

# ChequamegonChirps



## December 2025 Volume 43 Number 12

Our December meeting/Christmas party will be at the Medford library at 7:00 p.m. Monday the 15<sup>th</sup>.

There may be a bit of a business meeting. If so, it won't be much. Here are the parts of the session that are definite. If you bring them, there will be treats. The officers will serve drinks to go with the white elephant auction. Does anyone know where that term came from? or why we call it a white elephant sale? Just curious. There will be games available in addition to a trivia quiz or two. The details of the reindeer flyover and elf parade are still being worked on—also be on the lookout for any shade of elephant you could bring to the party—even if isn't white. Membership fees of individual or family—regardless of size—is \$18. Proceeds from the silent auction are used for club activities which benefit local students and adults. Depending on the weight of the elephant, that could bring in a significant boost to our funds if it is bought by the pound considering meat prices at our local grocery stores. It could be a group purchase.

This newsletter is extra early in the month. First of all, the meeting is the earliest possible day in the month. Also, the beautiful elf who prints and dresses up these pages will be gone next week so it needs to be completed today. Is it legal for elves to take days off in December? The result is a Chirps that is about a week earlier than usual. It doesn't change the meeting date from the third Monday of the month. Speaking of beautiful, the full moon tonight on fresh snow is spectacular. In less than three weeks we will reach the winter solstice and the beginning of lengthening daylight. Enjoy fresh tracks, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and seeing different birds that have come south.

Audubon Christmas counts are upon us with the Spencer one taking place On Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup>, the day after the meeting. That will be followed by Clam Lake, Medford on Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup>, Willard on Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup>, and Gilman on Thursday January 1<sup>st</sup>. I believe the Mead count is on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup>. For any details on that contact Mary Urban. Cathy Mauer is the person to get in touch with about Clam Lake. Joe Scott 715-965-3498 for Medford. Jan Luepke 715-567-1895

[newhome567@yahoo.com](mailto:newhome567@yahoo.com) is coordinating the Spencer, Willard and Gilman counts. Non-members are welcome to participate in this annual event which is free. It is important to contact coordinators as soon as possible if you would like a territory in any of these 15-mile diameter circles. You can make a last-minute decision if you ride with someone. An extra set of eyes and ears is always welcome, and you might be handed a pencil to record species or help with navigation. If you haven't been on a count before, it is an outstanding opportunity to spend all or part of a day with other birders which is an excellent learning experience. In addition, a chance to explore new roads, streets or check out feeders, you find out what species are around and their numbers. Every count has unexpected finds and some of those are downright amazing. I don't know of an instance where first time counters weren't glad they participated. The following paragraph details the scope of these counts which began in 1900 to promote conservation by counting birds, rather than hunting them.

This data is from last year's counts which occurred in 22 countries. 72,457 counters and 10,652 watchers recorded 44,259,423 birds by sound or sight of 2,503 species in 2,693 circles in 24-hour periods from December 14, 2024 to January 5, 2025. Forty-two of these circles were for the first time with 23 being outside the United States. This citizen accumulated information is a reliable source of what is happening to bird location and numbers to identify trends and shifting populations.

Despite consistent increases in number of circles surveyed and data reported, the total raw count of birds has been steadily declining—most noticeably since 2014. This information confirms numbers are declining and the impact of climate change. Tracking population trends is occurring for over 540 species. These numbers have fueled more than 300 peer-reviewed scientific studies which to date have provided information from analyses done with Audubon Christmas Count data. Another benefit for all citizen-science gatherers who participant is gaining a better appreciation of local situations and all these numbers accumulated under many different conditions provide solid, irrefutable evidence of changes taking place. These numbers don't lie and are not susceptible to any political spinning.

The following information is from an article in the Badger Birder from an article written by Derek Sallman. "Each CBC takes place within a 15-mile diameter circle, and participants have specific routs to follow, with each bird being counted (seen or heard) all day in the specific count area. Data from CBCs are used in research-based analyses, publications, and reports, so the work that's being done is really making a difference in our understanding of bird populations and conservation. You

can go to <https://www.audubon.org/conservation-christmas-bird-count> and click on the map of count circles. Locate a circle that is green or yellow (red circles are full) and contact the compiler well in advance of the count to arrange your participation. It is free to participate although you will be responsible for your own transportation, optics, and warm clothing. If you are new to birding, you are definitely still welcome to participate, and you can ask to be paired with a more experienced birder. To see the results from CBCs, you can sign up for the Audubon “American Birds” newsletter or check out the “CBC Live tracker” to see photos from other CBC participants, and submit your own.

## **Hawk Ridge**

Located in Duluth, Hawk Ridge is among the best bird counting locations—anywhere. This location is monitored daily from August 15 to November 30. Last year nearly 60,000 raptors were counted along with some 200,000 non-raptors. There are some days without a lot of birds heading south due to wind and weather conditions and other times the numbers can be crazy high. For example, this year on August 22, 17,870 nighthawks passed over this site. “Duluth reigns as the best place in the world to watch their flight.” (Could be a possible day trip to see such an unbelievable spectacle.) Geography, ecology and bird behavior combine to funnel flights that can be high overhead, at eye level, or below the ridges. “The thousands of square miles of forests wetlands and prairies between Lake Superior and the Arctic are breeding grounds for hundreds of species of birds. As the birds migrate south, many encounter Lake Superior. Rather than fly over the world’s largest lake, they prefer to stay over land. That funnels huge numbers of birds to the lake’s western edge where they can cross into Wisconsin and continue their southern journey,”

“Now one of the largest bird banding sites in the nation, about 3,000 birds are caught, banded and released at Hawk Ridge each year. Additional projects include genetics, contamination such as mercury telemetry work with various species including golden eagles and turkey vultures, and parasite loads.” During the 2026 breeding season, Hawk Ridge is scheduled to collaborate with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association in Pennsylvania and The Broad-Winged Hawk Project in research projects.

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Club contacts

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### **December and January events**

Full moons December 4 and January 3

Winter solstice December 21

Owl courting occurring

Enjoy the beauty of the season

Happy Holidays to everyone

Last month's quiz pictures

Goose Bumps and Bird Brain

