

Meet a Member!

"Hmmm, should I attend a birding event or a live music concert?" This is often the dilemma for member Muffy Petrick, whose passions lie in both areas. Luckily, for Hoy members, she's often opts for the birding activity.

Muffy's been a Hoy member since 1977, when it was known as the Hoy Nature Club. And Muffy should know, since she's been actively involved as a board member almost every year since then! "I've been treasurer, secretary, publicity and vice president. I've also been president, twice." Her first "job" as the publicity chairman involved sending information to area newspapers, radio and TV stations, which definitely furthered the growth of the club. "The biggest change in the club has been the advent of computers and Hoy's website. We're now able to reach more prospective members and disseminate late-breaking information, including rare bird sightings."



Muffy Petrick

Previously working in health care and now for the State of Wisconsin, 59 year old Muffy always had an interest in the environment. "It probably started in grade school when I was a Girl Scout. Then in college, I joined *Students for a Better Environment*." It seems she gravitated toward friends who majored in Natural Resources.

Muffy frequents Colonial Park, Hawthorn Hollow and Case Eagle Park for spring warblers and finds the Lake Michigan shoreline "a local treasure for year-round birding." She admits she's filled up hundreds of birding checklists and notebooks but hasn't ever added them up. "I love the spring migrants, especially the colorful and 'musical' warblers and vow to work harder to learn the gulls and shorebirds."

Just like some people never leave home without their American Express card, Muffy keeps an older Peterson guide in her car at all times. She also refers to the Sibley field guide, the book, *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*, and *Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail* brochures. She encourages novice birders to get outside as often as possible to a variety of habitats with another friend or in a group. "Helping on the spring, winter and February backyard bird counts are also excellent learning opportunities."

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOU DUES FOR 2010-2011. Just a friendly reminder from our treasurer Jenny Wenzel that your Hoy Audubon Chapter membership annual dues of \$12 are due by July 1st of each calendar year. Please consider sending your renewal in now (for 2010/2011) and

keep your membership current to support all of our great projects... like our Purple Martin houses and Bluebird trails!! The form for mailing membership dues is located on the last page of this newsletter (which you can also download from the website if needed). If you don't have a form, simply send a check with your name and address to: Hoy Audubon Society, P. O. Box 044626, Racine, WI.

New Hoy Audubon Board Members. Our Hoy Board of Directors has once again changed as the annual election process went forward at the May 6th meeting. I'd like to welcome Ray Palenik, Jim Veltman and Karen Gavahan. The complete listing of officers and directors is published in every newsletter.

Thanks go to the following board members who are stepping down. Bunny Bugnacki will continue as a Bluebird trail monitor. Secretary Gail Coombs served for two years during which time she re-organized our Hoy Library. She will continue as our Librarian. Cristina Mondragon served on the Publicity Committee and researched Facebook possibilities. She will continue to have input--as all members should--and will be serving on our new Bird City Project committee.

Long-time board member and past President, Muffy Petrick, will continue to serve as Refreshments Chair and Club Historian.

Great Horned Owl nest at Colonial Park. A nice addition to our late April and May bird walks at Colonial Park has been the presence of a Great Horned Owl nest with two owlets. The nest is located about 15 feet off the ground in a tree at the entrance to the Park. As of mid-May, both owlets, still sporting a lot of fuzz, were seen out of the nest and sitting on adjacent branches. Participants on our May 15 Saturday morning warbler walk got to see the mother and one juvenile. We are not sure what happened to the other juvenile.



Great Horned Owlets at Colonial Park.
Photo by Keith Kennedy

Remember...you can see the Hoy Honker "In Living Color." There are two ways to see our newsletter in color: view it on the Hoy website at www.hoyaudubon.org or get on the e-mail newsletter distribution list by sending an e-mail to Keith Kennedy (keith.kennedy@hoyadubon.org) and ask to be put on the electronic mailing list.



Canada Goose, Wind Point.

Hoy Board of Directors

- President:**
Helen Pugh 262-637-4359
- Vice-President:**
Keith Kennedy 262-639-8398
- Treasurer:**
Jenny Wenzel 262-752-0887
- Secretary:**
Karen Gavahan 262-633-7136
- Directors-at-Large:**
- Rick Fare 262-632-7585
 - Dana Garrigan 262-652-1737
 - Eric Howe 262-594-5853
 - Ray Palenik 262-595-0153
 - Jim Veltman 262-886-9374

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

Next Board of Directors Meeting:
Thursday, June 17, 7:00 PM, 810 Indiana St, Racine. All interested members are welcome. Come and find out what your club is doing!

Monthly Program Coordinator
Stan Rosenstiel 262-694-2206

Field Trip Coordinator*
Bob McFall 262-697-5167

* If you have suggestions regarding future field trips please contact Bob McFall at: rmcfall@wi.rr.com or 262-697-5167

Newsletter

- Linda Fare Hirsch
- Keith Kennedy
- Christina Mondragon

Ideas for the newsletter? We welcome your suggestions, recaps of birding seminars/activities, fun facts and birding tidbits for use in future newsletters. Please mail to the attention of Linda Hirsch at: Hoy Audubon, P.O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53402 or email to: hoynewsletter@hoyaudubon.org

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

Hoy Activity Reports—A brief recap of some of our recent events for members.

April 1, Monthly Meeting: Wind Turbines. “Why talk about the wind?” Dr. Noel Cutright asked this question of Hoy members attending the April meeting. Dr. Cutright, one of the most knowledgeable ornithologists in Wisconsin, began his talk by explaining the importance of wind as one of our most precious renewable resources. “Since Wisconsin is ranked 17th for wind power, the building of many more wind turbines in the near future is inevitable.”



Wind Turbines near Horicon

He pointed out the six key elements necessary for wind energy: wind, agricultural land, permits, transmission from farm to consumers, financing, and someone to buy it. “WE Energies is the usual buyer in Wisconsin.”

The following definition was taken from <http://www1.eere.energy.gov>: “Wind turbines work on a simple principle. The energy in the wind turns two or three propeller-like blades around a rotor. The rotor is connected to the main shaft, which spins a generator to create electricity. Wind turbines are mounted on a tower to capture the most energy. At 100 feet or more above ground, they can take advantage of faster and less turbulent wind. They can be used to produce electricity for a single home or building, or they can be connected to an electricity grid for more widespread electricity distribution.”



Dr. Noel Cutright

Wisconsin is in the process of creating state criteria which will mandate the locations and types of turbines on wind farms. Dr. Cutright listed the many intricacies involved in proposing a turbine site including property values, noise, shadows, as well as wildlife fatalities. While Dr. Cutright is actively involved in the research to determine bird and bat deaths related to turbines, he cautioned, “It’s hard to come up with a number of actual fatalities due to decomposition and animal scavengers. We’re still in the infancy stage of doing these studies.” Interesting, the research thus far indicates a very low bird fatality problem with the wind turbines.

However, bat fatalities were much higher than expected. The major cause of these fatalities was not collision with the blades but “barotrauma” i.e. damage to lungs as a result of a precipitous air pressure drop just behind the huge turning blades (the same principle provides lift for airplane wings). One solution may be disabling the blades during periods of low wind since this seems to be when most bats are affected. Other recommendations for the safety of both birds and bats would be for tall buildings and communication towers to switch from a constant light to blinking or red lights, with strobes being the best.

It’s encouraging to see that the preservation of wildlife, fostered by conservationists like Dr. Cutright, is being seriously considered as an integral part in the growth of the turbine industry.

May 6, Monthly Meeting: Birding 101. Whether you’re a new birder or just looking for a refresher course, Rick Fare and Sharon Kennedy shared an arsenal of useful tips just in time for the pinnacle of the birding season. Accompanied by Keith Kennedy’s descriptive diagrams and photos, Hoy members graduated to a new level in bird identification.

Rick pointed out some of the challenges birders encounter when identifying the 325

River Bend Nature Center: the location for our June Meeting.

Note that we will have our June regular meeting at **River Bend Nature Center**, 3600 N. Green Bay Rd., Racine, WI 53404. 262-639-0930

Wild turkeys are becoming a common sighting at River Bend Nature Center this year. This photo was taken mid-morning from the east parking lot in late April. *(photo by Keith Kennedy)*



Hoy Activity Reports continued...

to 350 birds found yearly in Wisconsin. And although birds of a feather usually do flock together, the males, females and juveniles in one family may not always don the same plumage, making it a little tricky to correctly label them. Shorebirds, too, switch up their looks in both spring and fall.

Rick suggests a birder should look for as many clues as possible. "It's handy to carry a pocket notebook so you can make a rough sketch of the bird. Then jot down as many of its distinctive features as possible like color, eye rings, and wing bars. To judge the size of a bird, compare it to a bird that you know. For example, a robin would be considered medium-sized; while a sparrow is small."

Rick also advises to check out the shape of the beak or bill, which will indicate what the bird feeds on. A sharp and pointed beak is characteristic of an insect-eating warbler, while a cardinal's short and stout beak indicates a seed eater. Paying attention to the tail also provides useful clues, especially of birds commonly confused like the crow and raven. The crow's tail is rounded in contrast to the raven's wedged-shaped tail.

After you've done all of your detective work, you can compare your notes to a field guide. If you successfully make a match... then you know you've really done your homework!

Warbler ID for beginners. For the second part of the presentation, **Sharon Kennedy** gave encouragement to the "over 50" beginning birder. And Sharon has



Palm Warbler (Shoop Park, May 2010) often identified by its constant tail wagging. *(photo by Keith Kennedy)*

it on great authority since that's just about when she started as a serious birdwatcher. To help the over 50 crowd learn warblers, Sharon has developed a very clever word association approach, focusing on the spring warblers at Colonial Park in Racine. "I say the same words in the exact same order every time."

Sharon provided an easy-to-follow handout as she recited each *mantra*. For the black-and white warbler, Sharon repeats, "creeps on limbs, striped like a zebra." Another example is the Nashville warbler: "yellow throat, gray head, white eye ring."

The twenty warblers Sharon discussed are "boldly patterned, making them relatively easy to describe and learn." Sharon recommends beginning with the yellow-rumped, palm, American redstart and magnolia warblers.

Thank you, Sharon, Rick and Keith for bolstering our courage as we forge out into the woods and start identifying those warblers!

Upcoming Activities

Thursday, June 3, 7:00 PM: Trip West...Plus. Presented by **Wayne Rohde**.

The program will focus on the various sites in and around Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, highlighting a few of the birds and animals, but dealing primarily with the beauty of these parks. Yes, we enjoy birds not only because of their beauty, but also because of the beauty of the environment in which they're found. The program will also feature a look at the rugged northwest portion of Wisconsin, particularly waterfalls in autumn. River Bend Nature Center, Racine.



Castle Geyser, Yellowstone Nat. Pk.

Saturday, June 5, Purple martin houses and bluebird trails.

Meet at 1:00 PM at Racine Water department entrance on Michigan Blvd. to see the purple martin houses (1:00 to 2:30 PM). For Bluebird trail tour (3:00-4:30 PM) meet at 3:00 PM at the parking lot for Johnson Park entrance off of HWY 38 and Emmertson Road.

Saturday, June 12, Vernon Marsh field trip. Meet at Highway 20 park and ride at **7:15 AM**. Bring lunch. Looking for bitterns, yellow-headed blackbirds, black terns, rails, moorhens. Directions: Highway 20 west to Waterford, and take 83 to Mukwonago turn onto Frog Alley Road and park at the end of the road at the dike.

Thursdays, June 17 and 24, Picnic with the Peregrines. 12:00 to 1:00 PM. Bring lunch and enjoy watching the new Peregrine Falcons. At the Racine County Courthouse, 730 Wisconsin Avenue. Spotting scopes will be set up.

Mark your calendars for future summer activities

July 8, Thursday: our annual **Hoy Audubon picnic**

August 21&22, Saturday & Sunday: Horicon NWR field trip (WSO event on Sunday at Horicon)

Please check our website for more details on these future events

HOY AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 044626
RACINE, WI 53404
www.hoyaudubon.org



Consider adding a tray feeder to your back yard feeding area. Many birds seem to prefer the tray to a traditional tube feeder. Plus, trays are easy to clean on a regular basis.



Blue Jays frequently 'hit' the a tray feeder vs. a tube feeder.

Please renew your Hoy Audubon Chapter Membership for 2010/2011. Renewals for our new year are due by July 1 but don't wait, do it now!

Annual renewals for Hoy Audubon Society "Chapter Supporter" memberships are due on July 1 of each calendar year. Please send a check payable to Hoy Audubon Society.

Chapter Supporter Dues: \$12 Total amount enclosed: _____

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A pair of Northern Shovelers with the male in breeding plumage at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (May, 2010). *Keith Kennedy*