

Announcing DBC's Spring Photography Contest Winners!

Below are the DBC Spring '22 Photography Contest Winners.

Best of Show - "Gold on Yellow"

Photographer: Dennis Streicher

Species of Bird: American Goldfinch

Where was the picture taken? Morton Arboretum

Narrative: While monitoring my count area at the Arb I came across this male Goldfinch admiring (?) this yellow flower. The light and position was an opportunity for a wonderful shot with one of our local beautiful birds.



Best Moment - “Lizards for Dinner”

Photographer: Jeanne Rosone

Species of Bird: Great White Egret

Where was the picture taken? New Port Richey, FL

Narrative: We were on Spring Break in New Port Richey, FL when I saw this Egret walking across the lawns of people's houses looking for snacks. My husband was driving and we were following it slowly. We saw it go into some bushes and pull out a lizard. I was able to capture a picture of it just before it was swallowed!



Best B&W Photo - “Fullersburg Wood Duck - Female”

Photographer: Eric Schwister

Species of Bird: Wood Duck female

Where was the picture taken? On Salt Creek at Fullersburg Woods, Oak Brook

Narrative - While waiting for this pair of Wood D

ucks to get closer, I was standing behind a tree near the entrance to Fullersburg Woods and very close to Spring Road. Every time I stepped away from the tree, my silhouette would scare the ducks and they would paddle away. I had to almost hug the tree while waiting about 20 minutes before they got close enough for these pictures. A good number of cars and even people walking the trail passed by, wondering, I'm sure, about the crazy tree hugger next to Salt Creek.



Best Group Shot - “Three Bachelors”

Photographer: Sirimon Reutrakul

Species of Bird: Wood Duck

Where was the picture taken? Thatcher Woods Forest Preserve

Narrative: After a long day of computer work, I ventured out to the nearby woods. It was quiet and I walked towards the edge of the river where I found these three handsome Wood Ducks. They lined up perfectly for about half a minute and then took off one at a time.



Best Backyard Bird Photo: “Orange You Glad It's Spring?”

Photographer: Ken List

Bird Species: Baltimore Oriole

Where was the picture taken? My backyard in Wheaton

Narrative: My wife and I always look forward to spring when the Baltimore Orioles spend a few brief weeks with us. This feeder is outside our kitchen window where we can sit and watch them come and go. They add another wonderful color to the yellows of the finches and the reds of the cardinals.



Best Warbler - “Okay, make it fast, guys, I'm busy!”

Photographer: Diann Bilderback

The species of the bird: Prothonotary Warbler

Where the picture was taken: Magee Marsh Boardwalk, Ohio

Narrative: I lined up three deep with dozens of birders jostling for a good look at this dazzling Prothonotary Warbler at the Magee Marsh Boardwalk. He was busy investigating a nest hole, preening, and flitting about in dense bushes. Suddenly he hopped up on a nearby branch and posed for a full 10 seconds. The crowd heaved an audible gasp and the cameras clicked furiously, mine included. He was so beautiful as the sun caught his beautiful yellow breast and that stunning profile.



The Patience Pays Off Award - “White-eyed Wiggler”

Photographer: Jackie Tilles

Species of Bird: White-eyed Vireo

Where was the picture taken? Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary

Narrative: I never realized how active White-eyed Vireos are until I tried to photograph this bird. It was constantly hopping from branch to branch in pursuit of bugs. It could champion any warbler. Luckily the vireo stayed in the same area all morning and with time, determination and a lot of patience, I was able to get a few clear shots.



Best Couple Portrait - “Working Together”

Photographer: Carrieann Fischer

Species of Bird in Photo: Yellow Warbler

Where was the picture taken? Fischer Woods

Narrative - A special moment in a young family's life.



Best Rarity - “A True Rarity”

Photographer: Mike Davern

Species of Bird: Little Stint

Where was the picture taken? Heislerville Wildlife Management Area, New Jersey
Narrative - This is a bird that was not supposed to be there. I participated in a bird walk as part of the Cape May, New Jersey Spring Birding Festival. On May 20th one of our group saw this slightly reddish looking bird mixed in with hundreds of Semipalmated Sandpipers and Plovers. After first guessing it was a Western Sandpiper, which is an occasional fall visitor to New Jersey, we settled on the extremely rare visitor from Asia, the Little Stint. Watching the experienced birders go through the progressions of trying to identify this little guy was quite amazing. The excitement rippling through the group was palpable when we realized this was a true lifer. Once we settled on the Little Stint a call went out to the American Birding Association with pictures and the finding was confirmed and put on the US Rare Bird list the next day. (Not sure of the exact process but I did see the posting the next day.) Another group went out on the 21st and it was found again in the same location. Only the 4th or 5th time ever seen on the east coast, although the Little Stint does sometimes visit Alaska from the east. Most birds are still lifers for me but this one was a special treat.



© Michael Davern

Great Story Award - "Do Birds Steal Eggs?"

Photographer: Laurel Ahlenius

Bird Species: Red-headed Woodpecker

Location: Lyman Woods

Narrative: Okay, this is one for the experts. While on the DBC Birdwalk, on May 19th, at Lyman Woods, our group observed a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers, drilling out a larger hole at the top of a very tall dead tree. In the same tree was a Hairy Woodpecker, very upset and crying out, and being chased off by the Red-headed Woodpeckers. It was a consensus of some in the group that this was a dispute about a nesting spot. However more information came to light, once I looked at the photos that I had taken.

I wish now that I had taken more, as this was one of my last photos of this dispute. It is a challenge for me to hold an 8 pound camera, literally almost straight up, with a long lens, and keep it steady for several minutes. This was also more of a challenge to do so without moving my feet to balance me as we were on a boardwalk, and there were other people present and I didn't want to fall.

Somehow, as the story my photos showed, that the Red-headed had enlarged the opening, and one finally managed to climb inside, and grab this egg and then back out with it in its beak. What happened after that, I do not know. I feel badly for the poor Hairy Woodpecker, who was so upset. Although it is a pain to lug this camera around, it often provides me with more information via photos about bird behavior than what can be seen through the human eye, as the photos do "stop a moment in time". I do love doing bird photography.



© L Ahlenius

Best Still Life Award - “In Perfect Stillness”

Photographer: Laurel Ahlenius

Bird Species: Blue-winged Teal

Location: Whalon Lake

Narrative: Since this was the start of May and daylight was lasting longer I decided to go for gold and try to find the beautiful Eared Grebe at Whalon Lake, even though it was almost 5pm. Sadly, it was not to be found, but I decided to pursue my search and walked around the northwestern part of the lake on the paved path. It was an interesting day. If my recollection is correct, it seems in the afternoons that typically the waves were present to some degree and seem to be more pronounced at the end of the day. This however was different. The lake was perfectly still, grey hues instead of blue and rather hazy due to the cloudy overcast.

So, sadly with no Eared Grebe in sight, I found other candidates. Some ducks, Coots and Pied-billed Grebes were doing their thing of swimming, fishing and enjoying the day. I found some interesting subjects, as especially the males were decked out in breeding feathers. Though far away, I spotted this sleeping duck and started taking pics. It was one of those photographic moments/scenes that I couldn't pass up. It is so rare to find perfectly still water, especially the hued gray tone that can mirror-reflect the subject on top. I took quite a few pics and he never moved. This typically is a scene one only gets early in the morning before the business of life kicks in. For those who do photography and processing: other than some cropping and adjusting just a smidge of exposure and texture, no other changes/edits were done to this pic.

