



Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

August 2011

Volume 30 Number 8

NEXT MEETING:

Date: Monday, August 15, 2011

Time: 6:00 p.m. Pre-meeting Birding on Riverwalk (weather permitting)

7:00 p.m. Meeting

**Location: Medford Public Library
400 N. Main St, Medford**

**Program: San Diego Bird Festival
Claire Romanak**

Discussion about Bird Club property and film sponsorship

Program: San Diego Bird Festival

The San Diego (California) Bird Festival is held each March. Each day of the four day festival offers a choice of over a dozen field trips and workshops. With an array of habitats ranging from oceanfront beaches and bayfront tidelands to canyons, mountains, and deserts, the area offers permanent and migratory homes for more than 480 species of birds. The festival includes workshops about optics, digiscoping, wildflowers, bird identification, backyard habitats, drawing, painting, and more! Many respected experts are on hand to lead the numerous field trips and teach on a wide variety of topics. (Information from Eagle Optics website.)



Upcoming Events

**August 12, Friday
Bird City Award Presentation**



Taylor County's application as a Bird City. The presentation of the award will be held, Friday, August 12, at 10:00 a.m. at the Ag Service Center, 925 Donald St. in Medford. (That is the building that houses the federal ag offices, UW-Extension, and the Land Conservation Dept. It is located just south of the Technical College.) Carl Schwartz, who is the coordinator for Bird City Wisconsin, will be there to make the presentation. Please come if you can. It would be great to have as many Bird Club members there as can make it.

**August 13, Saturday
Pine Line Trail – Butterflies and Other Insects**

This Walk on the Wild Side will be led by Joan Rickert, Bird Club member and nature enthusiast. The walk will focus on butterflies and caterpillars. As always, we will also look for birds and wildflowers along the way, and we'll talk about a few ways to record what you see and hear. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Pine Line Trailhead on Allman St in Medford.



Claire Romanak will discuss her experiences at the 2011 festival, as well as showing photos from the event. The 2012 Festival will be March 1-4. For more information go to:
www.sandiegoaudubon.org/birdfest.htm

Birds in the News

Bird Massage

A study published in *the Royal Society Biology Letters* looked at birds that massage each other. It appears that subordinate birds seem to benefit most when massaged by their superiors. The massaged birds reduce their activity levels and relax for a period of time afterwards. The author of the study, Andy Radford, theorizes that the subordinates may be the more stressed birds and if massaged by a superior they feel more secure. Radford's study looked at Green Woodhoopoes, which are native to Africa, but other birds also give massages. Discovery News, which reported the study, included a video of a parrot stroking a kitten.

<http://news.discovery.com/animals/birds-massage-each-other-110729.html>

Bird Evolution

A new fossil found in China challenges the theory that Archaeopteryx was the first bird or at least a proto-bird. The new fossil, Xiaotingia zhengi, is a chicken-sized dinosaur that also has feathers. Some scientists have speculated, since the 1940s, that Archaeopteryx was one of probably many feathered dinosaurs. This new find supports that theory. From the *New York Times* based on a report in *Nature*.

Gray-hooded Seagull

Birders from across the country flocked to Coney Island in New York to see a Gray-hooded Seagull. The seagull is usually found in Africa or South America. Many of the birders are usually found in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Illinois. If confirmed, including that it is not an escapee, it would be only the second sighting in the U.S.

Female Birds Prefer Local Songsters

In a study of Rufous-collared Sparrows in Ecuador researchers found that females preferred the songs of males from near-by. Even males from as close as 15 miles evidently were likely to sing a slight variation from the familiar songs the females knew, which they had learned from their parents and neighbors. The females preferred the local dialect four to one over the songs of males from further away; this was the same as the preference over songs of other species.

Julie Danner, a biologist at Virginia Tech University, described the study in the *American Naturalist*, also

reported in the *New York Times*. Danner and her colleagues are investigating whether this preference for local birds could lead to the development of new species over time.

Film – Possible Sponsorship?

Last spring the Bird Club was a sponsor for a showing of the film *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time* at the Broadway Theatre. At that time there was some discussion of sponsoring other films of environmental/conservation interest.

A new film is expected to come out this October, also dealing with environmental issues. The film, *Growthbusters: Hooked on Growth*, discusses the environmental costs of economic, urban, and population growth combined with overconsumption. While our economic system has been based on continued growth, are there alternatives to the current situation? The film encourages people to rethink some widely held beliefs and should be thought-provoking.

What does this have to do with birds? Loss of habitat and climate change are two of the most pressing issues facing our bird populations, and both are driven in large part by growth and over-consumption. We would like to take a few minutes at the August meeting to discuss the possible sponsorship of this film.



The Oven Bird

Robert Frost

There is a singer everyone has heard,
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
He says the early petal-fall is past
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers
On sunny days a moment overcast;
And comes that other fall we name the fall.
He says the highway dust is over all.
The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.
The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.



Bird Reports (June – July 2011)

Checklist observers: *Gayle Davis, Connie Decker, Cathy Mauer, Gordy Ruesch, Mikki Krueger, Ken Luepke, Doug and Willa Pledger, Claire Romanak, Cam Scott and Joe Scott.*

Total number of species observed this month: 149

(Only names of observers for rare or unusual sightings are included in the list below.)

- Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan (Multiple observers), Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal , Green-winged Teal , Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye (J. Scott), Hooded Merganser
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey
- Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Least Bittern (J. Scott/Romanak), Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron
- Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk (J. Scott), Red-shouldered Hawk (J. Scott), Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel
- Virginia Rail, Sora, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Decker/Luepke), Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope
- Ring-billed Gull, Forster's Tern, 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, Willow Flycatcher (Luepke), Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird
- Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo (Davis), 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, Tufted Titmouse (Davis/Krueger), Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper
- House Wren, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren
- Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin
- Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing
- Golden-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler
- Scarlet Tanager
- Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow
- Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel
- Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Oriole
- Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin (Davis), American Goldfinch, House Sparrow

Bird Club Inventory

If you have any items belonging to the Bird Club, please bring a list of those items to the August meeting. We would like to find out what we have and decide what we should do with the items. We know that we have a fairly large number of books. The Medford Public Library is willing to take some books and other items. If you use another library, you may want to contact that library to find out if they may be

interested in any bird books.



Also bring ideas for additional ways to dispose of unwanted/unused items. It would be preferred if the items could be put to some educational use or to bring some money into the club treasury.

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«FIRST_NAME» «LAST_NAME»
«STREET_ADDRESS»
«CITY» «STATE» «ZIP»

Club Officers

President – Claire Romanak
Vice-president – Connie Decker
Secretary – Gayle Davis
Treasurer – Cam Scott

Other Club Contacts

Web site: www.chequamegonbirdclub.org
Email: info@chequamegonbirdclub.org
Newsletter Email: newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org
(Cathy Mauer, editor)
Bird sightings: Connie Decker

August – September Outdoors

- August 18-21 – Ice Age Trail Improvement, take part one day or all.
<http://mobileskills.iceagetrail.org/mobile-skills-crew-calendar>
- September 12 – Full Moon
- Wild rice ripens.
- Snapping turtle eggs hatch.
- Monarch butterflies begin flight to Mexico.
- Clean out bird houses that are no longer in use.
- Ruffed grouse broods disperse.
- Ruby-throated hummingbirds start heading south.
- White-tailed bucks begin shedding velvet.



–Naturalist's Bookshelf

North Woods Naturalist Series

Published by Kollath+Stensaas Publishing of Duluth, this is an excellent series of field guides featuring color photos and lots of information. While the series does not include a bird guide, it includes guides for many other topics: butterflies, moths and caterpillars, dragonflies, damselflies, insects, spiders, amphibians and reptiles, orchids, and lichens. Each guide includes photos, descriptions, nature notes, and other information. Both the butterfly and dragonfly guides are in their second edition.

The guides are a convenient size to carry in the field and are well laid out. The company also has books about rocks, fungi, wildflowers, and earthworms that focus on our area.