

## Write

### HILDA'S BEHAVIOR EXPLAINED

I read with interest the story about the pet grouse, Hilda, in your April issue ("Hilda, the unmuffled grouch"). I have dozens of photographs of a grouse that has followed my activities during daylight hours. She has been spotted 31 times on our acreage from May 2016 to March 2017. It's uncanny how similar the stories are. I observed the grouse charging at my dropped gloves, following the truck and tractor on the trails, coming to the ground deer stands and hanging around when we hoed the garden. Family members have also watched in fascination as she carefully came closer to them. She did not allow contact.



Robert Oelke  
Hatley

Mark Witecha, Upland Wildlife Ecologist in DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management, replies: *Certain grouse species are known to occasionally exhibit this type of "tame" behavior. Oftentimes, it is juvenile males or a bird that inhabits an area where grouse are not heavily hunted. Regarding the tracking of vehicles, they may be interpreting the engine noise as drumming. They may also be acclimating to humans that are feeding them, which we strongly discourage. These birds tend to not be truly tame, as they will still exhibit strong survival instincts when encountering predators such as hawks.*

### FEBRUARY ISSUE A "KEEPER"

The February 2017 issue of your magazine was a real gem. I'm forwarding it to my granddaughter at UW-Stevens Point, majoring in recycling, but I want it back as a "keeper." Several articles will be of great interest to her. For me, the groundwater section is a great comprehensive section, which I'll keep until you publish another one. The magazine has been important to me for many years.

P.S. I'm 88, graduated in 1951 in chemical engineering.

Vern Ziegler  
Menomonee Falls

### MUSHROOM MISIDENTIFIED

On page 30 of the April 2017 issue of your magazine, the picture of what was identified as a "hen of the woods" mushroom looks nothing like what I harvest every fall. The interesting thing is I have never seen this variety of mushroom in central Wisconsin. I think it's a northern tooth (*Climacodon septentrionale*) which is NOT edible! I am not an expert on mushrooms and only hunt and eat certain varieties that I am familiar with. I am pretty sure that it is neither "hen" nor "chicken" of the woods.

Gary Kunz  
Fall Creek

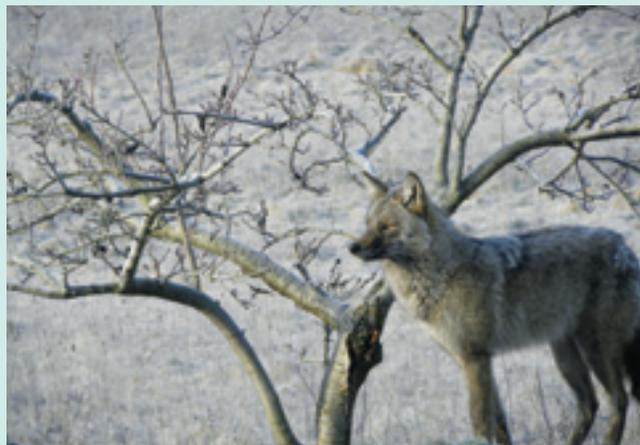
*Our thanks to you and other readers for pointing out this misidentification. It illustrates the difficulty of confirming the identification of species from photos, and in this case, the risk it sometimes involves. Sources say the northern tooth is not poisonous but is considered inedible because it is tough and bitter, especially when mature. On the other hand, the mushroom commonly called hen of the woods (*Grifola frondosa*) and species from the genus *Laetiporus* (commonly called chicken of the woods) are commonly hunted because of their "choice edible" rating with wild mushroom hunters. Most field guides and websites devoted to mushroom identification caution that if you have any doubt about a mushroom's edibility, it's best to refrain from eating it.*

### SAW-WHET OWL

Last fall while walking around a customer's property, I came across an area of the yard with an extreme amount of bird activity. Their chatter was very intense. While looking for the source of their concern I came across this little owl tucked into a large burning bush. It was so fixed on the other birds, I could get my camera within 3 feet before it flew off. This is only my second encounter with a saw-whet owl. The last was about 30 years ago while bow hunting. I had one light on a branch a couple of feet from my face.



Rob Schulz  
Wausau



### REGAL COYOTE

Occasionally, we've seen coyotes in the field behind our home in Greendale, which backs up to a Root River floodplain. However, we had never seen one in such a regal pose in our backyard. This photo was taken in December 2016 right from our patio door. We think it is classic.

Claudia Porter  
Greendale



### HUNTER TURNED WATCHER

Being a long-time past hunter, I'm now just a watcher. I have continued to enjoy for years the articles and photos in your magazine. I remember when turkey hunting was first introduced to Wisconsin and even attended a class on the habitat and the art of calling, but I never did the hunt. Today I enjoy more of what's around me on camera. This photo was taken right on my front stoop last spring.

Jerry Rosenwing  
Delavan



**POTATO LAKE RESIDENTS**

This photo was taken last year on Potato Lake (Washburn County) outside of Spooner where we have a cabin. I didn't know the turtles were there when I took the picture, it happened so fast trying to get the goose shot.

Edward N. Tredinnick  
Onalaska



**WHO COOKS FOR YOU-ALL?**

I wanted to share these photos of a barred owl, taken on Picnic Point on the UW-Madison campus in mid-December, and to tell you that I love your magazine. They're easy to identify with their brown eyes (most others have yellow).

John Keckhaver  
Madison

Thanks for sharing, John! Couldn't help but title your letter after the barred owl's distinctive call — "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?"



**KINGFISHER REHAB**

In July, this belted kingfisher struck our picture window and couldn't fly. I placed it on our bird bath and gave it some crappie minnows. Later in the day someone from the Dane County Humane Society's wildlife center picked it up for rehab.

Stephen Lang  
Madison

**KUDOS FOR POETIC WRITING**

The article "Picturing Wisconsin lighthouses" (February 2017), by Joseph Warren, has the following first sentence: "Whether photographed in the gales of winter near ice-encrusted piers, through canopies of brilliant fall colors or when the sun dips behind the horizon, Wisconsin's lighthouses have always provided dramatic backdrops where the fluidity of lake waves meets the solidity of shore."

Who writes like that — someone who "works in DNR's Bureau of Parks and Recreation"? I don't think your average DNR worker is all that Joseph Warren is. What he is, instead, is poetic, and a great writer. Thank you, and thank him, for capturing the three top occasions when people take photographs of nostalgic scenic objects like lighthouses, and capturing them with pithy, evocative words in vivid visual imagery. And then thank him for concluding with the poetry of "the fluidity of lake waves" meeting "the solidity of shore."

Charles Shifley  
Chicago

**INTRICACY OF NATURE**

My wife and I enjoy sitting out on our deck and watching the birds come in to feed and drink. We also have plants and shrubs that attract hummingbirds. We always thought it would be interesting to see a hummingbird nest but we could never see where they were nesting. Then one day this summer we noticed a female collecting nesting material but she would fly out of sight over the house. Finally my wife said, "Why don't you wait in the front yard and I will let you know when she is coming." It wasn't 10 minutes and the hummingbird came over the house and I saw her land in our locust tree about 15 feet off the ground. There was this beautiful nest so intricately constructed. How amazing is nature? We watched the nest every day for a few weeks until the two babies fledged.

The first photo shows the nest under construction and it looks like the finishing touches were with spider web. The next one is the female hummer sitting on the eggs and the last one is the two babies about one week before they fledged. To put everything in perspective, the inside of the nest is slightly larger than a quarter. This is probably a once-in-a-lifetime experience so I thought I should share it.

Jeff Baker  
North Prairie



**WHY NO MAP?**

While I enjoyed your article "Preserving pine relicts a prescription for good health" (February 2017), I was disappointed to note that no directions were given to the site and no map was shown. Omissions of this kind make me wonder about the sincerity of the stated goal of the DNR to make these state natural areas accessible to the public. Please include good directions and a map with all future articles of this kind.

Loren Wagner  
Mazomanie

**COMMENT ON A STORY?**

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. Or email letters to [dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov). Limit letters to 250 words and include your name and the community from which you are writing.

**NO ACCESS TO THE WEB?**

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