

Miraculously, I did relocate it and had to go back to tell the group when I saw a NBC camera crew and called out, "The bird is over here." After I returned to Chicago I was very surprised to see myself in the lead story on NBC national news at 5:30 p.m. talking about the Ross's Gull.

About the Wilmette Ross's Gull, needless to say, I was skeptical, but despite my skepticism I went to Gillson Harbor and met Andy Sigler. After he described the bird, I then realized it could be the bird. However, it was not seen again for ten days, until Nov. 29, when I continued to check the Lake Michigan shoreline and accidentally ran into Lucy Gemlo and Walter Hopkins at Fullerton Street Beach. They described a bird that sounded to me like it could be the Ross's Gull.

The next day, along with Richard Biss, Dave Bohlen, David Johnson and Gerry Rosenband, I finally saw the bird in flight at North Avenue Beach; it was easy to pick out.

On Saturday, Dec. 2, there were at least 100 birders lined up on the beach, but no bird. The New York Times was there and interviewed Andy. A picture showing the line of birders on the beach was on the front page of the Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978 paper.

### H. David Bohlen

I must have heard about the sighting of the small gull with pink underparts from Larry Balch. We were in contact those days about rarities. I tried to get someone to go to Chicago with me – but no one would go. I myself was indecisive. I awoke about midnight and thought "What else besides a Ross's Gull would have pink on it?" (Years later I actually saw a couple of Bonaparte's Gulls with pink blush.) So I jumped into my car and drove 3 1/2 hours to North Beach.

I remember it was still dark when I got there. And cold. As it got light I was standing on a park bench

jumping up and down to keep warm. A Chicago cop stopped and inquired what I was doing – then joked about it when I told him. Richard Biss showed up and some others including Gerry Rosenband and said the gull had been seen out on a sand spit. We made the short walk out there. A few Bonaparte's Gulls were working low along the shore. Then the Ross's Gull flew in and joined them. It was very close and we

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could see the peaked head, the wedge tail and dark area around the eye. It was slightly pink also but the vividness of this changed with the light angles. After we watched it intently for quite awhile and Biss took several photos – the bird flew. We tried to follow it – but I think we lost it.

The main credit for finding and identifying the bird should go to Andy Sigler. I just lucked out going up to look when I did.

### Richard Biss

I remember taking the photos through a regular camera attached to the back of my Questar. The field of view was very small, it was very dark in the viewfinder, and the bird was far away, so I was pretty sure that nothing would come out. I was totally amazed when I had the film developed that there was anything identifiable in the photos. These days with people's digital cameras they can instantly see the results of their efforts without having to wait to have film developed, and also without having to worry about whether they had their f-stops set correctly for the light conditions.

Dave Johnson had someone print out some T-shirts. We had two different types made up. One of them says Bird Chicago in print on the front, and Ross' Gull, 78 on the

back. Another T-shirt has Bird Chicago in writing on the front, and Ross' Gull, 78 on the back, with a drawing of a pink breasted Ross's Gull. I still have them, but they have shrunk with the multiple washings, and now my daughter wears them sometimes. (Note that Ross's Gull was spelled Ross' Gull in 1978).

That was the same year I did an Illinois big year, ending up with 307 species. I know it was a lifer for me and most other birders that were there at the time, and we were all very excited.

### Greg Neise

I was working at the Chicago Academy of Sciences that day, and Dr. William Beecher was called about the bird. He grabbed me and we walked over to North Avenue beach. There were already a number of birders strung out from Fullerton to North Avenue when we arrived. There was a northeast wind raising a good 3-foot chop on the lake, and hundreds of gulls, mostly Bonaparte's, were feeding in the algae that were being churned by the breakers.

We stood with others near the beach-house, but wandered north about 150 yards. I could see clutches of birders at Fullerton and North Avenue, all picking through the Bonies that were being tossed around like confetti by the increasing gales (remember that this was the day the great blizzard of '78 began). Beecher and I started ambling back toward the main group. As we got closer it became apparent that they had the bird, and as I ran up it was pointed out to me as a dot on the horizon headed out past Navy Pier.

At this point I was standing next to Larry Balch who grabbed his Questar and took off in pursuit. I'm not sure how, but I wound up in the front seat of his then-famous white Volvo wagon. He and Gerry Rosenband had "cop radios" that they used on Attu Island in Alaska, and I believe that Gerry was some-