



2025 Purple Martin Lakefront Initiative



New Purple Martin box at Siena Center!

As you may remember from my spring article, the windshear in mid-May took down two Purple Martin houses at the Racine Water Department. They were re-erected within a few days and repopulated shortly thereafter.

It was a cold spring, and I am not sure that the damage sustained had much effect. However, those two boxes dropped their production from the previous year by 15%. The Racine Water Department, with its four boxes, leads site production with the total of 178 birds fledged, down 13% from last year.



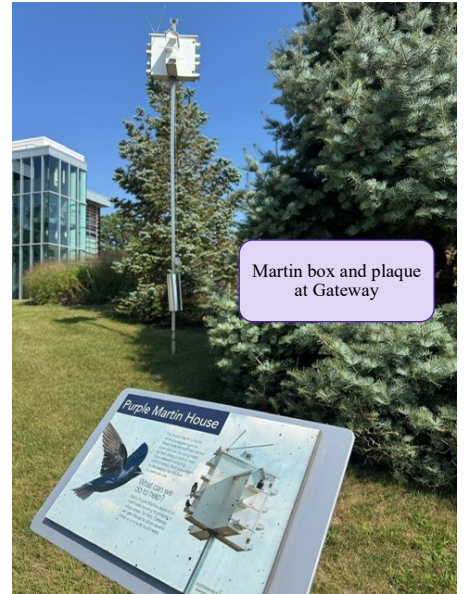
A second Purple Martin box has been added at the Racine Coast Guard station!

Purple Martins, continued—

The surprises were the Gateway house and the Kenosha Water Department. Both those locations have struggled in past years with only 18 to 20 birds fledged. This year they both came up with 40 plus!

Our two new installations at the Racine Coast Guard and Siena Retreat Center had active nests and together fledged 16 birds. That is an incredible start!

The third year box at Prairie school has a growing colony and fledged 34 birds this year.



Martin box and plaque at Gateway

Our Martins and monitors had the best year ever! A total of 376 birds fledged from this conservation effort. If you would like to join the Purple Martin team and help raise baby birds next year, please let me know. Our monitors are dedicated and are happy to share their knowledge. We monitor weekly mid-April to mid-July.

—article and photos by Helen Pugh

Nature Books Needed!

If you have extra bird or nature books you want to donate, please drop them off at one of Hoy's Little Nature Libraries at the Wind Point Lighthouse or the DeKoven Center. We can always use more books!



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

Next Board of Directors Meeting:

October 9, 2025

All members welcome; contact Hoy for more info if you'd like to join in person or via Zoom.

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:

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

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Adventures with John:

Golden-cheeked Warbler

On one of my travels a few years back, I made a trip to Lost Maples State Natural Area in the hill country of west central Texas, northwest of San Antonio, to search for the Golden-cheeked Warbler, a species that is endemic to Texas. This area has many hardwood trees, and most importantly, juniper/oak mixed canyons and hillsides, the breeding habitat of this species of warbler. I had seen one a bit earlier on this trip but wanted better views. After research on ebird, I found this to be a good location to visit.

I was pleasantly surprised when I arrived to see an area similar to Wisconsin in the amount of deciduous trees, unlike most places in Texas which have abundant mesquite-covered areas. Bird life was abundant, with seven species of vireo including the highly prized Black-capped Vireo, a species which breeds almost exclusively in Texas, save for a small area in neighboring Oklahoma.

As I walked higher in elevation on the trail, I started entering the habitat preferred by the Golden-cheeked: mixed juniper/oak woodland. It didn't take long before I found my target bird. Unlike my first sighting, these birds were quite cooperative, including the beautiful male pictured here.



An added bonus was another birder told me about a Golden-cheeked nest he had found right above the trail. I was lucky enough to see the female pop her head above the rim of her nest so I could snap a few photos.



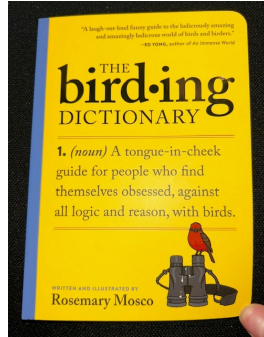
In all I saw 10 Golden-cheeked Warblers! It was a great way to end another birding trip to Texas.

- article & photos by
John Dixon, Field Trip
Chair

Book Recommendation: *The Birding Dictionary*

If you’re looking for a fun read, I highly recommend this new book by Rosemary Mosco, a science writer and naturalist who draws the comic *Bird and Moon*.

The Birding Dictionary offers humorous definitions of bird terminology and birding slang, some you may know, and some you may not! (My new favorite is “Lifer Pie,” a celebratory slice of pie one eats when one has seen a new life bird.) Mosco’s delightful illustrations add to the wit.



From *A* for *Adorbler* (an adorable warbler) to *Z* for *Zygodactyl* (think Great Horned Owl feet), this book is an utter hoot, and a must read for the birding crowd. More information is available at rosemarymosco.com.

- Kristin Wegner

Using Paint Pens to Prevent Bird Strikes

Donna Nicolazzi sent in a strategy for helping to prevent bird strikes: Draw lines on the outside of windows using a paint pen. (These can be found online, or try hardware or office supply stores.) From Donna:

I simply took a white paint pen and drew vertical lines, 4 inches apart, on my windows, using a ruler to guide the pen. The painted lines can also be easily removed with a simple scraper. I have not had one incident since!

Great to hear this is working! Thanks, Donna!

Take Caution with Shepherd’s Hooks

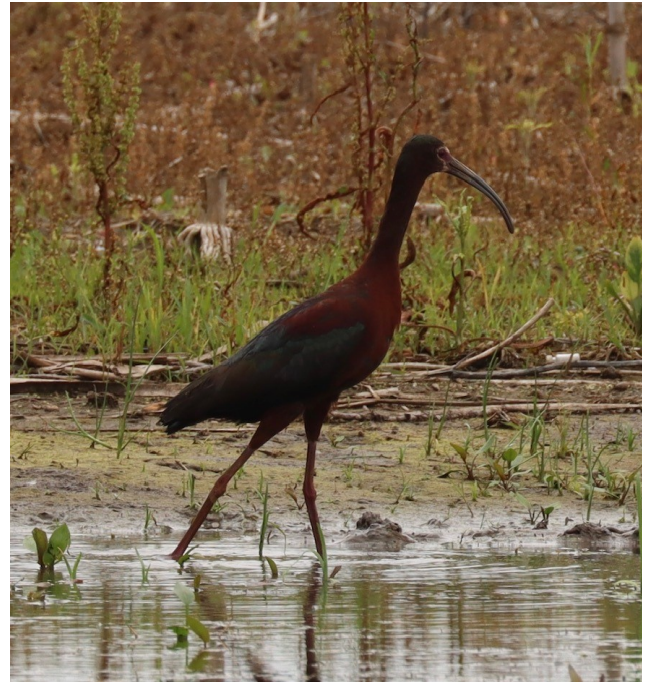
It’s come to light that the “shepherd’s hook” style of bird feeders can cause fatal injuries when birds’ feet slip into the gap between the hook at the pole. Birds can be wounded or even lose limbs.

But those gaps can be fixed by blocking them with durable tape, zip ties, flexible wrapping, or other materials that withstand the weather.

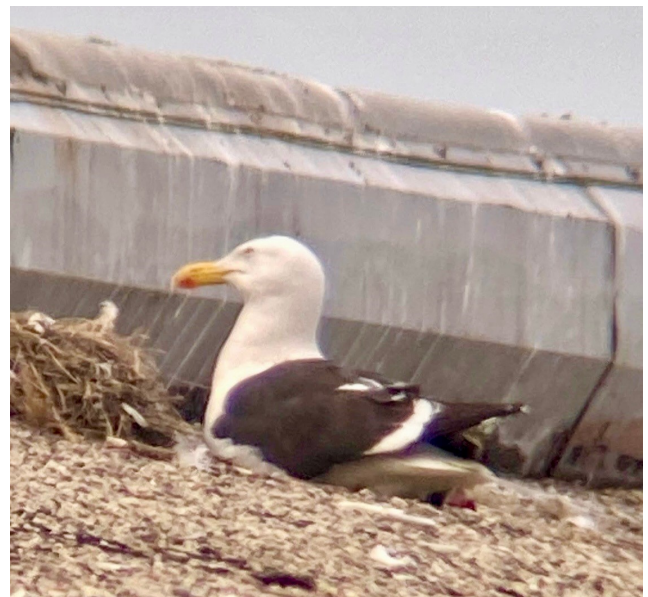
For an explanation of the problem and solutions, see the Facebook post here: facebook.com/groups/HoyAudubonSociety/posts/24789380363988171/. (Warning: Video contains images of injured birds.)

Rare Bird Sightings from the Summer

Jenny Wenzel captured this photo of the White-faced Ibis found in Kenosha in June.



Frank Sharkozy captured this photo of the Kelp Gull that has been nesting with a Herring Gull on a roof at the Milwaukee lakefront. This rare bird, who should be nesting in South America, had also been seen at the Wind Lake Sod Farms.



Upcoming Activities

If you have questions, contact hoyfieldtrips@hoyaudubon.org.

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

Hoy Meeting, Program: Bats of Wisconsin

River Bend Nature Center, 3600 N Green Bay Rd, Racine, WI
Bats are often thought to be scary or creepy; but it is really the night insects who have the most to fear from bats. In fact, bats are one of the most unique, beneficial animals in the world. They provide vital ecological benefits, including consumption of insect pests, pollination of some of our favorite fruits, and seed dispersal. Join a presentation by Christa Trushinsky, naturalist and Director of Education for River Bend, to get to know Wisconsin's bats.

Saturday, October 11, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. (backup date: Oct 18)

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. 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 18; watch Hoy's website and Facebook page!

Thursday, November 6, 7:00 p.m., book signing at 6:30 p.m.

Hoy Meeting, Program: A Closer Look at Gulls

Southwest Neighborhood Library, 7979 38th Avenue, Kenosha, WI
Gulls are sometimes perceived as 2nd class avian creatures. This, along with the identification challenges they present and their readiness to hybridize, presents a love-hate relationship for many birders. Amar Ayyash, gull expert and author of the award-winning *The Gull Guide*, will take us through an entertaining and intriguing exploration of the natural history of gulls, including their thorny taxonomy and identification. He'll also sign books at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 8, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding

Shoop Park, Racine
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 14, 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. (A WI State Parks vehicle admission sticker is required to park within Bong.) If excessive wind and/or rain is forecasted, this event may be canceled. Watch Hoy's website and Facebook page for updates!

Saturday, November 15, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Shoop Park/Wind Point Birding

Shoop Park, Racine
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, November 22, 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 29, 9:00 a.m.

Hoy Field Trip: Waterfowl at Eagle Lake

Eagle Lake Park 23705 Church Rd, Kansasville, WI
Tentative: We'll meet at the parking lot closest to the lake at Eagle Lake Park and then proceed to other stops around the lake. The field trip may be changed to Shoop Park if low numbers exist at Eagle Lake. Watch Hoy's website and Facebook page for updates!

Saturday, December 6, 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!

December meeting details TBD; watch Hoy's website and Facebook for details!

★ Christmas Bird Counts ★

Watch Hoy's website and Facebook page for updates!

December 14: Burlington CBC

(backup Dec 15)

Contact Nick Mimier at nickmimier@yahoo.com or 262-363-8856.

December 20: Racine CBC

(backup Dec 21)

Contact Eric Howe at cbc@hoyaudubon.org

December 21: Kenosha CBC

(backup Dec 22)

Contact Valerie Mann at kenoshacbc@gmail.com or 219-477-0006.

- ◆ Visit Hoy on Facebook at

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. 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**.

Total amount enclosed: _____

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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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