

Chequamegon Chirps



Medford, Wisconsin

July 18, 2016

Volume 35 Number 7

BIRD WALK AT 6PM, MEET IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY

PROGRAM AT 7PM BY JOE SCOTT

One of Joe's responsibilities in his work is locating Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawk nests in the National Forest areas of Taylor and Price Counties. His work impacts the nests of these protected species in relation to where logging is allowed. His personal experiences and insights will make an interesting presentation.

The "Winged Wonders" event at the Mead Wildlife Center on June 26th was a great success. Stan Tekiela was there with many of his books on birds and wildlife. His talk was "Uncommon facts about common birds in Wisconsin." He talked about the intelligence of Crows and Bluejays; the homing instincts of the Rock dove—they were used to carry messages in WWII; and the fact that birds have special cones on their retinas that allow them to see in the ultra-violet spectrum. This allows Kestrels to find small mammal trails by detecting urine drops! The Cowbird evolved along with the Bison. The birds followed the Bison, making it necessary to "borrow" another bird's nest to raise their young. The current problem now comes in fragmented communities when the Cowbird penetrates forest edges more than in pre-settlement days

Here is a note to CBC members from the IMBD committee. "Chequamegon Bird Club members: The committee for organizing the annual Int'l Migratory Bird Day celebration would like to thank CBC for its financial support, enabling us to have REGI do a presentation. We also appreciate food donated, as well as time. IMBD was a very big success this year with at least 98 people attending, despite the cold weather and snow! Thanks for the support. Cam, Cathy, Gayle, Judy, Joe and Norma."

A neat follow-up of the International Migration Bird Day recently appeared in the Star News. Tresa Blackburn submitted a photo of young Bluebirds in a box. Mrs. Blackburn and her daughter Autumn built that Bluebird box at this year's IMBD at the Perkinstown Winter Sports Area with the supervision of Curt Staab and others. It is gratifying to see quick results of such an activity. A big thank-you to Curt and all the others who put in a lot of effort to this major activity and the people who immediately made their production available to arriving migrants. Picture on page 4

For those of you who missed the June meeting/picnic, here's what happened. We were blessed with delightful weather on the summer solstice and a full moon which is quite a rare event. Always impressive when a hostess provides such amenities. Judy has well groomed grassy trails with convenient benches and picnic tables (some of us found that quite convenient) while we admired her ponds and beautiful vistas.

Here are the 32 species recorded during the walk and around the buildings: Red-tailed hawk, Barn swallow, Baltimore oriole, Red-winged blackbird, Tree swallow, House finch, Song sparrow, Mourning dove, Rock pigeon, Canada goose, Killdeer, American crow, Northern Harrier, Savannah sparrow, Cliff swallow, Northern Flicker, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Kingbird, Rose-breasted grosbeak, Common grackle, Bald eagle, Black-capped chickadee, American redstart, Green heron, Sandhill crane, Eastern wood-peewee, House wren, Blue jay, Cooper's hawk, Red-bellied woodpecker, Ruby-throated humming bird and American cardinal. In addition, a Sandhill crane nest was located—probably a second attempt. Hopefully, Judy will be able to report a successful fledging in the future.

Plentiful food with easy conversation wound up the evening. As the last of us left, that full orange moon, sometimes referred to as a honey or strawberry moon, started to peek over the horizon. May the rest of the summer of 2016 be as beautiful. Thank you Judy for hosting a delightful evening.

As I sit at my kitchen table writing a few lines, I've got colorful visitors coming to the feeders which are about two feet away. Goldfinches are most common and their bright yellow compliments the red enamel feeder they prefer. Three male Rose-breasted grosbeaks and a Cardinal add plenty of color, too. The bird that catches my eye as much as any is a Black-capped chickadee and—I'm assuming it is a she—looks as if she has been dragged through a proverbial knothole backwards. Several times, no less. Her feathers are ragged, broken and downright dirty at times. She is a mess. I expect she and her partner are raising a large batch of chicks and she, as mothers are wont to do, is putting all of her energy and effort to feeding those voracious babies. Hopefully, she survives the stress and the fledglings are soon able to fend for themselves.

One of my feeders is a plastic tube that squirrels have chewed on considerably. I've used Duct tape to patch the various holes. That tape loosened up over time and the backside of it gets exposed. There are strings in the tape and that have become nesting material for Goldfinches. Those strings are tough and it took a lot of persistence to finally pull them off. Still another case of how Duct tape can be used. I've heard of making tuxes and gowns with that product, but not house building. Possibilities keep expanding. More new birds are coming to the feeders on a daily basis. Newly fledged male Cardinals have black beaks of which I wasn't aware. They are clumsy at first, but quickly improve.

The Perseid Meteor Showers will be extra active this year. They will be visible from July 17 to August 24 when earth passes through the dust path of the Swift-Tuttle Comet with peak viewing being August 12. For a peak viewing experience, find the darkest area you can, have a comfortable chair, maybe some mosquito repellent and allow some 30 minutes or more for your eyes to fully adjust to the dark. Look to the north-east and enjoy the show—if it isn't overcast. Comet debris, which are the size of grains of sand, heat up as they enter the earth's atmosphere. Traveling at 37 miles per second, they burn up in a bright burst of light, streaking a vivid path across the sky. In space, these specks are called meteorites, meteors when they enter earth's atmosphere, a meteorite if they hit the earth.

Have you ever seen a 15 foot high Bluejay? I haven't either, but there is one on a building in Milwaukee on the corner of N. 35th and W. Vliet streets. This 35 hour project by artists Fred Kaems and Ben Stark was recently completed in the Washington Park neighborhood that has a burgeoning art scene and a library being turned into an arts and culture club. Kaems said he enjoys painting images of animals, but he thought the bird would be a positive image because, "birds are free and not constrained." They picked the color blue because it would stand out. "They (the residents) show a lot of appreciation," he said. This is a great addition to the area.



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CLUB CONTACTS

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JULY-AUGUST OUTDOORS

Many shorebirds migrating

Full moons 7-20 and 8-18

Perseid Meteor Showers 7-17 to 8-28

Peak viewing August 12

Blueberries, blackberries, elderberries ripening

Whitetail antlers reach full size.



Bluebirds

photo by Tresa Blackburn

Autumn Blackburn and her mother Tresa built a bluebird house while at the Migratory Bird Day held in May at Perkinstown Wintersports Area. A family of bluebirds has made a home there hatching a brood of chicks.