

Chequamegon Chirps



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The March meeting will be a working get-together at a different location. We will be assisting the Taylor County Sportsmen's Club in their annual wood duck and bluebird box building event on Monday March 20 and Tuesday March 21 at 6 p.m. both nights. Historically, wood duck box building occurs on the first night and bluebird box building on the second. Boxes get passed off to the club as well as Taylor County residents. You don't need woodworking experience as there are jobs for people of any skill level. If you have a cordless drill, please bring it including Phillips heads, too. This assembly-line operation is efficient and a couple hundred boxes are built each night. While well organized, you aren't obligated to stay for either session and can leave whenever you've had enough.

Woodland Logcrafters is hosting the event. Their manufacturing facility is located on HWY 64 a couple miles west of Medford. It is the first driveway east of Sunset Road on the north side of the road at W7120. Hope to see you there. This information is from a Joe Scott email. Any questions? Contact him at 715-965-3498 or joeyramon1@yahoo.com.

The Taylor County Sportsmen Club has been a community mainstay for many years with significant local contributions. The bird box building operation is done annually that has produced thousands of potential nesting opportunities for wood ducks, hooded mergansers, screech owls and squirrels, that I'm aware of. I would think there have other occupants as well of the wood duck boxes. The blue bird boxes, in addition to preferred bluebirds, are popular nesting places for tree swallows and house wrens. House sparrows and starlings will take them over too, if not evicted. Chickadees sometimes gather in them for warmth and protection in winter. Squirrels and bees sometimes make use of the quarters also as creatures make use of nesting and protection opportunities. Nature really does abhor a vacuum.

Early Migration 2023

It has begun, of course, since it never really completely stops because at least some species are shifting their locations due to changing daylight as the next

season starts to unfold—even when it is a quite uneven process. Our current snows will change over to rain, sap is already rising in trees and another growing season is in its early stages.

I expect to see the arrival of horned larks along our gravel road in the last week of January or first week of February. It was February 7 when I saw the first one and numbers have steadily increased. Other club members have mentioned seeing or hearing Canada geese, sandhill cranes, red-winged blackbirds, and robins so far. Many more species will start arriving in the very near future, assuming our snow cover lessens.

Hawk Ridge at Duluth, Minnesota is known far and wide as one of the premier places to watch fall migration, especially of raptors. Noe there is also a spring count from March 1 to May 31 which is now in its sixth year of full monitoring. The spring counting locations are slightly different from the fall counting place and will vary depending on wind direction. You can find the exact location by checking their web site. Here is a list of when raptors usually hit their peak numbers and how many you might see on a good day. Bald eagle March 25th-400 to 500/day. Golden eagle March 2th-10/day. Rough-legged hawk April 10 to 20th up to 75/day. Red-tailed hawk April 10 to 2th-1,000 to 2,000/day. Sharp-shinned hawk May 1 to 10—up to 450/day. Broad-winged hawk May 1st to 10th-3,000 to 4,000/day. Fifteen to twenty different raptor species are identified annually and a total of 130 different species recorded in the spring of 2022. There is a spring workshop in Duluth on April 21 to 23. Again, check their web site for details and registration.

The Wisconsin Society of Ornithology is planning a field trip on Saturday, April 22 to the George W. Mead Wildlife Area. “This trip will include a combination of car caravan and some light walking. Highlights include an assortment of waterfowl, Greater Prairie-Chickens, Lapland longspurs, as well as Winter Wren, sparrows (Fox, Vesper, Swamp), Yellow-rumped Warblers, and other songbirds. This trip will be led by Myles Hurlburt and Rob Pendergast. If you you Have questions, contact Myles Hurlburt at (715-574-1003) or mhurlburt44@gmail.com”

The April meeting surely won't be virtual due to weather or road conditions, will it? This would be the time to firm up participation plans in this field trip or any other excursion possibilities. Local field trips would be a welcome addition to club activities.

A Good Idea That Continues To Grow

Several years ago the Chequamegon Bird Club invested in bird identification equipped backpacks to donate to seven area libraries at Medford, Westboro, Rib Lake, Gilman, Dorchester, Abbotsford and Colby. The original idea had many contributors and a recent update by Peggy Stalheim. They were equipped with binoculars, books and other materials for beginning bird identification. There is now growing interest in this type of learning equipment and offerings of additional areas of nature studies. In addition to the original backpack, the Abbotsford Library now provides backpacks in Studies of Trees and Flowers, A Beach Walk, On The Nature Trail and Bug Hunting. Each one includes informational books, field guides, a nature journal and tools such as binoculars, compass, 10X Magnifying glass, butterfly net, underwater viewing bucket, and log books to record data to pass on to future users. All those who helped to develop the original idea and are now expanding unique learning opportunities deserve a special pat on the back. Kudos.



editor

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Club contacts

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March and April Events

Full moons Worm Moon March 7

Pink Moon April 6

Spring Equinox March 20

Great Horned owlets have hatched

Migrants are on their way

