



A Record Year for Hoy's Purple Martins!

The Hoy-sponsored Lakefront Purple Martin Conservation Initiative is proving very successful. Hoy has six houses (each with 14 nest boxes) in Racine, and two houses in Kenosha.



Tom and Karen Gavahan, along with myself, monitor the Racine boxes. We have four at the Racine Water Department, one at the Pugh Marina Coast Guard area, and one at Gateway Technical Institute. The Gateway house struggled again this year with House Sparrows, but did fledge all 18 birds from 3 nests. The Coast Guard house fledged 37 from 8 nests. The Water Department houses fledged 31, 47, 52, and 38 for a total of 168 birds from 38 nests.

This year's total of 223 from Racine is a new high—by 44 birds! We attribute this success to mild weather after their nesting began. Also, the bird feeding station at the Water Dept. was utilized by them during the inclement weather during our lengthy Spring. We monitored the birds every week until all fledged, and were diligent with nest changes. We believe that we were able to boost the health of the fledglings by keeping their nests free of parasites.

Purple Martins, continued -

Stan Rosensteil monitors the boxes at the Water Department in Kenosha. He reported a typical year of 4 nests and 13 birds fledged.

The birds are currently migrating South—to Brazil. The houses have an eerie quiet surrounding them. We miss their cheerful songs and chortles, and now must await their return in April.

- article and photo by Helen Pugh

Kent Hall retires—A Thank You Note!

Hoy wants to thank you for all of the help you gave our local chapter of Audubon. I remember well you driving down here several times in 2006-7, and helping us establish four Bluebird trails. Sometimes you drove your trailer piled high with boxes that your team had manufactured; sometimes your car was packed to the roof. Most of those trails' boxes were put in through the snow! Those trails are still in existence and doing well. Those monitors you trained, three out of four anyway, are still very active with Bluebird restoration. As you know, those four trails grew fourfold. People in Racine and Kenosha Counties now know what an Eastern Bluebird looks like!

Thank you for fulfilling a vision with foresight and hard work. You have left quite a legacy in Wisconsin!

- Helen Pugh

Christmas Bird Counts

Save the dates and watch Hoy's website and Facebook page for details and updates.

Sunday, December 15 (backup Dec 16)

Burlington CBC

To sign up, contact Nick Mimier at
nickmimier@yahoo.com
or 262-363-8856.

Saturday, December 14 (backup Dec 15)

Racine CBC

To sign up, contact Eric Howe at
cbc@hoyaudubon.org
or 262-498-3355.

Saturday, December 21 (backup Dec 22)

Kenosha CBC

To sign up, contact Valerie Mann at
kenoshacbc@gmail.com
or 219-477-0006.

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, October 24, 7:00 p.m.
Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive
Mount Pleasant, WI 53406

All members are welcome to attend!

Newsletter Editor

Kristin Wegner

Ideas for the newsletter?

Send your suggestions, recaps of birding seminars/activities, fun facts, and birding tidbits to the Newsletter Editor at: Hoy Audubon, PO 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.

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Merlin vs. Peregrine Falcon

Now that fall is near, it is time to think of migration again, not just of warblers, flycatchers, etc., but of raptors. Two falcons that pass through the area, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon, can be tough to tell apart. Here are a few tips to hopefully make it easier. (These points are in reference to adult birds.)

Size is an important factor as a Peregrine is quite a bit larger than a Merlin, sometimes being close to six inches longer with a much wider body and wing span. The Peregrine's tail, which is narrowly barred, is proportionately shorter and fairly wide compared to its body than the Merlin, whose tail appears longer and narrower with wide dark bars and narrow light-colored bars. Also in the Peregrine, the wings are longer and broader proportionately while the Merlin's are more pointed, shorter proportionately, and angular in shape.

Here are some tips for birds in motion: Peregrines are much more likely to soar, not to fly with several wingbeats and a glide like a Merlin usually does. Merlins chase their prey in fast, level flight while a Peregrine will "stoop" (dive from a great height) on its prey.

Plumage-wise, the most noticeable difference is the large, bold, black mustache of the Peregrine compared to the weak, small, pale gray mustache of the Merlin. Also, the chest and area behind the mustache is usually quite bright white on the Peregrine compared to being grayish and lightly streaked in the Merlin.



While Peregrines have a breast and belly which are darkly barred, the Merlin has heavily streaked underparts. The upperparts are similar in color with the Peregrine's being more of a dark slate color while the Merlin's is more of a dark gray color.

These two can be tricky to tell apart but with some practice and these tips hopefully it will be easier to tell them apart.

- article and Merlin photo by John Dixon

Bumble Bee Brigade

Bored with birds? (I can hear most of you yelling, “Never!”) Or is birding just slow in your area right now? Consider taking a closer look at bumble bees with the Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade!



Northern Amber Bumble Bee*

Wisconsin has twenty native species of bumble bee, including the federally endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, which has been sighted in Racine and Kenosha Counties in recent years. (Exciting!) Seven other species are classified in state as species of greatest conservation need.

The Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade’s mission is to “improve our understanding, management, and conservation of Wisconsin bumble bees.” They offer annual training sessions that cover bumble bee identification, observation protocol, and how to log sightings in their online tool. After sightings are submitted, they are professionally reviewed and verified, and the results help researchers help bees.



This bee may look rusty, but she’s actually a Tri-colored Bumble Bee.

Learning to distinguish between species, and even between males and females, provides quite a challenge. Not every bee looks like the diagram on the page; bees that are worn may appear to have more black since they have fewer hairs remaining. It’s also hard to ID a bee on the wing or while she’s furiously gathering pollen. Photos to the rescue!

Bees, continued

The Brigade requires photos to submit bumble bee sightings, and ideally, these photos give views of the bee’s face, side, and back, each of which contains critical information for making a positive ID.

As Eric and I learned when we took the Bumble Bee Brigade training this year, it can be rather difficult to identify bumble bees. Some species look nearly identical except for slight differences in the size of the spot on their backs or the color of the face or the vertex (back of the head). It’s quite fitting that one bee is named *Bombus perplexus*: the Confusing Bumble Bee! But we’re getting better with practice and enjoying finding “life bees!”

Interested in learning more about the Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade or Wisconsin’s bumble bee species? Check out <http://wiatri.net/inventory/bbb/>

- article and photos by Kristin Wegner

**I have yet to log this sighting, so it hasn't been verified yet!*

Trees We Love: Coming Soon!

Sue Schuit sent us this preview: *Trees We Love, 2019 has awarded two trees: a 150 year old Black Maple and a 180 year old Red Oak – both in Racine.*

Looking forward to seeing this year’s winners!

Advice for Fall and Winter Birding

What to Wear: Weather can be unpredictable, so warm layers are advised. Comfortable, waterproof footwear is a must, as are a warm coat, hat, and gloves. Hand warmers are highly recommended.

Finding Your Field Trip: Visit Hoy’s website for driving directions and maps (when available).

Watch the Weather: Heavy snow, icy roadways, poor visibility, or other potentially hazardous conditions may cause a field trip to be cancelled. We post cancellations on Hoy’s website and the Hoy Facebook page/group whenever it is possible to do so ahead of time. **If you are unsure whether a field trip will take place, please use good judgment when deciding whether to attend.**

Upcoming Activities

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

Hoy Meeting, Program: Wild Recyclers with Fellow Mortals
Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast's Trefoil Oaks Program Center
 3901 1st St, Kenosha, WI 53144

Aimee Sosenko, from Fellow Mortals Wildlife Hospital in Lake Geneva, will discuss wildlife rehabilitation, the animals they help, and simple ways the public can help. Learn about certain species of wild animals that help keep our environment clean and meet one of these amazing “wild recyclers” in person!

Saturday, October 5, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. (backup date: Oct 12)

Hoy Field Trip: Hawk Watch at Chiwaukee Prairie
121st St. and 2nd Ave., Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158

Hoy will meet at Chiwaukee to watch for migrating raptors. There is roadside parking in this area, as well as a portable bathroom unit. Bring your binoculars, a chair, water, snacks, and layered clothing in case it's breezy. If migration conditions are poor, we will postpone the trip until October 12. Watch Hoy's website and Facebook page for details!

Thursday, November 7, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Meeting, Program: Tracking Wolves In Wisconsin
Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast's Trefoil Oaks Program Center
 3901 1st St, Kenosha, WI 53144

Larry and Emily Scheunemann will be presenting this program on the gray wolf here in Wisconsin. Emily is a volunteer speaker for Timber Wolf Alliance, an organization that supports education to better understand wolves. Both have been volunteer carnivore trackers for the DNR for over 20 years and are Coordinators of Region 14, an area south of Necedah, WI. A brief overview of the history of wolves in Wisconsin will be included, as well as a description of research techniques used to monitor the wolf population. The Scheunemanns will also discuss some of the current problems and challenges in managing the wolf population in Wisconsin.

Saturday, November 2, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding
Shoop Park, Racine

We'll meet at the Shoop parking lot and walk north along the lakeshore trail to the Wind Point Lighthouse to look for fall migrants. Dress for cold & windy weather and wear sturdy walking shoes (it's 0.6 miles one way, and the trail may be overgrown).

Friday, November 8, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Owl Prowl at Bong State Recreational Area
Meet at DNR parking lot on north side of Hwy BB (7th Street)

We will drive near and within the park to listen for owls. (Note that a WI State Parks vehicle admission sticker is required to park within Bong.)

Saturday, November 9, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding
Shoop Park, Racine

Saturday, November 16, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Kenosha Lakefront Birding
7825 First Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53143

We'll meet at the Southport Park parking area (just north of the Kenosha Sand Dunes). Dress warmly!

Saturday, November 23, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding
Shoop Park, Racine

Upcoming Activities, continued

Saturday, November 30, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Kenosha Lakefront Birding
7825 First Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53143

Thursday, December 5, 5:30 p.m. Setup; 6:00 p.m. Dinner

Annual Holiday Potluck and Program

Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive, Mount Pleasant, WI 53406
 Hoy's annual Holiday Potluck! Bring a dish to pass along with your own dinnerware and utensils. Hoy will provide coffee and napkins. We'll discuss bird sightings and upcoming events.

Saturday, December 7, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding
Shoop Park, Racine

- ♦ View the Hoy Honker in full color at www.hoyaudubon.org
- ♦ Visit Hoy on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HoyAudubonSociety

Join [Hoy Audubon](http://www.hoyaudubon.org) or renew your 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.

Join or renew online at: www.hoyaudubon.org/donate/

Or complete the form below and mail it with a check payable to **Hoy Audubon Society**.

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Hoy distributes newsletters and field trip announcements by email. Please enter your email address below to be added to this distribution.

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