

Chequamegon Chirps



June 15, 2020 Volume 39 Number 6

Covid 19 continues to mess up our plans and what we would like to be doing. However, activities continue on in a modified and fairly successful way as we adjust to a new normal. The June meeting will take place via Zoom at 7:00 P.M. on the usual third Monday of the month which is June 15. Last month had about 12 to 15 participants and there is room for more this time. As before, zoom on over to this website and follow the necessary directions to participate in the meeting. www.chequamegonbirdclub.org Joe will make a presentation on how to squirrel proof your bird feeders. Is this really possible? Some squirrels have advance degrees in engineering and physics. They have spies who can tap into the web. Several may participate in this meeting. Beware if you notice some unfamiliar faces with prominent teeth making odd suggestions. Squirrels, in addition to being fantastic acrobats, are super sneaky. Good luck Joe. Another meeting topic will be is if it will be feasible to have a picnic for the July or August meeting.

If it isn't squirrels or chipmunks, raccoons and bears just don't empty feeders, they vandalize to absolutely destroy them. Then there is a berserk bluebird. That sounds extreme, but talk to Judy Rau and she will tell you about one attacking many of her windows non-stop for weeks. Usually when a bird is banging on a window, it is a robin or cardinal and only on one specific window for a week. What to do? Hire a squirrel?

There should be interesting input for What's Around. Here are a few tidbits that members mentioned when I called to see what they have observed since the last meeting. Sue Vick said she now has more time to do birding because of Corvid 19 cancellations. With visits to McMillan and Mead wildlife areas, some of her recent finds include a Tennessee Warbler, American Red Start, Common Yellow-throated Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Veery, and White Pelican. Her ID skills have been helped by using the phone app *allaboutbirds.org\guide*. Sue also has participated in a group activity of birders in the Marshfield area led by Doug and Martha Lee. He is a retired doctor and as a group they have done some activities that Sue could explain in greater detail than what I have here.

A partial list of more bird highlights include Cathy Mauer seeing a Scarlet Tanager, Norma Smoje has the company of Bobolinks and a pair of Brown Thrashers with a juvenal coming to her feeders in addition to Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Baltimore Orioles. Joe Scott, when he isn't plotting against squirrels, has observed American Redstarts, Double-crested Cormorant, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Yellow-throated Vireo and Warbling Vireo. Jayne Gulbrand, who isn't a club member, had this impressive posting from a couple morning hours at the Horicon Marsh area on June 8. She recorded Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Black and Foresters Terns, Yellow Warbler, Great Blue Heron, many Yellow Headed Blackbirds, Common Yellowthroat, Redstarts, Eastern Wood Pewee, Least, Willow and Alder Flycatchers, White Pelican, Black-necked Stilt, Ibis, Killdeer, Great-crested Flycatcher, Blue-winged Teal, Cormorants, Turkey Vultures, Oriole, Red-breasted Grosbeaks, Sedge and Marsh Wrens and Sandhill Cranes. Wetlands are great places to bird as long as you take tick and other bug precautions.

The Wonder of Rainbows

On Tuesday, June 2 there was a huge and beautiful rainbow at sunset. I talked to both Connie and Terri who also observed this spectacular event that evening and we compared notes on what we had seen. Connie, who lives nearly 3 ½ miles west of me saw a single rainbow while I saw a full double rainbow with the top one more faint. Terri, who lives about 2 ½ miles east saw both. Terri and I took photos, but they didn't do justice to what we had seen. The problem, too, with my camera was I couldn't get the whole rainbow in one shot. It was just too large in addition to not picking up the color intensities that were evident at that time.

I hope my writing about something in nature that doesn't pertain to birds won't offend you. If you would rather have me concentrate solely on bird information, let me know and I'll try to wander less in future newsletters. But for this issue, here's some rainbow information that you may or may not know.

There is no pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. That is pretty obvious—I think. Don't know where or how that myth got started. It sure would come in handy though. A lesser known fact is that rainbows are an optical illusion, similar to a mirage. They are formed when light rays pass through moisture in the atmosphere. This moisture is usually rain, but can be fog, mist or water spray. This why you can sometimes see rainbows by a waterfall or even by a lawn sprinkler. The sun angle

is critical in that it needs to be at 40 to 42 degrees. When white light from the sun passes through raindrops refraction occurs as this light separates into different wavelengths which our eyes perceive as separate colors. What we see is unique to humans as different species perceive colors or wave lengths differently. Red has the longest waves and violet the shortest. Our eyes distinguish seven different colors, but the wave lengths are continuous so there is debate as to how many colors there are in a rainbow. Humans like things to be organized so someone came up with the mnemonic **Roy G. Biv**. Those letters stand for the sequence of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Remember Roy G. Biv and you can impress friends with this bit of knowledge. Technically, rainbows don't have stripes since there is a continuous change of color from red to violet. These colors are always in the same sequence with red on top down to violet on the bottom. If there is a second rainbow, its colors will be reversed in this sequence and they aren't as bright.

There is a lot of physics and specific conditions involved in building a rainbow and where it is located. Most are in the east in late afternoon or early evening near sunset, but they can be in the west at sunrise. They never occur from mid-morning or mid-afternoon. An interesting fact is that at rare times a complete circle of color can be seen if you are high enough on a mountain or flying. My son-in-law who has been a pilot for 30 years has seen this phenomena a couple of times. Sounds odd to me, but that would go along the fact that after all rainbows are optical illusions. That doesn't lessen their impact of beauty in our eyes and souls.

Territory Defense

Almost all species of birds establish a territory and defend aggressively against intruders, especially of their own species. This can range in size from a few square feet for colony nesting birds to many miles for Golden Eagles. There are different kinds of territories that may be just mating areas while others include nests and feeding areas. The defense, while usually by males, can also be by females. Sometimes birds can attack a window reflection thinking it is a rival. In 1894 a pair of bluebirds nested in a birdhouse attached to an outhouse which had a window. "At almost any hour of the day from spring until early summer the male could be seen fluttering and pecking against this window" according John Burrows. Outhouses are now mostly gone, but the powers of love and reproduction continue as strong as ever.

Editor Chequamegon Chirps

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June and July Events

Full moons June 5 and July 5

Summer Solstice June 20

Juveniles learning about their world

Turtles laying eggs

Fawns exploring a new world

Stay safe and continue to enjoy nature

