

Chequamegon Chirps



Medford, Wisconsin August 21, 2017 Volume 36 Number 8

Program: Birding Basics—Bird Origins and Taxonomy *August 21, 7 p.m., Medford Public Library*

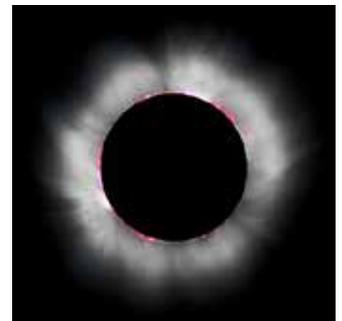
Recently the club purchased a series of National Geographic documentaries. This month's program is the first of this series, followed by Basic Bird Anatomy. Depending on the length of the business meeting, all or part of one or both of these informative programs will be on tap for the evening. See page 2 for more details.

Cathy Mauer, as she did for many years, is helping with this issue of the *Chirps*. Unlike Dorothy when she told Toto, "We're not in Kansas anymore," I am. There was a granddaughter baptism last Sunday, and since Kansas City is near the epicenter of the eclipse, I'm staying an extra week. Being retired is great for goofing off—as is I ever needed an excuse.

For the second month in a row the main topic of the month will be non-bird. Hope that doesn't offend you and I'm almost certain future topics will be much more avian in the future. A few hours before our August meeting will be a total solar eclipse that stretches from Salem, Oregon to Columbia, South Carolina.

Medford will be near an 80% blackout which will be obvious, but not as dramatic as the sweet spot which is known as the "path of totality" which will sweep across the country. This darkness will reach its peak about 1:15 in our area. It will be interesting to see if birds, insects and other wildlife exhibits nighttime behavior at this time.

Here are some other random tidbits about a total solar eclipse that I've gleaned from a July 10 article in Time Magazine by Emily Barone and graphics by her and Lon Tweeten.



(Gleaned sounds nicer than plagiarized—which I don't know how to spell according to my laptop dictionary.) "By definition, a total solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the sun and Earth, temporarily blocking sunlight. The moon passes between Earth and sun about once a month, but to be create a total solar eclipse, other conditions must be just right. For one thing, the moon's orbit is tilted. If the moon is not aligned with Earth, neither is its shadow. The moon orbit is also elliptical. If the moon is too far away, its disk is too small to block the entire sun."

This total eclipse, whose path is some 70 miles wide, is the first to traverse the U.S. since 1918. The next total solar eclipse to traverse the U.S., from California to Florida will happen in 2045. You should admire these phenome while

Eclipse (cont. from p. 1)

you can because in 600 million years solar eclipses won't occur because the sun is expanding and the moon is drifting away from Earth so it will no longer fully cover the sun.

I don't know about you, but I get brain cramps thinking about how scientists can deduct

effects of such events so precisely. The final factoid is this: "The shadowed area of Earth's surface will rise 1.5 inches due to the gravitational pull of the aligned sun and moon on Earth's crust. Hope that works for us short people, too. Enjoy the show! ... Jim

In Our Backyards

Jim: Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Purple Finches were bringing their recently fledged babies to my kitchen sunflower feeders in late July. Curt Staab sent a couple extra birdhouses home with me from the workshop at the International Migratory Bird Day Celebration. One was occupied immediately by a pair



Juvenile/Female Purple Finch

of Tree Swallow who successfully fledged young. A while later the other house hosted Bluebirds who fledged two young. As soon as they left, House Wrens built a nest in that box, and the last time I checked, she was sitting on five eggs. Thank-you Curt and to all others who make construction of these bird houses possible.

Cathy: Like Jim, we have had many parent birds deciding that our place makes an easy fast-food stop with the kids. In addition to Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Purple Finches, our dining families have included Hairy, Downy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. The kids are quite insistent on being fed by mom



Female Rose-breasted Grosbeak

or dad, despite their being the same size as their parents. Due to problems with bears, I take some of my feeders, including the suet feeders, in the house every night. Quite often, by the time I put them back out shortly after dawn, a line of woodpeckers seems to be waiting.

The Ruby-throated Hummingbirds also have to wait for their feeders in the morning. I was delighted last week when four or five of them were flying around my head while I was hanging the feeders, especially when I could feel the wind from their wings on my face. Our hummer population has been building over the years, and this year five of them were occasionally getting along well enough to share one feeder.

National Geographic Birding DVDs

The first DVD looks at the history of birdwatching from the 18th century to the present, the origins of birds and their relationship to dinosaurs and early reptiles, and bird taxonomy – the scientific classification of birds into groups. The second DVD covers bird anatomy, feathers, and flight, and how these features can help us identify birds.

What's Around: June 20 – July 17, 2017

At the July meeting, members reported seeing the following bird species during the previous month:

Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Trumpeter Swan, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck

Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey

Pied-billed Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Double-breasted Cormorant, American White Pelican

American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron

Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk

Sora, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane

Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock

Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Black Tern

Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo

Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl

Eastern Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker

American Kestrel

Eastern Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird

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, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren

Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin

Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing

Ovenbird, Golden-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler

Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco

Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel

Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole

House Finch, Purple Finch, Red Crossbill, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow

Editor Chequamegon Chirps
3221 Town Hall Road
Abbotsford, WI 54405

CLUB CONTACTS

Website: Chequamegonbirdclub.org

Information: info@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Newsletter: newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Bird sightings: connie1@charter.net

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER OUTDOORS

Full moon September 6

Get ready for the August 21 eclipse
of the sun—about 80% in this area

Most nesting completed

Shore birds begin to head south

CORRECTION

*Last month I referred to Chandler
Robbins as Chad rather than
Chan, as he was known.*

I apologize for the error.

Jim