



Hoy Bluebird Restoration Effort 2020

According to Stan Rosenstiel, compiler, there were fewer trails this year as two small ones were left unmonitored for health reasons. We still monitored 26 trails! The number of boxes remained at 354, and Bluebird numbers were indeed much better. Our 30 monitors this year helped to fledge 1670 songbirds!



John
Krerowicz

Total Bluebirds were 817 (an increase over 2019 of 32%); Tree Swallows numbered 768 (showing a 25% reduction). Additionally, we fledged 73 House Wrens and 13 Black-capped Chickadees. So all numbers are—in the current vernacular—“moving in the right direction.”

Thanks to all of the monitors for their time and effort put forth every week. I'd like to especially commend Rick and Sara Fare for overseeing their 58 boxes and producing 363 songbirds on three different trails. They had about equal numbers of Tree Swallows to Bluebirds which helps explain this truly phenomenal 6.2 birds per box!

Ray Palenik's Parkside trail of 18 boxes produced 116 songbirds...5.3/box. The Bristol Horse Farm monitored by Dennis Persinger fledged 84 songbirds from 16 boxes (5.2/box). Jenny and David Wenzel at South Hills Golf Course fledged 80 songbirds from 19 boxes (4.2/box).

Every one of the trails had excellent results this year with our overall number of 4.7 birds fledged per box. The cold spring set the timing of the first nesting back a bit, and let the Tree Swallows nest before the Bluebirds. After that, the Bluebirds showed good resilience as always. In other words, it was great fun this year, and we look forward to next year.

If you would like to join our monitors, please contact Rick Fare. He loves showing anyone interested the Bluebird life cycle. Bring your children/grandchildren!

- Helen Pugh

Don't wing it this election

Birds can't vote, but as one of the millions of Americans who care about them—you can. In addition to the presidential race, there are countless state and local elections happening nationwide that will have a big impact on our communities and our birds. Join bird lovers across the country and pledge to Vote For The Birds today! [Click here to take the pledge and start your voting plan.](#)

- a message from National Audubon Society

Are you still seeing hummingbirds? Keep an eye out, because fall migration sometimes brings rare ones.

If you see a hummingbird, try to get a photo, and log your sightings in eBird. Happy watching!



Sunbathing Ruby-throated Hummingbird,
Kristin Wegner

Christmas Bird Counts

Watch Hoy's websites for dates and details.

This year, due to Covid-19, we are looking for:

- Small groups who are members of the same household or quarantine “bubble”
- Individuals who can cover an area and/or bird from the roadside
- Feeder watchers—stay warm and count birds at home!

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

Next Board of Directors Meeting:

October 15, 2020. We will continue to meet via phone.

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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Female Surf Scoters vs. White-winged Scoters

Now that fall is upon us, I thought I would take a look at two of our migrant ducks that are quite similar looking, female Surf Scoter and female White-winged Scoter. (Immature birds of each species are similar to adult females.) Here are some tips to separate them.

Let's start with the female Surf Scoter, a quite large dark duck, with a dark gray to blackish body, and all dark in flight also. Its most distinct feature is its large, dark grayish bill, which has a vertical white feathered patch at its base. There is also a white patch of feathers behind the eye and sometimes on the nape.



Adult Male
Surf Scoter

Immature
Surf
Scoter

The female White-winged Scoter is our largest scoter who also has a dark body. One of the distinctive features of the White-winged is the large, pale, dull white or grayish patch of feathers that extends above the base of the bill. This area is dark and unfeathered in the Surf Scoter. The white patch of feathers behind the eye is often dark grayish and not as distinct as in the Surf Scoter. The most distinctive field mark is the white secondaries of the wings which give the White-winged its name. These can sometimes be seen when the bird is on the water swimming, or when starting to dive, but are most visible when the bird is in flight. This is the most positive way to tell them apart from Surf Scoter, and is a great way to tell the White-winged Scoter from almost all ducks in flight, as it is the most commonly occurring all dark duck with white secondaries.



Female
White-winged
Scoters

Hopefully these tips help when out in the field scanning waterfowl this season.

- article by John Dixon, photos by Kristin Wegner (apologies for the low light)

Purple Martin Success in 2020!

The Purple Martin season for the Hoy colonies was another record year. The cold spring set the birds a bit behind schedule, but weather co-operated after that with no large losses. Stan Rosenstiel monitored Kenosha's Water Department, and had 5 nests that fledged 14 birds. I monitored the Gateway and Coast Guard colonies in Racine for a total of 13 nests and 48 fledged...not quite as good as last year. However, Tom and Karen Gavahan diligently monitored the four boxes at the Racine Water Department and fledged 227 birds! So, Hoy's total is an impressive 289 new Purple Martins for 2020.

The Racine Water Department colony is really an exciting place to visit during nesting season—May-July. It is filled with the many songs, clicks, and chortle sounds of the Martins as they go about the business of raising young. I am amazed that the four 14-nestbox houses are basically at capacity! Only three nests out of 50 did not fledge any birds, and only one box did not have a nest built in it! Normally, it would be time to add another box. We do not have the "staff" for expansion...?

Late this season we erected a new gourd system for Purple Martins at Gateway in Racine. It was donated to Hoy by Lorrie Ogren who is joining our team as a monitor!



New gourd system at Gateway!
Thank you, Lorrie!

It is the first time we will be using the gourds, and we are very happy to have the opportunity to try this type of housing. It will also give Gateway a second area for nesting, as the house on the south side of the campus will remain in place for the next year. There is also a possibility of another location along the lakefront for additional housing.

Please, contact me if you have an interest in learning about Purple Martins. Our club is doing a good job with the Purple Martin Lakefront Initiative and would like to have you on the team.

- Helen Pugh

Sixteen Seasons of Bluebirds



Bluebird arriving
with food,
John Krewowicz

I have been very fortunate to have Eastern Bluebirds nesting on my Kenosha Co. property for the last 16 breeding seasons. Because they are close by I can monitor there progress very frequently. I have put together the data from those 16 breeding seasons for the bluebirds on my property. The house in the yard has been up for 16 seasons. The house by the creek has been up for 14 seasons. The yard house was used every year. The creek house was used only 3 years.

In the 3 years in the creek house, 5 broods were attempted, 19 eggs were laid, 3.8 eggs/brood, 18 hatched, 94.7%, 3.6/brood, 12 young fledged, 63.1% of eggs laid, 66.667% of eggs hatched, for an average of 2.4 young fledged/brood and 4 young fledged/season. 5 of 5 broods fledged young, 100%. The habitat here is marginal with little short grass to hunt, but still not bad numbers.

In the 16 years in the yard house, 26 broods were attempted, 121 eggs were laid, 4.65 eggs/brood, 114 hatched, 94.2%, 4.38/brood, 104 young fledged, 85.9% of eggs laid, 91.2% of eggs hatched, for an average of 4 young fledged/brood and 6.5 young fledged/season. 24 of 26 broods fledged young, 92.3%. The habitat is typical with open lawn and many trees to perch in for hunting.

Both boxes together in the 16 years, 31 broods were attempted, 140 eggs were laid, 4.52/brood, 132 eggs hatched, 94.2%, 4.25/brood, 116 young fledged, 82.8% of eggs laid, 87.8% of eggs hatched, 3.74/brood and 7.25 young fledged/season. 29 of 31 broods fledged young, 93.5%.

The two broods that did not fledge any young combined for 11 eggs. Only one year, 2015, did not fledge any young at all.

I kept track of feeding trips of the male and female with the average being 55% of the trips by the female and 45% by the male. The last brood in the yard house for feeding trips was 53.4% female and 46.6% male.

- John Dixon

Upcoming Activities

Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, Hoy will limit our field trips to activities/locations where we can maintain social distancing.

If you attend our field trips, we ask that you wear a mask, and please bring your own water, snacks, and optics (binoculars and spotting scopes) to help minimize contact. We will also not be carpooling to events as we have in the past.

The field trip end time will depend on bird activity and/or weather conditions but will generally conclude no later than 12:00 p.m.

If you have questions or need directions to field trip locations, contact hoyfieldtrips@hoyaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 10, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. (backup date: Oct 17)

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 17. Watch Hoy's website and Facebook page for details!

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

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding

Shoop Park, Racine

We'll meet at the Shoop parking lot to look for fall migrants. We may walk to the Wind Point lighthouse as well, depending on lake level. Dress for cold & windy weather and wear sturdy walking shoes.

Friday, November 13, 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 14, 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 21, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Eagle Lake Waterfowl

We'll arrive at Eagle Lake park (north side) at 9:00 a.m. and look for migrating waterfowl.

Saturday, November 28, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding

Shoop Park, Racine

We'll meet at the Shoop parking lot to look for fall migrants. We may walk to the Wind Point lighthouse as well, depending on lake level. Dress for cold & windy weather and wear sturdy walking shoes.

Saturday, December 5, 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!



Socially-distanced birding at the Sod Farms, photo by Helen Pugh

Stock your feeders for the Christmas Bird Count!

Editor's Note: This September, we celebrated five years of "Baldy" the Mourning Dove coming to our feeders!



- ◆ 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.

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