

Chequamegon Chirps



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The September meeting of the Chequamegon Bird Club will take place at the Medford Library on Monday, September 16 at 7:00 P.M. Last month we talked about possible projects, trips or learning experiences we can develop as a club. We would like to discuss this in more depth as well as any other business that may come up.

One thing I would appreciate is information about results of birds nesting in your yard or nearby for 2019. I'm particularly interested in bird house data—even if it should be about less desirable species such as sparrows or starlings. One other thought here is, would you be interested in selecting a species or class of birds on a yearlong basis? This would involve at least one meeting devoted to information about this particular bird or class of birds and something in every Chirps for the year. It could be as specific as local woodpeckers to warblers in general. It wouldn't have to be that serious in that it could be things such as "Birds you might see sitting on a highline wire," "Backyard birds or "Little Brown Jobs" that you might see, but have no idea as to what the heck they might be. One thing I have an opinion about, (the older I get, the more opinions I seem to have while having fewer absolute answers), is the club needs to be a learning opportunity for all levels of birders. This is especially true for newer members, who bring new experiences and questions with them. As stated, I don't have exact data about this, just an opinion.

October Banquet

October 21, 2019 at Stetsonville Centennial Hall

5:30 social hour 6:30 meal 7:30 speaker

Purchase or order tickets by October 15

Since this is family style food, there is room for a few last minute attendees

Raffle tickets available for a metal sculpture by Rustic Gardens

Program planners

Gayle Davis, Chris Finkler, Judy Rau, Peggy Stalhein

Thank you ladies

Chicken and roast pork
Sweet/sour green beans
Au Gratin potatoes
Relish trays
Dessert

Speaker--Linda Parker National Forest Service Ecologist

Linda Parker has thirty years of experience collecting data from Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest breeding bird surveys and Christmas Bird Counts. She lives near Phillips and will have information from almost in our own back yard. An accomplished and entertaining speaker, she should keep you awake after a hefty meal.

A Hummingbird Happening

In late July Claire Romanak hosted a two day hummingbird banding extravaganza at her and Bob's home north of Athens. The totals were amazing. Mickey O'Connor, a master bird bander from Milwaukee and two assistants banded 111 new Hummingbirds plus one that had been banded years ago. The dates, which coincided with beautiful weather, were July 27 and 28 with banding times 7:00 to 10:30 and 2:30 to 5:30 on Saturday and 7:30 to 10:15 on Sunday. All these birds were adults with 95 females and 17 males. The reason there were so many fewer males is because most of them had already headed south to establish winter territories. All females, with one exception, were rated 0-1 for fat deposits. (How that is done, I don't know.) That means they were feeding young which results in body reserves being depleted. A couple days after the banding, many recently fledged humming birds started showing up at Claire's feeders. Just think about that. Over one hundred humming birds came to these feeders to be banded and that didn't include a couple hundred babies. Also, when birds were captured, if agitated, they were immediately released to eliminate possible stress complications so there were more than the banded birds there.

A few odds and ends. One of the birds pooped red which Claire thought was from internal injuries. No, Mickey assured her, it only meant that the bird had been at a feeder where red colored sugar water was available. Claire does not add red coloring to her mixtures. Claire doesn't know of any near neighbor who has Hummingbird feeders. She does have 20 Hummingbird feeders that she fills twice daily. That took 160 pounds of sugar this year. As

of today, September 8, Claire still has a few coming to her feeders, but most have followed the males south.

The question still remains, what makes this place such a Hummingbird Mecca? The Romanak home is surrounded by woods with abundant flower beds in addition to all those feeders that stay filled. Do many forests have such concentrations of these tiny flyers? How far do they travel to get food? Does Claire have some secret attraction force?

A Bald Eagle Walked Into A Garage

No, this isn't the start of a joke. A fellow in the Owen area was working on his car when a mature male Bald Eagle walked into the garage. Really. It turned out the bird had broken a wing and was near death due to starvation. The Good Samaritan picked up the bird, which offered no resistance, and he called the DNR, who got in touch with Claire who took the patient to the REGI place near Antigo. There they X-Rayed the bird and started it on a baby food diet until it recovers enough to eat regular food. It is hoped the bird will recover completely and be released in the future. Will keep you posted.

Winter Survival

This statement is rushing the season, but winter is on the way. Hopefully there will be lots of Indian Summer days along with great color and few bugs in our near future. That isn't asking too much, is it? Most birds head south, but some not too far or even not at all. Black-capped Chickadees keep us company during the coldest weather and brighten up any day. How do those bits of fluff survive? The following information is from the birdsandblooms.com site of November, 2017.

“First of all, their winter plumage is extra dense. On cold nights, they seek out snug cavities or finagle their bodies under flaps of bark—and then they slow things way down. Scientists studying Black-capped Chickadees discovered the birds go into hypothermia on winter nights, slowing their metabolism and reducing their body temperature. Like an idling car engine, they only burn only a small amount of fuel; the food they eat during the day is enough to keep them alive during the long nights.”

“This is where birders can help. Studies show that chickadees in northern regions with access to a feeder have nearly double the winter survival rate of those who have to depend on caught or cached foods.” Seed and suet sales should be coming up before long at local stores as well as big name places. Subtlety is not always a strong point for me.

Editor Chequamegon Chirps

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September and October events

Full moons September 13 & October 13.

Fall Equinox September 23.

Southern migration in full force.

Peak leaf color.

Birds in Art at Wausau at the
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Museum.

