

# Chequamegon Chirps



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Our Monday April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting at 7:00 P.M. will be another Zoom session that can be accessed at **314 090 6270** compliments of Scott and Peggy Stalheim. This session, in addition to finding out What's Around and coming through—which should be pretty interesting in itself— involves an officer election, information about Avian Flu and what is in the works for National Migratory Day plus any other topics that may come up.

The election of officers. This has turned out to be a more complicated process than it needs to be. Ron Draeger for Vice President, Scott Stalheim--Secretary and Betty Danen for Treasurer have accepted nominations and I expect there will be a motion to cast an unanimous ballot for these capable members. That leaves the Presidency position. Damn, but this has been a bugger for anyone to accept. Why? It isn't rocket science. Being a really good birder isn't a requirement or even necessary. It used to be for many years people would serve two one year terms and the next volunteer would step up. Most of the long term members such as Ron, Connie, Ken, Gayle, Claire and myself have done this duty and survived without any long term major damages. The jury is still out about Joe since he did several two year terms, and was a bit on the squirrely side to begin with. Drummers tend to lean that way. Probably a genetic thing passed down from both sides of his ancestry. Nothing illegal about that. It certainly didn't impair his getting the job done. So who is next? While the bodyguard benefit doesn't exist anymore, there is a rumor that the new president will receive double the salary and might be able to negotiate it even higher.

Personally, I think it is a sign of club stagnation when there are few volunteers and others are willing to let anyone else do the things that need to be done to keep the club going—as long as it doesn't involve any effort on their part. Joe has done a good job and deserves a thank you from all of us as has Cam who has keep track of club dollars for many years. Betty will be equally competent and will there be a new president. If not, will the Chequamegon Bird Club continue? Think about it.

## **Field Sessions**

Currently there are three outdoor sessions scheduled that will emphasize different birding opportunities. The first will be Saturday, April 23 at the Medford School Forest starting at 6:30 P.M. to concentrate on late afternoon, early evening birds such as woodcock and owls. Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at Miller Dam will have a gathering from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. surveying area waterfowl. The final meeting of this series will be in the National Forest on May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 7:30 to 10:00 to inventory songbirds which should be plentiful at this time. I believe lack of sunshine and persistent intermittent snow has clogged up rational thinking on my part. Joe gave me specific directions to each location. When I tried to read my notes, the information was botched up and not comprehensible. And that was before I had my substantial Saturday night glass of wine. Therefore, to get specific and accurate directions to these places, check the Chequamegon information site on page four or call Joe at 715-965-3498.

## **Migration Time**

Spring migration is certainly noticeable now, but when you think about it, this is an ongoing process that goes on to some degree nearly all year long. At times it can be kind of messy and not in just a south to north travel. The end result is some degree of travel to satisfy the irrepressible and necessary urge to reproduce. At times, due to weather conditions such as wind strength and direction, there is practically zero movement. At other times, when conditions are optimal, especially at night, there can be many millions of birds going north to their nesting grounds.

The following quoted material comes from the book *What It's Like To Be A Bird* by David Allen Sibley which is a delightful and informative read. We say birds go north for the summer but relatively few birds have a simple south to north travel at this time. "Both within and between species there are differences in strategy, route, distance and timing. Each species has evolved a unique schedule and route that matches its physical ability and meets its needs for food, water, and shelter. Over millennia, as climate and ecosystems change, the birds' migration strategies and physiology evolve to match the new conditions."

"Not all birds migrate—only about 19 percent of species worldwide. Migration gives birds access to better food sources, which offsets the energy used in migrating. In many species migration is flexible. They can speed up or slow down, or even reverse direction, based on current weather and food conditions. Many

ducks and geese leave their breeding grounds in the late summer and fly a thousand miles or more to molt before making their way south to their wintering grounds. Many species have a strong eastward or westward component to their movements—for example, flying from Alaska to eastern Canada. In some species, males, females, adults, and immatures each have different migratory habits and tend to winter in different regions. Waxwings and some species simply wander in search of food, sometimes moving east and west across the continent rather than north and south. Some species are nomadic, breeding when and where conditions are good and then wandering elsewhere when the food service fails. Most small songbirds migrate at night; which night to fly is based on many factors such as less turbulent air, cooler temperatures, fewer predators, stars more visible for navigation, and the daytime can be spent on refueling. How they decide which nights to fly is complex. In the big picture changes in day length trigger hormones which lead to physiological changes that increase the bird's urge and ability to migrate. An appraisal of all these factors leads to a decision to take off or to wait. Launching into the night with an unknown destination is risky, but waiting might be even more risky.”

“Extreme migrants: An individual Artic Tern can travel 60,000 miles every year from the Artic to the Antarctic and back. Some Blackpoll Warblers migrate from Alaska to Brazil and back every year, more than 7,000 miles each way, including 2,500 miles non-stop over the ocean. Bobolinks migrate from southern Canada to Argentina.”

“Geese, like ducks, sandpipers, and chickens, have precocial young—hatched with eyes open, fully feathered, swimming, feeding, and maintaining their own body temperature within a few hours after they hatch. The adult goose in the wild protects the young from predators and other dangers, and leads them to good feeding areas, but does not feed them. Songbirds, in contrast, have altricial young, hatched naked and helpless with eyes closed, requiring two weeks or more of constant care and feeding to survive.”

“Young geese instinctively form an attachment to, or imprint on, the first plausible parent they see. In geese the critical period is about 13 to 16 hours after hatching. Newly hatched geese are not very discriminating, and can imprint on other species, including a human, or even on an inanimate object like a toy train. The precocial young leave the nest shortly after hatching and must be strongly attached to their parents to have the best chance for survival.”

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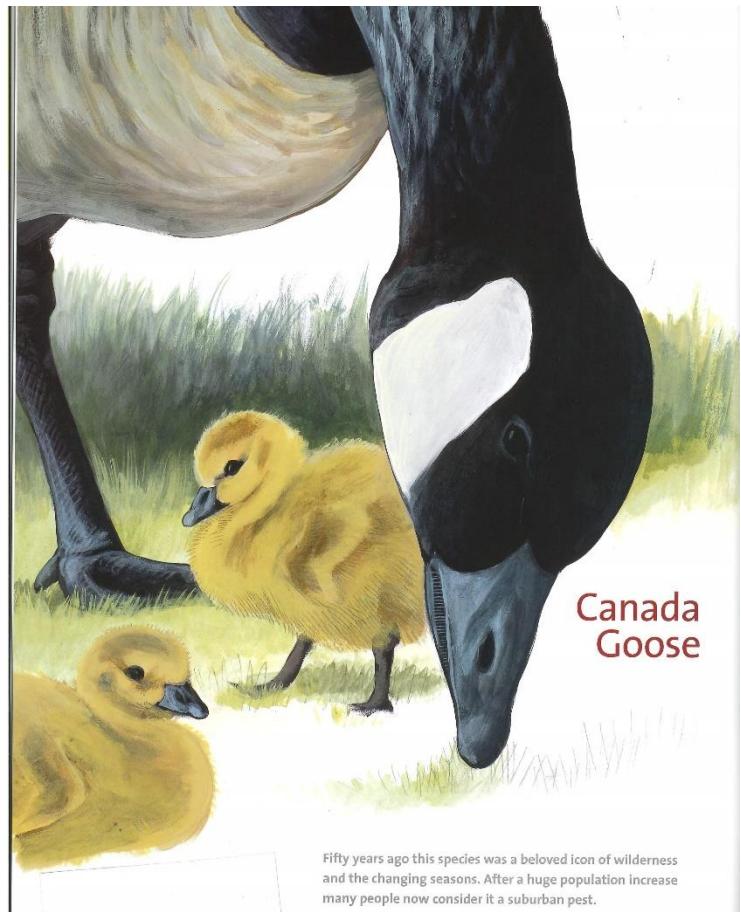
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**April and May Events**

Full moons April 16 (pink) and May 16 (flower) and eclipse  
Field trips April 23, May 1 and May 22  
Winter final surrenders to spring  
Toads and tree frogs begin calling  
Nature gets frisky



Fifty years ago this species was a beloved icon of wilderness and the changing seasons. After a huge population increase many people now consider it a suburban pest.