

Chequamegon Chirps



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Spring Meeting

A couple qualifications or disclaimers with the title of this paragraph. Spring? Really? Single digits on the thermometer and complete snow cover looks as if we got Christmas and Easter switched around. At least day length and sun angle are more representative of the time of year. To go along with this juxtaposition of events, we will try to hold the April meeting via internet since we are under self-quarantine due to the human version of Bird Flu. This session will be at 7 P.M. on Monday, April 20. To participate, you will need to go to the Chequamegon Bird Club face book site and hopefully, things will work out. If you have any questions you can call Joe Scott at 715-965-3498. The site is chequamegonbirdclub.org Good luck and with any questions, Contact Joe or just about any other club member except me because my computer literacy skills are way at the bottom of any learning curve. My stone tablet still works, why change?

Random Musings

Thirty days and counting. I find I'm talking to myself—and losing arguments. Teetering on the edge of sanity (or possibly insanity) becomes a balancing act with some days better than others. Self-isolation can be a challenging opportunity or a downhill drag. A time to catch up on too long put off projects if you are now unemployed. I'm assuming most of our members are not much impacted in this way since many of us are retired or self-employed. Even introverts find the lack of social contacts tiresome as the days go by. The circumstances have to be that much more difficult for extroverts. House and living conditions with multiple generations may have great opportunities for together time that can be wonderful to stressful. Maybe both extremes will be present in the same days. Phone calls, internet connections and letters among other things give us the opportunity for connections with friends and acquaintances that we can't do in the degree we would prefer. Take care, be well.

An oddball true bit of useless information. Several people were recently arrested in Hungary for not wearing face masks—in a nudist camp. I can understand why, but the mental picture of that tickles my funny bone.

What's Around

Since we won't be together physically for the April meeting—and probably more than that, I thought it would be interesting if we would find out about some of the birds around, including what might be different this year. As long as monthly meetings are cancelled, this will become a regular Chirps feature. If you weren't contacted this time, I'll try again next month or please contact me with information you could add to future issues. My phone is 715-223-7389.

Our regular feeder visitors who continue to keep us company in our yard include Chickadees, White and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Cardinals, Blue Jays, Downy, Hairy Red-bellied Pileated Woodpeckers, House Sparrows, Mourning Doves and Juncos plus some others who are only sometimes seen. Now the numbers are shifting as a general movement increases that will soon become a flood. In my own yard, Gold Finches are now back with some of the males showing bright yellow plumage in early stages. It appears there are different Juncos eating under the feeders and they have been joined by Fox Sparrows and Tree Sparrows coming through. Robins are plentiful, but nothing like what Connie observed in Dorchester on Monday, April 13. She estimated there were as many as one thousand Robins around her house in a three square block area. Has anyone else observed such a concentration of this red-breasted harbinger? Now in her yard are Robins, Grackles, Cowbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds, Fox Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, Goldfinches, and a pair of nesting Wood Ducks. There are already eight eggs with more expected. Connie plans to set up a game camera to hopefully catch the successful exit of ducklings from the box in her yard in a little over a month.

Betty and Mike were visiting Picnic Point at Moneaux last week and were treated to seeing Mergansers, Wood Ducks, Sandhill Cranes, Ravens and Ruffed Grouse among other common birds. Also, she saw a group of 16 Turkey Vultures over the Mill Pond.

Speaking of the Mill Pond, Chris saw Hooded Mergansers there and commented on the beauty of two pairs of Cardinals after the Easter snow. Teri, too, mentioned seeing a Cardinal in her yard March 26 and having Goldfinches return March 31.

Joe has heard Song Sparrows in addition to observing Cowbirds, Grackles and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Cathy has seen or heard Purple Finches, Phoebes, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers including three different Pileated Woodpeckers in her yard at one time.

Claire and Bob have migrated back north to be greeted by northern weather. Soon feeders were filled and life is returning to normal for them, at least as much as can be in our self-isolation regimen. She had Wild Birds Unlimited deliver feed for her winged

visitors to provide a banquet of goodies for Robins, Hermit Thrush, Phoebe, Tree Sparrow, Juncos, Bluebirds, Flicker and Yellow-rumped Warbler. She offers dried fruit, sunflower seed and meal worms which were hugely popular, especially when scattered on several patches of lawn after shoveling away the snow.

Hildegard has seen a Canada Goose and Wood Duck on her pond as well as feeding other individuals on her window sills such as Juncos, Song Sparrows, Chickadees and Robins. She also mentioned how a grey squirrel discovered a dried out pumpkin pie and devoured every last crumb of it in a short time. If you are feeling stressed and would like to relax on a bench in a peaceful place, remember the Kuse Nature Preserve welcomes all visitors with a special invitation for club members.

Ken travels rural roads daily with his work so he has the opportunity to record many birds and species. Some of his observations are before and after our current snow cover. Now he is seeing 50 to 60 Snipe daily along with Woodcock, Killdeer, Meadowlarks, and a few Rusty Blackbirds. One day he observed six Lapland Longspurs. On April 10 he saw a flock of 30 Yellow-rumped Warblers and on other days many Robins are coming through. At his feeders or near his yard there have been Brown Creepers, Fox Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Tree Swallows, Juncos, Cow Birds and Red-winged Blackbirds. His ponds have attracted or he has recorded other wetland species in the area such as Greater Yellowlegs, Loons, Pelicans, Cormorants, Red-necked Grebe, Buffleheads, Tundra Swans, Blue-winged Teal, Loons, Widgeons, and Lesser Scaup.

This isn't a complete list of all recorded species by these members. Also, I didn't contact as many members as I would have liked to get a more complete listing. Will try again next month, hopefully in a more timely and organized fashion.

Hummingbirds—A few fun facts

Our only hummingbird east of the Mississippi is almost always the Ruby-throated. However there are seven species in the western US with four nesting as far north as Canada. They are Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Calliope, with the Rufous going as far north as Alaska. All together here are 319 species in the Western Hemisphere. For such a tiny bird, they do have some large numbers attached to them considering their size. Scientists have measured certain species: Diving at 385 body lengths a second, comparatively speedier than a Peregrine Falcon. Migrating 78 million body lengths per trip, relatively farther than an Artic Tern. Burning energy at a faster rate than almost any vertebrate—a human might need 150,000 calories a day to compete.

Editor Chequamegon Chirps

103633 Fence Road

Abbotsford, WI 54405

Club Contacts

Website: Chequamegonbirdclub.org

Information: info@chequamegonbirdclub

Newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Bird sightings: connie1@charter.net

April and May Events

Full Moons April 8 and May 7

The progression of spring events will continue without regard to whatever restrictions we are asked to follow. That is a reassuring fact in troubled times.

Hoppy Spring

