

Chequamegon Chirps



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May welcomes significant numbers and variety of arriving migrants. It's a great time to be outside looking and listening for what's around. That's why it will be an excellent time for a bird walk starting at 6 P.M. that will leave from the front of the library and proceed along a boardwalk over the creek. The meeting will start at 7:00. With cooperation from the weather, (hey, it could happen) we might get lucky with warblers or something else. It is an easy stroll and we will share binoculars and our varying level of skills which makes it a fun activity.

The meeting itself will feature an educational film of bird anatomy and synopsis of the just completed World Migratory Bird Day Saturday at the Perkiinstown Winter Sports Area. What's Around should be particularly interesting. I've had the oddity of a Catbird coming to suet this weekend. A few miles up the road there is a Mallard sitting on eggs about six feet above the ground in the crotch of a large Maple. That pair must not have read the manual about their expected nesting habits. My question is will those ducklings seek a similar nesting site or standard on ground model for the next generation?

After a couple of weather caused meeting cancellations, it was pleasant to get together and review recent happenings. This was done in spite of the editor having a brain---- and being a week late for the Chirps. April is election time and with due process and no conflict these are our officers for this year: President--Joe Scott, vice-president--Ron Draeger, Secretary--Judy Rau, and Treasurer--Cam Scott. Thanks to Gayle Davis and Judy Derrico (now Rau) for filling the positions of Secretary and Vice President respectively for the completed year. Ron Draeger provided information how various birds are considered omens for births, death and other significant lifetime events. Connie Decker fielded questions about caring for and life with Kenya, her African Grey Parrot. Joe Scott explained how shifting climatic conditions effect different bird species, sometimes in unexpected ways as in the case of Spotted Owls being impacted by Barred Owls moving into their territory. Another recent happening before the meeting was the annual Bluebird and Wood Duck birdhouse building extravaganza where many club members pitched in to build welcome homes for a new generation. Also, Taylor County's application for Bird City status has been renewed.

Bird migration is in full swing now with new species arriving on an almost daily basis. This is a good time to throw out a few odds, ends and details about this phenom. The word migration is from the Latin *migrates* which means "to change" and refers to how birds change their geographic locations seasonally. There are many different types of migration, but they all involve some sort of geographic change in that species' range. Migration peaks in spring and fall, but there are birds migrating 365 days a year. The actual dates of movement includes many factors including species, distance to travel, and weather among other factors.

Before migrating, many birds enter a state of hyperphagia where hormone levels compel them to drastically increase their body weight to store fat to use as energy while traveling. Some species may as much as double their weight in the weeks leading up to migration. This time period is when food sources, such as backyard feeders, get extra use as birds build up this reserve fuel.

Hawks, swifts, swallows and waterfowl migrate primarily during the day while many songbirds migrate at night, in part to avoid raptors. The cooler, calmer air at night also makes migration more efficient for many species. Birds that migrate during the day often take advantage of solar-heated thermal currents for easy soaring to fly further using less energy.

Birds may fly from 15-600 miles or more per day during migration, depending when they are migrating, how far they have to go and the conditions they face along the route. Suitable stopovers and abundant food, water and shelter also affect how far birds may travel in a single day. Migrating birds travel at speeds from 15 to 50 miles per hour depending on the species, flight pattern air temperature and prevailing winds that can increase or decrease speed.

Migrating birds use the stars, sun wind patterns, landforms magnetic fields and landforms to guide them to the same locations each year. And magic? At least some species have some resources as to yet scientists have no clue. For example: Pectoral Sandpipers. The adults leave from northern Alaska long before its offspring can fly, heading south to spend the winter in the Argentina pampas. Amazingly, the offspring left behind, eventually take to the air on their own and, with no guidance, follow exactly the same route, joining their parents at a point 8,800 miles to the south. Things like that leave me with such a WOW factor that I'm unable to put into words, but it doesn't lessen the wonder, beauty and admiration of such an unbelievable occurrence.

Much of this information came from articles by Melissa Mayntz and April 29, 2018 issue of The New York Times.

2018

Year of the Bird

World Migratory Bird Day



Saturday, May 19

6 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

Perkinstown Winter Sports Area

MORNING

6 a.m., 7:30 a.m, 9 a.m. - Guided Birdwatching Walks
(9 a.m. walk includes Wildflower ID)

11 a.m. - noon - **Live vulture, hawk, & owl**
Presentation by educator from Raptor Education Group, Inc.

LUNCH and Bird Videos - Noon to 1 p.m.

AFTERNOON

1 p.m. - **FREE bus tour around Chequamegon Waters**
(Miller Dam) Look for waterfowl and other birds. Sponsored by
the Miller Dam Lake Association. Tour will last about 3 hours.
Special door prizes for those on the bus tour.

THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

- Displays
- Make a bird feeder or bird house to take home
(limited number available) *Materials supplied by
the Taylor County Sportsman's Club*
- Games and other activities



**FREE
ADMISSION**

**KIDS
& ADULTS**

FOOD

**DOOR
PRIZES**



HOSTED BY

The Chequamegon Bird Club

WITH HELP FROM

*Miller Dam Lake Association
Taylor County Sportsman's Club
Taylor County Tourism*

MORE INFORMATION

www.ChequamegonBirdClub.org
info@ChequamegonBirdClub.org or 715-748-3160



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CLUB CONTACTS

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May and June--Full Moons 5-29 and 6-28

Enjoy the change from winter to summer

Oak leaves will soon be the size of mouse ears

Garden planting time

Peak warbler time

Waterfowl hatching