



Chequamegon Chirps

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHEQUAMEGON BIRD CLUB

MEDFORD, WISCONSIN

JANUARY 2013

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 1

NEXT MEETING:

Date: Monday, January 21, 2013

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Medford Public Library

Program: Christmas Bird Count results and discussion

Annual Dues

Annual dues will once again be \$18/per household, i.e. one mailing address. Dues cover club activities, conservation support, and the *Chirps*. Please bring your dues payment to the January meeting or mail check (payable to *Chequamegon Bird Club*) to:

Cam Scott
Chequamegon Bird Club
N3566 Grover Dr
Withee WI 54498

Upcoming Events of Interest

January 26-27

Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Count

Each year the Eagle Nature Foundation coordinates this annual event, the only one day eagle count in the nation that has been conducted for the past half century. Volunteers are needed for the 2013 count. Anyone interested should fill out a form at www.eaglenature.com.

January 26-27

Bald Eagle Days

Outdoor viewing at Riverside Park Observatory in Cassville on Sat. and Sun. 8AM-Noon. Educational programs at the High School on Sat. 9AM-3:30PM. 608/725-5855

February 15-18

Great Backyard Bird Count

This is the 16th annual count, a four day event. This year checklists will be accepted from anywhere in the world for the first time. Also, for the first time participants must set up a free account to submit their checklists at www.birdsource.org.

February 15-17

Sax-Zim Bog Winter Birding Festival, MN

The 6th annual festival, with a bird list of over 240 species. Regularly seen species in the bog include Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker and Three-toed Woodpecker. The featured speaker on Saturday is the Raptor Education Group Inc. out of Antigo. More information and registration at www.sax-zimbog.com.

Little Worms, Big Consequences

One of the most beautiful sounds of the Northwoods in summer is the ethereal, fluting song of the Hermit Thrush. But in some areas of northern Wisconsin, this song is in danger of being silenced by an unlikely culprit – the earthworm.

Many who grew up with the idea that worms are good for the soil are surprised to learn that earthworms are not native to the northwoods. Any earthworms that were native to this area would have been killed off by the glaciers, and the forest

Earthworms (cont. from p. 1)

ecosystem that has developed since has done so in the absence of worms. Any present here now originated in other parts of the world.

Once introduced to an area, worms extend their range very slowly on their own, at a rate of as little as five yards per year, but humans continue to transport them into new places. Their presence in an area has the potential to change the forest floor in significant ways.

As earthworms move through a forest's soil and digest dead leaves and other organic material, they have several subtle but far-reaching effects. They decrease the amount of leaf litter and mix soil layers together. They can reduce the abundance of small soil dwelling insects, as well as of fungi that help provide nutrients to plants. This affects what plants will thrive in an area. Grasses and sedges replace a variety of other, more sensitive plants, leading to lower diversity.

A study conducted by University of Minnesota researchers in northeastern Wisconsin's Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest sought to answer the question of how this is affecting the Hermit Thrush and the Ovenbird. These two songbirds both nest and forage on the forest floor. Populations of these birds have been in decline across

the northern Midwest.

In surveying sites that had been invaded by worms and sites that were still worm-free, they found unequivocally that the population density of both birds was lower in worm invaded areas.

They found that Ovenbird chicks were less likely to survive in nests located in areas with more grass and sedge cover or in areas with a shallow layer of leaf litter. They theorized that the nests were more visible to predators against the uniform green backdrop of grass. Moreover, the decrease in insects caused by a lack of leaf litter could mean that parents had to devote more time to foraging for food and less time to keep watch over their nestlings.

The researchers were surprised at just how clearly different the densities of Ovenbirds and Hermit Thrushes were between earthworm free and invaded forests.

Once earthworms have become established, there is no feasible way to remove them. Instead, you can help to limit their spread. When fishing, dispose of unused bait worms in a trash can. Freeze compost solid to kill any worms in it before using it in your garden or transporting it. It can take as long as a month to completely eliminate their eggs. Rinse off tires with treads that hold soil before moving vehicles from place to place. If you are interested in helping to monitor earthworms in your area, consider participating in the Great Lakes Worm Watch-www.nrri.umn.edu/worms.

This puzzle appeared in a Chirps newsletter sometime way back in the 80s....

Just for a lark, try matching the definitions on the left with the appropriate bird names on the right.
Don't duck this cardinal quiz!

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| __1. In golf, two below par on a hole. | a. Adjutant |
| __2. Tool for opening hard-shelled fruits. | b. Oriole |
| __3. To lose courage. | c. Chat |
| __4. Wide-brimmed hat. | d. Crane |
| __5. To peddle wares by crying them. | e. Darter |
| __6. Toy to fly in the wind. | f. Eagle |
| __7. To grumble. | g. Goose |
| __8. Military officer's assistant. | h. Grouse |
| __9. To shoot at individuals from hiding. | i. Hawk |
| __10. Capable of moving at great speed. | j. Kite |
| __11. Hoisting machine. | k. Nutcracker |
| __12. In bridge, to trump a trick. | l. Pigeon |
| __13. Tailor's long-handled pressing iron. | m. Quail |
| __14. To use abusive language. | n. Rail |
| __15. In show business, unsuccessful production. | o. Ruff |
| __16. To converse informally. | p. Skimmer |
| __17. One who is easily swindled (slang) | q. Snipe |
| __18. To devour. | r. Swallow |
| __19. One who moves suddenly and swiftly. | s. Swift |
| __20. Baltimore baseball player. | t. Turkey |



Bird Reports (November – December 2012)

Checklist observers: *Cathy Mauer, Gordy Ruesch, Connie Decker, Ken Luepke, Willa Pledger, Joan and Joe R Romanak, Cam Scott, and Joe Scott.*

Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 62

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

- Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan (Luepke), Tundra Swan, American Black Duck, Mallard
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey
- Pacific Loon ** (Luepke)
- Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk (Rickert), Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel
- American Coot (C. Scott/J. Scott)
- Sandhill Crane
- Ring-billed Gull
- Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl
- Belted Kingfisher
- Red-headed Woodpecker (Luepke), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker (Romanak), Pileated Woodpecker
- Northern Shrike
- Gray Jay (Romanak), Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark
- Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet
- American Robin, European Starling
- Bohemian Waxwing, Cedar Waxwing
- American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird (Romanak), Brown-headed Cowbird (Luepke)
- Pine Grosbeak, Purple Finch, House Finch, Red Crossbill (Romanak/J. Scott), White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak (Romanak)
- House Sparrow

Birds and Coffee

For all of you who enjoy a good cup of coffee almost as much as you enjoy birds, *BirdWatching* magazine ran an article in their February 2013 issue about birds and coffee, i.e. the important conservation link between how coffee is grown and health of bird populations, including many of "our" birds, many of whom spend their winters in coffee growing countries. Many of us are familiar with claims for the benefits of 'shade-grown' coffee, but in addition to discussing that aspect, the article had a sidebar explaining different certifications. The certification that is most beneficial to birds is "Bird-friendly", sponsored by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

BirdWatching does not make all of their articles accessible on their website www.birdwatchingdaily.com, but I received a



Photo ©Seattle Audubon Northwest Shade Coffee Campaign

prompt response when I requested that they include this article:

<http://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/Getting%20Started/Featured%20Stories/2012/12/The%20true%20cost%20of%20coffee.aspx>. They also have lots of other great articles and information about birds.

The Cornell Lab also has similar information on their blog:

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/roundrobin/2012/10/09/making-sense-of-coffee-labels-shade-grown-organic-fair-trade-bird-friendly/>



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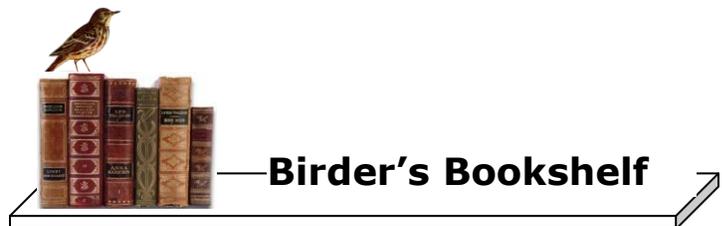
«FIRST_NAME» «LAST_NAME»
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Club Officers

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



January - February Outdoors

- January 27 – Full Moon
- Chickadees begin spring song
- Red fox, wolves, coyotes, beaver, and gray squirrels begin mating
- Great Horned Owls begin courtship activities
- Horned Larks begin northward migration
- Time to clean out and erect Kestrel, Wood Duck, and Bluebird houses.
- Northern Cardinals begin spring songs
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The Bluebird Effect

by Julie Zickefoose

Julie has been dealing with birds on a much more direct and sometimes startlingly intimate level than most people-as a biologist, rehabilitator, artist and conservationist. The result is a treasure trove of stories, stretching back decades, through which she explores the relationship between human and bird. Every species included has its own chapter, twenty-five in all, illustrated with hundreds of Julie's incredible watercolors and pencil sketches. Her unique empathy for these birds as she tells you their stories makes this book very hard to put down once you begin. If you don't already love birds, you certainly will after reading her book.