

Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

February 2014

Volume 33 Number 2

NEXT MEETING:

Date: Monday, February 17, 2014

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Medford Public Library

**Program: Studying Birds, Here & There
Ashly Steinke,
County Conservationist, Taylor County**

Snowy Owl Update

Update: As of Feb 9, the Wisconsin total has increased to a remarkable 271 Snowy Owls. Comparisons with 2011 have become difficult because that irruption wasn't tracked quite as closely on a state level but this year very likely surpasses that one based on general impressions. Though the 2013-14 flight is probably not without historic precedent here in Wisconsin, this year's total may be the highest ever recorded due to increases in number of birders, communication of sightings (e.g. social media), eBird usage, and tracking effort.

Update: As of Feb 9, the flight has expanded westward and now covers the entire state and much of Minnesota. Reports along Lakes Michigan and Superior have decreased significantly as birds are now on winter territories and many harbor areas are iced over and devoid of waterfowl prey. Hotspots are the Freedom area of eastern Outagamie County, Kewaunee County, east of Janesville in Rock County, southern Columbia County, Buena Vista Marsh in Portage County, Ozaukee County, and the ag country along the Hwy 29 corridor from Menomonie east through Chippewa Falls to Wausau.

From the Wisconsin eBird Snowy Owl webpage.

Map on p. 3

February Program: **Studying Birds, Here & There**

Before becoming the head of the Taylor County Land Conservation Department, Ashly Steinke participated in bird studies in a number of locations throughout the U.S. He studied Merriam's Wild Turkeys in South Dakota and grassland birds, including Prairie Chickens, in Wisconsin. He was also the Special Projects Director for the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association. He will discuss several of these studies and projects at our February meeting.

As the County Conservationist, Steinke is encouraging local farmers and other landowners to use good conservation practices that will provide habitat for grassland and other birds.

Reminders

Annual Dues:

If you haven't yet paid your 2014 dues, you can pay at the meeting or send them to:
Chequamegon Bird Club, c/o Cam Scott,
N3566 Grover Dr, Withee, WI 54498

Great Backyard Bird Count:

The GBBC runs from Friday, February 14, through Monday, February 16. You can count on any or all of the days. See the January Chirps.

International Migratory Bird Day:

Planning is underway for this club-sponsored event that will be held at the Perkinstown Winter Sports Area in mid-May. Help of many kinds is and will be needed, both for preparation and on the day of the event. Contact Cathy Mauer (715-748-3160) if you would like to help.

Chequamegon Bird Club Checklist Committee Report for 2013

During the year, fifteen club members submitted at least one monthly checklist. (The checklist runs from December meeting to December meeting). The species total for 2013 was 252. Species totals for the previous years starting in 2004 are: 2004 - 253, 2005 - 246, 2006 - 248, 2007 - 256, 2008 - 260, 2009 - 247, 2010 - 274, 2011 - 265, 2012 - 258. The ten year average is 256 species.

There were seven species listed as rare (average eight or fewer published sightings per year) by the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology (WSO). They were **Ross's Goose** (Luepke), **Eared Grebe** (Luepke), **Snowy Egret** (Decker /Luepke), **Eurasian Collared-Dove** (Decker/Luepke), **Great Gray Owl** (Decker/Luepke,/C. Scott), **Loggerhead Shrike** (Decker/ Luepke) and **Northern Mockingbird** (Luepke).

There were also five species listed as casual (averaging one record every 3-5 years) by WSO. They were **Eurasian Wigeon** in Marathon Co. (Davis/Decker/Luepke/Mauer/Romanak/Ruesch/and J. Scott), **Red Phalarope** in Clark Co. (Decker/Luepke) **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** in Marathon Co. (Decker/Luepke/Romanak), **Lark Bunting** in Marathon Co. (Luepke) and **Hoary Redpoll** in Clark Co. (Decker/Luepke).

There were also two species not on the WSO checklist: **Whooping Crane** in Marathon and Juneau County. (Decker/Luepke/Mauer/Ruesch) and Wisconsin's fifth record of a **White-tailed Kite** (Luepke).

Highlights by family were:

Thirty species of waterfowl were reported including **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Ross's Goose**, all three swans, **Eurasian Wigeon**, and **White-winged Scoter**. Galliformes included **Sharp-tailed Grouse**, **Greater Prairie Chicken**, and **Northern Bobwhite**. Grebes totaled four species, including **Red-necked** and **Eared**. Herons and bitterns had seven species including **Least Bittern**, **Snowy Egret**, and **Black-crowned Night Heron**.

There were fourteen species of diurnal raptors including **Northern Goshawk**, **Red-shouldered Hawk**, **Merlin**, **Peregrine Falcon**, and **White-tailed Kite**.

Shorebirds totaled only twenty-two species but included **Black-bellied Plover**, **Golden Plover**, **Sanderling**, **Long-billed Dowitcher**, and **Red Phalarope**. There were only three species of gulls and three species of terns. The three species of reported doves included **Eurasian Collared-Dove**. This year the owls had six species including **Screech**, **Snowy**, **Great Gray**, and **Saw-Whet**.

Flycatchers did well with eleven species including **Olive-sided**, **Yellow-bellied**, **Acadian**, and **Scissor-tailed**. A breeding pair of **Loggerhead Shrikes** was exciting, as were two separate **Carolina Wrens** and a single **Northern Mockingbird**. The warblers produced twenty-eight species including **Black-throated Blue**, **Prothonotary**, and **Connecticut**. The sparrow family had eighteen species with **Lark Bunting**, **Henslow's**, and **Lincoln's**.

Once again, all eleven of the blackbirds, including **Orchard Oriole** and **Western Meadowlark**, were found, as were all ten of the finches, including **Hoary Redpoll**.

There were quite a number of species missed that were found most other years. Some of them were Cattle Egret, Golden Eagle, Willett, White-rumped Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Caspian Tern, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Varied Thrush, Lark Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, and Harris's Sparrow. Chuck-will's-widow, which is always rare in Wisconsin, was missed for the first time since 2009.

Three new species were added to the all-time list this year. They were **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Red Phalarope**, and **White-tailed Kite**. This brings the project total from years 2004-2013 to 315!

As always, we strongly encourage everyone to keep and turn in a monthly checklist. The only requirements are that the birds are seen in Wisconsin and that they were identified by a club member. Second-hand reports are not acceptable. Remember that the time-frame for reporting is from one meeting to the next. Checklists are available at all meetings from Connie Decker or can be printed off from our bird club website www.chequamegonbirdclub.org.

Thanks to all who participated in 2013: **Gayle Davis**, **Connie Decker**, **Hildegard and Loretta Kuse**, **Ken Luepke**, **Cathy Mauer**, **Willa and Doug Pledger**, **Joe and Joan Rickert**, **Claire Romanak**, **Gordy Ruesch**, **Cam Scott**, **Joe Scott**, and **Ron Shiffler**.

Here's to great birding in 2014!

The checklist committee: Ken Luepke, Cam Scott and Connie Decker

~Thank you to Ken, Cam, and Connie for the work they have put in on maintaining the checklists.~



Bird Reports (December 17, 2013 – January 20, 2014)

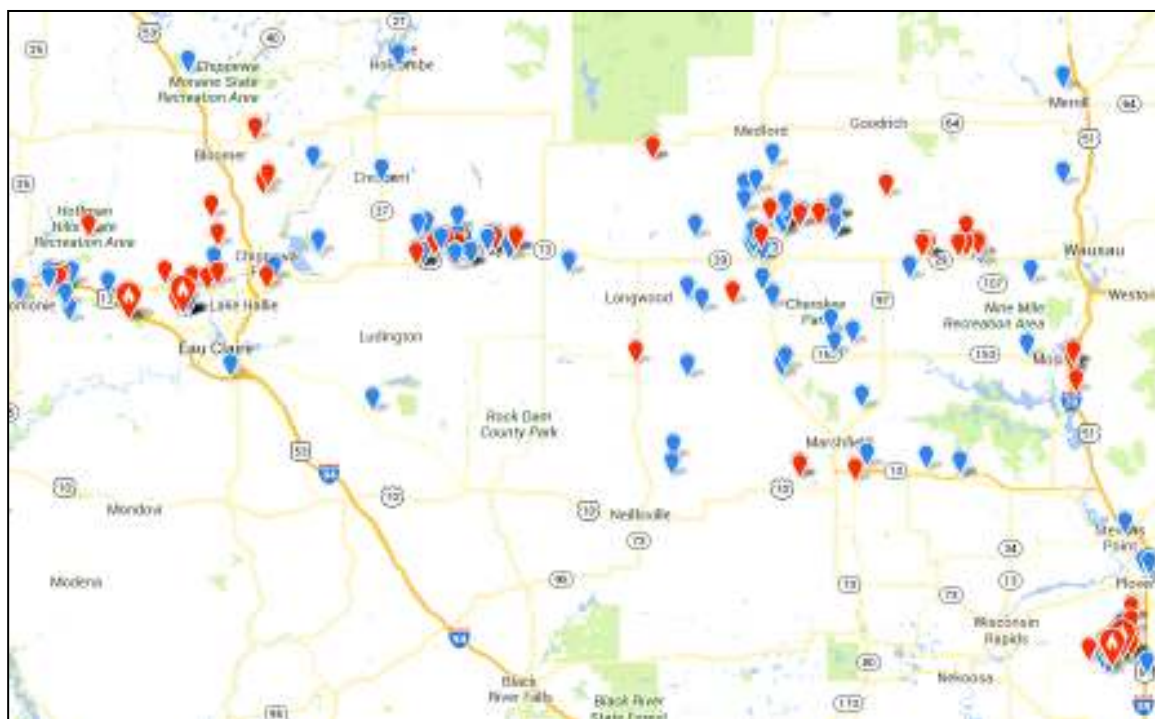
Checklist observers: *Gayle Davis, Connie Decker, Hildegard and Loretta Kuse, Ken Luepke, Cathy Mauer, Gordy Ruesch, Joan and Joe Rickert, and Cam Scott.*

Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 46

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

- Mallard, Common Goldeneye (Decker/Luepke)
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse (Decker/Luepke), Wild Turkey
- Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk (Davis/C. Scott), Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel
- Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove
- Great Horned Owl, Snowy Owl, Barred Owl
- Belted Kingfisher (C. Scott)
- Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker
- Northern Shrike
- Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven
- Horned Lark
- Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper (C. Scott/Rickert), Golden-crowned Kinglet
- American Robin, Varied Thrush (Decker/Luepke)
- European Starling
- Cedar Waxwing
- American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird (Luepke)
- Purple Finch, House Finch, American Goldfinch
- House Sparrow

Reported Snowy Owl Sightings as of 2-12-2014





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

February - March Outdoors

- February 14 & March 16 – Full Moon
- Great Horned Owls begin nesting.
- Canada Geese arrive.
- Mink and snowshoe hares begin mating.
- Maple sap starts to flow
- Bald Eagle migration begins.
- Sandhill Cranes arrive in southern part of state.
- Tom Turkeys begin gobbling.
- Gray squirrel young are born.
- American Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, and Red-winged Blackbirds begin arriving.
- Eastern chipmunks begin emerging from hibernation.



Birder’s Bookshelf

The Sibley Guide to the Birds of North America, Second Edition

David Allen Sibley

The Second edition of *The Sibley Guide to Birds of North America* will go on sale on March 11. The first edition was published in 2000. The new book includes ninety-eight additional rare species, some super-rare species, and thirteen exotic species. The layout is similar, i.e. one bird per column, but most of the paintings have been revised and many new ones added plus the illustrations are larger. Some descriptions have been improved and the range maps have been updated.

The book is the same length and width but is eighty pages longer.

Information from *Birdwatching*, February 2014.