



Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

September 2008

Volume 27 Number 9

NEXT MEETING:

Date: Monday, September 15, 2008

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Medford Public Library
Medford

Program: Group Discussion of Club
Project Ideas & Purchases and
Birding Video

Food: Bernice and Vane Gokey

Please bring your own mug for beverage.



INSIDE

Loons and Black Flies	p. 2
Loon Facts	p. 2
Bird Reports	p. 3
August-September Outdoors	p. 4
Birder's Bookshelf	p. 4

Chequamegon Bird Club

Annual Banquet ~ Monday, October 20, 2008

LOCATION:

B-S Bar and Catering – W4782 Hwy. 64
(2 miles east of Medford)

TIME:

6:00 p.m. – Get-together

6:30 p.m. – Dinner served

MENU:

- Chicken with dressing and beef tips
- Mashed potatoes w/ gravy
- Green beans
- Coleslaw
- Dinner rolls
- Dessert
- Coffee/milk

Guests are welcome!

SPEAKER:

Andy Paulios

“Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative
and the Wisconsin Birding Community”

**Andy Paulios is an ecologist with the
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
and the Coordinator for the Wisconsin Bird
Conservation Initiative.**

TICKETS: \$12

TICKET DEADLINE: October 10

*Tickets will be available at the September meeting or
send payment to:*

CAM SCOTT
CHEQUAMEGON BIRD CLUB
N3566 GROVER DR
WITHEE WI 54498

Make check payable to: Chequamegon Bird Club

Black Flies Drive Off Nesting Loons

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen, Staff Writer of the *Mazina'igan* (a publication of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Commission)
Used with permission of the author.

Overwhelmed by a subspecies of black flies, nesting loons were disrupted across Upper Michigan in 2008. Nesting lakes from Gogebic to Mackinac Counties swarmed with flies that feed primarily, if not exclusively, on loons. “With the late spring we had this year, the hatch of these flies was apparently delayed and their emergence coincided almost exactly when loons were beginning to nest and incubate eggs,” said Robert Evans, Ottawa National Forest wildlife biologist. “As a result, we believe that loons abandoned their nests and eggs on a number of lakes due to the flies.”

Nesting begins in early spring when clutches generally containing two eggs are laid. Male and female loons share incubation duties over a 28-day period. In most years, high numbers of loon flies are present for only a fraction of that time. Near Watersmeet and the Lac Vieux Desert Tribe, Evans said loons abandoned nests on Dinner, Moon, Beatons and Long Lakes. Birds later returned when black fly numbers decreased and again attempted nesting on three of those lakes—Long, Beatons and Moon. At Seney National Wildlife Refuge in the north central Upper Peninsula, researcher Damon McCormick estimates that over 60% of loon nests were abandoned presumably because of the flies.

“Renesting takes a large energy toll on adult birds and is not always attempted,” Evans noted. Some loon researchers believe that this black fly species known as *Simulium annulus* feeds only on the common loon. One of 254 black fly species in North America, adult *S. annulus* typically live from 10-35 days. While loons are very aggressive in defending their territories from predators, the tiny parasitic flies present a challenge to successful nesting. Wildlife biologists have witnessed the overlap of



Common Loons

Cathy Mauer photo

loon nesting and black fly hatches intermittently over time. According to loon researcher Joe Kaplan, the last time it occurred in the region was in 1996, which like 2008, was marked by a late, cold spring.

Loon Facts from the Minnesota DNR website:

- The bones of most birds are hollow and light, but loons have solid bones.
- The extra weight helps them dive as deep as 250 feet to search for food. They can stay underwater for up to five minutes.
- Because their bodies are heavy relative to their wing size, loons need a 100- to 600-foot "runway" in order to take off from a lake.
- Loons can fly more than 75 miles per hour.
- The red in the loon's eye helps it to see under water.
- Scientists think loons can live for 30 years or more

Bird Reports (July – August 2008)

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



Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 136

Canada Goose, Mute Swan (Decker/Luepke), Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup (Decker/Luepke), Common Merganser (Mauer/Ruesch)

Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite (Larson)

Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant

American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Cattle Egret (Romanak), Green Heron

Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk (Pledger), Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin (Decker/Luepke/Pledger)

Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Decker/Luepke), Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Ring-billed Gull, Black Tern

Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove

Black-billed Cuckoo

Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl

Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker

Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird

Northern Shrike (Pledger (Shrike sp.? extremely unusual))

Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo

Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven

Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow

Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Pledger (very early))

Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing

Golden-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler

Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow (Luepke), Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow

Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Oriole

Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin (Decker/Luepke), American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak (Romanak), House Sparrow

There are still relatively few members reporting their bird sightings. Everyone is encouraged to participate, regardless of the number of species seen. Ask Connie Decker if you need a checklist. The checklist is also available on the CBC website.



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

September - October Outdoors

- Full moon – September 15
- Hawks migrating
- Blue-winged teal migrating
- Trumpeter swan cygnets learning to fly
- Autumnal equinox – September 22
- Whooping cranes begin migrating
- Leaves turn to fall colors
- Little brown bats migrate
- Dark-eyed juncos begin arriving
- Bucks begin making scrapes and rubs



Birder’s Bookshelf

Both of these new field guides combine new technology with traditional print.

Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America – Collins, list price \$24.95

Uses photos of birds; includes a DVD of bird calls that includes a photo, MP3 downloadable.

Peterson Guide to Birds of North America – Houghton Mifflin, list price \$26.00

Combines both the Eastern and Western Field Guides into one volume. New range maps, some new illustrations, and updated taxonomic order. Podcasts are associated with the book.

The podcasts are also available without book purchase from the Houghton Mifflin website and can be downloaded to a computer or iPod. Free registration is required.

www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/peterson/petersonregistration.shtml