



Hoy Birders Travel to Peru!

In August 2012, the [Amazon Conservation Association \(ACA\)](#) in a joint effort with [WBCI \(Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative\)](#) hosted its second annual [Birdathon](#), a fundraising event benefiting conservation efforts in the buffer zone of the Manu National Park in the southeastern Peruvian Amazon, a location known for its immense biodiversity including bird species. Participants in the 2012 event spotted an increase of over 422 species from the 2011 event!



amazonconservation.org

ACA's Birdathon was an event in which a group of conservationist birders traveled a route from the highlands to the lowlands alongside Manu National Park while counting the number of bird species they saw. Their goal was to support conservation of southeast Peru's globally important forests and the birds

dependent on them by seeking sponsors to pledge an amount per bird seen or to make a donation to the event. All funds raised went to ACA to further ongoing conservation efforts.



Jenny Wenzel

Three Hoy members joined this Birdathon in August and will share their experiences at the January Hoy meeting at the Kenosha Northside Library. They'll share with the group the amazing number of bird species that the group found on this adventure, the beautiful landscapes they encountered, and the importance of this area to bird conservation.

-Source-[amazonconservation.org](#)

Locations for our Spring Meetings: Note that the April Meeting will be at the **Mount Pleasant Village Hall - Community Room, 8811 Campus Drive**. The May and June meetings will be at **Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive, Mount Pleasant**. For directions check MapQuest or Google Maps.

Holiday Pot Luck Dinner!



-Ricky L. Jones

About fifty Hoy members gathered for the annual pot luck holiday party this year and had a great time singing carols, socializing, and watching a video about Whooping Crane conservation efforts. Happy Holiday everyone!!

Hoy Lakefront Walks in November



-Jenny Wenzel

Hoy birders met and birded the Racine lakefront at Shoop Park three times in November this year. All of the walks had a great turnout, and fun was had by all!

Highlights include hundreds of Red-Breasted Mergansers migrating along the lake, lots of Bufflehead (aren't they just the cutest little ducks!), a few Common Loons and White-Winged Scoters flying by, and a flyover of an immature Bald Eagle!! We also saw a flock of Common Redpolls eating in the Birch trees across the street from the lighthouse. At the very end of one of the walks, as people were leaving, a flock of White-Winged Crossbills were seen in the conifers near the driveway of the lighthouse. It's been a good year for winter finches so far!



-Jenny Wenzel

There's always great company on our walks and a good amount of laughter shared by all!! We never know what we'll find, and that's what makes it so fun!!

Hoy Board of Directors

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Email addresses of Board members are available at: www.hoyaudubon.org

Next Board of Directors Meeting:
Thursday, February 28th 7:00 p.m.
 All interested members are welcome. Come and find out what your club is doing!

Monthly Program Coordinator*
 Colleen Vernon

Field Trip Coordinator*
 Mary Ann Toutant 262-554-0563

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

Newsletter Editors
 Eric Howe
 Ricky Jones
 Becky Jones
 Sharon Kennedy

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 the attention of Newsletter Editor at: Hoy Audubon, P.O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404 or email to: hoynewsletter@gmail.com

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

Endangered Bird Recovery in Wisconsin

At the October 4 Hoy meeting, wildlife biologist Joel Trick gave a talk on “Endangered Bird Recovery in Wisconsin.” Joel, recently retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after two decades in the Green Bay office, spent the second half of his career working on endangered bird recovery. The USFWS administers the 1973 Endangered Species Act, which has as its goal to recover a species to the point where it no longer needs federal protection. Wisconsin is home for part of the year to three endangered bird species, the Whooping Crane, the Piping Plover, and Kirtland’s Warbler.



-Ricky L. Jones

[The Whooping Crane](#) is the flagship species of the endangered species program. The wild population of Whooping Cranes breeds at Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories, Canada, and migrates through the central corridor of North America to its wintering grounds at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf coast of Texas. With a population of only 16 individuals in 1941, its numbers have increased slowly but steadily to about 280 today. In 1999, the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership was established to restore a self-sustaining migratory population of Whooping Cranes in eastern North America.

Partner organizations include the USFWS, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the International Crane Foundation, and Operation Migration. Excellent information about the migration of young Whooping Cranes from Wisconsin to their wintering grounds in Florida can be found online at the Eastern Partnership’s website: <http://www.bringbackthecranes.org/index.html>. For more information, see the **International Crane Foundation’s** website: <http://www.savingcranes.org/whats-new/2012/11/ultraviolet-led-whooping-cranes-arrive-at-wintering-destination/>

There are three populations of [Piping Plovers](#) in North America: the northern Great Plains population, the Atlantic coast population, and the endangered Great Lakes population. All three populations mix on their wintering grounds, especially in Florida. The Great Lakes Piping Plovers breed on wide, sandy Great Lakes beaches, mainly in Michigan as well as in Wisconsin. When they were listed in 1986, there were only 17 pairs. In 2010, there were 60 pairs. Wisconsin accounts for about 10 percent of the pairs and 10 percent of the chick production. Piping Plovers are particularly susceptible to human disturbance and to scavengers and predators. Their recovery has been aided by protection of their nests and nesting areas by fencing and “psychological” fencing (twine, signs asking people to please keep off) as well as volunteers to monitor the birds.

Until recently, the Kirtland’s Warbler was restricted to Michigan, where it breeds in large stands - over 1,000 acres of dense stocking with scattered openings - of young jack pines. In Michigan, the census of singing males dropped from 432 in 1951, to 201 in 1971. Fire suppression led to the population declines. Fires were essential to creating the habitat that this bird needs. Cowbirds were also adversely affecting nesting success. Today, 190,000 acres of habitat are managed in Michigan for the Kirtland’s Warbler, and 95 percent of the Michigan birds nest in managed habitat. In 2012, there were close to 2,100 singing males.

In 2007, a birder discovered the [Kirtland’s Warbler](#) on land owned by the Plum Creek Timber Company in Adams County in Wisconsin. Tree mortality created the openings that the birds needed. Eight males, three females, and three nests, of which two were lost to cowbird predation, were found. This was the first confirmed nesting of the Kirtland’s Warbler in Wisconsin. Beginning in 2008, nests at the Adams County site were monitored, cowbirds were trapped, and birds were banded. That year there were eight males, five females, and five nest attempts. Two nests fledged 10 young. Interestingly, one male can have two females on nests! In 2012, there were 24 males, 10 females, 14 nest attempts, and 8-13 fledged young. The goal for 2013 is to band more of the fledglings in order to determine if they are returning to Wisconsin. For more information about the Kirtland’s Warbler in Wisconsin including Joel’s photos, see <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/birds/Kirtland/>.

-Sharon Kennedy

A Choring Down of Joy

Hoy Upper Mississippi River Trip, November 10, 2012

It strikes me that I have two approaches to describe the trip: poetry or fact.

Life is short; poetry first. But where do I start? The wheeling eagles catching updrafts like fistfuls of dark oak leaves flung from the fingers of trees? The emerging sun striking sparks from white feathers of Tundra Swans so they swirled like innumerable snowflakes and wrappd the river in sudden winter?

The morning began at the Lynxville boat landing on the Mississippi River, where about a dozen of us converged to find over a hundred Bald Eagles and nearly 12,000 assorted waterfowl: Half were Canvasbacks, nearly



a quarter were Ring-necked Ducks, and Tundra Swans totaled 570. Two Pileated Woodpeckers briefly graced the leafless trees behind us. We also encountered a rather vocal & territorial Orange-breasted Rail (ok, technically, it was a freight train). Our next stop on the Iowa side at Pool 9 yielded closer views of Bald Eagles and a nice assortment of ducks, including Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, and Northern Shovelers. Surprisingly, we spotted only *one* Coot here when there had been 1,400 back in Lynxville.

When the group reached the Brownsville Overlook in Minnesota, we were greeted by the fluting calls of Tundra Swans that had gathered in large rafts, some close enough to spot the yellow like a daub of paint on their lores. Brownsville took our count up to 39 species for the day, including four White Pelicans perhaps hoping to blend in among the sea of swans. Another highlight was a very active female Long-tailed Duck who challenged the birders with her frequent dives. An immature eagle teased an adult until the pair engaged in synchronized acrobatics, each echoing the other's swooping and whirling.

It wasn't only the birds having fun. Hoyers warmly greeted old friends and gleefully drew new acquaintances over to peer through scopes at birds they had never seen before. I who had fought writer's block for months found myself suddenly scrawling down words about birds. A passing gang of leather-clad bikers pulled over to have their pictures taken with the swans.

And those swans... For someone like me, who upon waking that morning had never seen even *one* Tundra Swan, to witness some 1,750 of them at a single location was nothing short of magical. When I recall the way they floated down to meet the water, piping to each other as they drew close, a phrase from the poet Conrad Aiken comes to mind: *a choring down of joy*.

That is the foremost word to describe the weekend – *joy* – pure, untethered joy of a kind one seldom gets to experience. And that's a fact.

-Kristin Wegner

Bluebird Program By Rick Fare & Helen Pugh

“The Eastern Bluebird, Up Close and Personal”. The Eastern Bluebird is one of the most beautiful and best-loved birds in America. This program, filled with delightful photographs, will focus on its life-cycle and history with emphasis on man's efforts to increase its reduced population. You will learn how to attract bluebirds—proper housing plans with location requirements will be available—and about restoration efforts in Kenosha and Racine counties.



This program will be held on **March 7, 2013 at the Kenosha Northside Library at 7:00PM.**

Upcoming Activities

Hoy Meeting, Thursday, January 3, 7:00 p.m. Kenosha Northside Library, 1500 27th Avenue, Kenosha, WI. Program: Hoy Birders Travel to Peru!

WSO Field Trip: Lake Michigan Birding, Saturday, January 12, 8:00 a.m. South Shore Yacht Club, Milwaukee. Dress warmly and bring your “energy” foods.

Program: The Art of Falconry, Saturday, January 12, 9:00 a.m. Bong State Recreational Area - Visitor Center Kenosha County.

2013 Bald Eagle Days, January 18-19. Sauk City, WI.

Hoy Meeting, Thursday, February 7, 7:00 p.m. Kenosha Northside Library, 1500 27th Avenue, Kenosha, WI. Program: Birds and Urban Forestry. Matt Koepnick, City Forester for the City of Racine, will discuss the various benefits that birds derive from specific tree species and how and why tree species are selected to plant in parks and along streets.

Hoy Field Trip: Gulls and Waterfowl on the Racine Lakefront, Saturday, February 9, 9:00 a.m. Beginning at Carre-Hogle Park and making our way northward to the Harbor.

Great Backyard Bird Count, February 15-18. For more information visit www.birdcount.org.

Hoy Meeting, Thursday, March 7, 7:00 p.m. Kenosha Northside Library, 1500 27th Avenue, Kenosha, WI. Program: The Eastern Bluebird, Up Close and Personal.

Hoy Field Trip: Bird Watching at the Nicholson Wildlife Refuge, Saturday, March 9, 8:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Waterfowl Eagle Lake, Saturday, March 30, 8:00 a.m. Meet at Hwy 20/I-94 park and ride to carpool to Eagle Lake. We will check out the wetlands north of Hwy 11 & 75, then meet at Eagle Lake Park (north side of lake, South of Church Road) sometime after 9:00 a.m.

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



Hoy Members Birding at the Lakefront, Dec. 2009.

Please take the time to renew your Hoy Audubon Chapter Membership for 2012/2013. 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: _____

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Checking a bluebird box for eggs!

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 or get on the e-mail newsletter distribution list by sending an e-mail to jenny.wenzel@hoyaudubon.org and ask to be put on the electronic mailing list. You can now find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HoyAudubonSociety