



### Purple Martins Need Your Help

Purple Martins are North America's largest swallow and have been in decline in Wisconsin for many years. They are almost totally dependent upon human-supplied housing for their survival. They nest colonially at one multi-sectioned "house" (or a group of gourds) which are raised 12-15 feet high. These have very specific requirements: within 125 feet of a building, at least 45 feet from trees, with water close by. Historically, the Native Americans hung gourds at their homes for the Martins to use to help keep insect numbers down.

They are a very beneficial bird with delightfully cheerful songs and chortles. They migrate south to the eastern side of the Andes in Brazil for our winters, and then return to their natal home. It is about 5,000 miles round trip! They return to Wisconsin in April and leave in July.



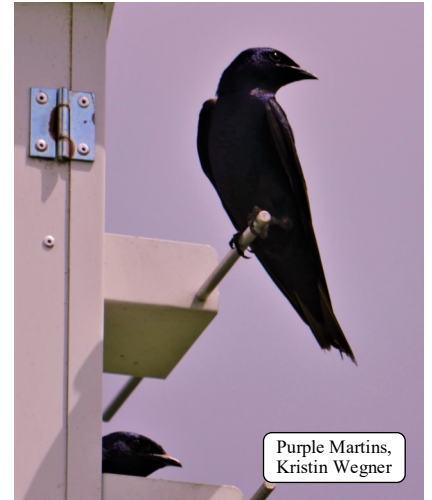
In 2009, Hoy Audubon began the Purple Martin Lakefront Initiative to help reestablish sustainable numbers of these birds along their ancestral breeding grounds: Lake Michigan's lakefront. Currently, there are three locations in Racine that have been successful. There is a small house colony and a new gourd system at Gateway, a house colony at the mouth of the Root River at the old Coast Guard buildings, and a thriving four-house colony at the Racine Water Department at the foot of Hubbard Street. The Kenosha location consists of one active house at the Kenosha Water Department on 51<sup>st</sup> Street. Hoy Audubon has installed, monitored and maintained those houses since 2009 at no cost to the land owners. Last year, 236 newly-fledged Martins were on their way to Brazil due to these efforts!

The Kenosha lakefront location has been successful with a small, and now growing, colony. Stan Rosenstiel has been monitoring that location for over 12 years. Thank you so very much, Stan, for your dedication.

Purple Martins, continued

#### Volunteers needed: Can you help?

Stan would like to retire from monitoring the Kenosha Purple Martins and is looking for a replacement.



Monitoring involves visiting the houses once a week from the end of April to mid-July. The houses are lowered, checked, notes taken, and re-raised. As the season progresses, there are various activities that can be employed to benefit the birds.

You would be fully trained by Stan. He can be reached at 262-694-2206.

If you would like to monitor in Racine, I can be reached at 262-308-6419.

Perhaps you have a lakefront area near your home that you would like to monitor?

- Helen Pugh

Happy July!

Time to Renew!

**Remember to Renew**  
your Hoy Audubon Society  
"Chapter Supporter" membership!  
Dues is \$15 per individual for the  
2021-2022 membership year  
and is due on **July 1**.  
We accept dues and donations  
via mail or via PayPal  
[www.hoyaudubon.org/donate/](http://www.hoyaudubon.org/donate/)

Yay Birds!

Hurray for Hoy!

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

**Next Board of Directors Meeting:**

August 12, 2021. We will continue to meet via phone for now.

**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](mailto: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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**Brewer’s Blackbird vs. Common Grackle**

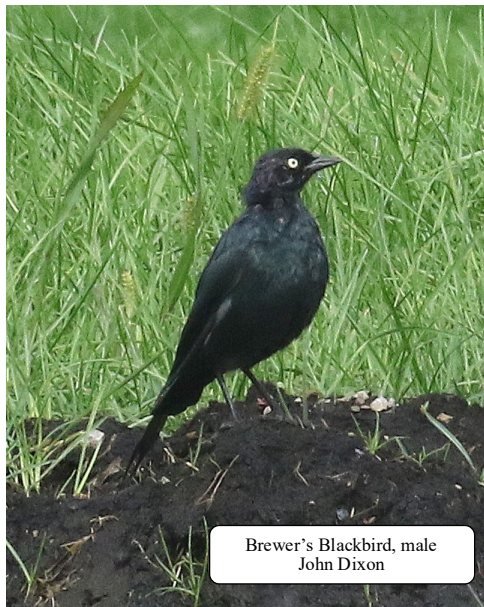
As migration is now over, it is time to look ahead to what birds might be around in the coming months. Two birds that come to mind are Brewer’s Blackbird and Common Grackle. Grackles breed here. Brewer’s Blackbirds do too, but in very few places. One of those places happens to be Wind Lake Sod farms. We see them quite commonly when we have a field trip there in late summer. Here are a few ID tips to help separate them in the field.

Let’s start with the more Common of the two, the Common Grackle. It is a rather large blackbird, being around 12 inches long. The male has an iridescent purplish head, with the rest of his body having a bronze iridescence. The tail often looks keel-shaped. His bill is rather stout and fairly long with a thick base tapering to a sharp point. His eye is bright yellow.



Common Grackle, male  
 Kristin Wegner

The female is basically a smaller, duller version of the male with a slight purplish sheen to the head, but very little iridescence on the body, making her a dull brownish color.



Brewer’s Blackbird, male  
 John Dixon

In comparison the Brewer’s Blackbird is much smaller than the grackle, being around 9 inches. In good light the male is quite glossy, with the head being very purple and the body having a shiny, glossy, greenish appearance. The eye of the male is bright white in color. The bill is rather small and thin with a very sharp point.

The female is much different looking and almost appears to be a different species. Her coloring is a drab brownish gray with no hint of iridescence at all. And unlike the male, she has a dark eye. On a very rare occasion her eye will be white also. Her bill is the same shape as the male’s.

Both birds can be seen in open habitat, with the Brewer’s Blackbird almost exclusively in open fields, sod farms, mown hayfields, golf courses, etc. Seeing these birds together, the differences are quite obvious. But if they are seen separately, hopefully these tips will help with the ID.

- article by John Dixon

**The Joy of Spring Bird Walks**



After hiding out from Covid-19 for 14 months, I began seeing old friends again on the many nature trails in our area. I had a social life again! What an up and down May migration it was. We enjoyed two days of summer-like weather early in the month that brought the vanguard warblers—lots of Yellow Rumps and Palms. Then the cold NE wind blew them away to Iowa, and it was pretty cold and quiet birding. Finally, the cold winds eased up and switched more southerly. The neotropical migrants again showed off their beautiful colors, let us revel in their songs, and generally kept us busy and happy. The last walk at Colonial Park was terrific with 52 species including 15 species of warblers—and lots of them! Attached are photos I took of some of the groups that braved the cold, and celebrated the migrants.

*- article and photos by Helen Pugh*



Beech forest at Tabor Woods, Caledonia Conservancy Walk

**A Call for Bluebird Boxes**

Rick Fare has been training and coordinating monitors on the Hoy Audubon bluebird trails (currently 23) for many years. He keeps a stock of houses, poles and parts. He tells me that the fellow who has been making and repairing boxes for him for over 12 years may not be able to do that much longer. (He is now 88.)

I am asking the club if anyone would be interested in helping. The trails are pretty well set up now, and not many boxes are needed. Rick says he needs 20-30 boxes repaired annually. He likes to keep a stock of 20 houses, but only has 10 now. Plans for the houses may be found at [braw.org](http://braw.org) (Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin). Hoy Audubon has a fund set up to help with costs of materials.

Please direct your questions to Rick Fare at 262-902-9020. Thank you for your consideration.

*- Helen Pugh*



Young Eastern Bluebirds, Kristin Wegner

**Upcoming Activities**

Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, Hoy will not host our annual picnic in July, and we will limit our field trips to activities/locations where we can maintain social distancing.

If you attend our field trips, we ask that you observe the latest CDC guidelines regarding masking and social distancing. 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.

If you have questions or need directions to field trip locations, contact [hoyfieldtrips@hoyaudubon.org](mailto:hoyfieldtrips@hoyaudubon.org).

Saturday, August 21  
 7:30 a.m. at Hwy 20 Park and Ride, or  
 9:00 a.m. at Horicon Auto Loop Trail parking area

**Hoy Field Trip: Horicon Marsh**

This is the 13th year that we'll be going as a group to Horicon, one of Wisconsin's premiere birding hotspots. If you would like to caravan (follow us in your own car), meet at the Hwy 20 Park and Ride at 7:30 a.m. If you would like to meet us at Horicon, we will meet at the Auto Loop Trail parking area off of Hwy 49 at 9:00 a.m. Sunscreen, hats, water, and snacks highly recommended.

Saturday, August 28, 8:00 a.m.

**Hoy Field Trip: Wind Lake Sod Farms**

Meet @ corner of Burmeister and Britton Roads in Racine County  
 We'll meet at the sod farms and, from the roadside, look for Buff-breasted Sandpipers, American Golden-Plovers, Brewer's Blackbirds and other fall migrants.

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

**Hoy Field Trip: Bird Walk, Petrifying Springs**

761 Green Bay Rd Kenosha, WI  
 Meet at lot 2; Rick Fare will lead, looking for fall migrants.

Saturday, September 11, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**The Big Sit**

Carre-Hogle Park, 1699 Main St. Racine, WI  
 Hoy's 11th 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.



Blue-winged Warbler,  
 Kristin Wegner

- ◆ 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)

**Join Hoy Audubon 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.

Please send a check payable to **Hoy Audubon Society**.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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



Golden-winged Warbler,  
 Kristin Wegner