

# Chequamegon Chirps



**March 18, 2024 Volume 42 Number 3**

Our Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting will start at 7:00 P.M. in Dorchester. To get there you will need to find the brick church on South Second Street. It is on the east side of the street which is one block west of Main Street. Come into Dorchester on Highway A and you should find it.

The former church, who at one time had Sam Robbins as the pastor, is now an art gallery with many rooms and space for Cheryl Paultz, Medford fine artist and photographer.

She describes herself as, “An avid nature enthusiast her entire life. Come join her at Steeple Gallery where she will share her love for nature and how its grace and beauty has inspired her. Cheryl is so moved by the wonders of local wildlife, that she photographs them daily hoping to capture that particular awe-inspiring image. She then chooses subjects from the very best photographs and paints them with exquisite detail. Cheryl’s love of birds has produced many award-winning stills of birds in flight with style and color that rival what is seen in publications such as National Geographic. Her hope is that the images she portrays on both photographs and on canvas bring joy to the viewer and encourage everyone to cherish and preserve these precious creatures that bring us such beauty and joy.”



## **April Meeting**

Sue Vick will present a program about her recent birding trip to Costa Rica at the Medford Library on April 15. Officer elections will also be held.

## BIRD FEEDER FIGHTS

The following information about bird feeder fights is from an article by Marc Devokaitis that appeared in the 2024 winter issue of Living Bird. Some of the wording is verbatim while I shifted some of the material around or left out parts while trying to stay true to the information.

When hordes of chickadees, finches and woodpeckers come to feeders, there are disagreements. Minimizing conflict in these situations is good for birds. It takes energy to fight, and it can be dangerous, so it usually makes sense to avoid it. Growing volumes of Feeder-watch data is allowing scientists to dive deeper into the behaviors, social relationships, and physical traits that shape conflicts at the feeder. Some birds, such as finches and house sparrows, often visit in groups while others such as woodpeckers and nuthatches are more likely to be lone wolves. White-breasted nuthatches and red-bellied woodpeckers are among the most likely to replace others. At the other end of the spectrum, American Goldfinches and house sparrows were more successful when in a group rather than alone. Highly social pine siskins lose most of their encounters when they are alone, but when a group of five visits together their individual interactions, on average, become twice as successful. A team looked at around 1,600 interactions from more than 100 different bird species from FeederWatch data and determined that syntopic species—pairs of species that often overlap in space and time—get into fights less than expected. Species that are not often found together fight more than expected when their paths cross.

For example, chickadees goldfinches, and juncos seem to avoid getting into scuffles even though they're often shoulder to shoulder at feeders. On the other hand, chickadees seem to be spoiling for a fight with yellow-rumped warblers. When birds see one another on a regular basis, they're more likely to know whether they are the subordinate or dominate one. It comes down to energy. Why start a fight you will probably lose? It's more advantageous to just leave before anything happens.

Scientists are studying more aspects of all kinds of bird behavior as citizen scientists amass more and more data. Project FeederWatch is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada started over 35 years ago. More than 45 research papers using FeederWatch data have been published in scientific journals.

## BRAW BLUEBIRD NEST MONITORING REPORT 2023

“Organized in 1986, the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin has volunteer officers and members who generously donate thousands of hours annually to ensure that bluebirds and other cavity nesters survive and thrive in Wisconsin. You can find us at <https://www.braw.org/>.

The 2023 fledging numbers do not meet the best years, such as 2012, when BRAW’s monitors reportedly fledged 35,000+ bluebirds alone. Weather issues are always a key variable, but a marked decline in volunteer monitors is our primary concern. Below is the published data report in the last issue of Wisconsin Bluebird. Revised 2023 figures may well be higher.

### Preliminary Data for 2023

Number Of boxes	Boxes used by Bluebirds	Bluebird eggs laid	Bluebird eggs hatched	Bluebirds fledged	Tree Swallows fledged	Chickadees fledged	House Wrens fledged
6651	3024	18,447	15,513	14,673	8983	1058	5623

Steve Sample and Steve Fallon BRAW president data collector; respectively

### 2023 BIGBY BIRDING CHAMPIONS

This competition is for people who bird without using fossil fuel. Feet and bicycles—or anything else that is self-propelled—are their means of travel to get where they count their birds for this contest. The grand prize is a highly coveted DRINKING GLASS which goes to the highest-ranking person who has never won it before. First place with 205 species is Ross Mueller from Outagamie County who hiked 30 miles and biked 630 miles. Second place went to Steve Thiessen of Dane County with 195 species on 29 miles of hiking and 546 miles of biking. Mary Murrell of Dane County had 194 species in her first year of participating. One hundred forty eight of those species were recorded at home.

More information is available at the WSO BIGBY webpage at [wsobirds.org/what-we-do/Wisconsin-green-birding-challenge](https://wsobirds.org/what-we-do/Wisconsin-green-birding-challenge)

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### Club contacts

Website: [Chequamegonbirdclub.org](http://Chequamegonbirdclub.org)

Information:

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### March and April Events

Full moons March 25 and April 23

March 19 Spring Equinox

More migrants—weather permitting

Will wacky weather continue?

