

Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

January 2007

Volume 26 Number 1

NEXT MEETING:

Date: **Monday, January 15, 2007**

Time: **7:00 p.m.**

Location: **Multi-purpose Building
Taylor County
Fairgrounds
Hwy. 13 and 64
Medford**

Program: **Landscaping for Birds**

Cathy Mauer

Food: **Greg & Cam Scott, K**

Luanke



Important Notice

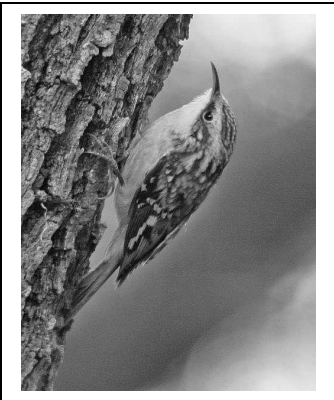
Due to budget constraints, Taylor County will now be charging a \$25.00/evening usage fee for the multipurpose room that CBC has been meeting in for many years. \$25.00 per month would stress CBC's treasury and I believe our best course of action is to locate a new meeting place. Taylor Electric no longer allows use of their conference room. The library in Medford is looking quite good as a meeting place, and I will explain the details of that at the January meeting. There are pros and cons to meeting at the library, and I would appreciate members coming to the January meeting with ANY alternative meeting places you might be aware of so we can make an informed decision on where to move CBC's regular meeting place.

I would also appreciate members giving some thought to fundraising for the club. Our efforts at the December meeting/party added \$111.75 to the treasury. We need to continue to plan for fundraising to keep the treasury viable.

See you in January, and Happy New Year!

- Gayle

Camouflage Bird by Cathy Mauer



Schaezler, San Antonio Audubon

Although I am by no means a master of identifying birds by their songs or calls, there are a few birds that I usually recognize by ear before seeing them. When I hear a high-pitched, thin, lispy *tsee* call, I stop for a few moments and watch. Soon I may see a movement at the base of a tree and a closer look reveals a small

way up the tree. It's a brown creeper looking for a meal of insects and similar tiny creatures, including eggs and larvae, that might be hidden in the crevices of the bark. After reaching the top of the tree, it flies down to the base of another tree where it begins another upward lunch trip. It often spirals around the tree as it goes.

It takes careful watching to keep track of this little 5" bird. The brown feathers on its upper parts are streaked with black, tan, and white, allowing it to become almost invisible against the bark. If frightened, it makes itself even harder to find by flattening against the trunk and remaining motionless. Other features include white underparts, a brown stripe through the eye with a light stripe above, and a rusty-colored tail. Like woodpeckers, it uses its stiff tail as a prop when climbing. And like nuthatches, it has short legs and long toes and claws, a combination that helps it cling to bark.

Its slightly down-curved bill facilitates probing little nooks and crannies in the bark.

Brown creepers are found in most forested areas of North America, from the Canada south to Nicaragua. They prefer mature forests, either coniferous or mixed coniferous-deciduous. They are year-round residents in much of their range, but northern birds usually migrate south. In our area we may have permanent residents, migrants passing through, or winter visitors. Some years we see many during migration. During the non-breeding season, they may flock with chickadees, nuthatches, and downy woodpeckers. The past few winters at least one brown creeper has been a regular visitor to a suet feeder hanging on a large oak in our front yard.

Certhia americana is the only member of its family found in North America. There are five members of the *Certhiidae* family found in Eurasia and another one in Africa, though there is some disagreement as to whether one of the similar creepers in Eurasia is the same or a different species as the one found here.

Like many other things about the brown creeper, its nesting method is unusual. It usually builds a hammock nest behind a loose flap of bark on a dead or dying tree. The female builds the nest, though the male may help gather material. The nest building may take as long as a month. The nest is built with a base of twigs, leaves and

Bird Words by Willa Pledger

Many words and expressions humans use originate by observing bird behavior. Here are a few examples:

What does it mean to 'eat crow'? This is an informal expression meaning to be forced to admit having made a mistake and to suffer humiliation.

What does it mean 'to crow'? This means to boast, exult or gloat over something.

What is a 'night owl'? This is an informal expression for a person who often stays up late at night.

What is a 'popinjay'? One meaning of the word is: person given to vain, pretentious displays and empty chatter. This word has been used in England referring to woodpeckers, especially the green woodpecker.

These are a few examples of Bird Words that humans use in everyday speech. What Bird Words do you use?

[If you know any other "Bird Words", please plan on sharing them at the next meeting.]



Photo from SmugMug

Can you find the brown creeper?

bark that is lined with fine bark shreds, grass, feathers, and moss. The female usually lays five to six eggs, which she incubates for fourteen to seventeen days. The male feeds her while she is brooding. Both parents feed the young, which fledge after fifteen to seventeen days and are fed for about another two weeks.

Keep your ears and eyes open and you might discover that this interesting little bird is more common than you thought.

Bird Reports (November - December 2006)



Checklist observers: *Rhoda Barber , Gayle Davis , Connie Decker , Ken Luepke , Doug and Willa Pledger , and Greg and Cam Scott*

Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 64

(Note: Only observers for rare or unusual sightings are included below.)

American White Pelican (Decker (extremely late)), Great Blue Heron (Scott (late)), Cackling Goose (Luepke), Canada Goose, Mute Swan, American Black Duck, Mallard, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoter (Luepke / Decker), Black Scoter (Luepke / Decker), Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye,, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser

Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel

Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, American Coot

Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull

Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove

Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Long-eared Owl (Luepke), Short-eared Owl (Luepke)

Belted Kingfisher (Davis)

Red-headed Woodpecker (Davis), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker

Northern Shrike

Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven

Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper

Golden-crowned Kinglet

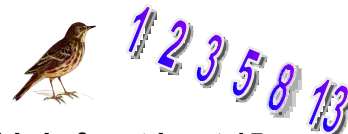
European Starling

American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, Northern Cardinal

Red-winged Blackbird (Davis / Decker / Luepke), Common Grackle (Davis / Decker / Luepke)

Purple Finch, House Finch, Red Crossbill (Davis / Decker / Scott), White-winged Crossbill (Davis / Decker / Luepke), Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow

Reminders



- ✓ **Great Backyard Bird Count:** It's easy to participate. **Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes during February 16-19.** Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like — just keep a separate list of counts for each day and/or location. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time, and write it down. Enter your results on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site - www.birdsource.org/gbbc. If you do not have access to the internet but would like to take part, contact Chirps editor, Cathy Mauer.
- ✓ **2007 Dues:** Dues are \$12/ mailing address and are payable now. **\$\$\$**
- ✓ **Aluminum Recycling Fundraiser:** Please bring your aluminum to meetings.



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Club Officers 2006-2007

President – Gayle Davis

Vice-president – Connie Decker

Secretary – Hildegard Kuse

Treasurer – Bernice Gokey

Other Club Contacts

Web site: www.sws-wis.com/cbc

Email: info@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Newsletter Email: newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org

Bird sightings: Connie Decker

January – February Outdoors

- Black-capped chickadees begin singing their spring courtship song
- Red fox, wolves, beaver, Canada lynx, gray squirrels, and coyotes begin mating
- Great-horned owls begin courtship
- February 1 – Full moon
- Northern cardinals begin singing
- February 16-19 – Great Backyard Bird Count



Bird Bookshelf

Lewis & Clark: Pioneering Naturalists – by Paul Russell Cutright

Admittedly not a bird book, this book is none-the-less great reading for anyone interested in the natural history of the United States or in the explorations of these famous explorers. All aspects of their scientific work are discussed, including plants, animals, geology, geography, ethnology, and weather. Chapters are arranged in chronological/geographical order, and each ends with a summary of the discoveries on that segment of their travels. There are also appendices listing the plants, animals, and locations.

Originally published by University of Illinois, 1969.
Paperback by University of Nebraska, Bison Books, 1989.
(A new edition came out in 2003.)