



The Great Wisconsin Birdathon - The “Long Walk” for Birds



In our last issue of the *Hoy Honker*, we announced the effort to raise funds for the Bird Protection Fund of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. The “Long Walk” for birds, spearheaded by Bill Mueller, involved 83 participants who walked sections of a long trail bordering eastern Wisconsin from Kenosha to Marinette Counties during the month of May. At its conclusion, the “Long Walk” tallied 192 species of birds and raised nearly \$10,000.

Jenny Wenzel and I walked portions of Kenosha and Racine Counties to represent Hoy Audubon. A big thank you to all who contributed to Hoy’s fundraising effort; donations for our county sections exceeded \$500 for bird conservation!

Jenny walked a five-mile stretch in Racine that included Colonial and Lincoln Parks. Some of Jenny’s highlights included two Mourning Warblers, a singing Alder Flycatcher, fifteen Canada Warblers, fifteen Wilson’s Warblers, and a Common Nighthawk. She also walked a section of the Kenosha Lakefront, where she had twenty-seven Chimney Swifts as well as Caspian, Forster’s and Common Terns.

My section was a portion of the MRK Bike Trail in northern Racine County. I hadn’t expected to walk this section, however, I soon saw the diversity of habitats that the trail connected. The shrubby and wet ditches that paralleled the railroad tracks were active at sunrise with the sweet calls of Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats, Wilson’s Warblers (whose songs resemble fading steam locomotives), and the punctuated notes of the Northern Waterthrush. American Redstarts flashed about as they stalked small larvae. A Green Heron flushed up to a branch allowing close study from mere feet away.

From a wooded section of the trail, a band of a dozen Blue Jays provided entertainment as they called and flew endlessly about. Great-crested Flycatchers cried out. Scolding Red-eyed Vireos revealed a female Cooper’s Hawk diligently incubating in a nest above a wooded wetland. Near the airport, Savannah and Vesper Sparrows whispered from the short grass field. Near Six Mile Road, a lone Eastern Meadowlark sang from a field, habitat which continues to shrink and fragment from years past.

“Long Walk” continued-

From backyards to small scattered woodlots, Baltimore Orioles reminded me of their long journey from Central America to Wisconsin, where some stay to nest. Other species, like the two Gray-cheeked Thrushes I encountered, had begun their flight from South America and had yet to complete their trek to the edge of the tundra.

Hoy Audubon looks forward to contributing to the Great Wisconsin Birdathon again next year!

-Article and photo by Eric Howe

For additional information on the “Long Walk” go to:
wibirdathon.org/nrfw/longwalk.asp

It’s not too late to contribute to Hoy’s donation! Visit hoyaudubon.org/birdathon and you’ll be redirected to our Birdathon page.

Use the Donate Now section to contribute - every little bit helps!

Toward Better Birding: Birding Code of Ethics

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology recently updated its Code of Ethics to address issues such as the baiting of owls that has occurred in recent years.

The complete Code of Ethics can be found on the WSO website in PDF format; visit hoyaudubon.org/ethics to be redirected to the PDF.

We highly encourage anyone who enjoys the outdoors to read and abide by this Code. It contains guidelines for how to observe birds safely and with minimal impact to either the birds or their environment, and it also advises us to respect the people we encounter while birding.

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Next Board of Directors Meeting: Wednesday, August 20, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive
Mount Pleasant, WI 53406

All interested members are welcome.
Come and find out what your club is doing!

Field Trip Coordinator

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If you have suggestions regarding future programs or field trips please contact the hoyfieldtrips@hoyaudubon.org

Newsletter Editors

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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@hoyaudubon.org

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

Advice from Audubon: Buying Binoculars



To get the most out of birding, it is essential that you get a good pair of binoculars. Not all binoculars are good for birding however, so use the tips below to find the pair that best fits you.

General requirements: The problem for most beginning birders is simply finding the bird. Look for binoculars that have a wide enough field of view to locate a bird and then follow its movements. The instrument must provide a bright enough image to allow you to distinguish subtle features, particularly in dim light, and also focus quickly so that you can get a sharp image of a fast-moving bird. If you wear glasses, look for binoculars that have a long enough eye relief to provide an unrestricted view.

Specifications: Binoculars are described by two numbers, 8x32, or 10x40, or 8x21 for example. The first number tells you the magnification while the second tells you the size of the objective lens, in millimeters. Binoculars that have a bigger ratio between the magnification and the objective lens size will always give a sharper, brighter image than ones with a smaller ratio. (For instance, 8x42 provides a brighter sharper image than an 8x32 or 10x42.) Most birders agree that 7 or 8 power is about right for most birding. We generally recommend against purchasing 10 power binoculars because they have a smaller field of view and a dimmer image. Binoculars with a bright wide field will also be much easier to hold steady; higher magnification also magnifies the movement of your hands. You may want to consider purchasing mid-size binoculars, such as 8x32s since they are bright enough and easy to carry and pack, may have a field of view as good as many 8x42s.

Pricing: You get what you pay for. Always spend as much as you can afford when buying binoculars; you will never be sorry to have purchased high quality binoculars. Pay attention to what experienced birders around you are using. Better yet, ask to look through their binoculars and question them about the pros and cons. Never buy a binocular before trying the actual instrument you plan to purchase. You need to be certain that you are comfortable using a particular brand and model, and individual instruments do vary within a brand and model.

Get Comfortable With Your Binoculars. Before you go birding, make sure you know how to use your binoculars - practice! Don't try to locate the bird with your binoculars. First find the bird with your unaided eye, then keep your eyes on the bird while you raise the binoculars to your face. Focus and enjoy.



Binocular Don'ts:

- ◆ Don't buy compact, or pocket-sized binoculars (typically 8x21, or 10x21) as your primary pair for birding. The size and weight are attractive, but no matter how good the optics, compacts provide a lower quality image than mid- or full-size binoculars. Another drawback is that most compacts have a narrow field of view, which makes it very difficult to locate and follow birds.
- ◆ Don't buy zoom binoculars. Expert birders report them as being inferior.
- ◆ Don't seek advice on buying optics from non-birders. Hikers, hunters, and boaters have different needs than birders. Looking at birds is not the same as looking at other wildlife. Pocket binoculars are fine for looking across a savannah at an elephant or a cheetah, but they are not suitable for birding. Marine binoculars provide a sharp, bright image, but are too big and heavy to carry around all day.
- ◆ Don't buy binoculars until you have tried them. Make sure they feel comfortable in your hands. Look through them and be sure you get a clear, unobstructed view. Different models suit different people, and each instrument varies. If ordering by mail or online, make sure that you can exchange them.

Article reprinted from audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_watching/binoculars.shtml

North Beach Notables

Spring brought some exciting migrants through the Racine lakefront, particularly at North Beach. At least two Piping Plovers were spotted this year (photo at right by Drew Goldberg). A flock of about two dozen Willets also made an appearance.



After one of Hoy's warbler walks at Colonial Park, several birders went to North Beach and were rewarded with this Marbled Godwit (photo by Eric Howe).



On May 15 in the early evening, 125 Caspian and 865 Common Terns crowded together for the night. (The photo below by Kristin Wegner represents just a small portion of the birds!)

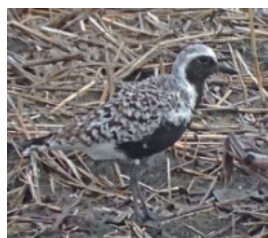


All terns are classified as endangered in Wisconsin, so it was nice to see them in these numbers. North Beach clearly serves as an important migration stopover, so it's important to keep beaches like this bird-friendly.

- Kristin Wegner

Samuel Meyers Sightings

Two American Avocets visited Samuel Meyers Park, as well as a Black-bellied Plover (photo by Eric Howe). The habitat restoration that is underway already seems to be making a difference. We look forward to the future here!



A Father's Day Salute to a Chickadee Dad

As any trail monitor can tell you, bluebird boxes attract more than just bluebirds. Black-capped Chickadees will occasionally nest in these boxes in lieu of hollow tree cavities.

This spring, when Rick Fare was monitoring his boxes, he opened one that contained a chickadee nest. Sadly, the female parent had died from unknown causes, but when Rick moved her aside, he discovered several five-day-old chicks still alive beneath her. After the female was removed, the male chickadee took over care of the young, feeding and raising them by himself. The chicks (pictured below) recently fledged. Nice work, Mr. Chickadee!



Black-capped Chickadee chicks, photo by Rick Fare

A Bird Struck My Window - What Should I Do?

Migration brings large numbers of birds, but unfortunately also increases the likelihood of window strikes. If you find an injured bird that has struck a window, here's what to do:

1. Find a cardboard box and gloves to protect your hands.
2. Poke air holes in the box and line it with paper towels or other soft items, if possible, to keep the bird from sliding around.
3. Gently scoop the bird into the box and close it.
4. Take the boxed bird to a warm, quiet place to reduce its stress.
5. Contact one of these wildlife rescue agencies for further instructions:

Peesh Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
262-716-8294
Salem, WI

Fellow Mortals Wildlife Hospital
262-248-5055
Lake Geneva, WI

To help prevent window strikes, Audubon offers several suggestions, including advice about feeder placement and window treatments. More details are available at audubon.org/bird/at_home/SafeWindows.html

Peregrine Progress & Picnics

The Racine Courthouse Peregrine Falcons have come a long way in the last few weeks, and the nestlings dubbed Ava, Corrine, and Maya are on their way to exploring a wider world. Visit hoysaudubon.org/birds/peregrine and you'll be redirected to the *Racine Journal Times* article and video about the banding of this year's young.

Here are a few snapshots of life in the hack box, taken from Racine's falcon cam, falconcam.goracine.org

June 3: R13 watches her chicks as they snooze:



June 10: One of the sisters tries her wings in the safety of the box:



June 12: Beaster brings breakfast to the eager trio, who are no longer content to wait for tidbits and rush to intercept him:



June 18: On the ledge and ready to fledge! Note the striking changes in plumage and the loss of down:



June 22:
A "finished" fledgling! Long, tapered wings and a strong, dark "mustache" like her parents.



All three young are spending more time out of the hack box though may return from time to time to rest or enjoy some shade.

-Kristin Wegner

Hoy held two "Picnics with the Peregrines" this spring. The first gathering on June 5 had beautiful, warm weather. Though the nestlings had not emerged yet, we listened to them in the hack box and watched their activities online. The parents brought in food and flew about the courthouse a few times.



Peregrine picnickers, photo by Helen Pugh

Our next gathering on June 10 had sleeping nestlings with sleeping adults nearby in very cold and windy weather, but good conversation was had by all. After the young falcons fledge, they will still be around the courthouse for several weeks while they hone their flying skills and their parents continue to feed them. Racine has THE most visible Peregrine Falcons in the state!

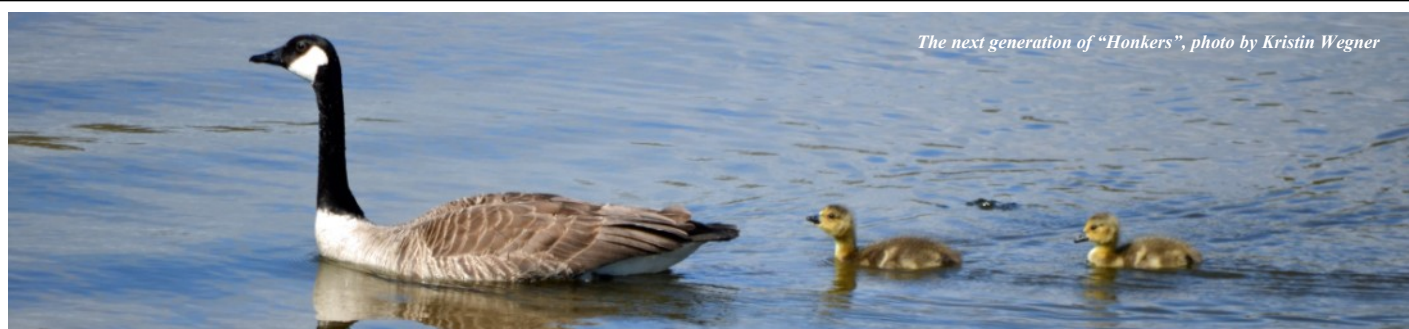
-Helen Pugh

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The next generation of "Honkers", photo by Kristin Wegner

Please take the time to renew your [Hoy Audubon Chapter Membership for 2014/2015](http://www.hoyaudubon.org).

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 per individual

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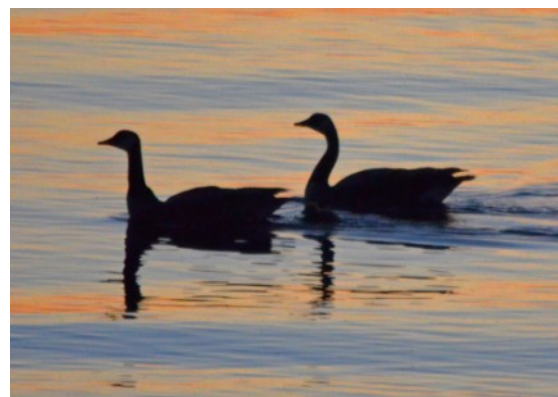
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Send to: Hoy Audubon Society, P. O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404



Canada Geese at Sunset, photo by Kristin Wegner

See the Hoy Honker "In Living Color."

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