



Ronald Peter Gutschow

May 29, 1940 - June 9, 2023

Ron Gutschow, a well-regarded professor of mathematics and leader in the birdwatching community, died June 9 of kidney failure at Lawlis Family Hospice in Mequon. He was 83.

Ronald Peter Gutschow was born in Milwaukee on May 29, 1940, to John Gutschow, a supervisor at Miller Brewing for 30 years, and Ebba (née) Hoving Gutschow, a homemaker. He grew up in Greendale, attended UW-Milwaukee as an undergraduate, and received his Ph.D. in mathematics from UWM in 1971. For 31 years, he taught in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at UW-Waukesha (now UWM at Waukesha), retiring in 2002 as an associate professor.

In his early 30s, Ron became an avid birdwatcher, leading monitoring projects such as the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and transect surveys for the Breeding Bird Atlas. He also invited expert and novice birders alike on countless informal birdwatching outings. His birding adventures took him to Australia, Africa, Europe, and South America, as well as throughout the United States.

Ron was preceded in death by his parents; his older siblings, Kenneth and Betty; and his wife, Deanna (Fry). He is survived by his sister, Patricia Pecho (Vic), by eight nephews and nieces, and by numerous grandnephews and

nieces.

Ron had a green burial at Forest Home Cemetery in Milwaukee. There will be a celebration of Ron's life on Sunday, August 27, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Urban Ecology Center Riverside Park branch, 1500 E. Park Pl., Milwaukee.

Donations in Ron's name may be made to the Urban Ecology Center, <https://www.urbanecologycenter.org>

Tribute Wall

FF

“*'My sincere condolences to Professor Ron Gutschow's family. I worked with Ron for many years at UW-Waukesha while I was a librarian. He often came into the library and donated many books to the library. I will always remember him as a very kind and thoughtful person.*

Faye Flesia - June 20, 2023 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ DALE SNIDER 6.16.23 Ron was the best birder that I worked with. For nearly 20 years he and I team-taught the birdsong course in Feb. at the North Shore School for Seniors. Then, starting about March 20 each year, we team-led the Spring Birding Group that met each Mon. & Fri. thru the spring bird migration season, until June 1. We led the group from 8 to 10 am at either Havenwoods [State Forest], or Kletzsch Park, or the "Radio Towers" where Lincoln Creek emptied into the Milwaukee River, all in north Milwaukee. Ron was a very auditory birder, meaning he rarely looked up until he heard and recognized a birdsong. Once he read an article about Chickadees scolding about a threat from a predator. He explained that the Chickadee sounded a warning of "Chick-A-Dee-Dee-Dee-Dee-Dee-Dee", with the number of "Dees" being proportional to the strength of the threat. A few days later he was out in his yard cleaning, when he heard a Chickadee calling loudly with a call with many "Dees". He finally found that a Saw-whet Owl perched in a small tree was the threat, actually more dangerous to Chickadees than a large Owl. The Saw-whet was migrating through and not normally present in Milwaukee. Ron quickly called me to come over to see the Owl. It is the only Saw-whet Owl I have ever seen. Thanks Ron. Another time Ron and I were birding together at Havenwoods when we both saw a female Oriole making a nest. Ron, looking towards the east, saw a female Baltimore Oriole building its famous hanging nest in a tall tree, while I, looking southward, saw a female Orchard Oriole making a more normal flat nest in a bush! from Dale Snider

Carolyn Kott Washburne (posting for Dale Snider) - June 18, 2023 at 12:00 AM

JP

“ I met Ron about 10 yrs. ago on a group birding hike. I was an experienced birder but I quickly realized Ron was an "expert" birder. I was fortunate to go on many bird walks and participate in a class from Ron on birding by ear which collectively helped me improve my skills. for which I'm very grateful.

In addition to birding, I was able to observe and participate in a diverse range of activities with Ron as he applied his considerable intellectual skills. These varied from Book Club contributions, planning precise hiking outings, to being a resource for locating obscure information digitally. We also worked with an invasive species removal group in a local park. His speciality was burdock which he preferred to tackle working alone as he knew exactly which area of the park he wanted to improve.

Ron enriched my life and I will truly miss his presence, including his forthright opinions on many topics.

Jeanne Prochnow - June 17, 2023 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ I first met Ron Gutschow when he showed up for a bird walk at the Urban Ecology Center one Thursday morning years ago. He became a regular. His expertise in bird knowledge and identification was soon apparent. He helped many of us find and identify a bird species for the first time and often provided us with tidbits of bird lure. Ron became one of the coffee/brunch crowd that gathered after the walk to relax, share stories, review the news of the day, and have a bite to eat. Those times at Colectivo are memorable. And there were other trips and gatherings, such as the annual Spring drive toward Madison to search for migrating waterfowl on flooded fields. I feel blessed that I knew Ron and shared so many birding experiences.

Bill Rumpf - June 17, 2023 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ Ron was a loyal friend, a patient birdwatching mentor, a fierce intellect, and a lousy canoeing partner. I'll treasure the memories of our birding travels, from Ecuador to the Sylvania Wilderness in Michigan, from Big Bend National Park to southwest Florida. I'll treasure his thoughtful comments in our On Point book group. I'll even treasure our canoeing misadventures on the Wisconsin River, with him yelling at me about how to paddle and me yelling back at him that if he didn't shut up, I'd jump out of the canoe and swim to shore. Farewell, dear heart.

Carolyn Kott Washburne - June 16, 2023 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ Ron knew more about birds than the rest of us birders. He was always willing to share and lead birding trips. He and Dale Sneider taught classes at the School for Seniors on bird calls. Ron will truly be missed in the local birding community.

Jon Bales - June 16, 2023 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ I met Ron on a canoe trip, the first day I became an official "birder." I was told he knew more about birds than anyone else I was likely to meet, so I was a little intimidated at first. But he was always encouraging of my growth as an observer (and listener), and I could ask him questions endlessly. He was welcoming and generous with his time, his experience, and his knowledge. I was fortunate to go on many hikes with him, and those are memories I will always treasure. I was honored, too, when he invited me to join the "On Point" book group that became an important network for all of us. As I told him on his deathbed, there is never a time that I go birding that I don't think about one thing or another that I learned from him. I will miss him on the trails, but I will always hear his voice, answering me patiently one more time!

Suzy Clarkson Holstein - June 13, 2023 at 12:00 AM

EF

“ *Our sincere condolences to everyone that was a part of Ron' life. He touched many lives and will be remembered often. May God Jehovah comfort you during this sad time in your life.*

Eisbrenner Family - June 11, 2023 at 12:00 AM