
- May 13 - May Count

FIELD TRIPS

April 1 - Ducks, Geese and Swans at Paradise Valley

April 8 - Woodcocks and Snipe at Scuppernong Prairie

THE GOSS HAWK

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Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring Hearings to take place April 10

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) is a citizen-elected board that gathers and conveys the opinions and feelings of the state's citizens, relaying them to the Natural Resources Board so they can better make decisions that align with the opinions of the states people.

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

While many of the 88 questions on the 2017 questionnaire address issues such as hunting, fishing, funding,



The 2017 Spring Hearing in Waukesha County will be held at WCTC in Pewaukee at 7:00 PM. Be sure to arrive early as doors close at 7:00. For more information or to preview the questionnaire, visit dnr.wi.gov and search for "spring hearings".



Sandhill Cranes migrating north

and general wildlife issues, there are a few items that specifically address birds!

At the top of the list for many birders is Question #80 which asks **Do you support legislation which would give the DNR authority to begin the process to develop a hunting season for Sandhill Cranes?**

While the bird club does not have an official position on this 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. Other questions such as the status of non-native species like the Eurasian Collared-dove are also on the ballot

Goss Bird Club is Getting Techie!

A couple technological upgrades are in place of which Goss Club Members can now take advantage.

New upgrades to the club website include the ability to download printable versions of the most up-to-date field trip schedule and all past club newsletters. In addition,

a link has been included on the field trip page providing access to the American Birding Association's Birding Code of Ethics.

Also, at the last meeting, the Goss Club approved the creation of an email listserv via Google Groups called

the Waukesha County Birding Network. Participating members can send bird sightings to each other via email. Rules and participation are similar to that of the state wide WisBirdNet. Participation is easy, and signing up can be done by emailing Tim Hahn at thahbirder@gmail.com

R to L: S. Paul Jones, Fred Alyea, and Peter Weber, about to embark on a bird outing.



One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a March thaw, is the spring.
 - Aldo Leopold, **A Sand County Almanac**

The Story of Peter, Charles, Tom & Fred

(based on the reminiscences of Peter G. Weber)

A Moment from the Archives from Club Historian Jennifer Tyskiewicz

Well....I really can't recall the specific moment or exact circumstances in which all of us met S. Paul Jones, who would one day have the Oconomowoc Bird Club named after

him.

He was one of the original founders of the B.F. Goss Bird Club....and one of the most respected and active birders in the area at this time. S. Paul was extremely knowledgeable, and precise and meticulous in his bird identification. Plus, he was one of the nicest people that I have ever met! S. Paul was the one that brought Tom, Chuck, Fred and I into the B.F. Goss Bird Club.

S. Paul Jones was already retired when we met him. He began to mentor us in

what must have seemed to him to be "The Little League of Ornithology!"

Okay....so we invited ourselves to his house because Chuck and I had heard that he had a library of bird books, prints of Fuerte's bird paintings, and the most tantalizing of all....a large collection of moths and butterflies. We wanted to inspect all of that!

Then, one day, as I'm sitting in my study hall at Waukesha High School, somebody gave me

"Four Boys" continued on page 4...

NOCTURNAL SURVEYS It's not just owling!

Nocturnal surveys are primarily aimed at those species most active and thus readily detected at night. These include most owls, nightjars, American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, and secretive marsh birds such as bitterns and rails. Of course some of these are crepuscular, i.e. active at dawn and dusk, or may even be detected during

daylight. Other species may also be found at night, e.g. loons, grebes, and certain songbirds, though in general they are equally or more detectable during the day.

The second club field trip of the spring will be a nocturnal survey. On April 8, we will look/listen for nocturnal and crepuscular birds such as wood-

cock and snipe at Scuppernong Prairie. Check the website for details.

Later in April on the 22nd is another opportunity to be part of a nocturnal survey field trip to Vernon Marsh as part of the WBBA II project. For details on the atlas event, contact Tim Hahn at thahnbirder@gmail.com.

Waukesha County Birds Seen List



Dunlin seen last May at Vernon Marsh during Goss Field Trip

The Waukesha County Birds Seen List is a group checklist maintained by members of the Goss Bird Club to record all of the species that club members see in Waukesha County each year.

Any member is welcome to add their sightings to the list. At each club meeting, a checklist and sign-up sheet is sent around the room to allow members to “fill the gaps” for species that have not yet been reported for the year.

In 2016 the club only tallied 217 species, our lowest total since 2009. If you have a chance, scan the 2016 list to see if you can add one or two for last year’s total.

A running tally for the current year will be posted at each meeting in the back of the room, and you are welcome to enter your sightings then. If you can not attend a meeting, you can add them via an email to Paula Stich at paulabirder@gmail.com.

HAPPY BIRDING!



Wisconsin
Breeding
Bird
Atlas II

www.wsobirds.org/atlas

Atlas Sponsorship What do we sponsor? Why?

The Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II is a comprehensive field survey that documents the distribution and abundance of birds breeding in an area. The information allows scientists and citizens to see changes in bird populations since the last survey and to measure future changes. These insights help us identify the conservation needs of breeding birds and try to meet those needs.

Although the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II project will be accomplished by thousands of volunteers over a five-year period from 2015 to 2019, there are considerable costs associated with a citizen-science effort of this magnitude.

The majority of the funding for this project will come from private sources — people like us who want to make a difference!

An easy and fulfilling way for you to help this effort is to **Sponsor a Species**. We anticipate that some 240 bird species will be recorded during this five-year survey.

Sponsorship involves a five year commitment to donate \$100 per year towards the atlas project. These donations help to pay for full and part time biological professionals, seasonal surveyors, communication materials, and a variety of planning and training events.

The Goss Bird Club decided at the beginning of the project that we would sponsor the Killdeer. The Killdeer is a charismatic plover of varied habitats. They can be found nesting in mudflats along rivers, on boulevards in parking lots, or even on gravel rooftops! They are readily found throughout our area, they’re easily identified, and their babies are just about the cutest thing in the animal kingdom!

This year is our third year sponsoring the Killdeer, and we have yet to meet our commitment of \$100 for 2017. If you wish to help with this donation, please see Paula Stich, our club treasurer.

“Four Boys” continued from page 2...

a message from my mom that S. Paul was picking us up after school! He had discovered a Stilt Sandpiper in a pond in Kettle Moraine, and wanted to make certain that we all had a chance to see it! It was definitely a “life bird” for us! And, still in summer plumage!

A November day....at what had become one of our “regular haunts” with S. Paul Jones.... Cedar Grove. The four of us....Tom, Chuck, Fred and myself....are sitting on a bluff there, overlooking the woods below. We are filling out “hawk data sheets” for the graduate students manning the hawk

banding station at Cedar Grove. Suddenly, a Townsend’s Solitaire alights below us! All of us knew immediately what a rarity this was! And, all four of us were rendered speechless! I finally found my voice....and blurted out the name, as I had seen a Townsend’s Solitaire in Colorado the previous summer!

On a much slower morning at Cedar Grove, while waiting for the hawks to appear, S. Paul started to show us the different kinds of insects found on goldenrod. One insect was the Polistes Wasp, that S. Paul insisted was of the “friendly variety.” He never missed an opportunity to handle this

wasp, although the four of us could never muster the courage to follow suit. He gently picked the wasp from the goldenrod flower, and was immediately stung! I don’t remember him ever handling that wasp again, as I’m certain he changed his mind about their disposition!

Another memory that I have of S. Paul Jones was the day that he drove all of us to a field near Saylesville, where he showed us our first Grasshopper Sparrow. He admitted that, because of his age, it’s song was pretty much out of his range of hearing. We all admitted that we could barely hear it ourselves!

2016 Waukesha Christmas Bird Count Final Report

It was a weird weekend to be sure, with all sorts of wintery weather predicted, and as a result, it was a weird Christmas Bird Count in Waukesha.

With major snow totals projected for Saturday December 17 it was decided that the official count would be postponed to Sunday the 18th. To the surprise of many-a birder, Saturday morning found clear skies and calm conditions, so anticipated Sunday temps topping

out at zero degrees sent some intrepid birders out to find “count week” species. As a result, the final tally included 12 species for count week that were not also found on count day.

Water birds such as Trumpeter Swans, American Coots, and Canvasback were pushed out as subzero temps froze Lake Nagawicka. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet must have moved on or hunkered down over night, as

it could not be located on count day.

All in all 39 species were still found on Sunday including 14 Tundra Swans, 3 Rough-legged Hawks, 4 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 2 Swamp Sparrows, a single Winter Wren, and a couple American Robins.

More productive CBCs have taken place for sure, but enduring through adverse conditions left proud birders with spirits high in anticipation of days birding in nicer weather!