



**Meet a Member!**

Ricky & Becky Jones

We've been married for 13 years. I'm 48 years old and employed as a Distance Learning & Media Tech in Kenosha, and Becky is 44 years old and works as a Legal Secretary in Racine. I've been an amateur astronomer since the late 70s and an amateur/semi pro photographer since about 1985. Becky loves to cook healthy, local, and organic food, avoiding processed foods.

I have had a love for nature since I was very young. Back when I was a Boy Scout we spent a lot of time in nature and learning about ecology. My Boy Scout leader was a very good naturalist and kept us sharp on native flora and fauna. Becky has had a general interest in the environment and animals since she was a child. She loves to hike nature trails, and closely follows environmental issues.

Becky and I have been members of Hoy since 2009.

We're into "networking", meaning we love to engage with others, meet people, talk with others and doing group activities. Hoy is a way for us to meet people with similar interests, and we have met some amazing folks. It is also a great means to learn from some of the best local birders in our area. Doing the CBC (Christmas Bird Count) with Rita Flores Wiskowski and David Flores was great fun and we learned a lot.

We've been enjoying birds our whole lives but as an official hobby since around 2005. It began as an interest in nature and bird photography, and bird photography is still a primary focus for us.

We really don't keep a Life List per se, as our photographs serve as our list. But we can tell you we have had dozens of lifers since we've started the process of visiting as many Wisconsin State Parks as we possibly can.

Our backyard is a favorite spot for viewing birds. We live in Caledonia, and we own a really nice acre lot where Becky and I have planted over 20 trees and bushes to try to entice birds to show up to our feeders.

We also love Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, Wehr Nature Center, both in Milwaukee, and Bong Recreational Area in Kenosha County. On vacation we love to travel up north to Green Bay to Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary and Peninsula State Park. Oh, and we don't want to forget Devils Lake State Park, and of course the whole Wisconsin River area.

Becky and I are members of the ICF (International Crane Foundation) and the National Audubon Society. The preservation of wildlife is what it's all about. Seeing the destruction of so many bird and animal habitats around the world is very concerning, from Western Africa to Central and South America, it's very hard to watch.

We use The Stokes Field Guide to the Birds, Birds of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America. For convenience and portability we also use the iBird app and the Audubon Guide bird app on my tablet computer.

Our advice for the novice birder is to have patience. Birding is about being patient and observing. That is something that took us a while to learn. Also, to enjoy being in nature, enjoy the great outdoors. Don't be in a rush, just be patient. Learn the habitat, the back story of birds. It's fascinating.

Becky and I also are members of the ASPCA, the Milwaukee Zoological Society and the Bong Naturalist Association. We love to travel all over the country; we also love travel by rail (Amtrak). Becky is one of the official owners of the Green Bay Packers. :)



**Bringing Nature Home author to speak in Racine March 5**

Dr. Doug Tallamy, whose book Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants has topped every nature-lover's must-read list, will speak at The Golden Rondelle Theater in Racine on Monday, March 5, at 6:30 p.m.

A vibrant and captivating speaker, Doug Tallamy reminds us that 54% of the United States is suburban/urban and 40% is in agriculture. This leaves precious little habitat for wildlife, including the 127 species of migrating birds that are in decline. While parks and preserves are important, he asserts, they just aren't big enough to ensure the biodiversity needed for our wildlife's – and our own – well-being.

The good news, however, is that the 128 million houses in the United States offer 128 million opportunities to put the right plants back in our landscape, plants that will support the insects that support birds and other wildlife. Insects are highly selective in what plants they will eat, and since 96% of birds in North America raise their young on insects, the relationship is clear: no bugs, no birds.

Professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, Dr. Doug Tallamy speaks to our times and offers workable solutions that each of us can contribute to.

The Golden Rondelle Theater is located at 1525 Howe St. in Racine. Seating is free but limited, and reservations are required. Call 262-260-2154.



Common Loon at Wind Point suffering from lead poisoning  
by Eric Howe

**Get the Lead Out!**

This fall, Hoy birders found an ill Common Loon stranded on the Racine Lakefront. The loon was taken to the Fellow Mortals Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and was found to have lead poisoning. Despite their best efforts the loon did not survive. Lead poisoning is a big problem for Wisconsin waterfowl and loons in particular. One small lead jig or sinker is enough to kill an adult loon. One of the easiest things we can do is use non-lead fishing tackle, including sinkers and jigs, and tell others to do the same. Learn more about it here

[www.wisconsinbirds.org/leadpoisoning.htm](http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/leadpoisoning.htm) and about Fellow Mortals here [www.fellowmortals.org](http://www.fellowmortals.org)

## Hoy Board of Directors

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Email addresses of Board members are available at: [www.hoyaudubon.org](http://www.hoyaudubon.org)

### Next Board of Directors Meeting:

Tuesday, February 28, 7:00 PM, 810 Indiana St. Contact a board member for details. All interested members are welcome. Come and find out what your club is doing!

### Monthly Program Coordinator\*

Dana Garrigan 262-652-1737

### Field Trip Coordinators\*

Mary Ann Toutant 262-554-0563

Eric Howe 262-594-5853

\* If you have suggestions regarding future programs or field trips please contact the coordinators directly.

### Newsletter Editors

Jennifer Wenzel

Sharon Kennedy

Eric Howe

**Ideas for the newsletter?** We welcome your suggestions, recaps of birding seminars/activities, fun facts and birding tidbits for use in future newsletters. Please mail to: Hoy Audubon, P.O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404 or email to: [hoynewsleter@hoyaudubon.org](mailto:hoynewsleter@hoyaudubon.org)

**The Hoy Honker** is the newsletter of the Hoy Audubon Society, Inc. PO Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404.

## Hoy birders travel to Costa Rica

Costa Rica's jungles and beaches were the destination for 60 people who attended Hoy's January 5 program, Conservation Birding in Costa Rica. Eric Howe and Jenny Wenzel shared slides, videos, and lively observations of their trip to the Osa Peninsula last winter.



Scarlet Macaw by Jenny Wenzel

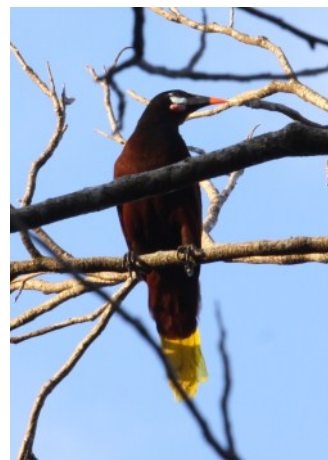
The Osa Peninsula is 300,000 acres of largely untouched wilderness. It houses a remarkable 700+ species of trees and 463 species of birds, including 54 birds that breed in Wisconsin. Osa hosts the largest number of Scarlet Macaws in the world and many species of birds that are found nowhere else (endemics).

The group of 10 Wisconsin birders was guided by two local experts who "knew everything," according to Eric. Gorgeous birds photographed included a pair of Montezuma Oropendolas sitting on a branch. When the male shows off, he flips over and hangs upside down. Unfortunately for him, the female was unimpressed and flew away.

The Osa Project is a combined Wisconsin-Costa Rica effort to protect this globally important area of 13 distinct ecosystems. Conservation birding trips organized by the Wisconsin Birding Conservation Initiative (WBCI) educate birders about crucial habitats such as the Osa and raise money to help protect them.

For more information about the Osa and about future trips, see the following websites [www.osaconservation.org](http://www.osaconservation.org) and [www.wisconsinbirds.org](http://www.wisconsinbirds.org).

-Barb Vass



Montezuma Oropendola by Jenny Wenzel



Prothonotary Warbler in Mangrove forest, Osa Peninsula by Jenny Wenzel



Red-Lored Parrot

by Jenny Wenzel



## All I Want for Christmas: My First CBC

2011 was a big year for me: 82 life birds. (The secret of course is to be a beginner – virtually anything on wings that doesn't have jet engines is a life bird.) Since excursions with Hoy gave me a number of these birds, I thought the Racine CBC would be a nice way to give Hoy something back. Below is a recap of the events of my first Christmas Bird Count.

4:00am: In bed: Four in the morning puts the “ow” in “owling.”

5:40am: A dark park: It's so quiet that, in between recorded owl calls, I can hear individual flakes of snow landing on my coat. Until the Screech Owls respond, to the untrained ear, with a sound like the whinnying of very small horses who can evidently climb trees. They are utterly delightful.

6:00am: Somewhere else dark: Several times now, Eric's owl calls have been answered by distant train whistles. The timing is uncanny; we are trying to stifle our chuckling.

6:45am: Somewhere less dark: No visible owls yet but non-owling people are waking up. As we get passed by another car, I wonder how we must look to the uninitiated.

“Do people ever stop and ask what you're doing?”

“Oh sure, all the time....I'm owling.' 'You're howling!?' 'No, OWLING.'”

7:00am: Nicholson Wildlife Refuge: A Great Horned Owl swoops loose from the shadows to perch like a Christmas tree topper on the tip of an evergreen, then a second Great Horned appears and they fly at each other, exchanging places. All decorum disappears as the four of us exchange a flurry of high-fives. Great start to the day.

7:25am: Wind Point Lighthouse: Light enough now for my camera, which I wear wrapped in plastic since it's still snowing. Eric and Jim both have scopes, so I volunteer to keep records. Eric attempts to explain his connect-the-dots notation system for keeping a running bird count. Running on instant coffee, I can't comprehend it, so I elect to keep score with a pencil, erasing each previous total and replacing it with the new one when the guys call out numbers. There is peril inherent in this approach, however – we only have ONE pencil.

8:15am: Beach toward Shoop: We spot another photographer and then her target: Not one but TWO Purple Sandpipers. Life bird #128 for me! I have to write them in, since these marvels aren't on our pre-printed checklist.

9:00am: Golf course: A bit of whistling and the Chickadees start following Eric like he's the pied piper. A handful trail us tree to tree. I've never seen anything like this outside a Disney movie.

10:40am: Lakeshore residence: A few kind souls have granted us access to their lakefront backyards. Eric spots a gull that lacks black wingtips – a Glaucous. Life bird #129 for me, and another write-in. Eraser on end of lone pencil is half gone. Did not count on our counts updating so rapidly.

12:00pm: Siena Center: I discover a new advantage to birding in Racine: Kringle!

1:15pm: On the road: I spy something that looks like a Kestrel. We loop back and it's only a Mourning Dove. Am beginning to seriously reconsider the efficacy of my new glasses.



Wind Point Purple Sandpiper by Jenny Wenzel

3:00pm: Caledonia Conservancy: A few small birds out in the cold, but our hike is largely silent until we're headed back to the car. A wave of honking begins to build in the distance behind us. This is honking on a scale I have never before experienced, and it is rather worrying – what calamity is driving this flood of sound in our direction?

Then they are upon us, V after V of Canada geese arcing above the trees like a volley of arrows. The sky is an utter pandemonium of honking. I am too staggered to even think of counting and can only stand there weak-kneed until someone shouts, “Eagle! Eagle!” and it sweeps overhead with magnificent wing beats, a juvenile Bald Eagle, too young yet to boast a wise white head. Managed to count that one!

3:30pm: King's Corner: We spot our third Great Horned; in one day, we have matched the number of Great Horned Owls I saw in all of 2010! As we near the car, Jim spots a couple of Snoopy decorations across the road. No Woodstock though. Too bad. But what the heck kind of bird is Woodstock supposed to be, anyway?

4:00pm: On the road: The light is failing rapidly. I spot two statues of swans. “They are definitely Mute,” I quip, a mite giddy from lack of sleep.

4:15pm: Wind Point Lighthouse: One last check of the beach. In the poor light, all ducks are starting to look like Black Ducks, but we forge ahead for the sake of science.

5:00pm: Wind Point parking lot: Officially dark. Time to stop. I can't remember the last time I devoted this much time to the pursuit of a single activity. I have grown so accustomed to wielding the clipboard that I almost drive off with it. Already making a mental list for next year: Don't stay up late reading the night before, even if the book is about birds. Find better gloves.

Bring a bigger eraser...and possibly a calculator.

-Kristin Wegner

## Field Trip Report

Hoy's January field trip visited the 115<sup>th</sup> Birthday exhibit for Owen Gromme. In the historic courthouse in Waukesha, our group of 11 met up with Kristen, our tour guide. She energetically informed us about the Historical Museum's building—from 1893. We learned that Owen Gromme was not just the "dean of wildlife artists". His career began as a taxidermist. No wonder his paintings are so life-like! He thought of himself as a museum man, and spent 42 years at the Milwaukee Museum. He had many, many skills and travelled to both Africa and the Arctic in pursuit of museum mountings. A charging Rhino met his match in Owen and is now in the Milwaukee museum! I came away wanting to know much more about this extraordinary individual.



After the tour the group went to the Southern Kettle Moraine in search of Crossbills. The Crossbills were somewhere else that day, but a Redpoll and "mystery" raptor made the sunny hike more than just a beautiful walk. We finished off with a fine late lunch at the Hen House Café in Eagle.



-Helen Pugh

## Winter Gull Watching

"When you think you know your birds, then try tackling the gulls" was something I read years ago. Although there is some truth to this, it shouldn't keep you from learning to identify them.

The two most common gulls, Herring and Ring-Billed take 4 and 3 years respectively to mature. During this time period, because of molts, weathering, and abrasion, they can have a wide variety of appearances. Since these two species make up 99.9% of the winter gulls, I can't stress enough the importance of learning to ID them. Pay particular attention to size, shape, bill markings, leg colors, and wing patterns. Although feather colors and shades may vary, these features are fairly constant.



I will now share with you the approach that works best for me when viewing a number of gulls which can usually be seen standing or swimming. I first look for any gulls which may have a different color other than gray on their backs. If one has a black back it is usually either a Great or Lesser Black-backed gull. The Great Black-backed Gull is our largest gull. It can appear massive compared to the Herring gull. In winter its head and neck area is usually unstreaked and its legs are pink. The Lesser Black-backed gull is nearly the same size of a Herring gull, has heavy streaking on the face and neck, and has yellow legs. If the back is either light gray or white, it will either be a Glaucous or Iceland (Kumlien's) gull. Neither one of these two have any black on the wing-tips. The Glaucous is larger than the Iceland and immatures have a strongly marked bi-colored bill.

After I have looked for these gulls, the next step is looking for a possible Thayer's gull. I look at all the wing-tips. If one has larger white spots than the others, I focus on it looking for other characteristics of a Thayer's. Thayer's have dark eyes rather than the yellow of Herring's. A Thayer's also has a rounder head giving it a dove-like appearance and a slightly darker gray back. Immatures have light markings on the wings contrasting with the black. The Herring immature has solid black wing tips.

One thing to remember, is that not all gulls will be able to be identified. Possibilities of hybrids always exist and immatures can pose challenges. Even gull experts have difficulties at times, so don't be afraid to get out on a wintry day and do some gull watching. Good places to look for winter gulls in Racine include Carre-Hogle Park, Myers Park, the boat launch, and the Pugh Marina.

-Rick Fare



Immature Herring Gull



**Locations for our Meetings:** Meeting Locations: Our February and March meetings will be at the Kenosha Northside Library, 1500 27th Ave., Kenosha. For directions check MapQuest or Google Maps.

Welcome to the new members of the National Audubon Society and our local chapter, Hoy Audubon Society(October 1 to December 1, 2011)

<b>Bristol:</b>	William Zell
<b>Franksville:</b>	Peter Altenbach, Emil Tisai, Wendy Wulff-Williams
<b>Kenosha:</b>	Erik Bartz, Karen Christiansen, Meg Harvey, Anna Hudson, Vicki Kalcic, Jean Kastman, Tony Maldonado, Mary Merfeld, Mark Nausieda, Rebecca Schrandt
<b>Mount Pleasant:</b>	Maureen Potter
<b>Oak Creek:</b>	Jennifer Ambrose
<b>Pleasant Prairie:</b>	Diana Sullivan
<b>Racine:</b>	Helen Fowler, Juanita Larson, Cyril Thiel, Jerome Veltman
<b>Sturtevant:</b>	Michelle Grinder
<b>Union Grove:</b>	Andrew Baumann

## Counted and Be Counted!

Make sure our local birds are represented in the upcoming Great Backyard Bird Count—they won't count unless YOU do! Save the dates: **the 15th annual GBBC takes place February 17-20**. Everything you need to know to participate is on the website at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org), including downloadable instructions, FAQs, and a how-to video. [Get a regional list](#) of the birds you might see in your area in February so you can brush up on your identification skills ahead of time. The GBBC is a joint project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon.

## In memory of....

Joan Rohan, one of Hoy's founding members and an active environmentalist and conservationist in the community, passed away on January 12, 2012.

Richard 'Dick' Garber, avid birder and past president of Hoy, died on December 27, 2011.

## Upcoming Activities

**February 2—Meeting 7pm-Kenosha Northside Library-Gardening for Hummingbirds**-Michael and Kathi Rock, who have a hummingbird garden in Madison which contains 100+varieties of plants that attract hummingbirds, will speak about hummingbirds and gardening for hummingbirds.

**February 17-20 Great Backyard Bird Count!** Info at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)

**February 25**-Gulls and Waterfowl on the Racine Lakefront-We're having our own Gull Frolic in Racine! We'll begin at Samuel Myers Park (11th Street and Pershing Park) and make our way northward to the Racine Harbor.

**February 25** Beginning Birding Class Salem Library 10:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.-See website for more details.

**March 1**-Hoy Meeting-Doug Taron, Curator of Biology at Chicago Academy of Sciences' Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum will discuss "Butterflies of the American Prairie" 7 P.M.-Kenosha Northside Library-See website for more details.

**March 5**-Doug Tallamy speaks on attracting wildlife with native plants in Racine at the Golden Rondelle Theatre. See article on page 1.

**Sunday, March 11**-WSO Sheboygan lakefront birding field trip. Meet at 8 A.M. at the Sheboygan Marina. From there the group will head north towards Manitowoc depending on where birds are being seen. Check Hoy's website for other updates on this trip.

**March 24**-Waterfowl and more at the Nicholson Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 8 A.M. at the parking area (south of 5 Mile Rd, between H and Nicholson Rd.) We'll walk the trail south to view the ponds. NOTE: Knee high boots are highly recommended as the trail may likely be flooded for the first hundred feet or more.

**March 31**-Waterfowl field trip to Eagle Lake.-We'll meet at the Hwy 20/194 park and ride at 8 A.M. to carpool out to Eagle Lake. Prior to birding at Eagle Lake, we'll check the wetlands west and north of the intersection of Hwy 11 and 75. We'll then meet at Eagle Lake Park (north side of the lake, south of Church Rd.) between 8:45-9:00 A.M. Contact Jenny via cell at 262-488-8077 that morning if you need help finding the group.

**April 4 through April 11**-Loon and Waterfowl Watch at Lake Andrea-Prairie Springs Park (Kenosha Co.) Contact Stan Rosenstiel at 262-694-2206 for times and directions.

**April 14**-Beginning Birding Class Kenosha Museum-further information to be announced.

**April 11th and 18th (Wednesday)-Evening Woodcock Walks at Cliffside Park (northeast Racine Co.)**

**Meet at 7:00 P.M. (or 5:30 P.M.)**

Listen to the peents and see the aerial dances of the twittering "Timberdoodle" at twilight. **Cliffside Park** is located on the lakefront in northeast Racine County, north of 6 Mile Road and east off of Michna Road.

Meet by 5:30 P.M. at Picnic Area #2 (near the yellow gate). While there is daylight, we'll bird along the main trail north of the yellow gate for spring migrants and may go as far north as the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan to view waterfowl.

Or, meet by 7:00 P.M. at Picnic Area #2 (near the yellow gate). We'll walk the trail to the north and await the display of the American Woodcock. The American Woodcock may begin call around 7:30 or 8:00 P.M. (depending if skies are overcast or clear) and will conclude after 8:30 P.M. **Some of the trails may be wet from recent rainfall, so it is advised to wear waterproof footwear. A warm jacket and gloves are suggested.**

**Evening Woodcock Walks at Chiwaukee Prairie (southeast Kenosha Co.)**

**Wednesday, April 18 and Wednesday, May 2.** RSVP with Stan Rosenstiel in advance to sign up (262.694.2206)

More info on activities can be found at [www.hoyaudubon.org](http://www.hoyaudubon.org).

## HOY AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 044626

RACINE, WI 53404

[www.hoyaudubon.org](http://www.hoyaudubon.org)



*Birding at Hoy's first Big Sit-On the Beach at Wind Point-September 2011.*

**Please take the time to renew your Hoy Audubon Chapter Membership for 2011/2012.** Annual renewals for Hoy Audubon Society "Chapter Supporter" memberships are due on July 1 of each calendar year. Please send a check payable to Hoy Audubon Society.

Chapter Supporter Dues: \$12 Total amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Receive chapter newsletter by email only?

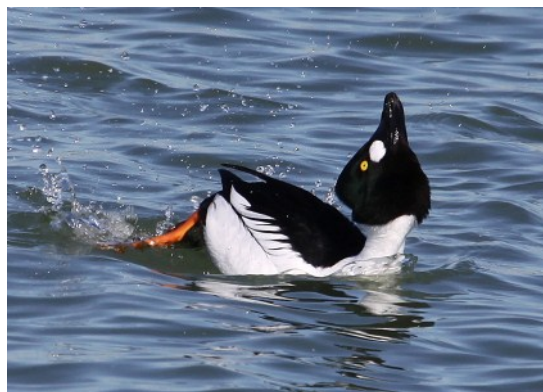
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**Send to: Hoy Audubon Society, P. O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404**



*Common Goldeneye on Racine Lakefront by Jenny Wenzel*

**Remember...you can see the Hoy Honker "In Living Color."** There are two ways to see our newsletter in color: view it on the Hoy website at [www.hoyaudubon.org](http://www.hoyaudubon.org) or get on the e-mail newsletter distribution list by sending an e-mail to [jenny.wenzel@hoyaudubon.org](mailto:jenny.wenzel@hoyaudubon.org) and ask to be put on the electronic mailing list.