

# Announcing DBC's Winter 2024 - 2025 Photo Contest Winners!

The winners of DBC's Winter 2024-5 photo contest have been finalized! The entries were judged by Andie Duffy, Steve Constantelos, Natalie McFaul, Thelma Hulka 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.

## Best of Show

**Photographer:** Bonnie Graham

**Species:** Northern Cardinal

**Location:** Maple Lake Forest Preserve

**Narrative:** I really like taking photos of female Cardinals. The male Cardinals get all of the attention, but I think the females are prettier than the males. I was taking photos of different birds landing on this stump when this female Cardinal sat and posed for me. I shoot in continuous bursts, and while shooting the female, a male flew right behind her. This is what I call a happy accident.



# Dragging Its Feet Award

Photographer: John Obenland

Species: Snowy Egret

Location: Orlando Wetlands, Florida

**Narrative:** On a recent visit to Orlando Wetlands, we arrived just in time for the mid-afternoon Snowy Egret show. The main attraction's act was very well rehearsed, and the routine was planned to fascinate those who traveled great distances to see the presentation. The lead performer, which I named Egie (from the genus name Egretta), displayed great ability, coordination, and strength in gliding to the surface of the swamp and just letting the toenails of both feet touch down simultaneously! Stunning!



# In Memoriam

**Photographer:** Tim Duitsman

**Species:** Snowy Owl

**Location:** McHenry, IL

**Narrative:** Reports of a Snowy Owl sighting in McHenry had circulated among the local birding community and I couldn't resist the chance to see such a rare visitor. After driving for more than an hour, arriving just before dawn, I pulled off the road and spotted what I thought might be the owl only to recognize yet another white plastic bag in an open field.

That's when magic happened. As I glanced back down the road to drive away, the snowy owl flew right past my window, no more than fifteen feet away. It flew right by and landed behind me on a nearby utility pole facing into the morning sun. I jumped out of the car and was able to circle through a field to take this picture (and 300 other not so good ones). The owl sat there for 10 minutes before silently flying to another pole down the line.

Days later, news spread that made me feel incredibly sad: the snowy owl had been found dead on the side of the road. I feel so lucky to have spent a beautiful morning sunrise with such a beautiful creature.





# Skating On Thin Ice Award

**Photographer:** James J. Goldsmith

**Species:** Great Blue Heron

**Location:** The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL

**Narrative:** On a cold, foggy morning in mid-December I visited the Morton Arboretum (where I am a Safety Patrol volunteer) to see if any birds were stirring. While walking on the West Side near the DuPage River, I noticed some activity on Sunfish Pond, which was partially frozen at this time. As I got closer, I was surprised to see a Great Blue Heron awkwardly skating on the ice and heading towards open water. This heron soon flew away but I did have enough time to get that photo.



# Christmas Lights Award

Photographer: Emma Robinson

Species: Fiery-throated Hummingbird

Location: Paraiso Quetzal Lodge, Costa Rica

Narrative: On my first trip to Central America, there were many eye-catching birds – but it was the expressions of the Fiery-Throated Hummingbirds that caught my attention. They seem to contemplate every drop of mountain mist and every mossy perch. Their iridescence is unlike anything I'd ever seen before, and were the "Christmas Lights" for a Christmas spent very far from home.





# Gentoo Jive Award

**Photographer:** Richard Roche

**Species:** Gentoo Penguin

**Location:** Yankee Harbor, Greenwich Island, Antarctica

**Narrative:** While cruising along the Antarctic Peninsula, we landed on a rocky beach in Yankee Harbor to visit a Gentoo Penguin colony. We humans had to stay on a prescribed path but the penguins were all around us. In my comment on eBird I wrote "thousands up the hill but only a couple of hundred on the beach". I saw these three Gentoos pop out of the cold Antarctic water and dance over the rocks. They look so clean after a swim.



# Fluffy Falcon Award

Photographer: Jackie Tilles

Species: American Kestrel

Location: Park Ridge, IL

**Narrative:** This American Kestrel has been frequenting my neighborhood for the last month. It was a cloudy, gray early morning when I first spotted this bird and I was able to identify him by the black vertical moustachials on his face. Then one sunny afternoon he landed on an evergreen tree when the light was perfect and I was able to capture his beautiful rufous and gunmetal blue colors. The black polka dots just add to this small falcon's cuteness.



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