

Chequamegon Chirps



Medford, Wisconsin

September 19, 2016

Volume 35

Meeting and program at Medford Library

6PM BIRD WALK leaving from the library

7PM Program presentation by Ron Draeger titled Amazing Bird Facts

Ron will present unusual to downright improbable bird facts from Wisconsin, the Midwest and beyond. Are you aware there is a poisonous bird?

ANNUAL BANQUET OCTOBER 17TH

The Chelsea Conservation Club will be the site for this year's banquet. The building is on the west side of Highway 13 at 106357, which is about 7 ½ miles north of the Wal-Mart traffic circle in Medford.

The family style meal will consist of chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, relish tray, sweet/sour green beans, dinner rolls, dessert bars, with coffee and milk. The cooks there have a great reputation. We should be treated to a fine meal.

The social hour will start at six with the meal at 6:30.

There will be door prizes and a raffle drawing.

The speaker is Anne Geraghty from the Chippewa Valley who has extensive birding experience and adventures, is a Breeding Bird Atlas surveyor and a high school Biology teacher.

Total bargain cost for the whole shebang is \$15.

Raffle tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5

Tickets will be available at this coming meeting. **Banquet tickets will need to be purchased no later than October 3rd.** This is so the cooks can order the necessary food for the meal. I've heard they are serious about this and any substantial violation of this could result in the perpetrator becoming the main dish. Hopefully this won't result in the loss of a club member or innocent bystander.

The August meeting of the Chequamegon Bird Club at the Scott and Peggy Stalheim place was a treat for all who attended. We had a chance to walk in and observe their tall grass prairie. The planning, preparation and planting of this one and a half acre jewel began in 2003. We had the opportunity to follow a mowed path through the impressively tall growth where the Cupplant must have been nearly ten feet tall. The blooming time in late summer were for the following species: False Aster, Prairie Blazingstar, Black-eyed Susan, Sweet Black-eyed Susan, Cupplant, and Prairie Dock. New England Aster and Stiff Goldenrod are considered fall bloomers and may have been in bloom, too. Scott and Peggy's prairie is a great example of what can be done with a couple spare acres, a heck of a lot of work and a financial investment. More than twenty different seed species were used to establish this prairie. These seeds ain't cheap. Their prices ranged from \$3.25 to \$80 per ounce! The 1 ½ acres took 4 ¼ pounds of prairie seed plus grass seed such as big Bluestem, Fox Sedge, Canada Wild Rye and Indiangrass. The investment of expertise, time, labor and money has produced a memorable patch of what was once such an important part of our landscapes.

Birds observed while at the Stalheim's were as follows: Red-winged Blackbird, Indigo Bunting, Mourning Dove, Great Crested Flycatcher, American Goldfinch, Green Heron, Blue Jay, Barred Owl, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Robin, Tree Swallow, Wild Turkey, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, Downy Woodpecker, House Wren and Barn Swallow. The pleasant evening ended around a campfire with lemonade, smores and a short meeting. Thanks to Scott and Peggy for a memorable evening.

Notes from Ken's Ponds near Spencer---Until recently, Ken had four to five hundred Sandhill Cranes spending nights at his shallow ponds. A rise in water level and nearby goose hunters have reduced those numbers to about half—hopefully only temporarily. Some 200 Canada Geese plus a whole bunch of ducks were guests also. He estimated there were still 300 Mallards left in the ponds after 800 to 1,200 headed for the McMillan Marsh area. A couple Great Blue Herons and seven Great Egrets completed the show.

Ken has a 100 mile mostly rural route that he travels daily with his work. Earlier he was seeing fifty some Kestrels daily as young fledged. Those numbers have now dropped, but Red-tailed Hawks are now plentiful. There were also three Turkey Vultures that he thought may have been migrating as they drifted south at a high altitude.

He also mentioned that on a recent walk (I think on the 10th) he saw the following Warblers: Chestnut-sided, American Redstart, Yellow-rumped, Tennessee, Black-and-white and Bay-breasted.

Moving from summer to fall

It has been a bountiful summer for gardens and farmer's crops. From late June on we have been blessed with consistent moisture and warm temperatures to produce impressive corn, hay and soybean yields. Hopefully the rain will diminish so fields will firm up to allow harvesting. In the meantime, there are significant bird events going on regardless of what people are trying to do at ground level.

HAWK RIDGE

Hawk Weekend 2016 is scheduled for September 16-18. This is the annual festival celebration of the fall bird migration by the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth, Minnesota. There are lots of field trips and workshops such as: Best of Hawk Ridge Workshop (9/14&9/15), Advanced Hawkwatching Workshop, e-bird Workshop, Songbird Banding Seminar, Birding at Wisconsin Point, Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad Birds and Natural History Train Trip among others. More activities and full descriptions of field trips and workshops can be found at www.hawkridge.org. There are fees involved for the various programs which include speakers Chris Wood, eBird Project Leader with Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Nathan Rathbun, US Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist. Registering can be done online at www.hawkridge.org.

If you would rather avoid the large crowds of that weekend, Hawk Ridge is open year around and with proper weather conditions, there can be spectacular bird migration as fronts move through and raptors with many other species ride wind currents southward.

BIRDS IN ART

Another bird spectacular that occurs annually is **Birds in Art** at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Museum on the east side of Wausau. This nationally recognized exhibit is now in its 41st year and will remain open until November 27. The Master Wildlife Artist this year is Karen Bondarchuk. Originally from Canada, she now lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan and teaches full-time at Western Michigan University. She has 16 articles exhibited throughout the show this year and many feature crows. In the bottom level is a work of 365 small drawings by her of crows done every day for a year titled "Ergo Sum: A Crow a Day" to help signify the passing of time for her mother having advanced dementia. "It was a huge commitment, and an emotional one. It was a cathartic project. It allowed me to grieve." She said, "I want people to walk away with a sense of identification. We share this planet with these spectacular creatures. It really is about connectivity. We connect to these creatures, we identify with them."

Editor Chequamegon Chirps

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CLUB CONTACTS

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September and October events

Full Moon September 17th and October 16th

Fall Equinox September 22nd

September (Sunday) 18th at the Mead Education and Visitor Center 11am-2pm

Fall Family Festival-Free public event

Wildflower and Butterfly Walk at noon Raptor Show at 1 pm