



## Meet a Member!

Helen J. Pugh



My main hobby is bird watching. When asked if I've been watching any birds lately, I normally respond with, "I'm breathing, so yes, I've been birding!" My interests occasionally divert to reading about birds, wood burning and carving (birds, mostly!), and planting native species. Most of my first 60 years of life was spent showing horses, skydiving, racing sailboats, or touring on motorcycles. I seem to have settled down a bit!

I have been a member of the Hoy Audubon Society since 1997. I have made wonderful friends through Hoy! This is a group that likes to "do," to get outside and see and experience the natural world. I've been involved with the Education and Conservation Committees--reaching out and teaching--hoping to spark the joy and caring that bring about an interest in active conservation.

I was raised in the country and loved the out of doors. I started to "notice" birds in 1980 when my mother took me to Pine Island in Florida to see the nesting Bald Eagles. It took ten years for my next birding field trip (to Bong) where a Common Goldeneye captured my heart. As they say, the rest is history!

I'm not organized enough to keep a life list. I do love to travel and see the beautiful tropical species, but I've not put them all onto one list. Oh, how I wish eBird had been around when I started! I'll get all those checklists submitted one of these days....

I have a few favorite bird watching spots. Of course I love my back yard best; the next closest spot is Wind Point. How lucky I am to live on a migratory pathway and be able to watch the season's parades of birds. I love the warbler walks in spring at Colonial Park--Muffy Petrick and I started going there together many years ago. The recent Hoy field trip to Horicon reminded me that I need to go there much more often.

I particularly love to watch the aerialists--swallows, swifts, martins, nighthawks. They feed and court on the wing, and to watch them takes my heart soaring along with them. I enjoy monitoring the Purple Martin Houses and Eastern Bluebird trails--seeing them build their nests, lay eggs, and feed the young. Sometimes, I can help the young to reach adulthood. The activity makes me feel like I am really *doing* something for conservation.

As far as field guides, the little blue Golden Book field guide was my first, and it helped me put a name to many birds. My bookshelf has many guides now, but the one I go to most is the Sibley Guide. It has more illustrations of many plumages--juvenile, male, and female, along with some subspecies--of each species.

The advice I would give to a novice birder regarding bird watching is to get outside with the best binoculars you can afford. Sometimes the best way to find birds is let them come to you--sit or stand quietly. Always watch the bird as long as you can before consulting a book. Join a bird club to shorten the learning curve and provide birding activities and new friends.

## Hoy Purple Martin Lakefront Conservation Initiative—Update

Several houses that Hoy installed in Racine were filled with colonies of Purple Martins this summer. The two-house colony at the Racine Water Department was filled to capacity and fledged 79 Martins this summer! A third house will be added for the 2013 season. The lone house at the Coast Guard Station fledged 33 Martins. There is no room on that site for expansion, but we expect the young birds to find their way north one block to the Water Department. The house at Gateway (off 11th Street) has finally become a functioning colony after four years. Five pairs of birds nested, and 14 Martins fledged from that location. The lone house at North Bay again did not attract Martins and may be relocated next year. The lone house at Pringle Nature Center in Kenosha also did not attract Martins; new strategies will be tried next year. The two re-erected houses at Kenosha's Water Department had House Sparrow issues. Only a few pairs of Martins managed to fledge 8 birds. Overall, a total of 134 new Purple Martins are now winging their way south to the Eastern Peruvian Andes, thanks to Hoy Audubon's efforts.



-Purple Martin

-Keith Kennedy

Hoy needs two new Purple Martin monitors, one in Racine and one in Kenosha. Here is an overview of this fun activity: Once a week we visit a site from April through July. We await and are thrilled to witness the return from South America of our largest swallow. In May, they start building nests and laying eggs. In June, the nestlings appear and we help them reach adulthood. By mid-July, most of the young have fledged and the houses grow silent again. We miss their happy chortling songs as the Martins are never quiet! If you would like more information about Purple Martins or the monitoring process, please contact Helen Pugh at 262-308-6419.

-Helen Pugh

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

**Next Board of Directors Meeting:  
 Thursday, October 25th, 7:00 p.m.**

All interested members are welcome. Come and find out what your club is doing!

**Monthly Program Coordinator\***

Looking for a member

**Field Trip Coordinator\***

Mary Ann Toutant 262-554-0563

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

**Newsletter Editors**

- Eric Howe
- Ricky Jones
- Becky Jones
- Sharon 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 Newsletter Editor at: Hoy Audubon, P.O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404 or email to:

[hoynewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hoynewsletter@gmail.com)

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

**Horicon Field Trip**

Fifteen Hoyers converged on Horicon Marsh at 9 AM on August 18 for Hoy Audubon's fourth annual field trip to the refuge. Our first stop was a walk along the Old Marsh Road, which is closed to vehicles, followed by a walk on the boardwalk. We spent some time birding from the shoulder of busy Highway 49 before making our way to Ledge Road, the Bud Cooke trailhead, and Dike



-Great Egret

- Kristin Wegner

Road.

During the course of the day, we saw many of the birds we hoped and expected to see at Horicon: several species of shorebirds including side-by-side Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, a Sora and a Virginia Rail near each other, a few Common Gallinules (known until recently as Common Moorhens), Pied-billed Grebes, rafts of ducks, Canada Geese, Great Egrets, American White Pelicans, two Trumpeter Swans, a few Bald Eagles, a few Northern Harriers, and Sandhill Cranes, to name only a few. At Bud Cooke, our Illinois birder spotted two big white birds with black wingtips flying together. Our 14-year-old birder took one look and said, "Whooping Cranes!" Whoopers were an unexpected treat for the nine of us who were still together at 3:30 PM.

- Sharon Kennedy



-Rick Fare at Bluebird box

- Ricky Jones

**Wow!!** What a great year for our Hoy Audubon bluebird trails. We had an astounding year as 909 bluebirds were fledged. In comparison, we fledged 580 last year and 600 in 2010. This is a fantastic increase. Our top sites were Brightondale Links with 139, Bristol Oaks CC with 121, U-W Parkside with 100 and Johnson GC with 95.

These four sites produced half of all the bluebirds fledged. Tree swallow production remained about the same as in previous years with 622 fledged this year vs. 580 last year and 600 in 2010. Prior to this year, our swallow numbers were very similar to our bluebird numbers. This year there was a huge difference. We also saw 32 House wrens and 8 chickadees fledged. The number of boxes remained about the same in all years with 320 installed.

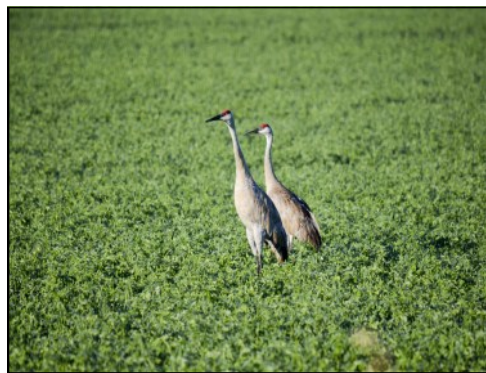
Thanks to all of our amazing volunteers who monitored boxes during the season.

- Stan Rosenstiel

## The History and Ecology of Horicon Marsh

At the August 2 Hoy meeting, Bill Volkert, who worked for 27 years as the naturalist and wildlife educator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at Horicon Marsh, gave a talk on “The History and Ecology of Horicon Marsh.” At 33,000 acres (13.5 miles long and 3 to 5 miles wide), Horicon is the largest wetland in Wisconsin. What you may not know is that the entire marsh was destroyed a hundred years ago. The marsh that you see today is a restoration.

Glaciers during the last Ice Age carved out Horicon Marsh. Native Americans occupied the area around the marsh for 10,000 years, hunting mammoths and then deer and bison. They left behind spearheads and effigy mounds.



-Horicon Marsh

-Kristin Wegner

The city of Horicon was established in 1845. The following year, a dam was built to power the town’s sawmill, turning the marsh into a man-made lake.

Steamboats plied the lake during the 1850s and 60s. Farmers whose land was flooded opposed the dam, and in 1869 the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled in their favor. The big dam was removed.

Waterfowl came back to repopulate Horicon Marsh. During the late 1800s, six exclusive hunting clubs were formed with bag limits of 25 ducks per day, and market hunting provided wild ducks to the Milwaukee and Chicago markets. The market gun, basically a small canon, took out as many as a hundred ducks in a single shot. Within 25 years, market hunting all but wiped out the Horicon Marsh ducks.

What good was a marsh without ducks? From 1910 until 1916, Horicon Marsh was ditched and drained for agricultural use. When onion farms failed, peat fires burned on the abandoned farms for 12 years, from 1920 until 1932.

In 1921, local conservationists began working with the state legislature to “Save Horicon Marsh.” Six years later, the Horicon Marsh Wildlife Refuge bill was passed, setting aside 11,000 acres as a resting site for ducks. It was the first wildlife area in the state of Wisconsin. In 1941, the federal government finished the job, setting aside the rest of the marsh as Horicon National Wildlife Refuge.



-Horicon Marsh

-Ricky Jones

Horicon Marsh was designated a Wetland of International Importance in 1991, a Globally Important Bird Area in 2001, and a Wisconsin Important Bird Area in 2004. 306 species of birds have been reported at Horicon, including the Neotropic Cormorant added last year.

Horicon Marsh is inextricably linked to the watershed around it. Today, the marsh is surrounded by privately-owned agricultural land as well as some residential land. In the spring, sediment and nutrients like phosphate wash into the marsh, eroding the quality of the water. Phosphate promotes the growth of algae, and as the algae die and decompose, they consume dissolved oxygen in the water. Non-native carp, which tolerate water with low dissolved oxygen levels, have displaced predator fish like northern pike, which need oxygenated water. Carp roil sediment and uproot the aquatic plants that ducks and American Coots feed on. Coots no longer “blacken the water” at Horicon as they once did. Forster’s Terns and Black Terns need very clean water for fishing. Carp and sediment are making it harder for them to fish. Cattails take up phosphate, growing more densely than they normally would. Will Sora and Virginia Rails, which are hidden at the bottom of the cattails, be able to adapt?



-Killdeer

-Ricky Jones

Not all species are adversely affected. Canada Geese are doing well at Horicon. At sunrise, they fly out to farm fields where they forage for the day, returning to the marsh at sunset. American White Pelicans moved into Wisconsin about 15 years ago. Because they eat carp, they are doing well at the marsh.

Bill Volkert left us with a thought about the current level of nutrients and sediment entering Horicon Marsh. If we don’t change our ways, can this restored marsh survive another 50 years?

The Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) has an overview of the conservation issues facing Horicon, including water quality as well as road kill along heavily trafficked Highway 49, on their website: <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/plan/sites/HoriconMarsh.htm>.

-Sharon Kennedy



## Birds and Climate Change

Dr. Doug Stotz, Senior Conservation Ecologist at The Field Museum and Chair of the Chicago Wilderness Climate Change Task Force, gave a sobering talk on “Birds and Climate Change” at Hoy’s June 7 meeting. Dr. Stotz began with the assertion that climate change is real and due to humans. He said that while his talk would be Illinois-centric, it was applicable to us here in Southeast Wisconsin. After all, we’re not very far from “Chicagoland.” With emissions rising faster than many scientists thought they would, by mid-century (2050), Illinois is projected to have a summer climate more like Austin, Texas. The Upper Midwest will have dryer summers and wetter winters. There will be more extreme weather events with hundred-year floods occurring every four or five years as heavy rains hit with increased storm intensity.

Some birds that winter in the southern U.S. are now wintering farther north. Christmas Bird Count data showed Gadwall to be much more common in Illinois in early winter than in previous years. There has been a big increase in wintering ground-



-Snowy Owl -Ricky Jones

foraging birds like White-throated Sparrows in Illinois and a big decrease in Florida as their winter distribution shifts northward. Frugivores like bluebirds, robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Yellow-rumped Warblers are increasing in Illinois in wintertime because of warmer winters and more fruiting shrubs. Nevermind that many of these fruiting shrubs are buckthorn and honeysuckle, both invasives! This is an example of an ecosystem out of whack.

The timing of migration is mainly set by photoperiod. Birds respond to the short days/long nights of winter versus the long days/short nights of summer. In contrast, plants and insects respond to weather. With warmer temperatures, plants leaf out sooner and insects become plentiful. This year we had a ridiculously warm spring, and plants leafed out early. When the birds arrived in late April or May, it looked like June up here.

There is evidence that some species of birds are returning earlier in the spring. In a study on the Chicago lakefront, 46 species arrived in Jackson Park over a week earlier than usual, 38 arrived a little early, 2 arrived on the same date, and 4 arrived later. In general, birds that winter farther north are more likely to arrive early than the Neotropical migrants that winter in the Caribbean or Latin America. The Neotrops are not getting weather reports down there! A likely explanation for the earlier return of migratory birds that stay in the U.S. during the winter is that they are not going as far south, so if they leave on the same date, they get here earlier. Birds that come back earlier do better because they claim the better breeding grounds.

Migration is timed to take advantage of leafout and a maximum population of insects. Later in the season, oaks produce tannins, which are poisonous to insects, so insects are no longer as

plentiful. The only warblers that were here this year for leafout were the Yellow-rumped Warblers. By the time other warblers got here, trees were already full of leaves. What will happen if the timing of oak leafout and peak migration no longer coincide? Dr. Stotz thinks that it is possible that the birds will arrive here but won’t stay as long if they are not finding enough insects to eat. When they reach their breeding grounds, they may not be in as good shape as they need to be for their reproductive success.

The leafout story is complicated. Over most of the U.S. including the Upper Midwest, leafout is earlier than it used to be. But in the Southeast, trees are leafing out later. When Neotropical migrants arrive on the Gulf coast, the vegetation is behind, slowing them down. It’s not good for them.

Tree Swallows are nesting nine days earlier than in the 1960s. The Pied Flycatcher, a well-studied bird that breeds in northern Europe and winters in sub-Saharan Africa, is nesting earlier, but caterpillars are peaking still earlier, so the birds have less food for their young.

A warm-up in winter is bad for Gray Jays, which nest early in spring and use cached food to feed their young. The food must stay frozen through the winter. At the southern edge of their range, in northern Minnesota (a place we don’t think of as very southerly), the cached food is rotting before spring, and the jays’ nesting success is close to zero.

Illinois is critically important for grassland breeders. In the last hundred years, the population of the Bobolink has declined precipitously, from 1,175,000 to 34,000. Keeping Bobolinks, which like open, lush grasslands, will be tricky. With current agricultural practices (earlier and more frequent mowing and the conversion of pasture to row crops), they are doomed in agricultural lands. Protected lands are crucial just to maintain the current Bobolink population.

With climate change, some species like the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Great-tailed Grackle are expected to arrive in Illinois. Species such as the Blue Grosbeak, Summer Tanager, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Northern Parula are expanding their ranges northward. Other species including the Yellow-headed Blackbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue-winged Warbler, and Vesper Sparrow are predicted to disappear from the region.

What impact will climate change have on birds? As a mobile species, birds should be a best-case scenario. However, they will most likely do worse than the models suggest because they are susceptible to climate mismatches. Birds may find themselves out of sync with their food source.

For more information about birds and climate change, check out the National Audubon Society website at <http://birdsandclimate.audubon.org/>. The Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) has posted a white paper on birds and climate change: <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/climatechange.htm>.

## Wildlife Rehabilitation Field Trip



*Hoy members*

*-Helen Pugh*

Located just outside Lake Geneva, **Fellow Mortals Wildlife Hospital** has been caring for orphaned and injured wildlife for 27 years. Jessica Massaro Nass, a wildlife rehabilitator with

Fellow Mortals for the past seven years, gave a program on wildlife rehabilitation on July 28 at Meadowlark Acres Nature Center in Burlington. Hoy Audubon sponsored the program as one of our field trips, and 13 Hoyers attended.

Fellow Mortals works with all species of orphaned or injured wild birds and most species of orphaned or injured wild mammals, except for raccoon, deer, skunk, or bat. The wildlife hospital is open 365 days a year and admits new patients 7 days a week. Care is available if you call **262-248-5055** and leave a message. Calls are returned between the hours of 10 AM and 7 PM. Messages received at other times are screened and calls returned as necessary in emergency situations. Do not send an e-mail as your message may not be seen for several days. Do not go to the hospital without an appointment.

The most successful outcomes for injured or orphaned wildlife occur when people have kept an animal warm, quiet, and contained and have not fed it or given it any fluid. Fellow Mortals has a website with specific emergency care guidelines for songbirds, ducks and geese, cottontails, and squirrels:

<http://www.fellowmortals.org/>



*Fellow Mortals*

*-Helen Pugh*

Jessica emphasized the importance of getting **emergency care for a bird that flies into your window**. As soon as you see or hear a bird hit your window, go outside and, if you are able to pick up the bird, that bird has suffered head trauma (a concussion) and requires immediate assistance from a wildlife rehabilitator. Put the bird in a cardboard shoe box lined with paper towels, move the bird to a quiet room, and call Fellow Mortals. They will give the bird an injection of an anti-inflammatory drug to reduce the swelling of the brain. Their success rate is high if they get the bird within two hours of the window strike. They keep the bird for a week, and then you'll be able to release it back where you found it.



*Fellow Mortals*

*-Helen Pugh*

If you have a **House finch with conjunctivitis** whose vision is so impaired that you are able to capture it, call Fellow Mortals. They treat the infection by putting medicine in the bird's drinking water.

The eye will look better after just one day, but the bird needs three weeks of treatment before being released.

*- Sharon Kennedy*

## Upcoming Activities

**Hoy Meeting, Thursday October 4th, 7:00 p.m.** Kenosha Northside Library, 1500 27th Avenue, Kenosha, WI. Speaker: Joel Trick. Details to be posted on our website.

**Saturday, Saturday October 13th.** Grosbeaks Galore! A "birds on your landscape" workshop, Forest Beach Migratory Preserve (formerly Squires Country Club), 4970 Country Club Beach Road. Belgium, Wisconsin. More information will be posted on their website:  
<http://treasuresofoz.org/31-home/333-grosbeaks-galore>.

**Hoy Board of Directors Meeting, Thursday, October 25th, 7:00 p.m.** All interested members are welcome. Come and find out what your club is doing!

**Field Trips, Saturday, October 27th, November 3rd, 17th, and 24th, 9:00 a.m.** Migration bird walks. Meet at the Shoop Golf Course (Racine) where we'll check the lakefront for migrating waterfowl and walk the wooded trail to look for other fall migrants.

**Hoy Meeting, Thursday November 1st, 7:00 p.m.** River Bend (3600 North Green Bay Rd, Racine WI).

**Field Trip, Saturday, November 10th.** Birding the Mississippi. Details to be posted on our website.

**Hoy's Holiday Potluck Dinner, Thursday December 6th, 6:00 p.m.** Mount Pleasant Village Hall (8811 Campus Drive, Mount Pleasant, WI).

**Save the Date: Christmas Bird Counts**  
Racine CBC - Saturday, December 15th  
Kenosha CBC - Friday, December 21st  
Go to <http://www.hoyaudubon.org> for sign-up information.

**HOY AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
**P.O. BOX 044626**  
**RACINE, WI 53404**  
[www.hoyaudubon.org](http://www.hoyaudubon.org)



*Hoy Members Birding at the Lakefront, Dec. 2009.*

**Please take the time to renew your Hoy Audubon Chapter Membership for 2012/2013.** 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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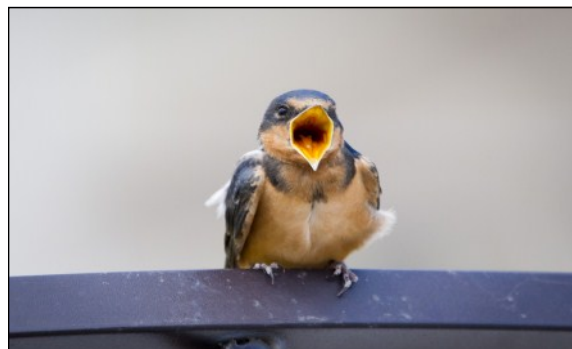
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**Send to: Hoy Audubon Society, P. O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404**



*Barn Swallow*

*-Ricky L Jones*

**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](http://www.hoyaudubon.org) or get on the e-mail newsletter distribution list by sending an e-mail to [jenny.wenzel@hoyaudubon.org](mailto:jenny.wenzel@hoyaudubon.org) and ask to be put on the electronic mailing list. You can now find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/HoyAudubonSociety](http://www.facebook.com/HoyAudubonSociety)