



Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

November 2008

Volume 27 Number 11

NEXT MEETING:

Date: Monday, November 17, 2008

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Medford Public Library

Program: Ruffed Grouse in Wisconsin
Gary Zimmer, Ruffed Grouse Society of Wisconsin

Refreshments: Gordy Ruesch, Cathy Mauer

Please bring your own mug for beverages.



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Do you know?

- Most birds have thousands of feathers - songbirds typically have 2000-4000, 30-40% of which are on the head and neck.
- Tiny muscles raise and lower feathers and twist them or pull them closer together.

(more feather facts inside on p. 3)

Courtesy of www.sialis.org

November Program: Ruffed Grouse

No matter how often it happens, I’m always startled by the sudden loud wingbeats as a grouse flushes from somewhere close. I rarely see them before they flush. If they are hiding under the snow, the surprise can be even more startling.

Gary Zimmer, Wildlife Biologist, with the Ruffed Grouse Society will present a program about Ruffed Grouse in Wisconsin. As most of us have noticed this year, grouse are rising toward the peak of their approximately ten-year cycle. The northern part of Wisconsin saw a significant increase in numbers this year.

The scientific name for the ruffed grouse is *Bonasa umbellus*. According to a recent Wisconsin State Journal article, it seems clear that the specific term, *umbellus*, refers to the umbrella-like ruff of feathers on the male, but the generic term, *Bonasa*, is less clear. The article states that, “It could mean buffalo or wild ox, a reference to a booming or bellowing noise a male grouse makes while

drumming. This could, some say, sound somewhat like a bellowing bull. Or the word could be a reference to a Latin term meaning good roast, because of the tasty, white breast meat.”

Ruffed Grouse have many interesting traits, as well as being tasty. Learn more about this common woodland bird at our November meeting.



From the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

CBC Area Birding Sites

At our annual banquet last month Andy Paulios gave an excellent presentation about the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. One project of the WBCI is the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail. The trail is a mapped auto trail that covers the entire state, divided into five regions with separate maps available for each. The guide for the **Lake Superior-North Woods Region** lists five sites in Taylor County:

- Chequamegon Waters Flowage
- Kidrick Swamp (Town of Westboro)
- Mondeaux Dam Recreation Area
- Pershing State Wildlife Area
- Yellow River Ice-walled Lake Plain (near Perkinstown).

The **Central Sands Prairie Region** guide lists four sites in Clark County:

- Mead Lake County Parks – North and South (west of Greenwood)
- Rock Dam Lake County Park (west of Willard)
- Schmidt Maple Woods State Natural Area (near Stanley)
- Sportsman Lake State Wildlife Area (near Owen)

Although the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail is designed as an auto trail, most of the sites on the trail also offer good hiking, either on established trails or by bushwhacking. The guides include a description of each site and a list of some birds that may be seen, including possible rarities. Some of these sites are also known for their interesting vegetation or geological features. Copies of the guides may be ordered through Travel Wisconsin on-line at www.travelwisconsin.com/maps_guides.aspx or by calling (800/432-TRIP). They are also available on-line www.wisconsinbirds.org/trail/overview.htm

If you have birded at any of these sites, or have other favorite birding spots in the CBC area, the *Chirps* would be interested in hearing from you so that we can include articles on birding in our area in future issues. Did you see a Cerulean Warbler in the Mondeaux Dam area? Get 'lost' in Kidrick Swamp? Stop at Rock Dam Lake to look for Red-headed Woodpeckers? Whether you saw a rare bird, observed some unusual behavior, or had an exciting adventure, we invite you to share the story with our readers. Please talk to Cathy Mauer, *Chirps* editor, at a CBC meeting or email to newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org.



Cerulean Warbler

Louis Agassiz Fuertes
Cornell University



American Bittern

Far Flyer

Bird migration is amazing. Not only do the birds need to find their way, they must also survive bad weather and various other hazards. Some perform incredible feats. The bar-tailed godwit, a shorebird that breeds in Russia and Alaska during the summer, has flown over 7,200 miles during migration to its winter feeding grounds in New Zealand. In an on-going study of godwits that were fitted with satellite trackers, several flew the distance non-stop. One female made the trip in nine days. It burned off half its weight.



For more information and maps go to the USGS Alaska website:
http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/shorebirds/barg_updates.html

Bird Reports (August - September 2008)

Checklist observers: *Rhoda Barber , Connie Decker , Dennis Larson , Ken Luepke , Cathy Mauer , Gordy Ruesch , Doug and Willa Pledger , Claire Romanak , and Cam and Greg Scott*



Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 135

- Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon , Mallard, Blue-winged Teal , Northern Pintail , Green-winged Teal , Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup (Decker , Luepke), Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey
- Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron, Great Egret
- Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin (Luepke)
- American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Decker , Luepke), American Golden Plover (Luepke), Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Sanderling (Decker/Luepke), Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock
- Bonaparte's Gull (Decker , Luepke), Ring-billed Gull
- Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove
- Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk (Decker (late)), Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher
- Red-headed Woodpecker (Romanak), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Three-toed Woodpecker ** (Pledger (extremely rare)), Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker
- Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe
- Northern Shrike
- Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark
- Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow (Decker / Larson)
- Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper
- House Wren, Winter Wren
- Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin
- Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing
- Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler
- American Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur
- Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Oriole
- Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow

Do you know?

Feathers serve many functions:

- insulation for controlling body temperatures
- aerodynamic power for flight
- colors for communication and camouflage

Modified feathers also have other roles:

- swimming
- sound production (as in American Woodcock) or muffling (as in owls)

- hearing
- protection
- cleanliness
- water repellency
- water transport (e.g., Desert Sand grouse)
- tactile sensation
- support (e.g., tail feathers of a woodpecker)
- display

Courtesy of www.sialis.org

Editor, Chequamegon Chirps
N4416 Crane Dr.
Medford WI 54451-9376



«NAME»
«ADDRESS»
«CITY_STATE_ZIP»

Club Officers 2008-2009

President – Claire Romanak

Vice-president – Connie Decker

Secretary – Hildegard Kuse

Treasurer – Cam Scott

Other Club Contacts

Web site: www.chequamegonbirdclub.org

Email: info@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Newsletter Email: newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Bird sightings: Connie Decker

November - December Outdoors

- Full moon – December 12
- Ring-necked pheasants winter in cattails
- Thanksgiving – November 27
- Watch for mink slides and otter slides
- Lakes freeze over
- Beaver very active getting ready for winter
- Keep feeders filled and provide water
- Winter finches arrive
- Christmas Bird Counts – December 14 to January 5



Birder's Web

The Feather Atlas

www.lab.fws.gov/featheratlas

This website, a product of the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, includes photos of the flight feathers (wing and tail) of North American birds. It includes over one hundred species so far and is still adding species. The photos are excellent. Species can be found by browsing or searching. The site includes a glossary of feather terms. This is going to be a great reference for those who try to identify the feathers they find. Note that it is not legal to keep feathers from non-game species.

