



Chequamegon Chirps



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The Chequamegon Bird Club will meet Monday, October 21 at the Stetsonville Centennial Hall. Social hour starts at 5:00 PM with dinner at 6:00 PM followed by a 6:30 PM presentation by Samantha Brooks of REGI (Raptor Education Group Inc.) from Antigo. This will include live hawks, owls, and falcons. The program is geared for anyone from experienced birders to children and beginning birders. There will be a door for all meal purchasers and raffle tickets available for a beautiful 16" X 20" real-photo art picture by Cerley Plautz of the Steeple Gallery in Dorchester.

MIGRATION CONTINUES

Volume has diminished but the impressiveness of migration is still there. Late departures while early arrivals can add spice to any day as later migrants pass overhead both night and day. Different species travel in their own particular way as some mix together, others dribble along in their own particular way and a few travel in huge masses such as broad-winged hawks of boggling numbers.

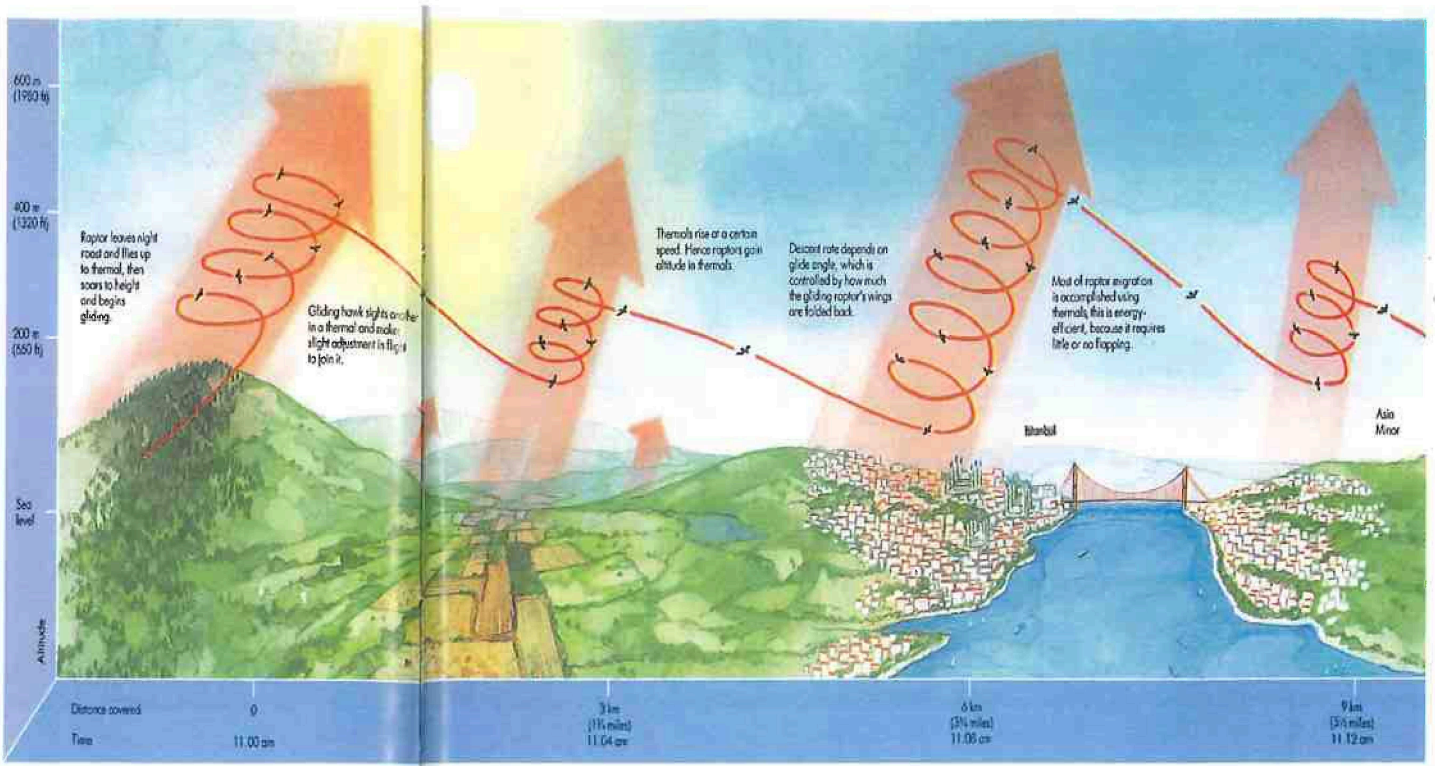
Last week a friend and I were able to spend parts of two days at Hawk Ridge in Duluth. We missed out on the major broad-winged hawk numbers passing which is a real feast or famine occurrence. Here are their recorded numbers for ten days starting September 15th-2, 16th-3, 17th-1, 18th-0, 19th-2, 20th-15,657, 21st-20, 22nd-5,465, 23rd-130, 24th-19. September 15, 2003 recorded 101,698 broad wings for the largest one day species total at Hawk Ridge. Sometimes numbers don't do a topic justice, but in this case...wow.

Hawk Ridge, which has an outstanding website, posts yearly, monthly, daily, and even hourly totals from August through November. You can get addicted to such a site which has to be more mentally healthy than watching current political ads.

Raptors use thermals extensively for migration. These are rising warm air elevators that make travel more efficient. Bodies of water don't provide such assistance. When migration paths come to a large body of water such as Lake Superior or Michigan, they don't want to travel over it. Offshore winds provide updraft and land provides thermals which makes their travel more efficient. Broadwings nest to the north and overwinter in Central and Northern South America. If they are coming from central Canada, they tend to drift to the south-east until they come to Lake Superior and then stay over land which brings them over Hawk Ridge where professional observers with amazing skills record their passing. Hawk Ridge is just one of the major raptor passing and counting areas in the United States. At only a four-hour drive or so from Medford, it is well worth the trip. If you want to travel further, the Isthmus of Panama funnels bird traffic over land to a few miles as they travel from one America to the other. Bodies of water direct migration between Africa, Europe, and Asia for other spectacular viewing experiences if you want to mesh world travel with your birding experiences.

There are a couple of upcoming programs about raptors and cranes that will soon be held that would require a dollar and time investment while providing outstanding learning experiences. HMANA (hawk migration association of North America) will hold its 50th anniversary November 7-10 in Duluth that will feature international speakers and many field trips.

Crane meetings, information galore, field trips and a festival are all available in the remainder of this month and into November at Baraboo and nearby sites. Google cranes and Baraboo. You will find a wealth of information. Personal bias here. Wouldn't the National Crane Foundation at Baraboo be a memorable field trip? I think it is the only location in the world that has live birds of all 15 crane species.



David E. Rowley/Planet Earth Pictures

◀ Each year a steady stream of raptors, including the Broad-winged Hawk, passes down the Isthmus of Panama. One year more than 2.5 million raptors were counted meticulously from photographs. Later studies from aircraft revealed passage of some species around midday in certain clouds not visible from the ground, and so missed by the camera.

of 28 species were counted passing Eilat.

location every day for an entire season of two or

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OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER HAPPENINGS

Full moons Oct 17 and Nov 15

Full leaf color fades

More northern light shows?

First snow?

There are only two known locations where over a million passing raptors can be recorded in a single season.

These are Eilat in southern Israel and the Panama Canal in Central