

Chequamegon Chirps



December 18, 2023 Volume 41 Number 12

The December meeting/Christmas party will be Monday the 18th 7:00 P.M. at the Medford Library. There will be a thing or two of business, but it should be minor. More emphasis will be on a silent auction, trivia contest and seasonal treats. Members are encouraged to bring something chewable and officers will provide liquid refreshments.

A short Zoom session will cover our discussion at the beginning in particular we want input on thoughts for future electronic attendance. The spliced together Zoom sessions were awkward last month, partly because we had to splice four sessions to get it all covered. Those attending via Zoom, see the link in your email, or contact an officer for it.

The Wisconsin Birds Field Checklist will be available for anyone to list all birds identified within Wisconsin during 2023. If you are not at the meeting, you could send your information to a club contact listed on page four. Silent auction items should be along bird and nature lines. Sales income will be used for potential club projects. Speaking of dollars, a new year brings the need to renew memberships. Those are \$18 for an individual, couple, or family. It is a case of the more the merrier, at the same price. You may pay at the meeting or send payment to Treasurer Betty Danen at 663 North 2nd Street, Medford. WI 54451.

The Chirps is going out a few days earlier than usual to be printed by my reliable angel. This gives you a chance to make a last minute connection to one or more of the five area Audubon Christmas bird counts. Arranging coverage areas in these fifteen mile diameter circles is a complicated and sometimes messy business for the organizers. At this late date it wouldn't be practical to arrange an area for you. However, it may be possible for you to ride along with other counters. This has a couple advantages. An extra set of eyes and ears is always helpful when counting birds and you get to spend some enjoyable hours with other enthusiastic birders which leads to memorable experiences. Your contacts would be Connie Decker 715-654-5819 or connied1@charter.net for the counts of Spencer-Thursday,

December 14th, Willard-Friday, December 29th and Gilman-Tuesday, January 2nd. Joe Scott 715-965-3498 or joeyramon1@yahoo.com for Medford-Saturday, December 16th and Gail Davis 715-678-2330 or 715-255-2348 or hummmnbrd@gmail.com for Owen-Wednesday, December 20th. Highlights of the Spencer and Medford counts will be available at the next meeting.

Lifetime Highlights by Gail Davis

The following is a write-up Gail did after two memorable fieldtrips this fall.

“You have likely heard of a ‘beer chaser’? The beer is meant to chase the liquor consumed prior so as to enhance the flavor of the liquor. I became a ‘bird chaser’ on two occasions recently and both experiences greatly enhanced my life of birding! And there was no handover involved!”

“Having freed up my schedule recently by retiring (yahoo), I thought: ‘What the heck?’ when five American flamingos seemed to be settling down at Petenwell Lake near Necedah. I was rarely a chaser, but *flamingos*? That’s a whole ‘nuther level of necessity to chase! So off I went on October 2nd, loaded with scope, binocs, and field guides (could I possibly fail to recognize ginormous pink birds?). Arriving on scene, numerous birders were already there, while the first I encountered was leaving, and he said: ‘We didn’t find them.’ Deep sigh. Was I to be disappointed? Moments after I was set up, the birds were spotted! Three pink adults and two gray juvys, feeding about a mile to the north, inaccessible by boat. My scope confirmed the little blobs of color, and at one point, the birds flew up to shift location a tad, and I clearly saw the black on pink wings. After viewing blobs for a while, I left and stopped at Sandhill SWA, driving the touring road throughout the complex. Highlights there were eight Great Egrets and four Red-headed Woodpeckers, two adult and their kids.”

“After successfully chasing a rare bird species, I wondered if luck would continue to side with me if I chased the Ancient Murrelet that showed up in Sturgeon Bay. Inspired by recent success, as well as the extreme rarity of the murrelet in Wisconsin, I decided to go for it on Saturday, November 26th, driving the three-and-a-half hours to Sturgeon Bay. I arrived at the parking lot of George K Pinney county park, the exact gps location posted by the many birders who had observed the

murrelet. Only two other cars were present, no one was outside their cars, and I feared the worst. Surely on a Saturday the lot would be jammed with observers if the bird was still around. I looked to the south of the parking lot along the Sturgeon Bay shoreline where the murrelet had been reliably seen all week long, usually within feet of the shoreline. No murrelet, only mergansers. Deep sigh. The other two cars had left. The high wind was just a given'er, the water was heaving and waves were crashing, and I could not find the bird. I phoned Cathy and asked if she saw and current sightings on the rare bird alert. Asw she checked,I drove up Bay Shore Dr, thinking perhaps Id find a crowd of birders congregated somewhere, but no luck. Cathy called back, the bird had been seen 30 minutes prior to my arrival at the 'usual' location. I returned and scanned and scanned. Other birders started arriving. We all scanned and scanned. Several of us decided to give it up after 30 minutes, and as we talked about our sad failure, I scanned one last time. Suddenly, there on top of a swell, was the Ancient Murrelet!! I hollered 'GOT HIM' to everyone. The sense of joy we all had was nearly palpable! We all walked to the south to be nearer to the bird, and I spent the next hour watching this tiny little alcid pop up on the water every minute or two, giving us tantalizingly-brief looks, not 20-30 feet away. With this species, usual range being the North Pacific Ocean/Bering Sea, the bird we were viewing was only the seventh Aincient Murrelet to appear in Wisconsin, and five of the other six were soon-dead or dead when found. I was so happy to see this little bird that was making history! This website has a brief history of the murrelet in Wisconsin, as well as photos. The bird was in winter plumage while here: <https://ebird.org/species/ancmur/US-WI>."

"A I was leaving, having sufficiently frozen my hands thanks to the cold northwest wind coming off the water, I saw a new arrival on the water, and viewed a Horned Grebe in winter plumage, something I had not seen before. The stark contrast of the black and white made it as beautiful as its breeding plumage!"

"I drove the 3.5 hours home, reveling in my success, and enjoying the sense of camaraderie that was shared by strangers, all connected by the love of birds and the magic of a rare species."

editor

103633 Fence Road

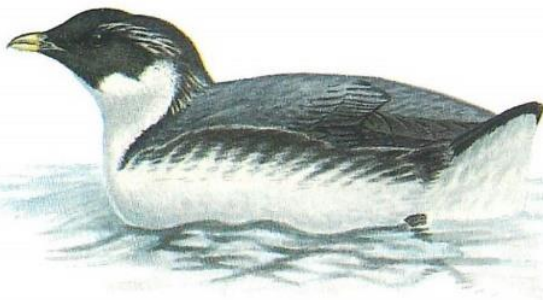
Abbotsford, WI 54405

Club contacts

Website: Chequamegonbirdclub.org

Information: Info@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org



Ancient Murrelet

Synthliboramphus antiquus

When ancient murrelet chicks are two or three days old, their parents summon them to sea with piping calls. Within minutes all the young in the colony rush to the water to join the adults.

Recognition. 9½–10½ in. long. Breeding adult gray above; underparts white; crown and face black with white eyebrow. Winter adult similar, but lacks white eyebrow.

Habitat. Open ocean and coastal cliffs.

Nesting. Builds no nest. Single white egg, sometimes spotted with gray or lilac, laid in hollow under tussock of grass or among rocks. Incubation 33–36 days, by both sexes. Young downy; leaves nest a few days after hatching and swims out to sea with parents.

Food. Crustaceans, squid, and marine insects.