

# Chequamegon Chirps

May 2025 Volume 43 Number 5



## Celebrate Birds

### **BIRD WALK**

Saturday, May 17, 8 a.m.

~ **KUSE NATURE PRESERVE** ~

W6219 Allman Ave, Medford

Free - All ages welcome

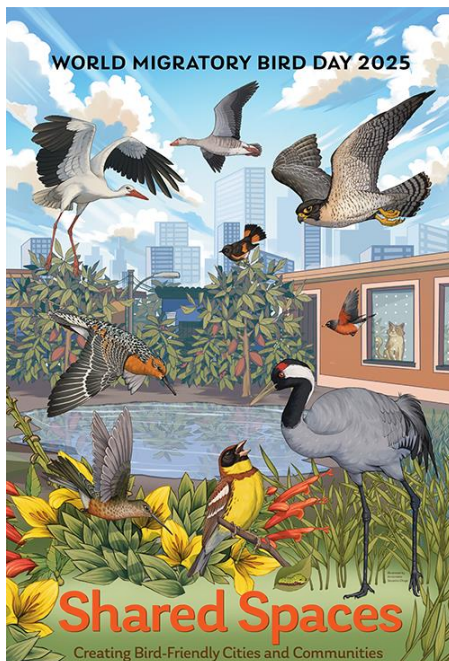
Displays & Information Indoors

*Members of the Chequamegon Bird Club  
will help identify the birds we see.*

More info: [chequamegonbirdclub.org](http://chequamegonbirdclub.org)

No formal meeting in May. BUT we hope to see many of you at our World International Bird Day event on May 17. Members can help lead bird walks or with indoor activities. We plan to use Merlin and introduce it to participants.

We have a Shopper ad, as well as a post on Facebook and information on our website, Contact Cam Scott 715-785-7614 for more information.



## The theme of World Migratory Bird Day in 2025 is **SHARED SPACES**

The Chequamegon Bird Club supports efforts to create safe stopover spots for birds along their routes, which traverse countries, borders, mountains, deserts, cities, farms, and seas.

In the month of May, our own area plays host to many migratory birds, some just passing through on their way to places as far away as the arctic tundra. It is exciting to see some of these temporary visitors. This “Chirps” highlights how you can play an important role helping “our” birds as well as those temporary visitors by planting or preserving native plants that support these birds.

## Plants for Birds

Spring came fast this year, but it is not too late to plant a nursery tree, even a bare root one, if it's not leafed out yet. The key is to keep the roots moist at all times before planting and afterwards keep it well-watered, especially if we enter a dry spell. Potted plants can be put in the ground most any time, but again, water is the important thing.

When we think of plants for birds, we often think of berries or seeds (or flowers for hummingbirds). But plants provide much more. They host caterpillars and other insects that are essential foods, proteins especially, for nestlings and young birds. They also provide nest sites and nest materials, roosting sites, shelter from the elements and cover from predators, and even water in the form of dew drops.

"Our" birds have evolved along with our native plants, so these provide the best options when looking for bird plants to add to your property. There are many factors to consider when selecting plants, and it is good to offer a variety of plant options for both the birds and yourself.

Characteristics of the site where you want to put a plant are important:

- Is there full sunlight, partial shade, or is it mostly shady?
- What is the soil like? Is it sandy, clayey or a combination?
- What is the moisture situation? Is this a dry hill, a wetland, or a moist soil?
- Will the plant be exposed to a lot of wind? To salt from roads or sidewalks?
- What hardiness zone are you in?

And then there are the plant's characteristics:

- How large will it get, and how fast does it grow?
- Is it a deciduous plant or an evergreen?
- Does it have berries or nuts or some other type of seed?

In many areas deer are one of the most important considerations:

- How are you going to protect your plants from deer?
- There are lists of supposedly deer resistant plants, but deer don't read them.
- Fences, individual metal cages, spray repellents all can help, but they do add to the cost.

### Websites that offer plant suggestions and advice:

**Audubon** - <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>

You can enter your zip code (and email if you want, but they don't seem to use it) and a list of plants will open. You can filter for plant type, birds that may be attracted, and what resources the plant offers for birds.

**Home Grown National Park** - <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/keystone-plants/>

To use this site, you need to find your ecoregion on another page. If you are on the boundary of two ecoregions, you can consider the plants in both ecoregions. Most of us are in 5.2 Mixed Wood Shield or 8.1 Mixed Wood Plains. This site also has filter options.

**WildOnes** - [www.WildOnes.org](http://www.WildOnes.org)

See the reading list under "Get Involved"

### A few of the nurseries that offer native plants:

- Hansen's nursery in Rhinelander
- Reeseville Ridge Nursery
- Yellow River Nursery in Marshfield
- Dragonfly Gardens in Amery
- Paint Creek Nursery in Cadott
- Prairie Nursery in Westfield "Migratory May" special on-line at [www.prairienursery.com](http://www.prairienursery.com)
- Prairie Moon Nursery in Winona, MN – online only at [www.prairiemoon.com](http://www.prairiemoon.com)

## Books on native plantings for birds and more:

***Bringing Nature Home*** by Doug Tallamy is a great starting point.

***Nature's Best Hope*** by Doug Tallamy – A follow-up to *\*Bringing Nature Home\**, offering more practical steps for creating wildlife-friendly landscapes.

***The Living Landscape*** by Rick Darke & Doug Tallamy – A beautifully illustrated guide to designing gardens that support ecosystems.

***Garden Revolution*** by Larry Weaner & Thomas Christopher – How to work with natural processes to create sustainable landscapes.

***The Midwest Native Plant Primer*** by Alan Branhagen – A regional guide (with broader principles) on native gardening.

***100 Plants to Feed the Birds*** by Laura Erickson

***Birdscaping in the Midwest*** – Mariette Nowak

**Pamphlet:** <https://wsobirds.org/images/pdfs/BeyondBirdFeederBookletFINAL.compressed.pdf>

## Hummingbird Hearts

The following information comes from the book *The Wet Engine* by Brian Doyle. This intriguing book includes the following information about functioning hummingbird hearts. Jim Bragg highly recommends this short book for an informative and evocative read.

Birds have four chambers in their hearts like ours but their hearts are bigger than ours, as a percentage of body weight, and beat faster than ours. A hummingbird's heart, the size of a pencil eraser, beats ten times a second. The first white explorers had never seen such creatures since the more than 300 species of them exist only in North and South America. Each one visits a thousand flowers a day. They can dive at 60 miles an hour, fly backwards, and more than 500 miles without pausing to rest in migration when they cross the Gulf of Mexico. But when they rest, they come close to death: on frigid nights or when they are starving, they retreat into torpor, their metabolic rate slowing to a fifteenth of their normal sleep rate, their hearts sludging nearly to a halt, barely beating.

Hummingbirds, like all flying birds, but more so, have incredible enormous immense ferocious metabolisms. To drive these metabolisms they have race car hearts that eat oxygen at an eye-popping rate. Their hearts are built of thinner leaner fibers than ours. Their arteries are stiffer and more taut. They have more mitochondria in their heart muscles. Anything to gulp more oxygen. Their hearts are stripped to the skin for the war against gravity and inertia, the mad search for food, the insane idea of flight. The price of their ambition is a life closer to death; they suffer heart attacks and aneurysms and ruptures more than any other living creature.

## Other Bird Club News

Reminder that bird club dues are \$18 annually per household. **Visitors are welcome at any meeting.** The usual meeting time is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month at 7 PM, but starting this May, summer meetings will vary for time and place. Members receive this Chirps newsletter with meeting details about a week or more ahead. Non-members can go to our website [www.chequamegonbirdclub.org](http://www.chequamegonbirdclub.org) to see the most recent newsletter and meeting info. We also host a Facebook page under Chequamegon Bird Club.

**April Elections** were held last month. For the next annual term, we have Joe Scott VP, Sue Vick Treasurer, and Mary Urban Secretary. The office of President is now vacant, but Scott Stalheim is serving temporarily as Acting President. A **program committee** consisting of Ron Draeger and Cathy Mauer will ensure we have a monthly program, and this helps reduce presidential duties to something very manageable, as we search for a new acting or regular president.