

ChequamegonChirps



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The third Monday in November at 7:00 P.M. will be the time and the Medford Library the place for the Chequamegon Bird Club members to have our monthly get together. Scott Stalheim, in addition to conducting the meeting, will present a program about a river trip he took with several other people that included traveling in a remote area of the Amazon Basin. The presentation will have both thoughts and visuals of different aspects of the trip. Saying the Amazon is ginormous doesn't do it justice. The current October issue of the National Geographic is devoted almost entirely to the subject. Authors describe the subject as Mysterious; Majestic; Mortal. Scott will add personal impressions.

Additional discussion will center around potential plans for next month's session and activities for a Christmas program and upcoming Christmas Bird Count plans. The "Whats Around" time could include personal migration highlights for you as well as monthly sightings.

Christmas Bird Counts

"The Christmas Bird Count is an annual tradition for birders. Beginning on Christmas Day, 1900, Frank Chapman, an ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History and early officer of the new Audubon Society proposed to count birds during the holidays rather than hunting them. This was to counter an existing hunting tradition of sports hunting competitions called "side hunts." On Christmas Day hundreds of game and non-game birds were killed in the quest to win by bringing in the largest pile of feathered and furry quarry. Birds were also being overhunted to provide feathers for the millinery trade. Twenty seven birders participated in twenty five Christmas Bird Counts which were held in places such as Toronto, Canada; Bristol, Connecticut; Central Park, New York; Pueblo, Colorado; Oberlin, Ohio; Baldwin, Louisiana; and Pacific Grove, California. Eighty nine species were recorded. **Today over 50,000 counters at more than 2,000 locations from above the Artic Circle to the southern most tip of South America participate in this Christmas Count.**"

“Due to one man’s vision, the Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations. By comparing the data over time, this count provides information on the changes in bird populations. When dramatic changes become evident, it is easier to put conservation measures in place to preserve species. For example in the 1980’s the decline of wintering black duck populations was documented and efforts were made to reduce the hunting pressure. The bird count data has documented range shifts in bird species. The Christmas Bird counts have provided the data for Audubon State of the Birds Reports, Common Birds in Decline, which includes species such as the Northern Bobwhite, Little Blue Heron, Rufus Hummingbird, and the Eastern Meadowlark. The birds on this list have lost at least half their populations in just four decades.”

The National Audubon Society in partnership with Bird Studies Canada, the North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Cornell Laboratory runs the Audubon Christmas Bird count. Volunteer citizen scientists survey birds for three weeks in December and early January. The information is submitted to a nationally based staff of scientists.”

Another source listed these five benefits if you do take part in this annual event.

You’re contributing to bird conservation. The data you collect is invaluable to bird scientists conservation efforts.

You’re getting some much-needed fresh air in the dead of winter. Simply going outside and observing nature is a welcome change of pace.

You’re getting a chance to explore your area. You may think you’ve seen everything, but the Christmas Count may show you wonders you never expected.

You’re going to learn more about birds. From IDing the birds visiting your feeders to new insights on their habits, you’ll benefit from the Christmas Bird count.

I try to give proper credit to material I have borrowed from other writers and sources. That is more diplomatic than plagiarizing which I tend to misspell anyway. In this case I didn’t find out who did the original writing—so, if you spot any glaring errors—it’s not my fault. Guess I watched too many political ads to come up with such an excuse. My bad.

Christmas counts run from December 14 to January 5. That works out nicely this year as the 14th is on a Saturday so we could have two counts done before

our monthly December meeting. The Medford count is scheduled for December 28. I don't yet have dates for our other local counts. I expect those details will be available at the November meeting. Joe Scott heads up the Medford count and he can be reached at 715-965-3498. Ken Luepke and Connie Decker organize the Spencer, Willard, and Gilman counts. Their phone numbers are 715-613-0262 and 715-654-5819 respectively. Gayle Davis can be reached at 715-678-2330 or 715-255-2348. The people who are willing to organize and do all the details for a count deserve a hearty pat on the back. That means Ken and Connie deserve a triple dose of recognition.

Every count seems to come with some unexpected birds, and unusual happenings. That's just in our local circles. Here's a few highlights from last years counts. If you are a real numbers nerd, you can go to www.audubon.org/news124th-christmas-bird-counts-species-united-states. **Six hundred sixty seven species** Six were identified along with 81 infraspecific forms and 40 exotic species. I honestly don't know what infraspecific forms and exotics includes or how they are put into such classifications, but I'd like to hear official definitions. The **Mottled Owl** at Falcon Dam State Park, TX was a new species for a U.S.CBC. The **Gray-collared Becard** and **Fan-tailed Warbler** at Brownsville, TX were also new, but they were only found during count week, not on count day. Birds can be recorded three days before and after a count day, but they can't be included in official totals. Some birds are real stinkers at doing this. This unusual to exotic bird can be seen or heard every day for a week and then hide on the official count day.causing teeth gnashing and frustration among people who were going to have a great find.

Only one CBC can have the most species in the country, but many counts of the species. The 2023 season 45 states 388 CBCs had the highest count at least one species. Here are some numbers picked out of various counts. Canada Goose 32,126 (MD, St. Michaels) Common Goldeneye 14,462 (WI, New Franken) Ruffed Grouse 63 (MN, Isabella) Sharp-shinned Hawk 23 (CA Point Reyes Pennisula) Coopers Hawk (79 AZ Tucson Valley) Bald Eagle 1,058 (AK Chilkat) Rough-legged Hawk 59(MN Baudette) Eurasian Collared Dove 4,394 (AZ Phoenix-Tres Rios) Great Horned Owl 134 Snowy Owl (WI Green Bay) Barred Owl 47 (FL Avon Park) Red-bellied Woodpecker 722 (OH Wilmot) Downy Woodpecker 275 (OH Wilmot) Pileated Woodpecker 163 (MD Seneca) American Crow 36,084 (IA Keokuk) Black-capped-Chickadee 3,213 (NY Ithica) Snow Bunting 550 (MN Hendricks) American Robin 121,662 (MA Mid Cape Cod) Red-winged Blackbird 1,100,010 (TX Lake Mer)

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Club contacts

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November and December Happenings

Full moons Nov 15 and Dec 15

Winter Equinox Dec 21

Birds in Art exhibit still open

Stay safe during deer season

Enjoy the holiday blessings

Political ads are finally over



"TIME FOR THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AGAIN ALREADY?"