

Chequamegon Chirps



October 16, 2023 Volume 41 Number 10

Chequamegon Bird Club members and guests will resume our annual fall banquet tradition on Monday, October 16 at the Stetsonville Centennial Hall located at 412 East Centennial Ave, (Highway A) Stetsonville. The social gathering will begin at 5:00 with the meal at 6:00 and speaker Steve Betchkal at 7:00ish.

Feathered Celebrities

It was a wow! Year for Wisconsin birds before the flamingos arrived on September 22 in Port Washington. They became a news sensation that caused traffic to accumulate where police interaction became necessary. "By Friday afternoon, word had gotten out and bird enthusiasts from throughout the state descended on South Beach, parking pretty much where they could and running to the shore to get a glimpse of history in the making." The stars tolerated the paparazzi atmosphere, or were possibly just physically exhausted. They were near a swimming beach/city park accessible by car which soon became a significant traffic jam. Its speculated the birds were caught up in hurricane Idalia which brought them a long way north and they have continued to wander north. After one day they traveled west and last I've heard, they were in the Wisconsin Dells area then Petenwell Lake area. There should be more updates about their location and how they are doing at our October 16th gathering.

The flamingos were at Port Washington for only one day, but left the city with precious memories that some residents and businesses are working to commemorate. Tellos Grill and Catering has rolled out the pink Port Washington Flamingo cocktail, Cupcake-a-Rhee was selling pink flamingo cupcakes and T-shirts celebrating the visit are being sold online. City Hall is fielding a number of suggestions, from renaming south beach Flamingo Beach to a resolution declaring September 22 Flamingo Day in Port Washington.

Even before the flamingos stole the show, there had been plenty of celebrity sightings in Wisconsin this year even though there had been only one first time confirmation within the state and that was a flame-colored tanager in April in

Milwaukee County. A roseate spoonbill, which drew birders to the Ken Euers Nature Area in Green Bay was recorded in Wisconsin 178 years ago. The other stars have included the limpkin, painted redstart and white-tailed kite. Three kite species—the Mississippi Swallow-tailed and white-tailed were in state at the same time in 2023. Another bird of prey, the black vulture, also was recorded in the state. Red crossbills, typically far north, showed up in state this summer. Mark Korducki, former chairman of the WSO records committee, commented, “That several factors are likely contributors such as climate change, severe weather events, increased number of birders and improved technologies such as digital photography and social media.” While this years “firsts” have received a great deal of publicity, there were six in 2000, four in 2002, four in 2011, and three each in 2018 and 2020 according to WSO records.



Lots of love for flamingos in Port

Two of the five flamingos that made history in Port Washington came together to form a heart shape with their long necks while wading in the warm Lake Michigan water just off Port Washington's south beach on Friday, Sept. 22. It was the first time flamingos had been seen in Wisconsin and the farthest north they have ever been recorded. See page 1B for a story on the birds' visit and the excitement they caused.

Photo by Bill Schanen IV

Cute, Endearing, and Amazing

“Our backyard chickadees are common, everyday birds that fill me with wonder. Several studies have shown that in severe winters, chickadees with access to feeders have higher survival rates than those who do not. Even in northern winters, about half the food chickadees eat is animal—mostly insect pupae and eggs but also fat from suet and dead animals they encounter.”

“Chickadees know the best spots to find food, water, and shelter and where predators lurk. They’re found in a wide range of habitats and have no objection to other songbirds and small woodpeckers associating with them. Small wonder warblers, vireos, kinglets, and other birds migrating through unfamiliar areas gravitate to chickadees.”

“To survive frigid nights in northern Canada and Alaska chickadees turn down the thermostat while roosting: Their body temperature drops an average of 20 degrees F and sometimes more. They awake shivering violently, that muscle action warming them to their 107 F or so. Minnesota’s all-time cold-temperature record, -60 F, was set in the town of Tower on February 2, 1996. One man who studied the forecast spent the night in a well-provisioned snow cave to boast he had survived the coldest night ever, emerged to news cameras and microphones. I watched coverage on the evening news, hearing chickadees calling and singing in the background, but not one reporter mentioned them.”

“The black-capped chickadee’s ability to cache food and remember where hundreds of morsels are hidden is astonishing. Chickadee brains have a large hippocampus to store spatial memories. Medical researchers have learned that every autumn, a great many chickadee brain neurons die, to be replaced with new ones right when they are caching food at the highest rate. Even the oldest chickadees add new memories every year, yet they hold onto some unused memories for a surprising long time. For years I handfed mealworms to my backyard chickadees from my home office window, until I spent three winters in Ithaca, New York. The moment I cranked open that window on my return, two chickadees flew to my hand.”

“When I’m down and troubled, I can count on my backyard chickadees to engage my sense of wonder and restore my spirit.” This information is from an article in *Birdwatching* by Laura Erickson, 2014 recipient of the American Birding Association’s highest honor, the Roger Tory Peterson Award.

editor

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October and November events

October 28 Hunter's moon

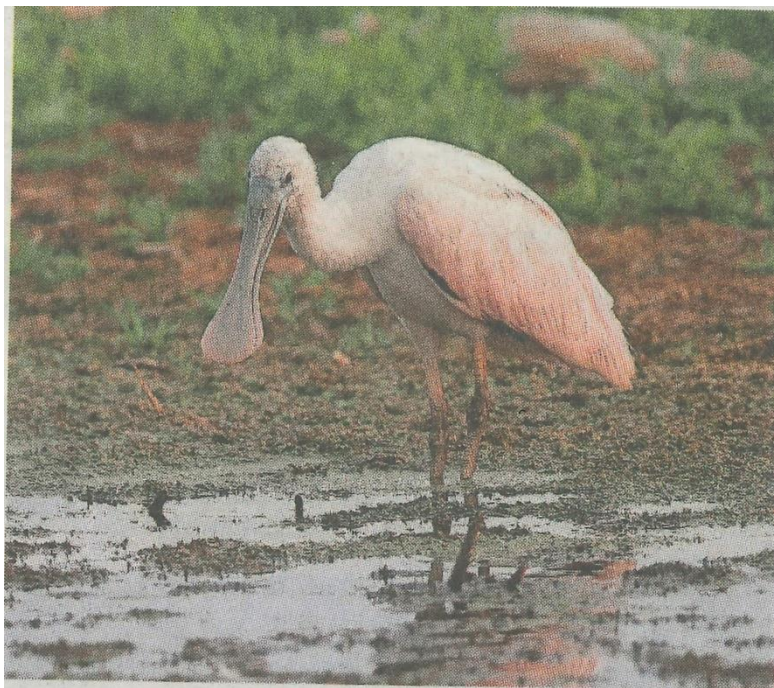
November 27 Beaver's moon

Bird's In Art LYW Wausau

Increased road traffic by deer

Winter bird residents arriving

Dig out winter clothing



A roseate spoonbill, pictured at Ken Euers Nature Area in Green Bay, hasn't been seen in Wisconsin in 178 years. SARAH KLOEPPING/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN