



### Plan Your Spring Planting

Every year we add a few new plants to our yard in an effort to attract more birds and pollinators. We have really seen an increase over the years in the numbers of butterflies, skippers, and bumblebees (including the federally endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee) in our yard, and I would like to share some of our favorite native plants and some of the pollinators we see on them every year!



Rusty Patched Bumble Bee  
on Joe Pye Weed

Here is a list of plants that Rusty Patched Bumble Bees are attracted to! [online.flippingbook.com/view/810946527/2/](https://online.flippingbook.com/view/810946527/2/)  
Winter is a great time to start thinking about spring. What plants could help support pollinators in your yard?



Silver-spotted Skipper &  
Goldenrod Soldier Beetles  
on Blazing Star

- article and photos by Jennifer Wenzel

### Looking for a New Treasurer

After many years of dedicated service, our Treasurer, Sue Schuit, will be stepping down to devote more time to her other activities. In addition to creating and managing Hoy's beloved Trees We Love program, Sue has built up a detailed and comprehensive record of Hoy's finances over the years.

We're incredibly grateful for her service, and for leaving us in such good shape for our next Treasurer!

Hoy is looking for a new person to fill the position as soon as possible. So: What does the Treasurer do?

The role of Treasurer includes tracking Hoy's revenue and expenses, reconciling bank statements, and presenting the board with bimonthly financial updates (currently the Treasurer creates a Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet, and listing of donations received and payments made). Other tasks Hoy's Treasurer performs include: sending thank you letters, making physical deposits, retrieving mail, managing insurance requirements, maintaining the member list, updating annual report filings, and completing the WI Dept of Financial Institutions annual financial report.

Sue is willing to spend a bit of time with her replacement to show them how she records information, how to recreate the financial documents (which do require a bit of accounting knowledge), and to discuss other tasks.

If you or someone you know is interested in helping Hoy fill this position, please contact [hoyboard@hoyaudubon.org](mailto:hoyboard@hoyaudubon.org) (this address includes Sue and the other Hoy board members). Thank you!

### 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!



**Hoy Board of Directors**

- President:**  
Mick Burke
- Vice-President:**  
Rick Fare 262-902-9020
- Treasurer:**  
Sue Schuit 262-752-5955
- Secretary:**  
Anna Hudson 262-960-5675
- Directors:**  
John Dixon  
Karen Gavahan  
Chris Glass  
Eric Howe  
Helen Pugh 262-308-6419  
Frank Sharkozy 262-770-2481  
Kristin Wegner  
Jennifer Wenzel 262-488-8077

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

**Next Board of Directors Meeting:**

February 12, 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/](http://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:**

**Snail Kites**

A few years ago I made a trip to south Florida in search of a few rarities that had shown up in the state. After having great luck in finding them, a friend of mine who lives in Miami took me to the northern part of the Everglades to search for another bird on my list that I wanted to see, the local Snail Kite.

After about an hour of driving, we arrived at a trail to hike which was situated between two shallow canals, prime habitat for Snail Kites and their preferred prey, Apple Snails.

It didn't take long (which was a good thing because the March sun in Florida is HOT) before we started seeing kites perched along the canals. They were mostly females and young birds (pictured here) with a smattering of adult males thrown in.

After about an hour in the sunny, 90° heat, we had seen 37 kites! A successful hike was ended with cold refreshments and hearty snacks in an air conditioned vehicle.

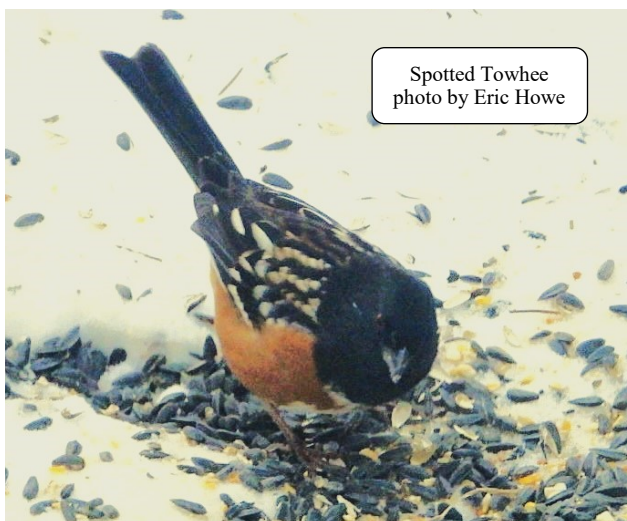


- article & photos by John Dixon, Field Trip Chair

**Spotted Towhees Spotted  
in Southeastern Wisconsin**

Not one but TWO Spotted Towhees were sighted in Southeastern Wisconsin in December 2025. One was found in Racine County, which was only the second county record, and the other was found in Kenosha as a county first! Both were males, and both were found feeding on the ground in backyards. The Racine homeowners who found the towhee very kindly set up a viewing for some birders to stop by and take a look.

**Thank you!**



Spotted Towhee  
photo by Eric Howe

Added bonus: The Racine towhee was present for the CBC, and the Kenosha towhee for CBC count week. Yay!

**2025 Bluebird Monitoring Result**



Female Eastern Bluebird  
photo by Kristin Wegner

Unfortunately, there was a dramatic drop in the numbers of birds fledged this year compared to last year:

	2024	2025
<b>Eastern Bluebirds</b>	717	561
<b>Tree Swallows</b>	733	613
<b>House Wrens</b>	70	10
<b>Black-capped Chickadees</b>	42	10

There could be a number of reasons for decline, such as bad weather on their wintering grounds or nesting predation. This year, some trails, including mine, had a lot of eggs laid that were either abandoned or were missing. We also experienced a two-week period after egg laying where the weather was cool, windy, and rainy. These conditions made it difficult to find enough insects to forage on. Birds either die or will eat their own eggs to survive.

But in a tough year, we still managed to fledge 1,254 birds from our nest boxes, so the monitors should be proud of this accomplishment.

I want to thank all of you for your efforts this year. Have a healthy, happy, and safe off-season, and I hope you will monitor your trails again next year!

- Rick Fare

**Bird Books Spotlight: Bernd Heinrich**

Biologist and author Bernd Heinrich has covered many topics in his time: birds, bees, insects, mammals, and even humans. My introduction to Heinrich was *The Snoring Bird*, a book I purchased purely based on the title. (The titular bird, so nicknamed for its call, is a rare, flightless rail that lives only in a specific area of Indonesia.) This memoir about Heinrich’s relationship with his world-traveling naturalist father really drew me in. Another title I recommend is *Mind of the Raven*, and I have several more of his books waiting on my shelves. Check out the link below for a list of his works; you’re sure to find something of interest!

[thenaturalistsnotebook.com/books-by-bernd](http://thenaturalistsnotebook.com/books-by-bernd)

- Kristin Wegner

**Upcoming Activities**

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

Dress warmly for our winter field trips! And remember to check [Hoy's website](#) or [Facebook](#) page for updates or weather-related cancellations before you go.

**Happy 2026 birding!**

Saturday, January 24, 9:00 a.m.

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

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

Thursday, February 5, 7:00 p.m.

**Hoy Meeting: Aquatic Invasive Species**

River Bend Nature Center, 3600 N Green Bay Rd, Racine, WI  
Scott McComb, Southeast Wisconsin Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach Specialist with Sea Grant, will give a presentation about aquatic invasive species. Here's more info about Scott's work: [seagrant.wisc.edu/bio/scott-mccomb/](http://seagrant.wisc.edu/bio/scott-mccomb/)

Saturday, February 21, 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!

Friday, February 13 through Monday, February 16

**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](http://birdcount.org) for more information.

Thursday, March 5, 7:00 p.m.

**Hoy Meeting: Program TBA**

River Bend Nature Center, 3600 N Green Bay Rd, Racine, WI  
Final details for our March 2026 program are still being worked out—watch Hoy's website and Facebook page for details!

Saturday, March 21, 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 / Facebook on the evening of March 20;** if the lake is still frozen or has few birds, we may postpone to March 28 (or the week after) and try again!



A leucistic American Goldfinch briefly visited our feeders in December 2024  
- Kristin Wegner

- ◆ 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. To join or renew online, visit [www.hoyaudubon.org/donate/](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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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**