



Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

August 2008

Volume 27 Number 8

NEXT MEETING:

Date: Monday, August 18, 2008

Time: Enjoy an evening walk on Kuse's trails. Come anytime from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. Meeting

**Location: Hildegard & Loretta Kuse Home
W6219 Allman St
Medford**

**Program: Carpenters & Drummers:
Woodpeckers of Taylor County
Loretta & Hildegard Kuse**

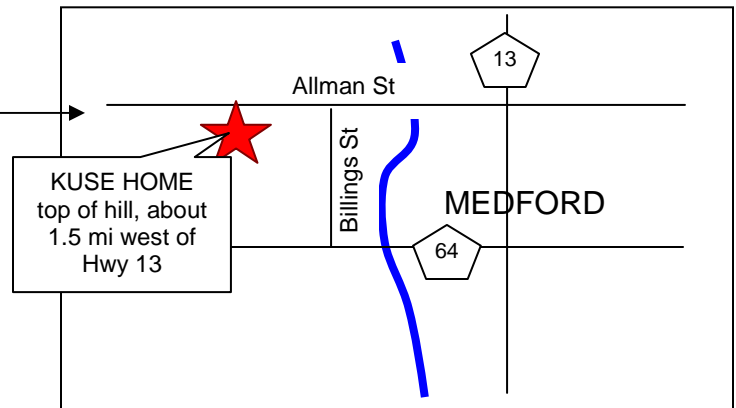
Food: Hildegard & Loretta Kuse



Please bring your own mug for beverage.

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August Meeting

Carpenters & Drummers: Woodpeckers of Taylor County

Rat-a-tat-tat! Rat-a-tat-tat! You may be woken up at 5:30 in the morning by a woodpecker drumming on a metal downspout. On your morning walk you may hear them drumming on a dead tree branch. Who are these percussionists? Find out more about these drummers that range in size from the 6" Downy Woodpecker, who often makes small holes in goldenrod galls, to the 19" Pileated, who may excavate massive rectangular holes in almost any kind of tree.

Hildegard and Loretta Kuse will present a program called "Carpenters and Drummers: Woodpeckers of Taylor County" for the August meeting. They have also been kind enough to invite the CBC to hold the meeting at their home. Those who would like to enjoy an evening walk on Kuses' trails before the meeting may arrive any time after 5:30 p.m. and either join a group or stroll by themselves.



A downy woodpecker with an itch.
Cathy Mauer photo

The meeting will be held in their new meeting room. Members will be invited to share their woodpecker observations and information.

Dead Trees – More than Woodpecker Food and Homes by Cathy Mauer

Most people who are interested in birds know that dead trees furnish housing for woodpeckers and other cavity nesters, as well as supplying a pantry of insects for food. However, dead trees, and even dead branches, do more than that. It is easy to underestimate the value of these sometimes unsightly snags.

On East Hill, not far from our barn, a dead white pine, undoubtedly killed by white pine blister rust, stands amid sumacs and brush. At twenty-five feet tall and maybe eight inches in diameter, it is not a particularly large tree and is certainly not very aesthetic to look at. Bluebirds use a house nearby and frequently perch in its top, Chickadees seem to find it a favorite place to hang out, and I see an occasional other bird using it. But on a recent August Sunday morning it was alive with bird activity. A Nashville Warbler perched and preened and searched for insects and enjoyed some early morning sun. A Least Flycatcher joined him, watching for insects flying by. Upon spying breakfast, it would sally forth but would soon return. Before long several Indigo Buntings, either females or juveniles, also came to enjoy the sun and look for a bit of breakfast. Like the flycatcher, they came and went several times – or perhaps it was several different ones. A Black and White Warbler soon arrived and went about searching busily here and there in its rather nuthatch way, and it wasn't long before the real thing landed in the form of a Red-breasted Nuthatch, who chose one of the topmost branches. A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak must have figured all that activity meant it was a good place to go, kind of like humans picking a restaurant based on the number of cars in the parking lot, and she came for a brief visit. A Chickadee or two also stopped in briefly. A Vireo (?spp.) arrived but spent most of its time partially hidden behind branches as it searched for insects. It found at least one larva of some sort, but dropped it before it could get it down the hatch. To add to its problems, a House Wren came by and pestered it a bit before finding other interesting things to check out in the dead pine.

I watched and took photos for about a half hour, and when the birds eventually went elsewhere, I, too, wandered off. The dead pine had given me a special



A flycatcher enjoys a perch in a dead pine tree.

Cathy Mauer photo

morning's enjoyment. A while later as I passed within sight of the tree, I saw a Blue Jay land briefly before it went on its way.

When I headed home, I could not know that I was to have another beautiful bird sighting in a dead tree the same afternoon. Gordy and I were out at his old farm when we spotted a young harrier sitting on the very top of a large old snag. The late afternoon sun lit its feathers to a beautiful golden glow.

I've noticed that many birds seem to prefer dead trees and branches for perching, perhaps because of increased visibility. For us that's a bonus, for we can see them, too.

Bird Reports (June – July 2008)

Checklist observers: *Rhoda Barber , Gayle Davis , Connie Decker , Dennis Larson , Ken Luepke , Hildegard and Loretta Kuse , Cathy Mauer , Gordy Ruesch , Doug and Willa Pledger , Claire Romanak , Greg and Cam Scott*



Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 155

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Redhead (Decker / Luepke), Lesser Scaup (Davis), Common Merganser (Barber / Romanak)

Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite (Scott)

Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron

Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk (Scott), Red-shouldered Hawk (Davis / Pledger), Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel

Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Multiple observers), Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper (Larson), Semipalmated Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope, Ring-billed Gull, Black Tern

Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo

Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl

Common Nighthawk, Chuck-wills-widow ** (Multiple observers), Whip-poor-will

Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker

Eastern Wood-Pewee, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird

Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo (Scott), Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo

Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven

Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow

Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing

Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler (Davis), Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager

Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow (Davis), Henslow's Sparrow (Multiple observers), Le Conte's Sparrow (Davis / Decker / Luepke), Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow

Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel (Larson / Scott), Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole (Davis / Romanak), Northern Oriole

Purple Finch, House Finch, Red Crossbill (Davis), Pine Siskin (Mauer / Ruesch), American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak (Pledger), House Sparrow

There are still relatively few members reporting their bird sightings. Everyone is encouraged to participate, regardless of the number of species seen. Ask Connie Decker if you need a checklist. The checklist is also available on the CBC website.

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«NAME»
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Club Officers 2008-2009

President – Claire Romanak

Vice-president – Connie Decker

Secretary – Hildegard Kuse

Treasurer – Cam Scott

Other Club Contacts

Web site: www.chequamegonbirdclub.org

Email: info@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Newsletter Email: newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Bird sightings: Connie Decker

August - September Outdoors

- Full moon – September 15
- Wild rice ripens
- Snowshoe hare mating ends
- Snapping turtle eggs hatch
- Monarch butterflies begin flight to Mexico
- Ruffed grouse broods disperse
- Ruby-throated hummingbirds begin migrating
- Bucks start shedding velvet
- Migrating Canada geese begin arriving



Birder's Gadgets

Two Remote Cameras

Several remote cameras designed specifically for taking bird photos are now on the market. Both are close focusing (<2'), motion-activated, take still photos or video, and use SD cards.

Wingscapes BirdCam Digital Wildlife Camera - \$249 (at Eagle Optics and others)

Also: remote control, time lapse, built-in memory as well as SD, day only.

Bushnell Birding Camera - \$100

(at Binoculars.com and others)

Also: color photos by day, night vision in the dark, includes birding book and CD.