

Chequamegon Chirps



The next meeting will be an outdoor session, weather permitting. More about that in a bit. It will be at Ken Luepke's place which is on the road just north of Spencer east to 103058 on Eau Pleine Road which is about a mile and a half on the north side. Start time will be 7:00 P.M. with the business meeting followed hopefully by seeing some shorebirds that are migrating through such as greater and lesser yellowlegs, pectoral sandpipers, solitary sandpipers and egrets. Sandhill cranes, Canada geese, mallards and teal come in the pond area around sunset. Others such as bob-o-links could well be there for a total of more than fifteen species. Some otter have been using the pond now which would be another treat to see. If it is raining or threatening to storm, the meeting will be cancelled. If you are in doubt about the situation, call Ron Draeger 715-659-5182 or Nadine Willett 715-207-1913.

Some ten plus years ago, Ken started the paperwork to develop a pond and wetland area on his farm of 12 acres which included a wet area and tillable farmland. Planning and clearance took nearly two years before ground moving started. The end result is mostly a shallow water area with one end going down ten feet where fish can overwinter. The pond depth is regulated by removable culvert plates of Ken's design that weren't approved at the time, but since have become a standard practice for current DNR projects.

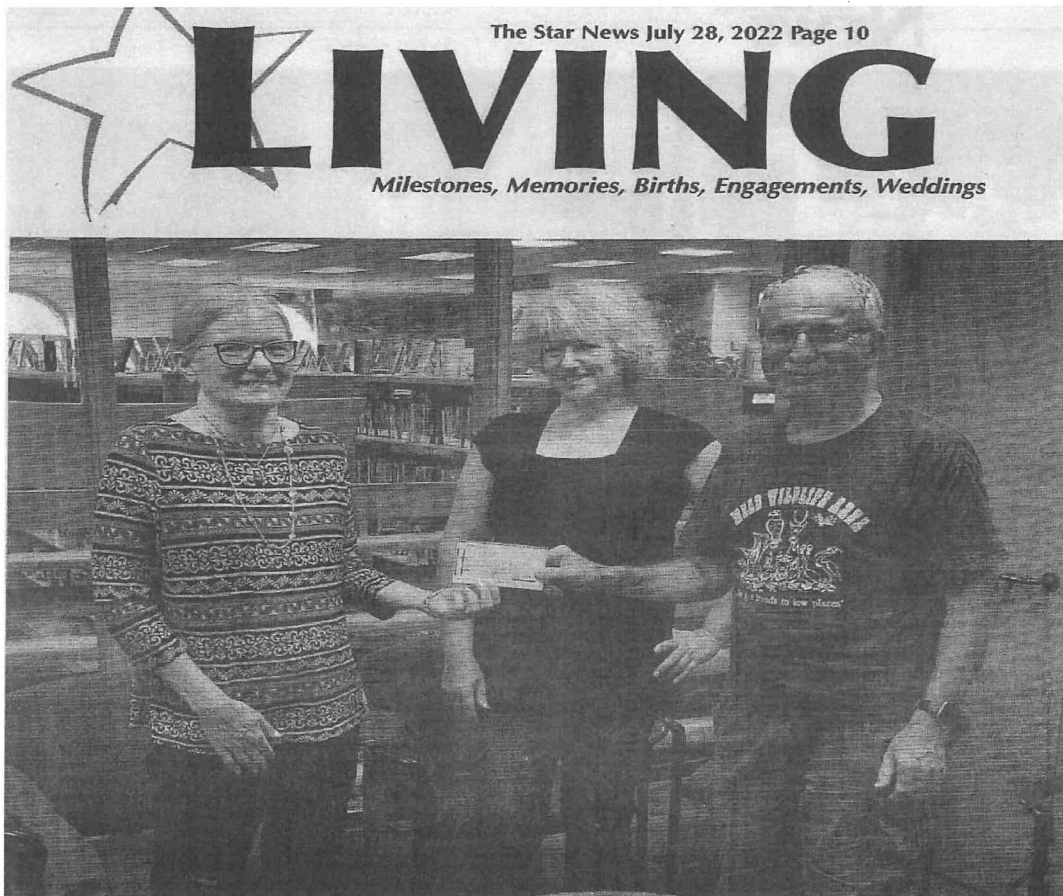
Cranes prefer overnighting in water 15 to 18 inches deep which can be kept fairly constant even with wide variations in rainfall such as we are having now. Currently there are some 40 sandhill cranes spending nights at the pond and these numbers will increase to as many as 700 as they gather prior to their final push south. While not present now, whooping cranes have also visited this wetland area.

The shallow slopes provide good mud conditions which attracts migrating shorebirds. Phalaropes and Wilson's sandpipers have already left. Since being constructed, Ken has recorded over 115 visiting species that includes white faced ibis, marbled godwits and avocets. All are a remarkable tribute to Ken's contribution to and support of area wildlife.

July meeting highlights

The meeting had 15 participants in spite of no email version of the Chirps sent out until after the meeting. Sorry about that. The evening started out with a short walk that came up with these species: eastern kingbird, Baltimore oriole, song sparrow, American goldfinch, mallard, Canada goose, hairy woodpecker, cedar waxwing, red-bellied woodpecker, northern cardinal, broad-winged hawk, chimney swift, blue-jay, killdeer, yellow-bellied sapsucker, indigo bunting, mourning dove, wood duck, pigeon and swallow (tree).

The meeting at the library was limited by an 8:00 P.M. closing which continued outside for the Whats Around part. Peggy Stalheim had done groundwork checking up on the six backpacks the club had produced and donated to Medford, Gilman, Rib Lake, Colby, Abbotsford and Dorchester Libraries. She was given permission to spend up to \$400 to update and replace missing equipment for the backpacks if necessary. It looks as if an annual banquet will be feasible this year. Volunteers would be appreciated to make necessary arrangements for this event.



Sarah Buehler and Elyn Bartelt presented a donation of \$1,000 to the Chequamegon Bird Club at their meeting on July 18. The donation was given in the name of their parents, Kenneth and Valerie McRoberts who were original members of the club in the early 80s. Money will go towards the bird club's booth and related expenses at the annual Taylor County Youth Expo. SUBMITTED

Educational gift in memory of former members

The evening was unique in that Sarah Buehler of Thorp and Ellyn Bartlet of Rhinelander attended to present a \$1,000 donation to the club to sponsor educational activities for area 3rd to 5th grade students. This dovetails beautifully with club support of Taylor County Youth Day and will provide funds for several years of the 5th graders who attend annually. The genesis of this generous gift comes from the charter membership of their parents, Kenneth and Valerie McRoberts. They involved Sarah and Ellyn plus their other five children in club activities including fieldtrips. Ellyn mentioned recently finding a Backyard Bird poster she had submitted many years ago. They mentioned how there were always bird feeders around their Medford home and binoculars so everyone could practice identification skills. These activities have now continue on to Kenneth and Valerie's grandchildren and great-grandchildren. What a neat legacy to pass on to descendents.

This is an outstanding example of continuing education Sam Robbins started in 1982 when he moved to Medford and provided the spark for the organization of the Chequemagon Bird Club. Thank you Sam, the McRoberts Family and all others who have passed on your education lore of birds here and wherever else it leads.

Caspian Tern Disaster

Bird flu-Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza- is killing Lake Michigan Caspian terns by the hundreds. This species is considered threatened in Michigan and endangered in Wisconsin. The bird's population was growing with a 2018 peak of about 10,000 Caspian terns in the Great Lakes region. They nest very close together on Lake Michigan islands which promotes the spread of this disease. It is estimated that 64 % of adults died on islands off of Door County. That means their chicks will be lost also. It isn't known why they are so susceptible while other close nesting birds suffer losses, but not to nearly the same degree with one exception which is double-crested cormorants. I haven't heard anything if this has been an issue for area nesting birds. Further studies will help to determine how profound these losses are.

Editor

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August and September Events

Full moons: Sturgeon 8-12

Corn or Harvest moon 9-10

Perseids showers will continue

Through the month. Peak August 13

Google EarthSky for best times

American Goldfinches nesting

Caspian Tern

Sterna caspia

