

## Bill Rudden, CONTINUED

of pearls pattern” making it a Slaty-backed Gull, which Snetsinger, along with Ron Goetz helped identify.

It was the first known occurrence of this Siberian/Alaskan species in the lower 48 United States.

By later in the day the phone hotline was buzzing. Bill had achieved his goal to pin down the mystery gull.

Super Macho- we’re gonna miss you big time.

**Editor’s Note:** For details on the Slaty-backed Gull, visit <https://sors.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/nab/v040n02/p00207-p00216.pdf> to read Slaty-backed Gull winters on the Mississippi River by Ronald E. Goetz, William M. Rudden and

Phoebe B. Snetsinger, published in *American Birds*, Volume 40, No. 2, pp. 207-216.

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## In Memoriam

**Lynn McKeown (August 26, 1939 - January 31, 2013)**

### Lynn McKeown: A quiet, gentle birding tutor

BY MICHAEL BAUM

I first decided to take birding seriously in 1982. You know, regular field trips, record-keeping, and the beginning of lists. I corresponded with Vern Kleen, and he sent me seasonal reports for all of Illinois. I searched through these especially for records in western Illinois, and one name kept recurring: Lynn McKeown. Bell’s and White-eyed Vireos, Bewick’s Wrens, and Harris’ Sparrows in Warren County, and all kinds of shorebirds and herons from Henderson and Mercer Counties, heady stuff to a beginner!

I didn’t know if this person was a man or a woman. I did know I wanted to meet this person. In mid-December I pulled into Lock and Dam 18 on the Mississippi and saw a guy with a scope. It was Lynn. We talked for some time and exchanged numbers. By January we began birding together three or four times a month for the next several years. He shared all his haunts with me, up and down the Mississippi from northern Mercer down into Hancock County. He knew all the flooded fields and marshes, many of which



Lynn McKeown on a CBC at Lock & Dam 18 in 1996.

Photo courtesy of Phil Reyburn.

are now gone forever. I garnered life-bird under his tutelage. And he initiated me to the wonders of the Monmouth Sewage Lagoons, still the best birding spot in all of Warren County. Many were the days we would troll the Mississippi with indifferent success finding waterfowl and end the day here with hundreds of ducks, species count in the low teens, and up close and personal.

In mid-June of 1984 Lynn and I spent a long weekend camping in the Shawnee National Forest, my first time there. We garnered another long list of lifers as we birded all day long, then deprogrammed around a campfire to talk of Blue Grosbeaks, Prairie Warblers, and chucks. On May 17, 1986 we tried a Big Day in Henderson County. Off and on rain all through the early morning ruined our chances, and I remember being frustrated and angry. What I didn’t understand was the remarkable effect the weather was having on water birds. Everywhere we looked, the river was covered with Black Terns! I was too preoccupied with Big Day thoughts to

understand what I was seeing. There were thousands of them. Mixed in were Franklin’s Gulls and Common Terns, never easy over here in Forgotonia. Every shorebird spot we hit, we saw flocks of birds dropping in on us, turnstones, dunlin, black-bellied and golden plovers, Short-billed Dowitchers at our feet. And as we walked north along the Lock and Dam 18 levee, there dancing at water’s edge was the Al Stokie of the day, a Tricolored Heron!

Lynn was a quiet, gentle man with a first-rate mind. I never saw him angry or upset – not once. He had a masters’ in library science, played trombone, and wrote for and edited the Galesburg Zephyr for years. When he and I weren’t talking about birds, we would discuss life, the universe, and everything. And every time my argument had a weak spot, Lynn was there with a scalpel to remove it. Quiet dignity and ego-free intelligence were his hallmarks. We lost Lynn from this world on January 31, 2013 at the age of 73. I am blessed to have a long list of great memories, places, and birds shared with this good man.

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