

# Chequamegon Chirps

April 15, 2024 Volume 42 Number 4



We will meet at the Medford Library on Monday, April 15 at 7:00 P.M.

Business will include officer election and discussion of a field trip to the Sandhill Wildlife Area on Saturday, May 11. Information will be supplied about the recent birdhouse building evening, upcoming Conservation Day at the Taylor County Fairgrounds and Migratory Bird Day. Sue Vick will show highlights of a recent birding trip to Costa Rica that includes outstanding photographs of a few of the 900 plus species in this Central American country. It should be a fun and fact-filled evening.

This newsletter is nearly a week early as I am throwing it together between a couple out of state trips. It does make it possible to advise you of a "You don't want to miss it" TV program on Wednesday, April 10. It is a Nova presentation on channel 20-1 at 7:00P.M. about **Nature Raptors: A Fistful of Daggers: Meet the Raptors:** From giant eagles to miniature falconets, meet the many species of raptors.

## HOW IS AN EGG MADE?

The following is from an article in the Calgary Sun on 11-14-12

Can't say I've ever lost sleep pondering this process, but it could be less contentious than most political discussions this year. We know that hens can lay an egg an day. Here's a look at the science behind how that egg is formed. The whole process takes about 24 hours and begins again shortly after an egg is laid.

1. **Each day** the chicken egg starts as an egg yoke inside a hen. A yoke (called an oocyte) is produced by the hen's ovary in a process called ovulation.
2. **18 minutes** The oocyte is released into the oviduct (a long, spiraling tube in the hens reproductive system).
3. **2-3 hours** It takes approximately 3 hours for the albumen to be deposited around the yoke. As the albumen is formed, the yoke rotates, twisting the albuminous fibers to form the chalazae.
4. **1 hour** Formation of shell membranes takes a little over an hour.

5. **16 hours** The egg spends most of the time in the uterus, initially some water is added, making the outer white thinner. Then the shell material (mainly calcium carbonate) is added. The egg gets its "bloom," a thin coating which helps it pass through the cloaca smoothly, just before the egg is laid.
6. **Minutes** A series of small muscle contractions pushes the egg through the cloaca. It stretches outward to release the egg. During formation, the egg moves through the oviduct small end first. Just before laying, it is rotated and laid large end first. A young hen lays small eggs. The size increases as she gets older.

What kind of eggs do you buy?

**Farm fresh**—Less than 21 days old. Misshapen eggs are used for other purposes e.g. Mayonnaise and dried egg produce. The hens are confined to a cage size providing at least 750 square cm per hen. Perching space is available at 15 cm per bird.

**Value added**—Obtained by changing the diet of the hen. More vitamins or omega 3 produce an egg with a higher rate of vitamins.

**Free range**—One acre of field for every 400 hens. Hens are free to roam during the daytime. Buildings used to house hens are typically well ventilated with an area of wood shavings and access to food and water.

**Organic**—From hens kept in a similar environment to free range but are fed on organic produce and roam on land classified as organic. They are not fed antibiotics to promote growth.

### **BIRD FLU IN DAIRY CATTLE**

Recently news outlets publicized bird flu infecting dairy cattle in Texas, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico and Idaho which is the first time the disease has been found in dairy cattle. The Texas Department of State Health Services announced that a person who was exposed to dairy cattle presumed to be infected with the bird flu had also caught the virus.

Personal opinion here. This sounds like a potential nightmare, especially for the agriculture structure of this state and anyone who buys dairy products in a store

which is almost everybody. But, that isn't the case in this situation, assuming the following information is factual.

"The good news is this is not a serious problem," Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller told National Public Radio. Cows basically have the flu for a week, and they get over it. The country's commercial dairy is safe and a milk recall is unnecessary. Dairies are required to divert or destroy any milk from impacted livestock, and only milk from healthy cows can be processed for human consumption. Additionally, pasteurization—which is required for milk entering interstate commerce—kills bacteria and viruses, including influenza. Texas officials said that the person who tested positive for bird flu had reported eye inflammation, or conjunctivitis as the only symptom. It is only the second time a human in the U.S. has contracted HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza). A person in contact with infected poultry was sickened in Colorado in 2022.

Bird flu infects the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts of birds and is often fatal to avian populations. It can spread from wild birds to commercial poultry and backyard flocks as well as terrestrial and marine animals and humans. An infection in a commercial operation is controlled by depopulation of all the birds. Currently one group of nearly one and one-half million birds is being depopulated.

Dairy feed attracts different species of wild birds who reduce the quality of the feed in addition to spreading diseases. Pigeons, starlings and grackles were identified at the Texas farms. I suspect this publicity will influence cattle farmers to take greater measures to reduce or eliminate birds around their animals. Hopefully, non-poisonous methods will be used.

### **AN OWL CONUMDRUM**

Should a number of one species be killed to prevent the possible extinction of another species? The barred owl is crowding out the less-aggressive northern spotted owl in the northwestern states according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It has proposed a plan to kill 470,000 barred owls across California, Washington, and Oregon over a 30 year period to protect the northern spotted owl and California spotted owl which are threatened species. Conservation experts who support the proposal say it is a difficult but necessary plan that will help solve a problem that humans helped to create. Conservationists and animal welfare advocate groups have objected. It is a tough job playing God. Would having both sides being equally unhappy be considered a success?

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## Club contacts

Website: [Chequamegonbirdclub.org](http://Chequamegonbirdclub.org)

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### **April and May activities**

Full moons April 23 and May 23

Solar eclipse April 8

Early migrants have arrived or passed through

Winter weather is visiting now that it is spring

Recent moisture is helping dry conditions

Current snow is several months late

### You Can Help!

Plant Natives To Help Nature

Native WI Plants For Beginners -

Spring Bloomers: Wild Geranium, Columbine, Solomon's Seal

Summer Bloomers: Bee Balm, Common Milkweed, Culver's Root

Fall Bloomers: Heart-Leaved Aster, New England Aster, Little Bluestem, Stiff Goldenrod

Follow the code using your smart phone for more info on how to create a bird friendly yard with native plants!

