



Meet the Peregrines!

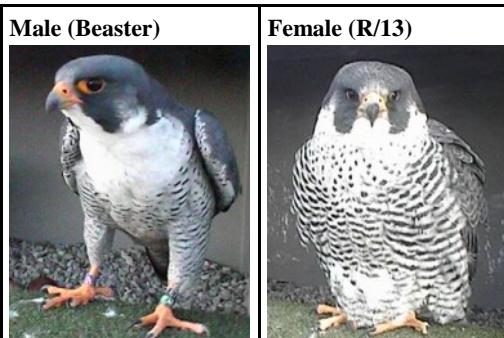
We're excited to report that the Peregrine Falcon pair has returned to the Racine County Courthouse nest box. On March 20, both falcons were observed rearranging stones to form the shallow "scrape" that will house their eggs. (Peregrines do not build nests with sticks the way other raptors such as Red-tailed Hawks do.)

The male falcon (left), was also observed feeding the female (right) some choice morsels the same day.



Egg laying began in late March last year, so the falcons may be incubating by the time you read this issue of the *Honker!* The female lays eggs across a period of several days, then the falcons take turns incubating the eggs until they hatch approximately a month later. Once the eggs hatch, sunrise is a good time to tune in and watch for a parent to deliver food, typically small rodents or birds. The nest box gets quite messy as the young mature. Their plumage begins a downy, pure white but gradually gives way to recognizable feathers, including black and tan facial markings that resemble the "mustaches" of their parents.

Let's get to know the Racine County Courthouse Peregrine Falcons, who raised two female young last year.



Left leg bands	Black 67 Green M	67 M	Black R Green 13	R 13
When hatched and where?	2005, WE Energies Power Plant, Pleasant Prairie, WI		2007, Tower Building, South Bend, IN	

You can watch their adventures unfold online thanks to the live feed available here: falconcam.goracine.org. The camera runs 24 hours a day and also has a black-and-white night mode so you can see what the falcons are up to after dark.

Of course, if you're in the Racine area, you may get to see a true "live feed" if you swing by the Courthouse and catch a falcon making a delivery to the nest. Look for Hoy's "Picnic with the Peregrines" events in **Upcoming Activities** on page 5.

Falcon Cam Tips

Having trouble telling the male and female apart? It's easiest to see the difference when both birds are present, as the female is larger.

If only one bird is visible, a good way to tell who's there is to examine the falcon's breast feathers. Beaster has an all-white breast, while R/13 has black spots on her white breast feathers. R/13 also takes up more space within the nest box, as you can see from these images of the two birds dozing on the scrape in 2012:



Article by Kristin Wegner. Images from the Racine County Courthouse "Falcon Cam." Statistics from Septon, Greg. 2013. Wisconsin Falconwatch – 2013 Nesting Season Report. An account of peregrine falcon nesting activity in Wisconsin for 2013. Milwaukee, WI. 44 pp.

Other 2013 Peregrine Points of Interest

Kenosha County:

- ❖ WE Energies Pleasant Prairie Power Plant hosted Thilmany (female) and PBR (male), who fledged one male falcon. Hourly images of this nest box and other boxes are posted here: www.we-energies.com/environmental/protect_wildlife.htm
- ❖ United Hospital System, Kenosha Medical Center hosted Olivia (female) and Livingston (male) who fledged one male and two female falcons.

Racine County:

- ❖ A Peregrine was seen in flight at the Racine Quarry, but no signs of nesting activity were observed.
- ❖ A pair of Peregrines briefly took up residence on a narrow ledge at the Wind Point Lighthouse in May but they did not nest. Due to the Lighthouse's historical status, a nest box cannot be affixed to the structure.

Hoy Board of Directors

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Secretary:

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Helen Pugh	262-637-4359
Mary Ann Toutant	262-554-0563
Kristin Wegner	

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

Next Board of Directors Meeting:

Thursday, April 17, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive

Mount Pleasant, WI 53406

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

Field Trip Coordinators*

Mary Ann Toutant	262-554-0563
Eric Howe	262-498-3355

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

Newsletter Editors

Kristin Wegner
Eric Howe
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@hoyaudubon.org

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

John James Audubon: Namesake and Inspiration

Since Audubon's birthday is April 26, here are some excerpts from his biography online; the full text is available here: www.audubon.org/john-james-audubon

John James Audubon (1785-1851) was not the first person to attempt to paint and describe all the birds of America (Alexander Wilson has that distinction), but for half a century he was the young country's dominant wildlife artist. His seminal *Birds of America*, a collection of 435 life-size prints, quickly eclipsed Wilson's work and is still a standard against which 20th and 21st century bird artists, such as Roger Tory Peterson and David Sibley, are measured.

Audubon was born in Saint Domingue (now Haiti). In 1803, at the age of 18, he was sent to America, in part to escape conscription into the Emperor Napoleon's army. He lived on the family-owned estate at Mill Grove, near Philadelphia, where he hunted, studied and drew birds, and met his wife, Lucy Bakewell. While there, he conducted the first known bird-banding experiment in North America, tying strings around the legs of Eastern Phoebe; he learned that the birds returned to the very same nesting sites each year.

Audubon spent more than a decade in business, eventually traveling down the Ohio River to western Kentucky - then the frontier - and setting up a dry-goods store in Henderson. He continued to draw birds as a hobby, amassing an impressive portfolio. Audubon was quite successful in business for a while, but hard times hit, and in 1819 he was briefly jailed for bankruptcy.

With no other prospects, Audubon set off on his epic quest to depict America's avifauna, with nothing but his gun, artist's materials, and a young assistant. Floating down the Mississippi, he lived a rugged hand-to-mouth existence in the South while Lucy earned money as a tutor to wealthy plantation families. In 1826 he sailed with his partly finished collection to England. "The American Woodsman" was literally an overnight success. His life-size, highly dramatic bird portraits, along with his embellished descriptions of wilderness life, hit just the right note at the height of the Continent's Romantic era. Audubon found a printer for the Birds of America, first in Edinburgh, then London, and later collaborated with the Scottish ornithologist William MacGillivray on the Ornithological Biographies - life histories of each of the species in the work. The last print was issued in 1838, by which time Audubon had achieved fame and a modest degree of comfort, traveled this country several more times in search of birds, and settled in New York City.

Audubon's story is one of triumph over adversity; his accomplishment is destined for the ages. He encapsulates the spirit of young America, when the wilderness was limitless and beguiling. He was a person of legendary strength and endurance as well as a keen observer of birds and nature. Like his peers, he was an avid hunter, and he also had a deep appreciation and concern for conservation; in his later writings he sounded the alarm about destruction of birds and habitats. It is fitting that today we carry his name and legacy into the future.



Upcoming Revisions to Hoy's By-laws

Hoy Board members formed a sub-committee last year to work on revising our by-laws. This process is now complete and the by-laws are available for review: www.hoyaudubon.org/documents/HoyByLaws.pdf

One or two copies will be available at the April meeting, but we encourage everyone to read the by-laws online to save paper. We will be voting these by-laws into effect at our annual elections meeting in May of this year. Please feel free to call or email Jenny Wenzel if you have any questions: 262-752-0887 or jenny.wenzel@hoyaudubon.org

The Great Wisconsin Birdathon and the “Long Walk for Birds”

The Great Wisconsin Birdathon, a fundraising event held throughout the month of May, aims to raise \$75,000 for eight statewide bird conservation projects.

The “Long Walk for Birds” is one of the efforts led by Bill Mueller of Milwaukee. Last year, Bill walked 246 miles from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River and raised \$10,000. This year, Bill has doubled his goal to \$20,000 and he needs a hand (or foot!) in completing sections of the route from Kenosha County to Marinette County/Northern Green Bay.

Hoy Audubon Society is eager to support Bill and birds that will benefit from his efforts. During the month of May, our members will be birding an approximately 25-mile stretch of Bill’s route in Racine and Kenosha Counties, hoping to spot and identify 125 species of birds and raise at least \$1,000 for bird conservation. You can view our route here: hoyaudubon.org/birdathon/map

To sign up: Volunteers can sign up to walk any part of a route by contacting WPMueller1947@gmail.com. Walk any time during the month of May, alone or with friends. Participants are urged to have their family and friends donate or pledge toward the number of birds they see during their walk.

To make a pledge: Go to hoyaudubon.org/birdathon and you’ll be redirected to Hoy’s team webpage. Donors can pledge per species or donate a set amount. Your pledge will support the following bird protection projects:

- ❖ The 2nd Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas
- ❖ Bird City Wisconsin
- ❖ Wisconsin Bird Monitoring Program
- ❖ Kirtland’s Warbler Monitoring and Management
- ❖ Important Bird Areas Program: Southern Forests Initiative
- ❖ Wisconsin Stopover Initiative
- ❖ Reforesting the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica (where many of our birds overwinter)
- ❖ Whooping Crane Reintroduction Program

- Eric Howe

Racine’s Sustained Flight

Racine renewed its recognition as a Bird City for 2014, its third year.



The renewal letter from *Bird City Wisconsin* cited Racine’s many “bird-friendly” accomplishments, including its extensive Bluebird trail, Purple Martin houses, and nesting Peregrine Falcons (page 1).

Congratulations, Racine, and many thanks to all whose efforts helped keep Racine a Bird City!



Hoy’s Annual Elections will occur at our **May 1 meeting**. The slate for elections is as follows:

Officers			
President: Jenny Wenzel		Treasurer: Jim Veltman	
Vice President: John Krerowicz		Secretary: Karen Gavahan	
Directors			
John Dixon	Rick Fare	Eric Howe	Helen Pugh
Sue Schuitt	Wendy Sorenson	Kristin Wegner	Elizabeth Wheeler

Hoy Committees Need Your Help!

We have a few open positions for Committee Chairs, and we’re always interested in having more members help on the board, so if you can join us to help with any of these positions, let any board member know!

Committees & Committee Chairs	
Conservation: Helen Pugh	Field Trips: Open position
Education: Rick Fare	Membership: Open position
Newsletter: Kristin Wegner	Programs: Open position
Publicity: John Krerowicz	

Nicholson Wildlife Refuge

This is an area that floods annually in spring and may retain water throughout the season given adequate precipitation. The area is at its best in early spring when the waterfowl are heading north. During that time, Greater White-fronted, Cackling, Snow, and Ross’s Geese have been found mixed in with the hundreds or thousands of Canadas. The entrance to this area is on 5 Mile Road, midway between Nicholson Road and CTY H; there is a small parking lot in the grove of pines. Open fields surrounding the wetlands may produce Lapland Longspurs, Horned Larks, and Snow Buntings in season. Following the hiking trail to the far southwest border puts you in an area for Orchard Orioles during the summer. Other rarities seen here include LeConte’s Sparrow, Little Blue Heron, and Eared Grebe. A board walk has been partially installed that will eventually allow the public to head south into the park over areas that typically flood in spring and hike back to the main pond for waterfowl viewing.

- Jerry DeBoer, “Wisconsin’s Favorite Bird Haunts”

Other Sites Near Nicholson

Other fields in this area have recently been good for finding flocks of migrating geese in the springtime. Scan flooded fields along Hwy. H west of Nicholson Refuge. Other flooded areas which can be productive are located on 4 Mile Road. One spot is west of Nicholson Road on 4 Mile Road (a creek can be seen looking north towards Nicholson). Further west on 4 Mile Road will get you to the “Truck Stop ponds.” These ponds are basically farmers’ fields which flood in the springtime. Scan the fields to the south in the valley/field which floods on 4 Mile Road between highway V and the east frontage road. (They are adjacent to the truck stop at the freeway entrance on Hwy. K and Hwy. 94). These “ponds” produce good numbers of ducks in spring when there is a lot of water. Later in spring as the water starts to dry up this area can also be good for shorebirds. - Jenny Wenzel

Hoy's Favorite Winter Bird Sightings

We asked Hoyers to share their favorite sightings this winter. The results are in!

Snowy Owls



I saw a Snowy Owl fly over a field off Hwy H just north of Hwy A in the early evening. Several Snow Buntings followed it until it landed further out in the field to rest before going on the nightly hunt. - *Sighting and photo from Jennifer Ambrose*

I also have to go with Snowy Owl, the one that we found for the Racine CBC. We had been searching for the Snowy reported in the Racine Harbor area Saturday in bitter, blizzard conditions, and had no luck finding it during our first CBC pass on Sunday. I thought we should try Pugh Marina one last time, and I finally got it in the scope with minutes of daylight remaining, perched far out on the rocks. A great end to the count! - *Sighting from Eric Howe*



“Snowy” Owl

I saw this Great Horned Owl doing its best Snowy impression at a wildlife rehabilitation center in January. The elements bothered the bird a lot less than they bothered me and my camera.

- *Sighting and photo from Kristin Wegner*

Geese Galore

A recent post on Hoy's [Facebook](#) group reported a nicely mixed flock of geese near Nicholson Wildlife Refuge, including hundreds of Canada Geese, a Ross's Goose, a few Greater White Fronted Geese, and at least one blue phase Snow Goose.

- *Sighting posted by Jenny Wenzel, geese found by Steve Lubhan*

Long-tailed Duck



The Long-tailed Duck was my favorite sighting of this winter. I have never seen one before and I ventured myself on the icebergs formed on the Wind Point shore to get closer to this beauty.

- *Sighting and photo from Monica Noyb*

And finally, this unusual “Snowoodcock” visited a porch railing:



Become a Bluebird Monitor!

Do you enjoy watching bird behavior? Would you like to see up close the birth and raising of birds? Would you like to participate in a project to help bird populations grow? Do you like to take a healthy walk or ride in a golf cart?

If you answer yes to these questions, why not become a Bluebird monitor? Opportunities exist to either have your own trail or assist others on theirs. It's a lot of fun and very rewarding. - *Rick Fare*

If you are interested in becoming a Bluebird monitor, please contact one of our Bluebird coordinators:

Rick Fare: 262-902-9020 or rick.fare@hoyaudubon.org

Stan Rosenstiel: 262-694-2206 (You may also contact Stan if you're interested in monitoring Purple Martin boxes.)

Upcoming Activities

Thursday, April 3, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Meeting, Program: Samuel Myers Park Restoration

Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive, Mount Pleasant, WI 53406
Adrian Koski from the City of Racine Health Department will discuss redesign plans for Samuel Myers Park, a local bird watching hotspot. Please join us to learn about these improvements to access, habitat, and water quality and how you can get involved.

Wednesday, April 9, 7:30 p.m. (or 5:30 p.m.)

Field Trip: Evening Woodcock Walk: Cliffside

Picnic Area #2 at Cliffside Park, Racine County

Meet at 5:30 p.m. to look for early spring migrants. At 7:30 p.m. we'll walk the trail to the north and await the display of the American Woodcock. Waterproof footwear advised.

Saturday, April 12, 8:00 a.m.

Field Trip: Bird Watching at Nicholson Wildlife Refuge

Nicholson Wildlife Refuge, Racine County

Knee high boots are highly recommended as the trail will likely be flooded in portions (the boardwalk is not complete yet). Depending on conditions, we may visit other nearby birding areas afterwards.

Wednesday, April 16 and April 23, 7:30 p.m. (or 5:30 p.m.)

Field Trip: Evening Woodcock Walk: Pike River

Pike River Pathway, Mount Pleasant, Racine County

Meet at the Wendi Court parking lot. At 5:30 p.m. we'll look for early spring migrants. At 7:30 p.m. we'll walk the pathway and await the display of the American Woodcock.

Saturday, April 26, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Earth Day Celebration

Gateway Technical College, Kenosha Campus: 3520 30th Avenue

Various organizations will have displays, workshops, hands-on activities for people of all ages. Rick Fare will be leading bird walks from the Sustainable Living Center.

Wednesday April 30, 5:30 p.m.

Field Trip: Evening Warbler Walks at Colonial Park

Colonial Park, Racine, WI

Our Wednesday evening hikes are a great way to experience the progression of spring migrants as well as those birds that summer here. We will walk in light rain but not if there's a downpour.

Thursday, May 1, 7:00 p.m.

Hoy Meeting, Film: Gulf Crossing + Annual Board Elections

Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive, Mount Pleasant, WI 53406

In the spring billions of birds representing hundreds species move from the tropics into North America. Many must face the great barrier of the Gulf of Mexico. *Gulf Crossing* documents this remarkable and moving natural phenomenon. We'll also vote on **Hoy's revised by-laws** (page 2) and **Board Members** (page 3).

Saturday, May 3, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Field Trip: Bird Walk at the Trout Ponds

Caledonia Conservancy, Racine County

Helen Pugh will lead the walk. The parking lot is located along Four Mile Road, 0.1 mile west of Hwy 31.

Sunday, May 4, 6:30 p.m.

Field Trip: Evening Woodcock Walk: Chiwaukee Prairie

Chiwaukee Prairie, Kenosha County

RSVP with Stan Rosenstiel in advance to sign up (262-694-2206). Meet at the kiosk north of 121st Street & Second Avenue.

Upcoming Activities, continued

Tuesdays, May 6 and 13, 8:00 a.m.

Field Trip: Bird Walks at Hawthorn Hollow

880 Green Bay Rd, Kenosha, WI

Meet Stan Rosenstiel outside the nature center.

Wednesday, May 7, 14, 21, and 28, 5:30 p.m.

Field Trip: Evening Warbler Walks at Colonial Park

Colonial Park, Racine, WI

Our Wednesday evening hikes are a great way to experience the progression of spring migrants as well as those birds that summer here. We will walk in light rain but not if there's a downpour.

Fridays, May 9, 16, and 23, 8:00 a.m.

Field Trip: Morning Bird Walks at River Bend

River Bend Nature Center, 3600 N Green Bay Rd, Racine, WI

Rick Fare will lead the bird walk. Birdwatchers of all experience levels are welcome. Bring your binoculars and your bird book.

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

Hoy Meeting, Program: Critters & Creepy Crawlers

Sealed Air YMCA, 8501 Campus Drive, Mount Pleasant, WI 53406

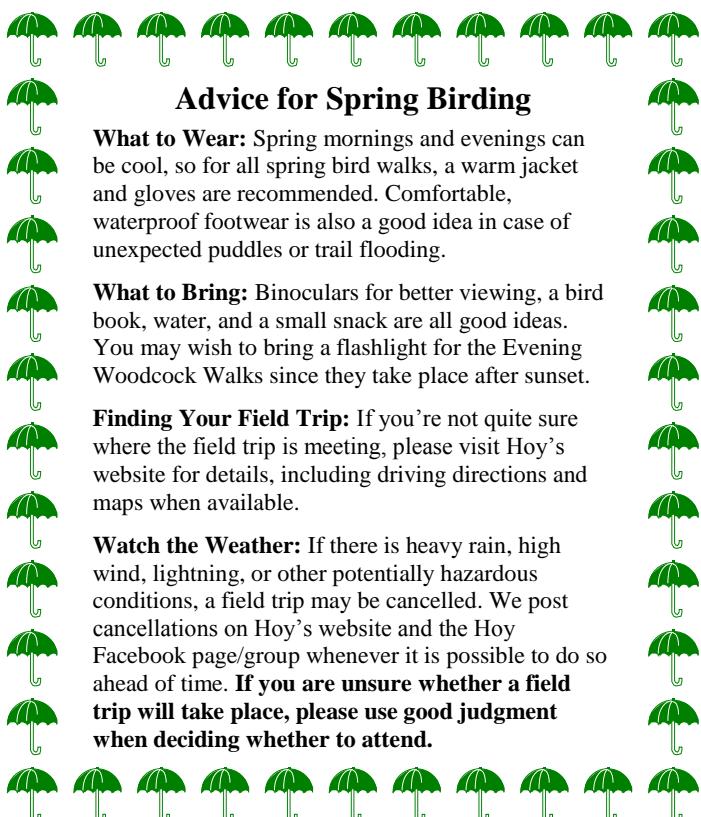
Jerry DeBoer will talk to us about the various mammals and other living creatures we can encounter in Southeast Wisconsin: Moths, dragonflies, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians, grasshoppers, and more!

Thursday, June 5, and Tuesday, June 10, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Picnic with the Peregrines!

Racine County Courthouse, 730 Wisconsin Ave, Racine, WI

Back by popular demand! Bring lunch and enjoy watching the young Peregrine Falcons beg food from their parents and practice flying. Hoy will have spotting scopes set up near the picnic table on the southwest lawn on both dates.



Advice for Spring Birding

What to Wear: Spring mornings and evenings can be cool, so for all spring bird walks, a warm jacket and gloves are recommended. Comfortable, waterproof footwear is also a good idea in case of unexpected puddles or trail flooding.

What to Bring: Binoculars for better viewing, a bird book, water, and a small snack are all good ideas. You may wish to bring a flashlight for the Evening Woodcock Walks since they take place after sunset.

Finding Your Field Trip: If you're not quite sure where the field trip is meeting, please visit Hoy's website for details, including driving directions and maps when available.

Watch the Weather: If there is heavy rain, high wind, lightning, or other potentially hazardous conditions, a field trip may be cancelled. We post cancellations on Hoy's website and the Hoy Facebook page/group whenever it is possible to do so ahead of time. **If you are unsure whether a field trip will take place, please use good judgment when deciding whether to attend.**

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



Peregrine Falcon perched on the Wind Point Lighthouse, May 2013, photo by Kristin Wegner

Please take the time to renew your Hoy Audubon Chapter

Membership for 2014/2015. 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 per individual

Total amount enclosed: _____

Do you wish to receive chapter newsletter by email only?

Yes, my email is: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Send to: Hoy Audubon Society, P. O. Box 044626, Racine, WI 53404



Prothonotary Warbler @ Wind Point, May 2013, photo by Kristin Wegner

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 email newsletter distribution list by sending an email to hoynewsletter@gmail.com and asking to be put on the electronic mailing list. You can now find us on **Facebook** at www.facebook.com/HoyAudubonSociety