

Announcing DBC's Fall 2023 Photography Contest Winners!

The DBC's Fall '23 photo contest was a great success! We had the most entries ever in the contest - 36 beautiful bird photos. The entries were judged by John Hebert, Andie Duffy, Steve Constantelos, Natalie McFaul, and Mike Warner. Because of the variety and quality of the submissions, the committee had a very tough time deciding on which pictures to recognize; the committee would like to thank all the photographers for their entries.

Congratulations to Tim Duitsman for his **Best of Show** picture of a male Hooded Merganser "running" across Whalon Lake. Below are all the DBC Fall 2023 Photography Contest Award Winners:



Best of Show - Hooded Merganser

Photographer: Tim Duitsman

Species of Bird: Hooded Merganser

Where was the picture taken: Whalon Lake

Narrative: Just after dawn a male and female Hooded Merganser were along the eastern shore. I had to walk through the tall and frosty grass to get close enough to get this picture.



Exotica Award

Photographer: Rick Roche

Species of Bird: Crested Caracara

Where was the picture taken: Pixaim River, Pantanal, Brazil

Narrative: From our boat our birding guide spotted a Jaguar stalking a Caiman on the right side of the Pixaim River near the SouthWild Pantanal Lodge in Brazil. We stopped close to the left bank to watch the Jaguar, who receded into the brush but was still visible. This Crested Caracara landed on a bush just five yards behind us and watched us watch the Jaguar for twenty minutes. A Jabiru, a Cocoli Heron, and a Little Blue Heron also joined our audience.



Best Portrait Award

Photographer: Name: Laurel Ahlenius

Bird Species: Nashville Warbler

Location: My patio pond, Wheaton, IL

Narrative: Just off my patio and down a steep slope is a large pond.

Surrounding most of the pond is a variety of wild shrubs, trees and plants at the water's edge. The birds often pass quickly through the dense shrubs but this one paused in a clearing and I was able to get a clear shot. The blue background is the pond reflecting the sky that day. This fall I was surprised to have repeated visits from a few Nashville, Cape May, and Palm Warblers; even a Northern Parula stopped by for a quick visit. I never know who is going to show up next!



Say Ahhhhh! Award

Photographer: Laurel Ahlenius

Bird Species: Green Heron

Location: My patio pond, Wheaton, IL

Narrative: I watched this Green Heron walking along the pond's edge from the slope above and I was able to follow it quietly to the end of the pond without disturbing him. He stopped walking, stretched tall, and slowly opened his beak as if responding with a return call, though I heard none. What was most interesting was that I actually captured raising his tongue up in another photo, but decided to submit this one as the sunlight shone down his throat making part of his throat translucent. One can even see part of his tongue. I can just hear a doctor say, "Now, open wide and say "AHHHHHHHHH"!



Best Owl I'd Like to See Award

Photographer: Dick Yamasaki

Species of Bird: Barn Owl (Tyto alba)

Where was the picture taken: Villa Park, California

Narrative: This photo was taken at a friend's house in Villa Park, California. The owl had been there for several weeks and had been returning to his yard for several years. I suspect that the orange tree in the yard, with ripe fruits on the ground, is attracting prey for the owl. The owl never opened her eyes, even with five adults standing just below her and me taking photographs! The heart-shaped face with her eyes wide-open would have made an even better photo! To the prey the face probably looks very murderous.



Welcome To the Neighborhood Award

Photographer: Jeanne Rosone

Species of Bird: Great Egret

Where was the picture taken: Army Trail Nature Center in Addison

Narrative: While this Egret was hanging out on a tree stump, a turtle started making its way out of the water. I'm not sure if the egret thought it was a fish at first because it was staring into the water. The Egret seemed surprised to see a turtle.



Local Color Award

Photographer: John Obenland

Species of Bird: Eastern Towhee

Where was the picture taken: Springbrook Forest Preserve, Naperville

Narrative: On an early October hike at Springbrook, this late migrant was caught performing his "act" alongside the trail, following the script perfectly with his alternating hopping and scratching in the leaves. Not only were his actions "natural" and "convincing" but the costuming was perfect as well - black and orange in October! Just enough color and action to draw attention, while blending in with the shades of autumn in the background. A big surprise that I had not anticipated, and I hope he received rave reviews at all the stops on his tour!



Tranquil Reflection Award

Photographer: Micheal Regan

Species of Bird: Great Egret

Where was the picture taken: Lincoln Marsh

Narrative - Lincoln Marsh is a place I go to find tranquility. Finding this reflection reminds me of why I enjoy birding.



Best Story Award

Photographer: Vicki Sroczynski

Species of Bird: California Condor

Where was the picture taken: Grand Canyon South Rim - El Tovar

Narrative: My husband and I were walking to take the bus to a vantage point where we were told a condor nest was visible-we knew the birds weren't nesting now, but hoped they'd be in the area. It was our last chance to see a condor after three days of NOT seeing them. As we were walking I saw two large birds with upswept wings and a lot of white underneath. Woohoo, California Condors! So we hurried to the Lookout Studio to try and find them from the terrace.

The chick is one year, nine months old (they're considered rather independent at age two). Nonetheless, it could not stop tugging on his mom's wing tag, probably begging for food according to a park ranger we talked with later. It just made us laugh, the chick was so pesty, just like a toddler. Condor #123 was hatched in captivity on 5/20/95 at the Los Angeles Zoo, but he raised a wild-born chick in 2005. He's raised 4 chicks so far, I think, 3 with Condor #297 (she was hatched on 4/10/03 at the World Center for Birds of Prey, Boise). We were simply delighted to see this family, along with a lot of other happy visitors, with whom we shared our binocs and later, photos.



Award For Best Backyard Bird Shot

Photographer: Photographer: Lana Pedersen

Species of bird: Mourning Doves

Location: My yard in unincorporated Lombard

Narrative: On a cold, dreary afternoon this November these Mourning Doves were huddled together, trying to keep warm in their puffy down jackets. Our Ohio Buckeye tree is a favored perch for the doves year-round; at daybreak, you can count on them congregating at the very top of the tree to soak up the first rays of the rising sun.

You can see all pictures posted to the DBC Website, including past Photo Contest Winners, by [CLICKING HERE](#).