



Trees We Love 2022

by Sue Schuit

In my deepest troubles, I frequently would wrench myself from the persons around me and retire to some secluded part of our noble forests. – John James Audubon

Trees We Love awardees are selected, and while the plaques, pictures and research are not yet complete, we thought all would enjoy seeing some trees in leaf. During this monochrome season when the sun sets faster than a dash from work exit to car in arctic cold and wind, we can look back with wonder and look forward to being surrounded once again with rich colors and subtle hues; dream of relaxing under a shady canopy and savoring the sounds of wind dancing thru branches weighted with foliage.

2022 nominations were sparse. I admit, I no longer spend a great deal of time getting the word out. I do not “do” Facebook, Instagram, Twitter...so my methods are old-school (at one time not mentioned, now I am envied and state such with pride). The pro is similar to the con – reduced social media interaction. I digress.

2022 Trees We Love were chosen by me and are both in Caledonia.

Catalpa

- ⬆ 48” DBH (diameter at breast height)
- ⬆ 50’ height
- ⬆ 45’ spread
- ⬆ Approx. age: 65 years
- ⬆ Melanie & Matthew Urban, 7551 Foley Rd., Caledonia

Catalpa trees, while not native to WI, have naturalized and do not appear to have presented any invasive threat. They are a beautiful tree; large heart-shaped bright green leaves, fast growing (many trunks grow with a twisted/whorled effect), dense shade which makes them attractive to many birds, and showy (white with yellow lines interspersed with purple waves), fragrant flowers in May-June (time and appearance are very similar to chestnuts). The flowers draw bees and butterflies, and the catalpa is the sole source of food for the catalpa sphinx moth. The moth caterpillars are an excellent source of fish bait, thus one nickname is the fish bait tree. Catalpas have also been nicknamed cigar tree in honor of the long (8-20”), hanging, cigar-like pods which persist through the winter.

One of Wisconsin’s champion trees is a Catalpa located at the UW-Platteville campus. The diameter is over 6’, height 82’, with a spread of 78’. Our Trees We Love awardee is a diameter of 5’, height of 50’ and spread of 45’. A truly impressive tree – a future champion?

Trees We Love, continued



The winning Catalpa Tree, photo by John Krerowicz

Should you care to view the tree in person, it is at the head of the driveway, next to a line of 175+ yr old pines (seedlings brought from Bohemia by the original settlers) and a historic farmhouse “House of Evergreens” (a story unto themselves).

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Hoy sends a huge **THANK YOU** to Karen Gavahan, our outgoing Secretary! Karen’s many years of service have been vital to keeping our Board of Directors organized and on task.

We couldn’t have done it without you, Karen!



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

Next Board of Directors Meeting:

February 9, 2023.

We will continue to meet via phone and Zoom for now.

Renew or Donate Online

To join Hoy, renew your Chapter Supporter membership, or make a donation, visit www.hoysaudubon.org/donate/

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@hoysaudubon.org

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Mallard vs. American Black Duck

As winter is now upon us, it's time once again to be looking for waterfowl on the move. Two ducks that can be confusing are female Mallard and American Black Duck. To make things more confusing, they sometimes hybridize with each other. Here are a few tips that may be helpful.

Let's start with the female Mallard. The head is rather light colored and finely streaked with a dark eye line and pale supercilium, with the crown being darker than the face. The bill is usually orange with a dark patch near the middle. The body feathers are buffy in color with darker edging on them, giving a scaly look. One of the best field marks is the speculum, or brightly colored patch on the wing. Female mallards have a blue speculum with a relatively broad white border.



Female Mallard,
Kristin Wegner

Now, the American Black Duck, in contrast, is a much darker bird overall, with the male being somewhat darker than the female. The head pattern of both sexes is similar to the female Mallard in all aspects except it being darker in color. The bills too are different in color, with the male's having a dull greenish-yellow hue, while the female's is a rather dull, dark olive color. A major difference is seen in



American Black Duck,
John Dixon

the body feathers. On both the male and female, the feathers are very dark brown (female) to blackish (male) with buffy edgings, more prominent in the female. The speculum of both sexes offers a good clue also. On both sexes the speculum is purple, with the border being black, not white.

If a bird is seen that has Black Duck traits, but has a white bordered speculum, it is more than likely a hybrid of the two species, such as the duck pictured at the right.

Something else worth mentioning is that Mallards are much more common than American Black Ducks, but they are found together in mixed flocks. Being seen together is helpful as the contrast in plumage is quite apparent then.



Mallard x American Black Duck hybrid,
John Dixon

- John Dixon

Trees We Love 2022, continued

Bur Oak

- ⬆ 55.5" DBH
- ⬆ 60' height
- ⬆ 60' spread
- ⬆ Approx age: 230 years
- ⬆ Jamie and Lorietta Tuinstra
- ⬆ 3632 South Lane, Caledonia



The winning Bur Oak, photo by John Krerowicz

The splendid oak tree is one of the most famous of magical trees, and is considered sacred in many parts of the world. The oak's root system is easily as large as the height and width, making it one of the strongest and long lived of trees. It was believed that the oaks deep roots penetrated as deep into the Underworld as its branches soared to the sky. The old saying "fairy folks are in old oaks" mirrors the belief that the roots of the oak tree are a passage to the underworld and a door to the realm of the fairy.

Bur oak trees in SE WI are truly spectacular. Their gnarly, deeply ridged wood, huge dimensions and long twisted, knotty branches, which are capable of reaching to the ground and then climbing back to the sky, can remind one of the south's spectacular live oak trees. Trees We Love has awarded 2 bur oaks in previous years; 2016's "oak king" (245 years), 2017 SENO Conservancy's "wisdom oak" (220 years) as well as 2018's preservation of the 300+ bur oak on Foxconn land (Braun Rd). 2022's bur oak is another venerable guardian oak.

The next drive that takes you north on Hwy 38, slow down (if you can) just prior to Hoods Creek Rd and look to the right. Before flying by you may see this mighty oak a bit off the road.

You'll be impressed, really.

Rumor has it a petition was submitted to DOT by the neighborhood to save this tree should this Hwy be widened. I would certainly sign it, perhaps this award will help should this issue surface again – after all, the mission of this program is to recognize and preserve these silent curators of history.

Thanks once again to Racine Heritage Museum for archive research, Ketterhagen Memorials for plaques, John Krerowicz for beautiful photos, Kevin Nolan for site visits and measurements, and Carol Wiechers for framing. Previous year awardees, pictures and narratives can be found here: www.hoyaudubon.org/TreesWeLove

*Woodman, spare that tree! Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me
And I'll protect it now.*

– George Pope Morris

Poisoned Owl in the Prairie

Chiwaukee Prairie volunteer Nathan Robertson sent in this sad news about a local Great Horned Owl who died from secondary ingestion of rodent poison:

"I feel like I lost an old friend today. This owl and its mate have been nesting and producing young in my neighbor's big pine tree for a number of years now. I will miss hearing this couple hooting back and forth to each other at night, and the shrieking squawks from their young begging for food.



Photo by Marlene McMichael, who took the owl to a rescue facility. Sadly, it passed away soon after its arrival.

When mice or any rodent is poisoned, they often will go outside disoriented, making them an easy target for owls, hawks, and foxes. Usually we don't directly see the results of this secondary poisoning because the animals die out of our sight. We may only notice that there are fewer hawks, owls, or foxes around. I know that we have a huge number of rodents living around us, but many of these poisons are silently killing our wildlife. If you use a commercial pest control company, please ask what they are using. There's a loop-hole in the law that allows them to use poisons more dangerous to wildlife that are not available to the consumer."

Upcoming Activities

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

Saturday, January 14, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Waterfowl & Gulls on the Kenosha Lakefront
7825 First Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53143

We'll meet at the Southport Park parking area (just north of the Kenosha Sand Dunes). Dress warmly! If the conditions are poor, our backup date will be January 21.

Thursday, February 2, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Meeting: Monitoring American Kestrels
River Bend, Main Hall

3600 N. Green Bay Road, Racine, Wisconsin 53404

Over the past 25 years the American Kestrel population has plummeted in the United States and Canada. What is the cause? What can we do to help restore kestrel numbers? Learn what habitat and nest boxes can help Kestrels and how to monitor this small falcon. What can be done to prevent European Starlings from nesting in boxes meant for kestrels? Where can you get more info and send your data to? This program answers these questions and more. Guest speaker Patrick Ready has been monitoring American Kestrel boxes for Madison Audubon Society for 10 years.

Saturday, February 11, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Gulls on the Racine Lakefront
Myers Park, Racine

We'll begin at Myers Park then make our way northward to the Racine Harbor. Bring your binoculars (and spotting scope if possible) and dress for the weather! If the conditions are poor, our backup date will be February 25.

Friday, February 17 through Monday, February 20

The Great Backyard Bird Count!

A world-wide, joint effort by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, and Bird Studies Canada—open to all. Visit birdcount.org for more information.

Saturday, February 18, 8:45 a.m. to caravan to event at 9:30 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Illinois Gull Frolic

Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club, Winthrop Harbor, IL

Meet at the BP gas station at 12720 Sheridan Rd (corner of Sheridan and Russell) at 8:45 to caravan. The 21st Annual Gull Frolic in IL is a great time to watch the gulls gather. This is a fun event and a chance to get to know birders "across the border" too! Please note: Hoy will be birding outside only, but if you wish to enter the building for refreshments and presentations, register and buy a ticket here: www.illinoisbirds.org/21st-annual-gull-frolic/

Thursday, March 2, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Meeting: Birding in the Pacific Northwest
River Bend, Main Hall

3600 N. Green Bay Road, Racine, Wisconsin 53404

Several Hoy members traveled together to Washington State in September of 2016 to explore birding in the Pacific Northwest. They'll share photos, videos, and tales of adventures on the beaches, in the mountains, and on the high seas.

Saturday, March 18, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Eagle Lake Waterfowl

23705 Church Rd., Kansasville, WI

We'll arrive at Eagle Lake park (north side) at 9:00 a.m. We'll bird the lake then check the wetlands near the intersection of Hwy 11 and 75 on the way back. **Check our website prior to the trip;** if the lake is still frozen by late March, we may postpone to March 25 and try again.

Activities, continued

Saturday, March 18, 10:00 a.m.

Eastern Bluebird Program

Salem Community Library

24615 89th Street, Salem, WI

Rick Fare will provide a summary of the biology and habitats needs for the Eastern Bluebird and how you can help monitor nest boxes.

Bob Glazauskis found a stranded Common Loon in Kenosha in December and organized a rescue. He and Jenny Wenzel transported two Loons to Fellow Mortals that day. Thanks, both!



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Renewals for Hoy Audubon Society "Chapter Supporter" memberships are due on **July 1** of each calendar year. Chapter Supporter dues are \$15 per individual. To join or renew online, visit www.hoyaudubon.org/donate/. To join or renew by mail, complete this form and send with a check payable to **Hoy Audubon Society**.

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