



# Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

July 2013

Volume 32 Number 7

## NEXT MEETING:

Date: **SUNDAY, July 14, 2013**

Time: **10 a.m. to 4 p.m., followed by a field trip to McMillan Wildlife Area**

Location: **Hamus Park, Marshfield**

Program: **ANNUAL PICNIC**



## ANNUAL PICNIC

We are excited to be trying a new location for our annual picnic – Hamus Park, located on the northeast edge of Marshfield, between Peach Ave (Old County Road E) and State Highway 97. Take Ash St/Northridge St (about ½ mile north of the intersection of Peach and 97) to access the road into the park. The address is 210 Wilderness View Drive. This 32 acre park and nature reserve has a picnic shelter and tables, restrooms, and a grill. Trails wander through woods and open areas and should provide some good bird habitat. There is also a paved trail and a catch-and-release fishing pond.

Lunch will be served at noon, but everyone is invited to come anytime after 10 a.m. to explore the trails and look for birds, play games, or just to visit.

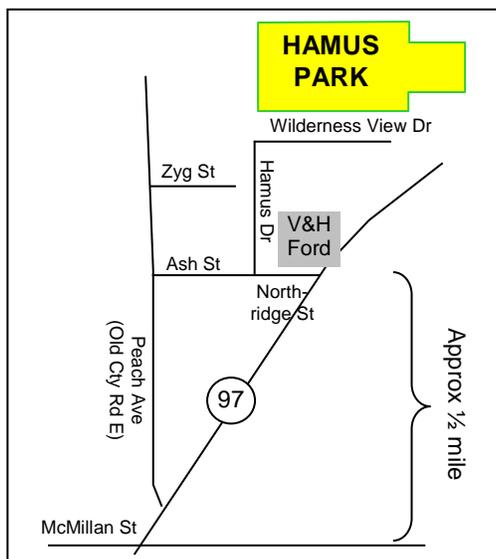
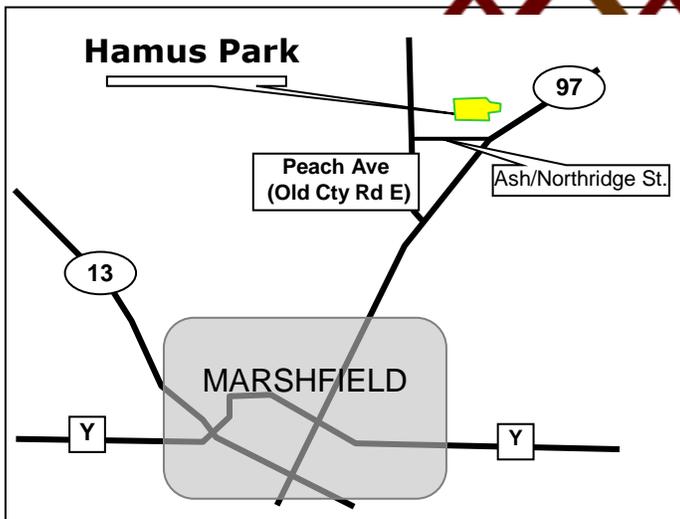
The Bird Club will furnish turkey and barbecue (sloppy joes) and buns. **Please bring a dish to share, cups, plates, and utensils, your own beverage (glass containers are not allowed), and a lawn chair if you would like.** If you have a lawn game that you enjoy playing, please bring that along, too.

The Wildwood Zoo, on the southwest side of Marshfield, offers another option in the area for birding and viewing animals, either in the morning or afternoon. The zoo is free.

Following the picnic, we will have a **field trip** to McMillan Wildlife Area, leaving Hamus Park at 4 p.m. McMillan is a short drive north of Hamus Park. The trails may be damp with a few wet and rough spots so if you plan on going on the field trip, please wear appropriate footwear.

If you plan on hiking, either at the park or McMillan, remember that mosquitoes, ticks, and deerflies may also be looking for lunch at this time of year. A hat, long sleeves, long pants, and/or repellent may make your walk more enjoyable.

And don't forget to bring your binoculars.



## Ruby-throated Hummingbirds – A few facts & a bit of feeding info

With a chatter that seems too loud for such a small bird, a hummingbird zooms by chasing another hummer away from “his” feeder. Hummers are feisty little guys. Almost everyone is enchanted by these little jewels, who weigh only 2-6 grams (0.1 – 0.2 ounces), but have an attitude that belies their size.

Hummers can beat their wings up to ninety times per second but more commonly beat a bit over fifty times per second. They are incredibly agile flyers and can stop from full speed in an instant, hover motionlessly, and move up, down sideways, and backward with precision. They are not, however, agile on their feet. They have very short legs and cannot really walk or hop, but can manage to move around on a perch.

Despite the defense of feeders and flowers that many ruby-throats exhibit in our area, they will yield to larger or more aggressive species in areas where they share the same range. And in some cases they seem to tolerate each other. Having enough feeders grouped together seems to be one factor in their getting along. Perhaps they don’t feel a need to hoard when there is such a bountiful supply or maybe they just can’t defend it all.

Hummingbirds prefer red or orange flowers, especially tubular ones, but don’t show a strong color preference when it comes to feeders, though most purchased feeders have at least some red near the feeding port. The common mixture for making nectar is 1 cup of sugar to four parts of water, which is usually boiled. That concentration approximates natural concentrations of nectar in many flowers that hummingbirds utilize. Flower nectar, however, varies greatly in sugar concentration, and several studies have

looked at the question of ideal concentrations in artificial nectar in at flower preference relative to sugar concentration in the nectar.

A summary of one study was printed on Hummingbirds.net

(<http://www.hummingbirds.net/hainsworth.html>). The authors found that the weaker the concentration, the more frequently the birds eat, though they consume the same amount at each meal. The authors suggest that during migration and when the hummers first arrive, it may be a good idea to make a more concentrated solution, providing more energy, even though it may look like fewer birds because they will visit less often. They can eat more than ten times their body weight in one day, and if they hover while feeding, they burn more than fifteen times more energy than when they perch. No wonder they try to defend their food sources if they think there may not be enough.



Hummers, mostly male, in the evening. *Gayle Davis photo*

### OLD Books, Continued from p. 4

hunting for robins and the end of such hunting thanks to the Migratory Bird Act.

*Fact and Story Readers, Book Seven* also has a story, “Wild Pigeons” about bird conservation, telling the tragic story of the Passenger Pigeon from the viewpoint of naturalist John Burroughs. “The Pheasants”, as its title implies, is a description of various pheasant breeds.

One of the more interesting inclusions is the “Boy Scout Bird Student”. It provides some sound advice for today, such as the value of a living teacher rather than just relying on books, but the author cautions to “beware of the man or boy who can name the species of every warbler in the top of the tallest tree!” and

“when in doubt about an identification, resolutely omit it from your list until you know.” The “list” referred to is a list of fifty species which have been personally observed and positively identified in the field.” In the introductory paragraph, it is noted that this is “an equally interesting and appropriate task for girls.” In the concluding paragraph, he says “the young people of to-day [pre 1930] little realize the wealth of bird lore that has been literally poured out at their feet during recent years.”

If anyone else has old bird articles or books and would like to share, we would be happy to include it in a future *Chirps*.

## Bird Reports (May 21 – June 17, 2013)



*Connie Decker, Ken Luepke, Cathy Mauer, Gordy Ruesch, Claire Romanak, Cam Scott,*

Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 147

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

- Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye (Decker/Luepke), Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Greater Prairie-Chicken (Decker/Luepke), Wild Turkey
- Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant
- American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret \* (Decker/Luepke), Green Heron, Black-Crowned Night Heron (Decker/Luepke)
- Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon (Luepke)
- Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Common Moorhen (Decker/Luepke), Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Decker)
- Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper (Decker/Luepke), Semipalmated Sandpiper, Dunlin, Wilson's Snipe
- Ring-billed Gull, Black Tern
- Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove
- Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk, Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher
- Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker
- Eastern Wood-Pewee, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher \*\* (Decker/Luepke/Romanak)
- Loggerhead Shrike \* (Decker/Luepke), 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, Tufted Titmouse (Decker/Luepke), Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch
- House Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin
- Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird \* (Luepke), Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing
- Golden-winged Warbler, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat
- Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow (Luepke), Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow
- Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting
- Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark (Decker/Luepke), Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Oriole
- Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin (Mauer/Ruesch/Romanak), American Goldfinch, House Sparrow,

*Species are arranged taxonomically. Some families may be grouped together to save space.*

### **Report: Successful Field Trip to Pershing Wildlife Area for Our June Meeting**

Twenty members enjoyed the field trip to Pershing Wildlife Area for our June meeting. Among us, we saw over forty species of birds. Some of the bird highlights included an American Bittern that flew overhead, a pair of Trumpeter Swans, a Common Loon with a young one on its back, and Sandhill Cranes with their colts. We also had some great non-bird sightings – a bear with three cubs while we were traveling to Pershing, several Blanding's turtles, which are a threatened species in Wisconsin, and several people saw a white deer on the way home. This was our first field trip in place of an indoor meeting, at least in many years, and given the success of the evening, we expect to do it again.



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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

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 (Cathy Mauer, editor)  
 Bird sightings: Connie Decker

### July - August Outdoors

- Full moon – July 22
- Perseid Meteor Showers – August 10-13. Peak numbers likely on morning of August 12.
- Bird song decreases, but many birds can still be heard.
- Purple Martins begin gathering
- Deer antlers reach full size
- This is a good time to refresh your shorebird identification skills and take a trip to marsh areas to look for these early migrants.
- Blueberries, blackberries, and common elderberries ripen; also raspberries in this late year.
- If the weather becomes hot and dry, birds are likely to find birdbaths, drippers, and misters especially attractive. Keep birdbaths clean and put in fresh water regularly.



### Birder's Bookshelf

#### Old Books

Club member Ron Shiffler lent me a couple school readers from the early 1930s that included several stories about birds. “How to Know Bird Songs”, in *Reading and Living, Book Three*, which is for middle grades, suggests learning bird songs by drawing simple diagrams of the songs, e.g., a Chickadee’s feebee song would be portrayed as  $\text{— — —}$ . Shorter notes have shorter lines, louder notes are bolder, and so on. Several follow-up activities are suggested. The following story, “The Warblers”, includes the habits and description of the Ovenbird, Maryland Yellowthroat, and Yellow-breasted Chat. The Maryland Yellowthroat is the Common Yellowthroat. Another bird-related story in *Reading and Living* describes a pet California Quail, and a fourth story is about

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