June is picnic time. The June meeting will be a picnic at the Medford School Forest which is about 8 ½ miles east of Medford on Highway 64. It is on the south side of the road a half mile east of where County Highway goes north of 64. There is a sign by the entrance road.

Weather permitting, there will be a bird walk starting at 5:30. We will follow the same path we used at the May meeting which produced 21 species where we walked along a wide trail that ended by a scenic pond with docks and benches. When we return there will be a campfire and if it should be raining, there is a good facility for indoor eating. The club will provide Sloppy Joe buns thanks to Judy Rau and new member Sue Vick. Cam Scott will bring a bunch of desserts from the World Migratory Bird Day program. We would like to have you bring a small side dish to pass, utensils, your beverage and chairs for sitting around the fire. Outlets are available to keep anything warm before we eat. Hope to see you there.

Forty three new species were recorded by members in Wisconsin between the April and May meetings. Ducks; Northern Shoveler. Cormorant; Double-crested. Hawks; Red-shouldered, Peregrine Falcon. Gallinules; American Coot. Sandpipers; Solitary, Greater Yellowlegs, Upland. Gulls; Herring, Glaucous. Swift; Chimney. Hummingbird; Ruby-throated. Woodpecker; Red-headed. Flycatchers; Least, Eastern Kingbird. Swallows; Purple Martin, Cliff. Wren; House. Kinglet; Ruby-crowned. Thrushes; Veery, Gray-cheeked, Wood. Mimids; Gray Catbird. Warblers; Golden-winged, Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Yellow-Throated, Palm, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat. Towhee Eastern. Sparrows; American Tree, Clay-colored, Lincoln’s. Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Blackbirds, Bobolink, Brewer’s. This brings the yearly total to 146 species.

Will Rogers

Well known for his political comments and of course, “I never met a man I didn’t like.” Also had one that goes, “Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip.” Is that true Connie?
Odds and Ends and Such Things

First of all, about the weather we have had this spring. Odd doesn’t do it justice. Even old timers can’t remember planting being this late. According to my Taylor Electric report, average temperature in May 2018 was 61 degrees. This year it was 50. Eleven degrees less is one heck of a difference. Don’t even want to think of the bird mortality and nests lost due to high water and miserably wet, windy and cold days.

Here is a blurb written in _The Diary of the Old Order Churches_ by Clarence Miller who lives west of Little Black on Apple Avenue. “The Martins are back again. Seems good to hear their warbling again, Though there aren’t a whole lot here yet. Saw the first one on the 16.” This was written April 24. His bird houses are close to the road for easy viewing. At least a couple of his Amish neighbors have also had Martins. If you stop at those places-or anytime you are close to houses scoping out birds-it is polite and good public relations to introduce yourself and explain what you are doing and why. Sometimes it is a good teaching moment.

**Scarlet Tanager**

Scarlet Tanagers are flat out gorgeous. The male’s scarlet color with black wings and tail is unique. Different club members have been fortunate to have multiple males show up in their yards this year. One book I checked said they will come to feeders for a mixture of bread crumbs, cornmeal and peanut butter. They require large areas of forest for breeding and are a fairly common host to Cowbird parasitism. This is more apt to happen as large forests are fragmented. The eggs are brooded by the female. Both sexes feed the young who stay in the nest 9 to 11 days. Isn’t that amazing? From egg to fledgling in a little over a week. I did suggest once to my wife to feed at least one of our children (in the interest of science) a bunch of insects to see if they would grow faster. For some reason she wasn’t interested. Catching bugs didn’t appeal to her.

**White Pelican**

_A wonderful bird is the Pelican,_

_His bill will hold more than his belican._

This is true. A White Pelican’s bill holds about three gallons of water as it scoops for fish, more than twice the capacity of its stomach. They are a big bird. Almost 75% heavier than Bald Eagles with a wing span more than two feet wider. They are clumsy on land and need a running start to become airborne. Once flying, they are poetry in motion.
Last week I was at the Owen Watershed in early evening when through a gap in the trees, I saw a flock of at least 20 White Pelicans fly over the water as the low sun highlighted their brilliant whiteness. That image will be a warm memory for the rest of my life. Their slow wingbeat of one or two beats per second looks effortless but is also efficient. There are reports of them traveling up to 100 miles to bring food to their young. They use thermals to gain tremendous altitudes, but also cruise low over water. They sometimes fly in a V, but more often in single file. Fishing as a group, they will swim and splash with their wings to drive small fish into shallow water where they can more easily scoop them up. Feed for them amounts to about four pounds per day or nearly a quarter of their weight. They do not carry their catch in their bill pouch, but rather in their gullet or esophagus, the tube that runs from bill to stomach. They are not a threat to commercial fishing because of feeding mainly on low value fish such as chubs, carp, bullheads, shiners in addition to crustaceans and occasionally a small bird.

One or two eggs are commonly laid with the second hatchling rarely surviving due to aggressive feeding by the older sibling. Both sexes participate in hatching the eggs which are warmed by the parents keeping their webbed feet on the eggs. Young stay in the nest for 17 to 28 days being fed by both parents. Then they gather in groups called pods after fledging and continue to be fed by adults. First flight is at 9-10 weeks.

From late winter until after eggs are laid, White Pelicans have a vertical horny knob on their upper bill. Maybe it is sort of a, “I’m taken” kind of thing like a wedding or engagement ring. What really intrigues me is where does it go? Is it absorbed or shed like a deer antler? The answer to that won’t change the trajectory of the world, but it is sorta fun to collect useless bits of information. Those seem to be the ones I’m more apt to remember now. Wonder if it could be a question on Jeopardy! someday?

A more pertinent fact is White Pelicans are expanding their territory eastward into Wisconsin. Older range maps show this primarily western bird only to the Dakotas and a bit of northern Minnesota up into far northern Canada. For most of the 1900s the pelican was rare both as a migrant and summer visitor (Robbins 1991). Now it is our good fortune to see this huge and elegant flyer locally.
Editor Chequamegon Chirps
3221 Town Hall Road
Abbotsford, WI 54405

Club contacts
Website: Chequamegonbirdclub.org
Information: info@chequamegonbirdclub.org
Newsletter: newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org
Bird sightings: connie1@charter.net

June and July events
Full moons June 17 and July 16
Summer Solstice June 21
Late planting continues
Earliest migrants start south in July
Fledglings coming to feeders
Enjoy the outdoors (with Deep help)