



### Toward Happier Trees ...



*A rainbow in Racine, from spring 2015 (Kristin Wegner)*

Hoy intends to begin distributing our newsletter, *The Hoy Honker*, via email in the future instead of printing and mailing physical copies. This is a step that has been taken by many conservation-minded groups who wish to reduce their consumption of paper and fuel.

Our virtual version displays all our gorgeous bird photos in full color. (We have many excellent photographers in this group!) The electronic version is also easier to read: You can enlarge the text as needed on your screen, and you won't encounter the printing issues or shipping damage that can happen with a paper copy.

We understand that not everyone has ready internet access or email, so whenever possible, we will continue to print a few copies to have on hand at our monthly meetings for our members.

We will read our intent to change the newsletter distribution and the associated bylaws during our August and September meetings. The intent is that **this issue**, the July-September 2016 issue, will be our final printed-and-mailed newsletter. The new bylaws will read: *Newsletter Committee: The newsletter committee shall publish and distribute a newsletter to chapter members at least twice a year (having printed copies of said newsletter available at member meetings when possible).*

**Not subscribed to Hoy's emails yet?** Send an email to [hoynewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hoynewsletter@gmail.com) and let us know you'd like to be added to our email distribution list.

**Subscribed, but can't find our emails?** Please make sure [hoynewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hoynewsletter@gmail.com) (newsletter address) and [communications@hoyaudubon.org](mailto:communications@hoyaudubon.org) (future address for announcements) are added to your address book to ensure our emails don't get caught in your spam folder.

**Want to read the newsletter without subscribing?** You can visit the Hoy website to access the current *Honker* and past issues at any time: [www.hoyaudubon.org](http://www.hoyaudubon.org)

### ... and New Members!

Hoy carries a sign-up list at our events, but collecting emails has not led to a significant increase in membership. In order to promote our group in a more meaningful way, we will modify the format of the newsletter so the Upcoming Activities list can easily be printed as a handout. Having a few copies of our activities on hand at Hoy events will encourage more return visits and participation. (And it amounts to much less paper than printing the entire newsletter as a handout.)

#### "Where's my lunch?"

Cooper's Hawk, thwarted in pursuit of a sparrow when it ducked into a wood pile

*Kristin Wegner*



### Renew Today!

**Annual renewals** for Hoy Audubon Society "Chapter Supporter" memberships are due **July 1**. Please note that dues is now **\$15** per individual for the 2016-2017 membership year. (See page 6 for renewal details.)

Your dues supports Hoy's marvelous monthly programs, building and maintaining Purple Martin and Bluebird nest boxes, and other Hoy activities.

**Thank you for your support!**

## Hoy Board of Directors

**President:**

Frank Sharkozy 262-770-2481

**Vice-President:**

Elizabeth Wheeler 262-880-9250

**Treasurer:**

Jim Veltman 262-886-9374

**Secretary:**

Karen Gavahan 262-633-7136

**Directors:**

John Dixon  
Rick Fare 262-902-9020  
Eric Howe  
Helen Pugh 262-637-4359  
Kristin Wegner  
Jenny Wenzel 262-488-8077  
John Krowicz 262-694-8736

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

### Next Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, August 18, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

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

All members are welcome to attend!

### Open committee positions:

Field Trip Chair  
Conservation Chair

### Contact Hoy to help!

**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, PO Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404 or email to: [hoynewsletter@hoyaudubon.org](mailto:hoynewsletter@hoyaudubon.org)

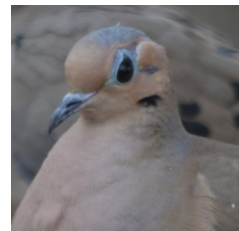
**The Hoy Honker** is the newsletter of the Hoy Audubon Society, Inc. PO Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404.

Copyright © 2016 Hoy Audubon Society.  
Copyright © of each work belongs to the author or creator of the work.

## Meet a Membird:

### “Baldy” the Mourning Dove

*We didn't have any volunteers for our “Meet a Member” feature this issue, so here's the story of an interesting avian visitor to our yard. -Kristin*



Back in September 2015, a bizarre bird landed on our multi-level tray feeder with a *whomp*. It was a Mourning Dove, but it took me a moment to figure that out. The bird was in great disarray and had obviously survived a recent predation attempt. Feathers were torn from the top of its head, exposing a raw, red scalp, and the damage continued down its neck and back. Its tail feathers were completely missing. Worst of all was that the dove's left eye appeared warped from a wound on its head; the bird was a shocking sight.

It wedged itself between two levels of the tray, where only sparrows and finches venture. Despite the trauma, it continued to look around alertly as it gobbled up seed. Once it had eaten its fill, it flew off as though nothing had happened. I never even had a chance to call a rehabber for advice.



I wasn't sure I'd ever see the bird again, but to my surprise, it continued to return throughout the fall and winter. Each time it reappeared, it had grown back more feathers, but the bare patch atop its head was the slowest to fill in so it picked up the nickname “Baldy.” Fortunately, the injured eye healed; the dove could blink and appeared able to see, though its eyelid remained scarred, giving the eye a teardrop shape. Once all its feathers (including the missing tail) had grown back, that odd left eye was the only way to recognize it.

In mid-March this year, Eric and I were watching the feeders and noticed a very handsome Mourning Dove with iridescent neck feathers strutting his stuff and elaborately preening on our patio while a slightly smaller and more drab dove looked on. She decided he was a desirable prospect; they “kissed” bills a bit then proceeded to mate. When the male dove turned his head, we saw his unusual eye and discovered our old friend Baldy! The doves lounged awhile at the bird bath, where Baldy shooed away a rival male.

The pair returned to our yard several times over the next couple of weeks, then Baldy started to visit the feeder alone. Our guess is the pair is nesting, as he tends to eat quickly and fly off in the same direction. (Since his mate has no battle scars, we can't tell her from other female doves if she's visiting.)



Every now and then, Baldy visits the feeder where I first saw him, but oddly enough, he doesn't eat; he just looks around for awhile, almost as if the place has some strange significance. - article and photos by Kristin Wegner



## Great Egret vs. Snowy Egret

Now that summer is here there is a chance to see some vagrants from other parts of the country that make their way into Wisconsin. One of those is the Snowy Egret, which is similar in appearance to the Great Egret, which is regularly seen here. As both egrets are large white wading birds, identification can be tricky. Here are a few tips to help tell them apart successfully.

If you are lucky enough to see the two together, which does happen on occasion, the ID is easier as the Great Egret is much larger than the Snowy Egret. If seen separately there are field marks that will help with the ID.

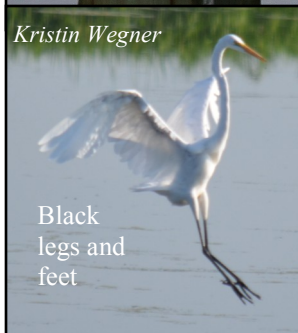
The adult Snowy Egret has a thin, black, medium length bill whereas the adult Great Egret has a long, yellow bill which is also a bit thicker. The Snowy also has bright yellow lores, the bare skin between the eye and the base of the bill, while the Great Egret has much duller lores, making the lores less conspicuous. The back of the Snowy Egret's head has shaggy plumes, but the Great Egret has no head plumes.



Yellow lores with bare skin between eye and base of bill

*John Dixon*

Black legs and yellow feet

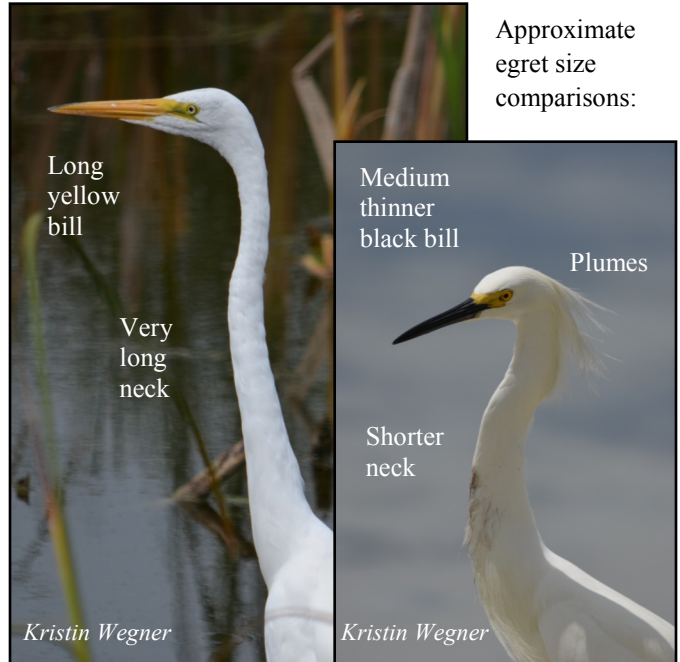


*Kristin Wegner*

Black legs and feet

Both the Great and Snowy Egret have black legs, but if you get to see the feet of a Snowy Egret you will notice they are bright yellow in color while a Great Egret's feet are the same color as the legs: black.

The Great Egret has a much longer neck than a Snowy Egret, even if the Snowy has its neck stretched out while hunting or looking around.



Approximate egret size comparisons:

Long yellow bill

Very long neck

Medium thinner black bill

Plumes

Shorter neck

*Kristin Wegner*

*Kristin Wegner*

One more hint that can be helpful is that when feeding, the Snowy Egret is often much more active than the Great Egret, running through the water to chase and catch prey. The Great Egret is usually quite stealthy and deliberate while seeking prey. I have also seen a Snowy Egret shuffle its feet in the mud and water to scare prey into movement before it is caught.

If you are lucky enough to see a Snowy Egret, hopefully these tips will help you make the identification.

If your white egret is smaller than either of these, has a short yellow bill, and has orange legs, you've spotted a Cattle Egret, another vagrant to Wisconsin. These are easier to distinguish from the other two egrets due to their size and the fact that they usually don't wade. (They do hang around with cattle, though.) - *John Dixon*



*Kristin Wegner*

### Racine's Trio of New Falcons



*Eric Howe*

Followers of the Racine Courthouse falcon cam were disappointed this spring when a March storm zapped the camera. Since it could not be repaired or replaced without bothering the nesting falcons, the camera remained offline this season. Falcon researcher Greg Septon, who monitors peregrine nests and bands the resulting chicks annually, posted updates on the pair when possible. The female “R13” (who appeared in one of Septon’s photos) was back for her 8<sup>th</sup> year nesting at the courthouse, and her mate was likely “Beaster,” back for his 9<sup>th</sup> year.

Although unable to follow the events online this season, I was fortunate to attend the banding of the falcon chicks on Monday, May 23. I had never seen a bird banded before, but having observed the falcons tearing prey to feed their young in years past, it was easy to grasp the necessity of the nest-raiding party’s accessories: thick leather gloves, hard hats, eye protection, tough jackets. A reinforced pet carrier would house the chicks on their trip from the roof to the 10<sup>th</sup> floor and back again.



*Eric Howe*

Septon prepared the table by unfurling a towel, a simple tool to help the bird stay calm. Each chick would be laid on its back with its head covered by a corner of the towel while Septon attached the bands to its exposed legs.

Of the four eggs incubated this year, three hatched. As Septon explained, over half of the peregrines hatched young about two weeks ahead of schedule this year. Racine’s pair did too, so the banding date shifted accordingly. He explained why there’s a narrow window for banding peregrines: Too early, and you can’t tell the males from the females, so you risk putting the wrong size band on the bird (females will be larger than males). Too late, and the chicks might bolt from the nest before they are ready to fledge.

When it was time to begin, Septon and his assistants donned their protective gear and ascended to the roof, returning a few minutes later with the borrowed birds.

From a distance one could mistake them for fluffy, white chickens, but a closer look at the fierce gaze, the hooked bill, and the curved, pointed talons on their enormous, yellow feet would quickly dispel that impression. And then, of course, there was the screeching. Three peregrine chicks pining for their parents in a sealed room with stout metal elevator doors, a glass wall at the back, and a tiled floor make *quite* a racket. There was always at least one chick calling continuously. It was humorous when, at the end of the festivities, all three shrieking chicks went silent simultaneously, as if they had finally had their say.



*Eric Howe*

As Septon collected the chicks, some of us rushed down to ground level to watch the spectacle above us. As tricky as it must have been to remove the chicks from the hack box, it proved even more tricky to return them. The men raised brooms to give the falcons a target other than human hands and heads. (I’ve been walloped by a Red-winged Blackbird before, but I can’t imagine being struck by a talon-toed falcon.) The crew slid a piece of wood across the large front opening of the box to prevent any chicks from escaping.



*Eric Howe*

Both parents hovered, quite literally, around the men; the wind was enough to keep the birds aloft with little flapping. The larger female circled the intruders. A crowd collected on the sidewalk, craning their necks at the odd sight of raptors in the urban sky . . . a sight becoming more common thanks to the remarkable work of dedicated individuals like Greg Septon.

*- Kristin Wegner*



## Hoy's Upcoming Activities

Saturday, July 2, 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

### **Bong Recreation Area: Annual Butterfly Survey & Hike**

*Visitor Center, Bong Recreation Area*

Bong Recreation Area is looking for participants for their annual butterfly survey. After the survey, Naturalist Beth Goeppinger will lead a butterfly hike at 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 14, 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 4, 7:00 p.m.

### **Hoy Meeting, Program: The Birds of Wisconsin**

*River Bend Nature Center, 3600 N Green Bay Rd, Racine, WI*

Join us in welcoming back Mike Wanger for an entertaining evening of "The Birds of Wisconsin." Mike will have photos and tidbits about our favorite state birds. So don't miss a great time to catch up on all the great birds of Wisconsin.

Saturday, August 13, 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@hoyaadubon.org](mailto:hoyfieldtrips@hoyaadubon.org).

Thursday, September 1, 7:00 p.m.

### **Hoy Meeting, Program: Hawk Watch**

*Kenosha Northside Public Library*

*1500 27th Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53140*

Vic Berardi, the founder of the all volunteer Illinois Beach State Park Hawk Watch in Zion, IL, will be discussing the history of hawk watching along the western shore of Lake Michigan in southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois. He will also show the species of raptors and their frequency in fall along with a few ID tips. In addition, Vic will discuss some of his photography techniques and recommendations on what equipment to use.

Saturday, September 3, 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.

Thursday, September 22, 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.

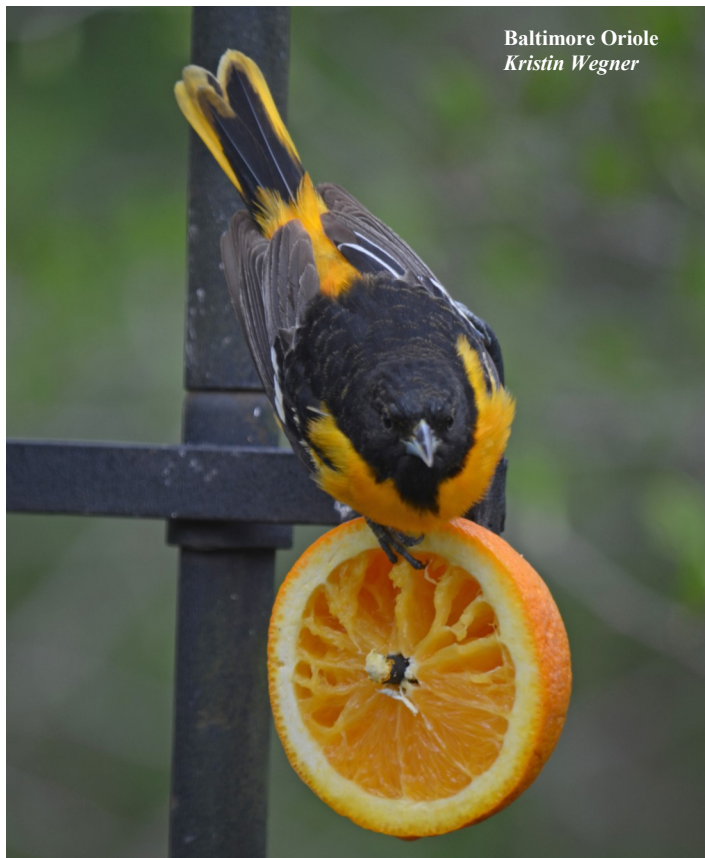
Saturday, September 24, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### **The Big Sit**

*Samuel Myers Park, Racine*

Hoy's sixth 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. **New location: Samuel Myers Park!**

**Weather Advisory:** We post field trip cancellations on Hoy's website and Hoy's Facebook page/group whenever it is possible to do so ahead of time. If you are unsure whether a trip will take place, please use good judgment when deciding whether to attend.



Baltimore Oriole  
Kristin Wegner

## Watching (and Helping!) Condors

Cornell has added a Condor Cam to their collection of amazing live bird cameras. To see the condors and other nesting birds, visit [cams.allaboutbirds.org](http://cams.allaboutbirds.org).

Want to do something a bit more interactive to help condors? Visit [condorwatch.org](http://condorwatch.org) to participate in a citizen science project researching condor behavior through the use of motion-activated cameras. CondorWatch presents reviewers with photos that may contain condors, ravens, and other birds and animals (including the meal they are scavenging). Reviewers use a series of clicks to tag each creature in the image, giving additional information such as age (juvenile or adult), wing tag color, and tag number when possible. Once a photo has been tagged by enough reviewers, scientists will use the data to look for behavioral patterns that may indicate when a condor is suffering from lead poisoning, which is still a major threat to condors.

# HOY AUDUBON SOCIETY

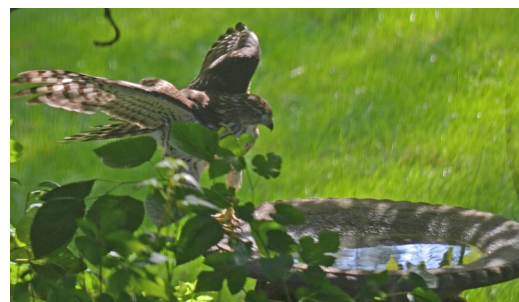
P.O. BOX 044626

RACINE, WI 53404

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

Everyone enjoys  
a birdbath...  
Coyote,  
Cooper's Hawk,  
and American Robin

*photos by  
Kristin Wegner*



## Join [Hoy Audubon](http://www.hoyaudubon.org) or renew your 2016/2017 Membership!

Renewals for Hoy Audubon Society "Chapter Supporter" memberships are due on July 1 of each calendar year. Chapter Supporter dues are \$15 per individual. Please send a check payable to **Hoy Audubon Society**.

Total amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Hoy distributes newsletters and field trip announcements via email, so please provide your email below if you would like to be added to this distribution.

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

- ◆ View the Hoy Honker in full color at [www.hoyaudubon.org](http://www.hoyaudubon.org)
- ◆ Visit Hoy on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/HoyAudubonSociety](https://www.facebook.com/HoyAudubonSociety)

