

# Chequamegon Chirps



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## Another Zoom Session

Monday, September 21 at 7P.M. will be gathering around time at your computers to participate in another club meeting. Joe will give some of the highlights of his recent month long excursion to California as a firefighter. A personal perspective of any disaster is so much more meaningful than what we hear and see on news programs. Thanks to Nadine, you can make the connection by going to the [chequamegonbirdclub.org](http://chequamegonbirdclub.org) website. One topic of the meeting will be to decide what to do about an annual banquet. Yes? No? Or some other variation of these choices? Input is appreciated. Since the meeting will occur in the last few hours of summer 2020, what were some of your summer highlights and what do you most look forward to with the official start of fall beginning on the 22<sup>nd</sup>? Again—participation is helpful.

## Odds and Ends

**Snowy Owls** will be the topic for a program on Channel 20.2 on Sunday, September 20 at 7 P.M. Two times I have posted bird programs on channel 20 and both were changed. Hopefully the third time will be the charm. As a follow up on the Wild! Series on September 27, also at 7P.M. on 20.2 will be a program titled **Raptors**. Other programs along bird and animal themes on Public Television have been spectacular with amazing photography.

Hummingbirds have gathered in impressive numbers at Bob Judnic's place. He is a member of the Wausau Bird Club and fed up to a peak of one and one half gallons of nectar per day this summer. There are different formulas for estimating hummingbird numbers by the amount of sugar water consumed with highest numbers up to 1,000 Hummers for each gallon. Whatever the number, it still amounts to a heck of a lot of birds with many active feeders. As a side note, while most of the tiny dynamos have already headed south until their return next year, a few may hang around a surprisingly long time in colder weather. I don't think he and Claire are in completion, but her consumption numbers are also in that impressive range. Do you still have some hanging around?

**A First! Mountain Bluebird** pairs with **Eastern**, nests successfully in state.

The summer 2020 issue of The Badger Birder had a full page written by Ryan Brady about the first recorded Wisconsin nesting of a female Mountain Bluebird with a male Eastern Bluebird near Hannibal in western Taylor County. The female was discovered May 16 and only the sixth recorded in-state individual of this species since 2002. This was the first time of a documented mating and successful fledging of the hybrids. This is a rare occurrence, although more apt to happen in Manitoba where the two species overlap. Does anyone know if they produced a second brood? Will they return to the same site next year?

Hawk Ridge in Duluth is rated as one of the top three places north of Mexico to watch raptor migration. Now is peak time and definitely worth a road trip, especially when weather conditions are right such as a front coming in from the northwest. But this area is not exclusively for raptors. I checked the website on 9-11 and found out 26,000 Blue Jays had already passed through going south and 4,000 more before noon on that day. Sometimes flights there are predictors for winter invasions although that doesn't necessarily mean they will be lingering in our neighborhoods. They sometimes keep going south of central Wisconsin and spend winters somewhere beyond here. Why? Good question. There may be logical answers, but what are they? Ask a bird.

Pine Siskins are starting to show up at Connie's feeders. One was mixed with a whole xxxload of Goldfinches before, and today, 9-14, had four more. My questions are how many does it take to qualify for a xxxload and is it one or two words? She also mentioned hearing Eurasian Collared Doves about any time of the day around Dorchester this summer. This is an example of a rapidly bird expanding its territory that was a rarity a few years ago. Will this be to the detriment of other species or no problem?

Sue commented how helpful the Cornell ebird app was making certain identification of Dickcissels while she was in Iowa and locally confirming Barred Owl and Nighthawk sounds when she wasn't able to see the birds. Have you used this app or others to confirm identification? How did you use this resource? That could be a topic for a future meeting via Zoom or a normal get together meeting.

### **Politics and bird watching presidents**

Political viewpoints are such a current, contentious issue, it is reassuring that some past presidents shared an avid interest in birding. Teddy Roosevelt was an accomplished naturalist and skilled birder. His distant cousin, Franklin, was an active birder his whole life that included collecting single specimens, many which he mounted himself. Eleanor stated, "For as long as I have known him, Franklin could always point to a bird and tell what it was.

Since leaving the presidency some forty years ago, Jimmy Carter and his wife Roseland have developed a strong interest in birding around the world in their continued travels. This information came from articles written in The Bird Watcher's Digest. All of these former presidents have or had strong outdoor interests and participated in bird counts, surveys and recording bird information for documentation and their own satisfaction.

### **Wisconsin's Woodpeckers**

Nine woodpecker species inhabit Wisconsin. They are Red-bellied, Red-headed, Downy, Hairy, Three-toed, Black-backed, Pileated, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Northern Flicker. Their Identification is helped since they are mostly black and white, with their bouncy flight, clinging to the sides of trees and calls in addition to individual highlights of this family. Size and weights range from the sparrow sized Downy at just under an ounce to the crow sized Pileated which weighs ten times as much. Six species are in the 1.8 to 2.5 ounce range with Northern Flickers at 4.6. The light weight of birds is astounding.

Most of our resident woodpeckers are year round residents with the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker being the exception. Red-headed woodpeckers and Northern Flickers do head south to some degree with significant numbers staying within the state borders. Three-toed are rare visitors from the north. Red-head numbers have declined drastically in part to completion from starlings while Red-bellied have expanded their territory as they come further north.

Downies are the tamest and are common at bird feeders with Red-bellied and Harries also coming to provided food sources with suet and black sunflower seeds their favorites. Much rarer visitors are Pileated and Red-heads. Flickers prefer ants and often feed on the ground. When woodpeckers are not coming to feeders, their preferred diets include insects for all of them and sap for sapsuckers which attracts flies, ants and beetles. These sap sources also attract other birds including humming birds, kinglets, warblers and nuthatches.

Woodpeckers vary a lot in their densities to two species found only in the north, if they are in Wisconsin at all. They are the Black-backed and three-toed, both of whom have three toes on each foot rather than four as found on all the others. These two species also tend to flake bark off of trees rather than drill holes.

Woodpeckers help to recycle pieces of wood and bark into the soil. They help to control ants, boring beetles, flies caterpillars and larvae, devouring them by the millions which can help to balance delicate woodland ecosystems. Their drilling and excavating activities also can provide housing for some mammals in addition to nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, starlings, bluebirds, flycatchers, wood ducks and small owls. These benefits far outweigh the RAT-A-TAT-TAT of an amorous male hammering on a piece of metal too early in the morning.

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#### Club Contacts

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#### September and October Events

Full moons September 2 and October 1

Birds in Art opened September 12

Fall Equinox September

Fall color peaking

Strong migration continues

Enjoy the outdoors, stay healthy

## Mountain Bluebird

*Sialia currucoides*

