



Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

August 2013

Volume 32 Number 8

NEXT MEETING:

Date: **Monday, August 19, 2013**

Time: **5:45 Pre-meeting Bird Walk
7 p.m. Program**

Location: **Medford Public Library**

Program: **Birding in Peru**
Claire Romanak

Also, meet Ashly Steinke, new head of the Taylor County Land Conservation Dept.

Field Day in Northern and Western Taylor County – Sunday, August 25

We will spend the day exploring bird habitats in northern and western Taylor County, starting at the Mondeaux Flowage and ending up at Pershing Wildlife Area for a potluck.

9:15 a.m. – Meet in Medford behind Hardee's for those who would like to carpool from Medford.

10 a.m. – Meet at the lodge at the Mondeaux Flowage.

We will bird in the Mondeaux area and work our way west, getting to the **Pershing Lodge about 4 p.m.** with a cold **potluck supper at 5 p.m.** The Pershing Lodge is located on Chuck's Rd (go about 3.5 miles west of Highway 73 on County Road M to East Loop Rd and 2 miles north to Chuck's Rd, which is on the right. The lodge is visible from East Loop Rd.)

Bring lunch or snacks and water for during the day and a cold dish to pass for supper along with your own plate, utensils, and beverage. Dress appropriately for the weather and for some walking

August Meeting

We will have a pre-meeting Bird Walk along the River Walk, starting in front of the library at 5:45 p.m.

Ashly Steinke, the new head of the Taylor County Land Conservation Department, will be attending our meeting and has asked for some time to discuss some of his goals for working in Taylor County. He has a bachelor's degree in wildlife from UW-Stevens Point and his master's degree was based on studying Merriam's turkeys in South Dakota. If you have special concerns about birds in Taylor County, please bring your questions and suggestions.

Claire Romanak will share her experiences and photos from a sixteen day birding excursion to Peru last year. Peru is made up of three zones – an arid coast to the west, a mountainous center, and a forested slope to the Amazonian plains on the east. The diversity of habitats makes possible an amazing 1,879 species of birds located in a country that is 5/6th the size of Alaska. Peru has the second highest number of species of any country on earth and one out of every nine species on earth occurs in the Manu Biosphere Reserve - which is the highest concentration of bird species in the world. Peru is also home to Machu Picchu, the "Lost City of the Incas", built in 1450, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Hope to see you there!

(optional) and remember to bring field guides and binoculars.

Contact Connie Decker (715-654-5819 or 715-255-2407) if you have questions or would like to make arrangements to meet the group later in the day.

Optics

Two items are on the top of most birder's equipment list – a good field guide and a good pair of binoculars. Birder's Digest recently came out with their 2013 Optics Annual. In addition to a comparison and reviews of mid-priced (\$200-\$600) 8x42 binoculars, this edition includes information on

what to look for when buying binoculars and tips on traveling with optics. Here's a link to the Optics Annual:

<http://www.birdwatchersdigest.net/shot2013/oa2013>

The Warbler Guide (cont. from p. 4)

sonograms and sections on how to listen to warbler songs and learning chip and flight calls.

If your mind is overflowing with whistles, trills, buzzes, and chips, the next section features a series of "quick finder" pages that include small photos of the faces of all the species and views from the side, 45°, and directly underneath. More "quick finder" pages cover eastern species in spring and in fall and western species. Two pages are devoted to undertail illustrations, one for eastern species and one for western. Then it's back to sounds and a chance to put into practice what you know about reading sonograms, with "finder charts" covering songs of all (I think) the species and chip calls and flight calls of some.

Most of the remainder of the book is devoted to species accounts. The species are listed alphabetically. Within each species, the order at first may seem a bit confusing. The more brightly colored plumages are covered first. Whether that is the male or both the male and female depends on the species. Most species have 6 to 10 pages devoted to them in more or less the following order:

- The first page has three different views of the species in its most brightly colored plumage along with descriptive comments. A ✓ indicates a feature that is diagnostic. The top of this page also includes a series of icons showing a general silhouette, color impression, tail pattern, range, habitat, and behavior.
- Next is a page that includes several close-ups of distinctive features and other additional photos in the bright plumage.
- This is followed by a page of comparison species
- And a page on aging and sexing along with a range/migration map
- A page or two of sonograms cover both the species being described and comparisons to similar sounding species.
- Then, depending on what type of variations there

are in plumage such as summer/fall or male/female, there may be several more pages of photos of the more drab-colored plumages, laid out similarly to the first three pages of brightly-colored plumages.

After the species accounts, there are photos and a discussion of similar non-warbler species, a quiz and review, photos of some of the species in flight, a glossary, and an index.

It's hard to imagine a more thorough coverage of any group of birds, though the volume of information may be somewhat overwhelming. The book is listed as a field guide, but its size is similar to Sibley and it may be heavier. The binding and cover seem to be sturdy so it will probably survive being tossed in a pack.

As I mentioned, the order of presentation within each species is a bit confusing, especially at first, and the labeling doesn't always seem clear. That may resolve itself after using the book more. The photos are very good, particularly in the species accounts. Those in the "quick finder" sections are rather small; I suppose that was done to fit them on one or two pages. The small icons for the range and the habitat are dark blue and dark green, and the colors are not easy to distinguish. Two more highly contrasting colors would have been a much better choice.

I have read most of the section on sonograms and looked at part of "how to listen to warbler songs", as well as looking at the sonograms and song descriptions for a few species. I have not yet tried the song finder charts. I imagine listening to some recorded warbler songs and practicing would be of benefit.

With fall warbler season upon us, it will be fun (or frustrating) to try out this new book, and once I have the winter to practice, just wait until next spring.

-CM

Published by Princeton University Press. List at \$29.95

Bird Reports (June 17 – July 14, 2013)



Observers: Connie Decker, Ken Luepke, Claire Romanak, Cam Scott

Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 124

(Only names of observers for rare or unusual sightings are included in the list below.)

- Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan (Romanak)
- Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal , Northern Shoveler , Green-winged Teal , Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey
- Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant
- American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron
- Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel
- Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot
- Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Luepke)
- Killdeer
- Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope
- Ring-billed Gull, Black Tern
- Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove
- Barred Owl
- Chimney Swift
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Belted Kingfisher
- Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker
- Eastern Wood-Pewee, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird
- Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark
- Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow
- Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch
- House Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren
- Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin
- Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing
- Golden-winged Warbler, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler (C. Scott), Ovenbird, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat
- Scarlet Tanager
- Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow
- Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel
- Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark (Decker), Yellow-headed Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Oriole
- Purple Finch, House Finch, American Goldfinch
- House Sparrow

The above list is arranged taxonomically and grouped more or less by family, but for space and readability reasons, sometimes several families may be combined. The list covers the time period from one meeting to the next. A printed checklist is available at each meeting or can be found on-line at the Bird Club website. The checklist committee reviews the list each month before the list is printed. In an effort to make the list as accurate as possible, additional information may be sought for unusual or unlikely sightings.

Everyone, regardless of skill level, is invited to keep and submit a checklist and also to share interesting sightings and bird behavior at meetings.



Editor, Chequamegon Chirps
 N4416 Crane Dr
 Medford WI 54451-9376

«FIRST_NAME» «LAST_NAME»
 «STREET_ADDRESS»
 «CITY» «STATE» «ZIP_CODE»

Club Officers

President – Claire Romanak
Vice-president – Connie Decker
Secretary – Gayle Davis
Treasurer – Cam Scott

Other Club Contacts

Web site: www.chequamegonbirdclub.org
Email: info@chequamegonbirdclub.org
Newsletter Email: newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org
 (Cathy Mauer, editor)
Bird sightings: Connie Decker



Birder’s Bookshelf

August – September Outdoors

- Full moon – August 20
- Fall migration moving into full swing
- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds head south
- Blackberries and elderberries ripen
- Wild rice ripens
- Monarchs begin flight to Mexico
- Ruffed Grouse broods disperse
- Migrating Canada Geese overhead, in fields, and on ponds and lakes
- White-tailed bucks shed velvet
- Late summer and fall flowers in bloom and going to seed

The Warbler Guide

By Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle

This much talked about book attempts to help birders sort out and identify the 56 different species of warblers in the United States and Canada. Over 1,000 colored photos offer views from multiple angles, including from below, which is how many warblers are seen as they frequent the upper tree canopy.

Before getting into individual species descriptions, the book follows a format that is similar to many other field guides with an introduction to the layout of the book; illustrations of bird topography; and extensive coverage (five sections) of what to look for when viewing a bird, in this case specific to warblers; and aging and sexing of warblers. This introductory material is followed by a very thorough discussion of

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