

# Chequamegon Chirps



August 20, 2018 Volume 37 Number 8

7 p.m. meeting Monday August 20th at the Medford Library

## **Monarch Butterflies**

**Vanessa Hillenbrand will present a program about some of the wonders of these remarkable beauties**

A Medford resident, she got involved in the science of tagging migrating Monarchs indirectly through the interest of a young son who liked bugs. These tags are delivered from the University of Kansas in early August to identify south bound Monarchs with a three letter, three number code that hopefully will be recovered at a later date. Monarch migration peaks in this area from August 29 to September 10. With her years of experience, Vanessa will have data and tales to share with us.

## **Fall bird migration**

Spring bird migration is a dramatic and much anticipated event each year. Arrival dates are recorded and phone calls exchanged among friends to find out who has bragging rights to first recording particular species. Fall migration? Now that is usually a much different, more subtle and underappreciated phenome. There are actually many more birds heading south than came north with the year's fledglings. The migrants are quieter and less colorful due to faded breeding plumage, immature or winter feathers. There usually isn't the rush to get where they are going. You notice how I'm hedging what I'm saying here because there always exceptions. It will many times be proven wrong when someone states, "This is the way it is with birds and no exceptions." Well, it can well be a certain way most of the time, but not always. Birds don't read what experts believe or have proven with careful research, so some feathered oddball comes along and travels in his own particular direction or does something weird—to the delight of some bird watchers—and consternation of others. Just one of the things that makes nature observation an ongoing delight.

Robin lovers-- there are many—not including Joe of course, who are thrilled when they make their spring appearance. But, have you noticed any lately? There are some around, but not nearly as conspicuous as they were just a couple months ago. Those we will be seeing are probably dribbling down from further north. Instead, at least for me, I'll see more Northern Flickers which are one of my favorite birds. Many years ago in the fall I had the unique experience of having one land on a weed only a foot away and I was able to study and really appreciate its striking plumage. That image has firmly stayed with me. Before too long warblers will be passing through. They give me enough trouble with spring identification without duller colors and immature plumage thrown into the mix. I really admire people who bird by ear and have a high degree of identification skills. That's one of the enjoyable things about the club, learning from such competent teachers.

### **Birds In Art**

The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual Birds in Art exhibit will open at the Leigh Yawkey-Woodson Museum September 8<sup>th</sup> to run until November 25<sup>th</sup>. "This exhibition celebrates avian marvels through new interpretations in an array of mediums including oil, watercolor, the graphic arts, bronze, stone and others created within the last three years." I don't even pretend to coolly objective about this show. Each year I go there expecting it to be good, but come away with a feeling of "son-of-a-gun, that is some great work. Well worth the trip." (Incidentally the current exhibit by Federico Uribe also fits into that category which goes until August 23<sup>rd</sup>.) This year's entrants feature 31 international artists and eight from Wisconsin including Jan Stommes from Owen. The 114 artists in this year's exhibit were selected from 900 submissions from 575 people.

The opening day on September 8<sup>th</sup> includes an opportunity to meet artists from 9 to noon, a Master Artist's talk from 9:30 to 10:30 and An Artist in Action from 10:45 to noon. The Birds in Art residency program will include Kris Parins sharing watercolor techniques October 2 to 7, Josh Guge demonstrating woodcarving November 1 to 4 and Jane Kim will design and paint a mural November 9 to 18.

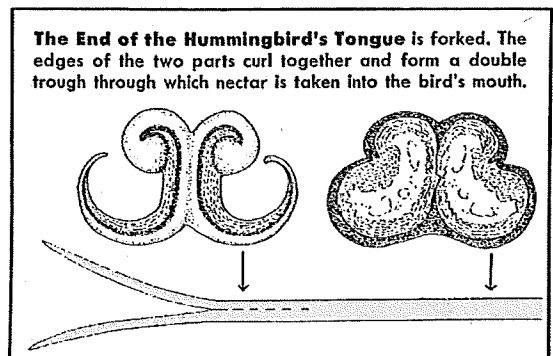
### **Flyway Film Festival**

To follow with an artsy theme, here is another thing you might consider this fall. "The 2018 Flyway Film Festival, now in its eleventh year, will take place October 19 to 21<sup>st</sup> along the shores of Lake Pepin in the towns of Stockholm, Pepin and Alma. Illustrator Carey DeRahm, a self-proclaimed 'bird-nerd,' created this year's poster to acknowledge the 100

year anniversary of the Migration Bird Treaty Act, signed in July 1918—one of the oldest wildlife protection laws on the books. The National Audubon Society, National Geographic, Bird Life International and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology have declared 2018 to be The Year of the Bird. Every spring and fall, migratory birds make their way along the Mississippi River, over the towns the Great River Road where the Flyway Film Festival takes place. Visitors who come for the films are treated to the sights of eagles, herons, pelicans, and the flocks of songbirds passing through on their way south.” Google the Flyway Film Festival to get announcements of this year’s films.

### Hummingbird slurps

Is there a formula for how many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds it takes to consume a pint, quart or even a gallon of prepared nectar? According to my older World Book Encyclopedia, “Their long slender bills are especially suited for sucking nectar from flowers, even the deep-throated or trumpet-shaped flowers such as the honeysuckle and trumpet flower. The tongue of the Hummingbird is also a useful tool for obtaining from difficult places to reach. It is shaped like a long tube through which the birds suck the flower nectar. The end of the Hummingbird’s tongue is forked. The edges of the two parts curl together and form a double trough which nectar is taken into the bird’s mouth.” A forked tongue? Wonder what they are really saying about us when their feeders aren’t filled or as fresh as they would prefer? Insects are their main food source, but does anyone know how much nectar a single hummingbird can consume on a daily basis? Just wondering.



WORLD BOOK diagram adapted from "The Tongue Apparatus in Hummingbirds" by R. D. Weymouth in *ACTA Anatomica*, Vol. 58 (Karger, 1964).

### Hawk Ridge

A couple pages back I implied that fall bird migration is more of a lower key, subtle process. I sorta lied about that. If you wonder why, go up on Hawk Ridge, Duluth there in mid-September and with the right weather conditions, you could be treated to a spectacular flight of Broad-winged Hawks. On September 15, 2003, almost 102,000 of them were counted on this record setting day. The sky must have been filled with kettles all day long. A day for the ages. Even much lesser flights of many species can make your time there memorable. And it is a scenic drive there, too.

Editor Chequamegon Chirps

3221 Town Hall Road

Abbotsford, WI 54405

## CLUB CONTACTS

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

Information: [info@chequamegonbirdclub.org](mailto:info@chequamegonbirdclub.org)

Newsletter: [newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org)

Bird sightings: [connie1@charter.net](mailto:connie1@charter.net)

**August and September** Full moon Sept 9

Southward bird movement increases

Monarchs begin migrating south

Time to collect wildflower and grass seeds

Wausau's Artrageous Weekend Sept 8-9

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