Our Feathered Friends - January 11, 2012

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As much as my left hand is almost hurting constantly, my mind tries to shut out the pain so I can type out a new bird story for you all. There is no way that I can say thanks to you all for your thoughts and prayers as words do not possess the thoughts strong enough for it. I'm still here, and that does count for something.

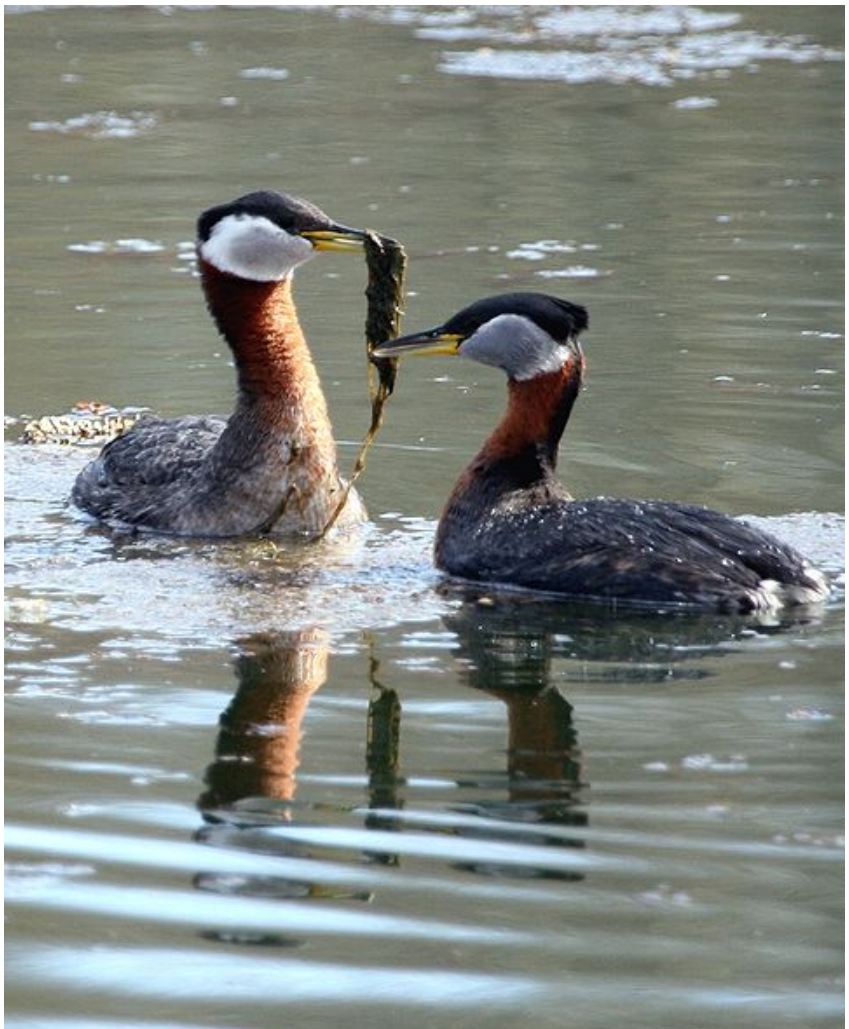
The Northern Goshawk

With winter officially here, we can expect to find a few more birds here in the beautiful southern parts of the United States that are escaping the frigid temperatures of our northern neighbors. It takes me back to the mid 1970s when I was first getting my feet wet in trying to be a bird

watcher. The best part of gaining knowledge on this subject is to get with someone who doesn't mind answering questions and will take the time to teach. My mentor was the Reverend **William (Bill) Senter**
. We would look for an excuse to hit the road and find something that most people will never see, and if they do see, would have a problem identifying what they are looking at.

A good bird book is a must, hopefully one that has a map next to the bird picture and description. Like I said before, there is a big difference in the winter birds and the summer breeding ones here at an appointed time for nesting. Learn to read the maps which will give you the knowledge to know where the bird in question will be at the time for breeding and it's winter roosting area. Not all birds will migrate as **Karen Franklin** was writing about her favorite small bird, the Carolina Wren. They are year round residents, as like many more species around here.

Back in the older days, Bill and I were doing a Christmas Bird Count when his sharp eyesight spotted a very rare member of the Hawk family. To me it just looked like a "Hawk," but Bill saw the subtle differences. The Hawk was a Northern Goshawk which lives up in the far north. He is the largest member of the Accipiter family. Very bad weather will sometimes force a species to travel south for a better food source. Anyhow, after all descriptions were turned into the Christmas Bird Count, we were credited with locating a very rare bird here in the south.



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