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How To Find Out About Birds Being Reported

Especially here on Eastern Long Island

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Have you ever wondered how some folks know about rare birds arriving locally, and you only find out about them much later? There’s no “secret club”, no “in-crowd network” – not at least as far as I know! OK, a lot of birders, after spotting a rare bird, may call a couple of close birding friends, or send them a text message. That will never change, but here are a couple of easy to use ways to be alerted if a rare – or Good Bird - shows up!

Long-time birders will remember calling into a state – or county – Hot Line (think land-lines, answering machines, taped messages). And then, the Internet was invented! Emails, usually sent as the result of someone receiving a phone call, were sent out a group of people who asked to be notified. Sometimes, a daily or weekly summary was sent to those folks – around here there was the East End Bird Report, sent out by Hugh McGuinness, an East End resident. That’s no longer in existence....

The Grandparent of notifications

Around that time, Cornell Lab of Ornithology stepped up and started the New York State Rare Bird Report, the Grandparent of alert notification methods. It’s still around, and still used

by many birders – a good number of whom are here on Long Island. You receive a real-time notification via email, usually sent by the person seeing the bird, when a note-worthy bird is spotted. Basic info is conveyed and the email is signed – you can always contact the sender, if you wish more details. It’s not a chit-chat sort of notification system, just a “Just the Facts”. Signing up for this is free, and very easy – you can even, by following directions, take a break from the notices, if you wish. Admittedly, it’s not the Number One posting site lately – there are a number of other players out there, but here’s the info, should you wish to join this method:

Google: NYSbirds

Click on “NYSbirds-L Welcome and Basics”

Scroll to “Subscription Creation” – Follow the directions of sending a message, addressed to: NYSBirds-L-Request@cornell.edu

Read this whole intro page by NYS – it takes about 3 minutes. The site is Cornell Lab, and administered by Christopher Tessaglia-Hymes (cth4@cornell.edu) and it’s free. Over 500 folks are currently on this site.

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