



Meet a Member!

Ninety-four year old **Joan Rohan** ranks right up there with the likes of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. How?



Joan Rohan

Well, all three are considered Founding Fathers, in a manner of speaking. Washington and Franklin naturally founded our great United States; Joan Rohan and a few other instrumental people laid down the groundwork for what is now the Hoy Audubon Society. Thanks to these hard-working members, we can now enjoy the fun, interactive and diverse programs Hoy offers today!

When she was six years old, Joan's father introduced her to the world of birds. His influence led her to pursue an Art History major and a job as a school librarian. Both experiences added to her education and appreciation of wildlife, particularly birds. Joan and her late husband, Bill, often coupled their sailing excursions and other travels with bird watching and, although a foot and ankle injury has sidelined her a bit, she still indulges in some gardening along with her backyard birding. "It doesn't hurt to have several bird feeders and a clean bird bath available to draw a number of species into your backyard," she advises. Colonial Park, Wind Point and her friend Peggy's backyard top her list of other hot spots. She has never kept an official bird list but admits to "enjoying them all!"

Roger Tory Peterson's [A Field Guide to the Birds](#), Robbins, Bruun, and Zim's [Birds of North America](#), and National Geographic Society's [Birds of North America](#) continue to provide Joan with valuable identification information. It's not surprising that a former librarian would advocate that birders keep reading anything they can about birds. And why go it alone? "Hoy is a great place to learn about birds, to have fun doing it, and to make new friends as you learn!" *Linda Fare Hirsh*

Bird, Bath, and Beyond! During the hot dry weather of August and early September, many birds took advantage of backyard bird baths.

In addition to the usual suspects (chickadees, sparrows, cardinals, etc) we had 9 warbler species use our bird bath including: black-and-white, ovenbird, Nashville, blackpoll, Tennessee, Northern



Black-and-white warbler (photo by Keith Kennedy)

waterthrush, Cape May, and Wilson's. If you don't already have one, pick up a bird bath for next season! *Keith Kennedy*

602 Bluebirds Fledged in 2010

Hoy's Bluebird Conservation Program had a record year. Our chapter installed and monitored 24 trails this past summer. There were 34 monitors recording nestbox activities, repairing boxes, and educating others about this beautiful bird. With 273 nestboxes, our group fledged **602 Eastern bluebirds**, 602 tree swallows, 38 house wrens, and 4 black-capped chickadees, for a total of 1246 songbirds! A great year for songbird conservation in Racine and Kenosha Counties!



Eastern bluebird on nest box (photo by Keith Kennedy)

Our dedicated monitors should receive a medal for diligence. Going out on those first few checks in spring requires a lot of dedication, not to mention clothing! But then you see the nests being built, eggs finally laid, and the chicks hatching—it's all worthwhile. We would like to thank all our monitors: Joyce Anderson, Bunny Bugnacki, John Dixon, Frances Fonk, Tom and Karen Gavahan, Mark Hjortness, Jill Hoffman, Skip Hoffman, Heather and Dennis Jensen, Nancy and Don Jobe, Carolyn Kakuska, Maureen Kauffmann, Keith Kennedy, John Krerowicz, Gayly Opem, Al and Melody Oban, Ray Palenik, Juanita Patterson, Helen Pugh, Stan Rosenstiel, Greg and Ann Shea, Eleanor Smith, Nancy Somdahl, Melissa Warner, Jenny and David Wenzel, Nancy and Paul Willing. A special thanks to Rick Fare as Monitor Coordinator. *Helen Pugh, Conservation Chair*

Hoy's Lakefront Purple Martin Conservation Project is making good progress. We now have four active houses in Racine. The two new houses in Kenosha also saw activity this year! The classic saying, "Build it and they will come," seems to hold true. All in all, the purple martins (PM) built 45 nests that **fledged 115 birds**. This is an excellent start for our project.



Purple Martin House at Racine Water Department.

It is quiet now at our PM colonies — the birds have all departed on their return trip to South America. Hopefully they will find their way back to SE Wisconsin next April. We have two as yet unused houses, and hope that next year they will be accepted by our traveling feathered friends. If you would like to be involved with monitoring the Purple Martin activities next year, please talk with one of our current monitors: Helen Pugh, Keith Kennedy, Stan Rosenstiel, Ann Henderson, Tom and Karen Gavahan. Thanks to all of you for your time and effort. *Helen Pugh, Conservation Chair*

Hoy Board of Directors

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

Next Board of Directors Meeting:

Thursday, Oct 21, 7:00 PM, 1737 Centennial Lane, Racine. All interested members are welcome. Come and find out what your club is doing!

Monthly Program Coordinator*
Dana Garrigan 262-652-1737

Field Trip Coordinator*
Bob McFall 262-697-5167

* If you have suggestions regarding future programs or field trips please contact the coordinators directly.

Newsletter Editors
Linda Fare Hirsch
Keith Kennedy

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, Racine, WI 53404.

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

Bird City Wisconsin coordinator Carl Schwartz provided an overview of this brand new project at our September meeting. This information is of particular interest to Hoy members, since Hoy President Helen Pugh coordinated a committee this summer to collect data that would qualify the city of Racine as a Bird City. For the past 12 years, Racine has been a *Tree City, USA* participant, which is one of the key criteria for becoming a Bird City. A list of other criteria includes park planning to seek additional bird habitats, that the community contain a segment of the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail, involvement in the American Bird Conservancy’s “Cats Indoors” program, plus much more. A city need only fulfill seven of these criteria and Racine has already surpassed this number! There are many perks to being classified as a Bird City, including street signs informing visitors of the city’s commitment to sustaining natural bird habitats, flags with the Bird City logo, a commemorative plaque and, most importantly, the fostering of a great deal of community pride. Carl encourages interested parties to visit the *Bird City Wisconsin* website (www.birdcitywisconsin.org) for specific details on how you can help promote this worthwhile project. *Linda Fare Hirsh*



Carl Schwartz

Horicon NWR Field Trip. Fifteen members (plus Bill and Mary Ann Toutant’s son and grandsons) of Hoy Audubon went to Horicon NWR on August 21, the day before the WSO’s Horicon field trip. On the Dike Road we saw Canada geese, sandhill cranes, a juvenile Baird’s sandpiper, and a Northern harrier (at one time more aptly named the marsh hawk) flying low over the marsh. We had the good fortune to see five black-necked stilts, an adult with four juveniles that had fledged and grown up on the mudflat there this summer. They came pretty close to the road, and we watched them fly in a group across the road, calling incessantly. What a show!

The black-necked stilt is a particularly elegant shorebird with its long pink legs, black needle-like bill, and striking black-and-white pattern. It is a **BIG DEAL** that stilts are breeding at Horicon. (If you look at a range map for stilts, they are shown here not as breeding birds but as rare on migration.) According to the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin*, they first bred at Horicon in 1999, then again in 2004, and now for the past few years. Whether they’ll breed at Horicon next summer is anyone’s guess. As for our timing, we were cutting it close. Last year’s Hoy field trip to Horicon was also on the third



Some of the Hoy Audubon birders on the Dike Rd., Horicon NWR.

Location for our Fall Meetings: note that we will have our October and November monthly meetings at the **Northside branch of the Kenosha Public Library**, 1500 27th Avenue, Kenosha, WI ((262) 564-6100). For directions from Racine, check MapQuest or Google Maps (Ohio Street is almost a straight shot to the library).

Horicon continued...

Saturday in August, but the stilts had already left on their fall migration southward. This year our group was lucky enough to see them, but the next day, when the WSO group converged on the Dike Road, there were no stilts to be found.



A black-necked stilt does a 'fly-over' for the Hoy Audubon group at Horicon NWF. (photo by Keith Kennedy)

On Highway 49 we saw two more birds that are rarities in Wisconsin, a little blue heron in plain view near a great

egret, and a juvenile American avocet flying low over the water. Like the stilt, the avocet is an elegant shorebird with its long gray legs and thin upturned bill. The little blue heron had recently been reported, but the avocet was a gift. It may have been on a one-day stopover as it was not seen the next day. Also on Highway 49 we saw rafts of ducks, pied-billed grebes, coots, a few black terns flying, and two trumpeter swans on a mound.

Before driving back to Racine, Keith and I stopped at the Dike Road for a second time without the Hoy group. We didn't see the stilts, but Keith did get a photo of the recently reported

leucistic barn swallow (white with a rufous throat and dark eyes) in a dead tree with seven other barn swallows. (An albinistic swallow would have been all white with pink eyes.) According to Project Feeder Watch, "albinism is a genetic mutation that prevents the production of melanin in the body. Leucism is a genetic mutation that prevents melanin from being normally deposited on feathers. Leucism is relatively



Leucistic barn swallow (photo by Keith Kennedy)

unusual in birds, and albinism is rare." For more information, see: http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/Albinism_Leucism.htm (note: you may have to copy this link and paste it into your browser). It was a great field trip, but any day spent at Horicon marsh during migration or breeding season is bound to be good! *Sharon Kennedy*

Did you know? "I am not an obsessed lister; but bird photography is my therapy, and I would rather shoot a roll of film on some relatively common species than add a new bird to my life list." —Roger Tory Peterson

From: *Bird Watcher's Digest*, July/August 1985, reprinted in All Things Reconsidered. My Birding Adventures, p. 44. 2007, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Want to help improve birding at Shoop? Join Hoy Audubon on Saturday, October 2, from 9 AM to 12 noon to help clear the overgrown trail at Shoop Park. Bring gloves, a hedge trimmer, a lopper, and/or a pruning saw and lots of enthusiasm. Meet at the top of the steps behind the Shoop golf course clubhouse at 9 AM. Hoy is working with the Racine Parks and Recreation Department to improve the birding opportunity and experience at Shoop and other important birding locations in Racine.

Upcoming Activities

Thursday, October 7, 7:00 PM: The Dinosaurian History of Birds: An Evolutionary Tale, presented by Dr. Thomas Carr, Associate Professor of Biology, Carthage College and Senior Scientific Advisor, Dinosaur Discovery Museum. Kenosha Northside Library (see directions at top of this page).

October 10, Sunday. Hawk Watch, Harrington Beach State Park. Meet at Ryan Road park and ride 6:30 AM. Meet WSO at lower beach parking lot at HBSP at 8:00. Bring lunch. Car must pay entrance fee for park.

Saturdays, Lakefront Birding: October 23 and November 6, 13, 20 and 27. Join Hoy Audubon bird expert **Rick Fare** to look for late fall migrants and winter ducks along Lake Michigan. Meet at the Shoop Golf course parking lot at 9:00 AM.

Thursday, November 4, 7:00 PM: Twenty Years of Great Bird Photography, presented by Chuck Hagner, Editor, *Birder's World* magazine. Kenosha Northside Library (see directions at top of this page).

Saturday, November 13. Field trip to Richard Bong State Recreation Area for the Short-eared Owls. Meet at Nature Center 12:30 PM. Bird until about 3:15. Short-eared owl program, 3:30-4:30. Look for owls after that. A Wisconsin State Parks sticker is required (can be purchased at the park entrance).

Thursday, December 2, 6:00 PM: Annual Holiday potluck dinner. This is our annual potluck dinner—please bring a dish to pass and some flatware, Hoy will provide beverages. River Bend Nature Center, Racine.

"A Remembrance of Awakened Birds" is a special art exhibit (until Oct 16) featuring birds at the H.F. Johnson Gallery of Art at Carthage College. For more details, go to: <http://www.carthage.edu/calendar/event/1363/>

HOY AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Photos from the Hoy Audubon Horicon NWR field trip, August 21.

Don't forget to renew your Hoy Audubon Chapter Membership for 2010/2011. Renewals for our new year are due by July 1 but we will take them anytime ☺. 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.

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