



Upcoming Programs

Thursday, October 2, 2008

The Buzz About Bees

River Bend Nature Center

3600 N. Green Bay Rd. - Racine

7:00 P.M. - Program

Do you like carrots? How about cucumbers, broccoli, onions, cranberries, blueberries, apples, muskmelons, avocados, almonds or cherries? These crops, among others, can't grow without honeybees, and a mysterious die-off of these hard-working pollinators could put \$15 billion worth of U.S. crops at risk - not to mention put a damper on your diet. Come and hear what Tim Fulton, a local beekeeper, has to say about his experience with bees.

We'll also discuss possible dates for the mid December Bird Count.

Thursday, November 6, 2008

River Bend Nature Center

7:00 P.M. - Butler's Gartersnake in Wisconsin :

Robust population estimation and habitat analysis

Eric Hileman is the director of conservation, education, and animal welfare at the Racine Zoo, where he has worked for more than ten years. He earned his B.S. in Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and is currently enrolled in a M.S. Biological Science program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has conducted field research in Wisconsin, Jamaica, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama. Since 2004, Eric has co-instructed the undergraduate tropical herpetology field course at the La Suerte Biological field station in Limon, Costa Rica.

Butler's gartersnake (*Thamnophis butleri*) is a small, stout-bodied snake of 38.0 to 73.7 cm total body length, making it the smallest of five Wisconsin congeners. It ranges from central Ohio to central Indiana northward through eastern Michigan and the southernmost edge of Ontario, with isolated populations occurring in central southern Ontario and south-eastern Wisconsin.

Fragmentation and loss of suitable habitat as well as concerns over possible hybridization with eastern plains gartersnake (*T. radix*), with which it is sympatric along the southern fringe of its Wisconsin range, prompted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to list *T. butleri* as state threatened in 1997. It is also listed as threatened in Ontario and state threatened in Indiana. Since its designation in Wisconsin, the protection afforded to *T. butleri* has been a major source of conflict and debate between conservationists, politicians, landowners, and land developers over how to maintain a balance between economic development and preservation of its habitat.

The primary objective of this study is to estimate *T. butleri* populations within three suitable habitat patches using robust mark-recapture methodologies as density estimates are key missing data in the current conservation strategy. A second objective of this research is to identify and characterize biotic and abiotic factors within survey sites that influence population density and spatial distribution. Collected data will be extrapolated to infer density estimates for all habitat patches within the state of Wisconsin and their potential for supporting sustainable populations. The results of this study will aid the current conservation strategy for this threatened species.

Thursday, December 4, 2008

Holiday Potluck and Winter Birds

5:30 P.M. - Doors open and snacks

6:00 P.M. - Potluck 7:00 P.M. - Program

River Bend Nature Center

Bring a dish to share and your own dinnerware. We'll discuss updates on Hoy Audubon programs as well as updates from River Bend Nature Center. We'll also view slides of what winter birds to expect for the season and how you can help on the next Racine Christmas Bird Count in mid December. We'll finish the evening with some holiday songs!

542 new Songbirds love Hoy Audubon!!

It appears we are doing some good work here. We have finalized this year's data and sent it off to the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW). As a recap, last year Hoy fledged 124 Eastern Bluebirds and this year---212!!! Last year there were 136 Tree Swallows fledged and this year---302!! Last year Hoy had 66 boxes that were monitored. This year we have 131. Taking that into consideration, this year was not up to what we feel we can produce. Throughout the state, the spring was cool and delayed nesting of the Bluebirds so the Tree Swallows won out in Round One. (Bluebirds typically nest earlier than the tree swallows.) Further, there was the rain and cold in June which had adverse affects on both eggs and nestlings. Personally, I suffered 6 lost nests of BB's this year and NONE the year before. Kent Hall, our Bluebird guru from BRAW, also feels that with better weather next season, we can produce more Bluebirds than Tree Swallows.

Now, we all like Tree Swallows, but--since these ARE Bluebird trails--these current totals seem a bit excessive. So Kent was kind enough to come to visit our trails and "tweak" them a bit. The initial trails were installed with approximately 8" of snow on the ground, and several large ponds (which Tree Swallows particularly like) were discounted. The trail that produced 103 Tree Swallows and only 21 BB's out of 26 boxes, has been overhauled. Our thanks go to John Raymond for overseeing that trail and it's transformation. He will now be monitoring the 25 newly-installed boxes at South Hills CC--much higher and drier. 12 boxes were left at Ives Grove, and they will be monitored by their personnel. The 5-box trail at Johnson Diversey was pulled.

In addition to moving boxes, we installed new trails at Bristol Oaks CC, a horse farm in Twin Lakes, and at Raymond School. The Raymond School trail will be monitored by the children and not specifically aimed at Bluebirds--though Rick has high hopes. It will be called a "Cavity Nesting Songbird" trail. We added boxes to the Petrifying Springs GC back nine, and are going to install another trail at Parkside later this fall.

I'd like to thank all the monitors for making this year such a success with 542 new songbirds in SE Wisconsin. Keith Kennedy at Shoop; Janet and Jack LeSuer at Johnson Diversey; Eleanor Smith at Petrifying Springs; Rick Fare at West Lawn Cemetery; John Raymond at Ives Grove; Stan Rosenstiel and John Krerowicz, Al and Melody Orban in Kenosha; Juanita Patterson, Ann and Greg Shea, and Nancy and Don Jobe at their homes.

Already looking forward to the "Blues" arriving next spring! Helen Pugh

Purple Martins AHOY !!

Hoy Audubon has launched a Purple Martin Conservation effort!! According to the "Breeding Birds of Wisconsin", the Purple Martin's numbers have declined... "from 1966-2002 at 4.8% annually. More startling is their decline from 1980-2002 at 8.4% ANNUALLY." We want to turn that around.

We were told that we could place boxes in the parks, but "they had better be bullet proof". After some thought, we set up a nest box at the Racine Water Dept. The site is fenced, secured, and adjacent to the Racine Yacht Club. It can be viewed from the parking lot on the harbor next to the Yacht Club. We hope the BB guns won't be able to reach them there. See our website for a photo of the Purple Martin condos.

There were essentially no unusual difficulties for the martins this year even with all the rain and cold weather that the spring brought. Their usual difficulties are enough...flying from Peru, building their nest, evading their avian predators (like Peregrine Falcons), and enduring spring days of below 50 degree temperatures (read, no food available).

We monitored the location and found that 46 Purple Martins fledged from this site this year. Your club recently installed a second "condo" identical to the first nest box. We look forward to next year for another successful year. We will offer a field trip to monitor the little ones and count their eggs during the third week of June. 'Til then, keep them in your hearts as they migrate south and then return. Helen Pugh

A Note of Thanks

We would like to thank Bill Pugh for funding the additional Purple Martin condo and other programs in 2008.

Field Trip

Saturday, October 11th - 12:45 - 3:00 P.M.

Canoe Trip on the Root River

Enjoy a relaxing paddle surrounded by the wonderfully rich fall colors along the banks of the Root River, while Hoy Audubon experts help us locate fall migrate birds. We'll meet at the nature center at 12:45 and canoe from 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. The cost for River Bend Nature Center and Hoy members is \$7. The public is invited at \$10. River Bend will provide the canoes, paddles, and life vests. Bring your binoculars and cameras--if you dare--and a drink and perhaps some skeeter juice. Reservations are required; call River Bend Nature Center at 639-0930. See you there!

All programs and fieldtrips are open to anyone interested. Contact John Raymond, 262.633.0285 for information regarding field trips or to suggest future fieldtrips.

HOY AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. BOX 044626
RACINE, WI 53404
www.hoyaudubon.org

Hoy Meeting Location for January - March 2009

To accommodate for better parking in the snow covered winter months, our general meetings will be held at the YMCA (725 Lake Avenue, Racine) in The Buhler Room (second floor) on Thursday, January 8th, Thursday, February 5th, and Thursday, March 5th.

Parking is available on Lake Avenue; no fee at meters after 6 pm. From Lake Avenue you enter in the northern facing doors and go up the steps a flight or take the elevator to the second floor. The Chapel (where the October 30th board meeting will be held), is "kitty corner" from the stairs. The Buhler Room, where the general meetings will be held, is west of the Chapel down the large hallway. You may also park in the lot behind the "Y" for \$1.00. There you have a few steps and then the elevator and stairs are on your right. Remember, 2nd floor is two flights up from the back--lakeside/parking lot--entrance.

Stay tuned for program topics later this year.

Highlights of Hoy Projects in 2008

Hoy Audubon Society hosted three Beginning Bird watching classes during the spring and summer. They were held at River Bend Nature Center, Racine Zoo and the Racine Public Library. A total of 39 people attended the two hour sessions. The introductory class covered the topics of basic bird ID, best birding spots in Racine and Kenosha, selection and use of binoculars, and birding reference works and organizations. Our thanks go out to Rick Fare, Keith Kennedy and Helen Pugh for making these presentations available as a community service.

Results of the "Swift Night Out!"

Hoy Audubon took part in the national "Swift Night Out!" project again this year. The chimneys monitored were in downtown Racine, and the swifts have been counted there for some years. Muffy Petrick and Helen Pugh counted 42 swifts going to roost on August 16th at 400 Park Ave. On September 14th, they were joined by John and Sandra Raymond, Marty McMahon, and Jenny Wentzel. Muffy and Marty counted just two swifts at the previous location, John and Sandra had 13 go down the chimney at their old apartment building, 1024 S. Main St. Helen and Jenny lucked out to find 320 roosting in the Racine Journal Times chimney on the NE corner of 4th and Wisconsin. We believe that there are many chimneys used in the downtown area, and hopefully will locate more next year. John and Sandra saw many more swifts in their area than they counted going to roost. The swifts, we have found out, change their roost chimneys from year to year. So it's always a bit of a "treasure hunt" to locate them. The technique we've developed is to go to an area prior to dusk and search the sky for swifts. If we see a number of them, we stay there and look for a chimney. As sunset approaches, the swifts will get closer to their roost site, and will begin diving at it. If there is a large number, you will be treated to the group circling and diving. Eventually, the swifts will go into the chimney by momentarily pausing over it and fluttering down. It's quite a unique movement. You may go to <http://www.concentric.net/~Dwa/index.html> for further information on Chimney Swifts and their activity.

Additional Trips of Interest - Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Field Trips

Join the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) for field trips throughout the year. The final field trip of 2008 will be held on Sunday, October 19 at Harrington Beach State Park for "Hawk Watch". Meet: 8:00 am at the lower beach parking area of the park. Please note that there is a state park entrance fee. Bring a bag lunch or cooler. For 2009 field trip dates and locations, visit www.wsobirds.org later this year when they are posted. For the WSO field trips, severe weather conditions may cancel the trip. In the event of cancellation, every attempt to notify participants via the WSO Hotline (call 262.784.4032 for recording) and WisBirdNet (recent postings at <http://www.birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/WISC.html>)

New Annual Renewal Date for Hoy Audubon Society Chapter Membership***

Annual renewals for Hoy Audubon Society "Chapter Supporter" memberships will now be due on July 1 of each calendar year. This simplifies the renewal process for everyone and insures that all members continue to receive our bi-monthly newsletter for information on current programs and field trips. To renew your Chapter Supporter membership for 2008/2009, please send in a check for \$12 (payable to Hoy Audubon Society). Your local chapter membership also helps to support local Hoy Audubon projects in our area such as our Bluebird restoration projects, beginning birding classes, and bird walks. Please note: if you have submitted Chapter Supporter dues (\$12) for 2008 in the past 6 months (January-June), you are considered to be in full membership for 2008/2009.

To continue your national membership and the Audubon Magazine subscription with National Audubon Society (NAS), please refer to information you receive from NAS. NAS only members will receive the Hoy Audubon Society newsletter twice a year.

Chapter Supporter Dues are \$12 per year.

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Send dues to Hoy Audubon Society, P. O. Box 044626, Racine, WI

Receive chapter newsletter by email only? Yes, my e-mail is _____ No

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October 30th at 7:00 P.M. - The next Board meeting will be held at the YMCA, 725 Lake Avenue, Racine in the Chapel Room on the second floor. See directions above. All members are welcome. Come and find out what your club is doing!!

www.hoyaudubon.org