



Springing into Summer

Migration always brings good birding, and this spring was no exception.

Kenosha had such notables as White-rumped Sandpipers and Black-bellied Plovers. A Louisiana Waterthrush sang its way up and down the Pike River at Petrifying Springs. A Whooping Crane was also spotted in Kenosha County. Hawthorn Hollow hatched out a handsome Great Horned Owl that afforded lovely views to many birders.

Banded Caspian Terns were spotted at Samuel Myers Park and North Beach, locations that also hosted Common and Forster's Terns. A Franklin's Gull stopped at North Beach, and a Laughing Gull turned up at Wind Point (below, photo by Frank Sharkozy). Wind Point also briefly boasted a



Yellow-throated Warbler.

Shoop Park sightings included a Yellow-breasted Chat and a Le Conte's Sparrow.

Piping Plovers visited North Beach and Myers; it's a treat to spot these birds, which are endangered in Wisconsin (and throughout the Great Lakes).

Myers hosted some great birds despite foot and truck traffic from the ongoing restoration project. (Killdeer and a Herring Gull even decided to nest at Myers this year.) Willets, Dunlins, Semipalmated Plovers, and Least Sandpipers were frequent visitors to the puddles, as were Blue-winged Teal and Northern Shovelers. A White-rumped Sandpiper, a Stilt Sandpiper, and five Whimbrels were some of the more unusual visitors. Marsh and Sedge Wrens sang in the reeds.

Virginia Rails and a Sora (right, photo by Frank Sharkozy) skulked about, picking for food in the mud.



Springing, continued-

Jenny Wenzel had some great finds at Nicholson; topping the list were a singing Prairie Warbler and a Black-necked Stilt (below, photo by Jenny Wenzel).

This last bird created an impromptu Hoy convention as several of us dropped what we were doing and rushed to the boardwalk to see the bird wading and feeding.

According to eBird, this is only the second Black-necked Stilt ever reported in Racine County!



All the more special was that the Black-necked Stilt was Rick Fare's 300th species in Racine County—go, Rick, go! (Rick at left, photo by Eric Howe.)

-Kristin Wegner

Dues are Due!

Annual renewals for Hoy Audubon Society "Chapter Supporter" memberships are due **July 1**, so please renew today, if you haven't already! See page 6 for renewal details.

Field Trip Coordinator Needed

Since Frank Sharkozy has been elected president, Hoy needs a new Field Trip Coordinator. Contact any board member if you'd like to volunteer!

As always, everyone is welcome to send suggestions for field trips. Although we love our traditional sites like Colonial Park and Shoop, we love birding new places too!

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, August 13, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

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

All members are welcome to attend!

Field Trips:

Coordinator needed; contact Hoy to help!

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

Newsletter Editor:

Kristin Wegner

Ideas for the newsletter? Send your suggestions, recaps of birding seminars/activities, fun facts, and birding tidbits to the attention of Newsletter Editor at: Hoy Audubon, P.O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404 or email to: hoynewsletter@hoyaudubon.org

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Meet a Member: Drew Goldberg



Hello everyone! I'm sure many of you have met me at one point or another, perhaps on the trail. My name is Drew Goldberg.

I have been working at Midland Display and Packaging for 27 years now as a press operator. When I'm not working long hours, I can be found at rummage sales to feed my 5,000 plus album collection or out on the trails birding.

I started "birding" when I was really young, around 7 or 8 years old. For hours, I would watch Blue Jays, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Cardinals, Evening Grosbeaks, nuthatches and others visiting the platform feeder at my grandparents' cabin. It was addicting! My grandparents had 48 acres of land to play with in Southern Forest County. I'd watch Common Loons, Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagles, and Ospreys out on the lake. We searched for American Woodcock and Ruffed Grouse in the woods (along with bear, deer, porcupine and other critters). By the time I was 3rd or 4th grade, I was able to identify the majority of the common species.

Then there were the family vacation trips to the national parks out west.... I could tell stories!

Some how I lost my way as a teen. A different life style was more important to me than the great outdoors, that changed about 3 years ago when I saw a Red-breasted Merganser diving in the Racine Harbor. Intrigued, I began to wonder what I had been missing out there. Glad that I did! At that moment, my passion for wildlife and nature was renewed. Soon after that I started hanging with the Hoy Audubon and have a life list of about 271 different species for Wisconsin and perhaps more than 300 U.S. species.

I'll bird virtually everywhere... My all-time favorite birding spot would be at Horicon Marsh. There is so much to see there! Buena Vista Grasslands near Stevens Point is awesome! Around the Racine/Kenosha area, I like to bird at Bong State Recreation Area for the wintering raptors. (Short-eared Owls are a favorite!) Colonial Park is great for warblers! Myers Park is awesome for shorebirds! (I LOVE avocets!) Shoop Park is great for the migrants. Nicholson has got some great stuff! What did I miss?

Advice for new birders? Hmm.. I say read, listen, observe and BIRD EACH BIRD! There are many field guides out there to read. Sibley's is supposed to be the best; however, online sites like Cornell Lab of Ornithology work well for me. Listen to other birders and the stories they tell. Much could be learned from them. Go out and observe the birds. There is so much that be learned out there that be can't be taught in field guides. Lastly, BIRD EACH BIRD! That "seagull" that you overlook could be a rare Slaty-backed Gull. Most importantly, HAVE FUN out there!

What are you, Chicken?

Several Hoyers made the trek to Buena Vista Grasslands this April to see Greater Prairie Chickens strut their stuff. Peter O. Dunn's February presentation reminding us of their dwindling Wisconsin numbers only strengthened my resolve to see these birds in state before it's too late. Thus one Sunday, long before dawn, I found myself stumbling through a pitch black field...

Underfoot the grass is thick and tangled with twigs as six birders follow a crumb trail of reflective stakes to reach the blinds. Before we left, the guide rearranged the groups, so Eric and I are the only Hoy members at this spot. I don't catch the blinds in the beam of my headlamp until we're right on top of them: two plywood boxes. I'd heard they were small, but it looks like we're attempting to cram ourselves into a child's cardboard box fort. Eric is over six feet tall; how is he supposed to fit in there?

Fortunately, once we arrange our gear and sit, there's actually plenty of room. Small windows, each with pivoting panel, line the sides of the blind. (Once the sun is up, only one side can be opened at a time or the light will shine through and the chickens will detect movement.) We open the front shutters to reveal... Nothing, not even the outlines of the windows. Too dark for human eyes.

Cackling floats out of nowhere. It's less eerie than cheery, a sort of joking chortle. A chicken has landed, though it remains invisible. Cackling becomes whooping as other chickens announce their arrival at the lek. The black outside gives way to deep cobalt. At first the birds are blots and blobs of an uncertain paintbrush trailed through liquid, pre-dawn ink. As the birds begin to dance, a chorus of booming drifts from the grass like air puffed over the lip of a bottle: *hoo-hoo-oooooh, hoo-hoo-oooooh*.



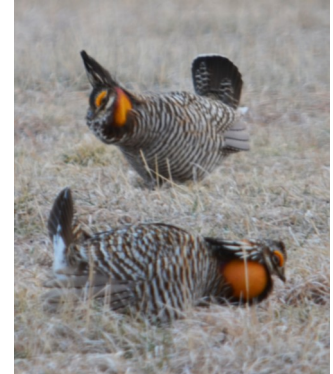
As dawn breaks, the details emerge: flared tails, sharp wing feathers, wagging pinnae, brown and white bars on wings and flanks, inflated mango neck sacs, orange-peel eyebrows.

Other birds emerge too: an Upland Sandpiper calls as it flits by. A Short-eared Owl dips down to scan the lek, but the chickens boom on. A Savannah Sparrow on the roof sings so loudly he might as well be perched on my head.

Chicken, continued-

Six males have arrived; one at the far left keeps mostly to himself, but the others chatter, squabble, and sometimes fight as they defend particular patches of ground.

Each periodically flutter-jumps, perhaps to be visible above the unmown grasses that surround the lek. They strike all manner of comical poses rendered even more humorous by how earnestly they approach their dance. It's difficult not to giggle (quietly) as they court, cavort, and caterwaul.



At last, a hen emerges from the grass. The dancers emit frantic whoops that sound for all the world like, "Me, me! Pick me!" They are revitalized, especially the leftmost bird, who is nearest the hen. He drums his feet, splays his wing feathers, puffs his peach pouches, points his pinnae, and dances circles around her. The hen is wary, more alert to her surroundings than to his advances.

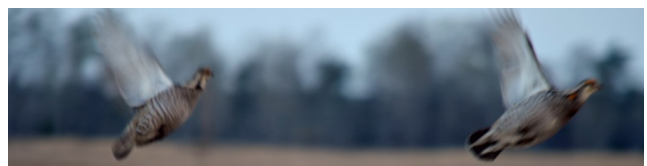


Just as she begins to give him more serious consideration, she tenses then bolts from the field. The male also flushes, returning a minute later without her. Probable cause soon arrives in the form of a Rough-legged Hawk who swoops over the lek, scattering all the chickens, including a hen who had just peeped out from the grass. Drat.

The dancers return once the hawk departs, but the hens stay hidden and without them, energy flags. Chickens boom less and bicker more. Finally they lose interest boundaries and haphazardly forage for breakfast since mating is no longer on the menu. Relaxed pinnae lend the loafing birds a profile not unlike lop-eared rabbits.

With the sun up, the pace slow, and the hens long gone, birders start to leave the blinds. The chickens flush. After spending the morning making themselves as bold, boisterous, and visible as possible, it's amazing how quickly they disappear. I only hope it's not forever.

- Article and photos by Kristin Wegner

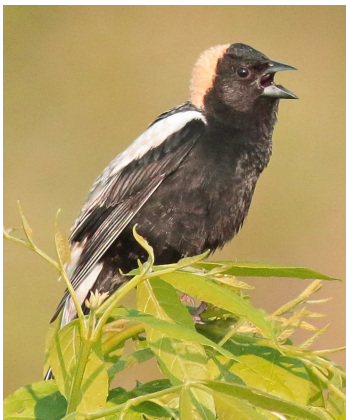


A May Day at Horicon

Article and photos by John Krerowicz

There's old advice about going where the birds are, if you want to see them. Horicon Marsh is usually guarantees birding success. Hoy Audubon plans an annual outing there every August, so I spent a day in late May checking out the usual site suspects to see and photograph birds:

- ◆ The Department of Natural Resources Field Office on Palmatory Street, on the south end of the marsh, was quiet, birdwise. The most interesting activity was two laundry basket-sized snapping turtles either dueling or courting in one of the ponds to the northwest.
- ◆ The DNR's Visitor Center, on Highway 28, had plenty of cormorants and an active but distant osprey nest. I walked along the boardwalk to the south and listened to a dozen or so Marsh Wrens. They responded to pishing more than the warblers in the forested area at the end of the boardwalk. Some of those warblers, including Yellows and Common Yellowthroats, were vocal but stayed hidden. There also were a few Baltimore Orioles and a "creepy" Great Crested Flycatcher calling out.
- ◆ Dike and Ledge roads featured plenty of protective and extremely rude Canada Geese, which hissed and stuck their tongues out at me as I drove by.



But the birding jackpot that day was along the Auto Tour, off Highway 49 and on the west side of the marsh. Immediately, several Bobolinks (left) greeted me on both sides of the entrance road, along with an Eastern Meadowlark or two and, later, a few Clay-colored Sparrows. Further down, an Eastern Kingbird

perched on short brush, and an Eastern Wood-Peevee repeated its name. An array of Flycatchers—Alder, Willow, Least and Great Crested—easily could be seen and heard along the rest of the route. I saw what I believed was an Olive-sided Flycatcher, but it was for a split second through binoculars while facing the sun. It didn't give itself away, vocally.

The tour's boardwalk is usually a welcome place, if not for birds, then for the cool breezes that make hot weather more bearable. This day, I found the walkway surrounded by Black and Common terns. For entertainment, all you had to do was follow one of the Commons because eventually it would hover over the water and dive like an Olympian, usually surfacing with its next meal.

I began watching a Common Tern that was sitting on one of the posts along the boardwalk because it was making so much noise.

Horicon, continued-

Why wasn't this bird joining the others, croaking as they flapped through the air searching for food? Instead, she reminded me of the fledglings in our backyard that riot—endless squawking, and buzzing their wings—until parents bring insect snacks. But this tern was no tot; it was an adult female on the receiving end of courtship offerings. I watched the suitor bring small fish several times (below).



North and west of the boardwalk is a pond that happened to be covered by hundreds of Dunlins, some of them wandering quite close to where I sat with a camera. A bonus were a half dozen Semipalmated Plovers mixed in. An unexpected extra bonus was a croaking Whooping Crane coming my way. I heard it a few football field lengths away so was able to grab a dozen shots as it flew directly over me.



Near the end of the tour, I saw a car pulled to the side and the driver aiming a long camera lens at something in the pond to the north. Sure enough, a pair of Black-necked Stilts were taking turns, maybe every 20 minutes, sitting on a nest maybe 70 feet from the road. At the west end of that pond were three Yellow-headed Blackbirds jockeying for position among the reeds.

That was a great day. What to do for the follow up? I was camping at nearby Ledge County Park, a great place for birding itself. Every morning was like waking up in an aviary that specialized in Great Crested Flycatchers and Vireos. I could hang around the campground or retry the previous day's quiet sites in hopes of a different story.

That old advice, however, kept telling me to go where the birds are and make a date with the sure thing. I did and wasn't disappointed.

Prairie Springs Park and Lake Andrea

This 425 acre park in southeastern Kenosha County contains locally excellent river bottom habitat along the Des Plaines River. In addition, this park contains a 110 acre spring fed lake known as Lake Andrea. The lake itself appears to be a rather sterile looking environment, yet seems to attract excellent numbers of geese and diving ducks in the spring, including a mixed flock of Snow and Ross's Geese estimated at 200 birds, with the majority of them being Ross's in the spring of 2006. To the west of the lake are the river bottom woods that are excellent for the local woodpeckers and can be swarming with birds during the peak of the May migration. Flood waters of the Des Plaines River along Hwy. 165 have produced numbers of Great Egret and a Cinnamon Teal.

This park is located on the north side of Hwy. 165 approximately 1.5 miles east of I-94.

-Jerry DeBoer, *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*



Wood Thrush,
photo by John Dixon

Toward Happier Trees...

To help save trees and reduce Hoy's operating expenses, we encourage you to subscribe to *The Hoy Honker* via email instead of print.

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You can also visit the Hoy website to access the current *Honker* and past issues at any time:
www.hoyaudubon.org

Hoy's Upcoming Activities

Thursday, July 16, 5:30 p.m.

Hoy Audubon's Annual Summer Picnic

Petrified Springs Park

716 Green Bay Road, Kenosha, WI 53144

We look forward to seeing you! Bring your own beverage, a dish to pass, a plate, and flatware. We'll meet at picnic area four; if four is unavailable, we'll meet at area five or six further north. After we picnic, we'll look for birds and play bocce ball.

Thursday, August 6, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Meeting: Program TBA

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

Watch Hoy's website for details.

Friday, August 7, 7:30 p.m.

Swift Night Out!

Kenosha, location TBA

Join us to help count Chimney Swifts! We'll watch them choose a chimney and count them as they drop inside to roost. Watch Hoy's website for location details.

Saturday, August 15, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Horicon Marsh

We will meet at the Auto Loop Trail parking area off of Hwy 49 at 9:00 a.m. If you have questions, need directions, or are interesting in carpooling, contact hoyfieldtrips@hoyaudubon.org.

Thursday, September 3, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Meeting: Program TBA

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

Watch Hoy's website for details.

Saturday, September 5, 7:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Wind Lake Sod Farms

Meet at the Highway 20/I-94 Park & Ride

We'll carpool to the sod farms and, from the roadside, look for Buff-breasted Sandpipers, American Golden Plovers, Brewer's Blackbirds and other fall migrants.

Wednesday, September 9, 5:30 p.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Bird Walk, Petrifying Springs

761 Green Bay Rd Kenosha, WI Meet at lot 3

Meet at lot 3; Rick Fare will lead, looking for fall migrants.

Friday, September 11, 7:30 p.m.

Swift Night Out!

Racine, St. Patrick's Catholic Church

Meet at the parking lot at Hamilton and Douglas to help count Chimney Swifts! Will we break our record night from last year, when Hoy members Helen and Bill Pugh and Frank Sharkozy tallied an astonishing **1,336** Chimney Swifts funneling into **this** chimney? Be there and see!

Saturday, September 12, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The Big Sit

Location TBA

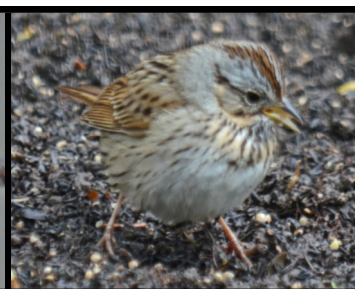
Hoy's fifth Big Sit is a FREE EVENT and open to EVERYONE! It is an easy activity for those with limited mobility, as birders watch from a stationary location. Bring binoculars, sunscreen, water, snacks, and a folding chair. Our experts will have spotting scopes set up for the public and will be happy to talk about birds with you and your family. **Location TBA based on bird sightings—watch Hoy's website for details!**

HOY AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 044626

RACINE, WI 53404

www.hoyaudubon.org



Feeder Frenzy! Indigo Bunting, Cape May Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow, photos by Kristin Wegner

Please take the time to renew your [Hoy Audubon Chapter Membership for 2015/2016](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

Total amount enclosed: _____

Do you wish to receive chapter newsletter by email only?

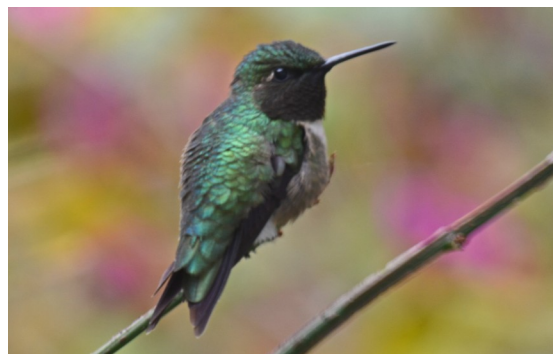
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Send to: Hoy Audubon Society, P.O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404



A male Ruby-throated Hummingbird rests in the shade, photo by Kristin Wegner

See the Hoy Honker "In Living Color."

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