



Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

October 2007

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NEXT MEETING:

Date: **Monday, October 15, 2007**

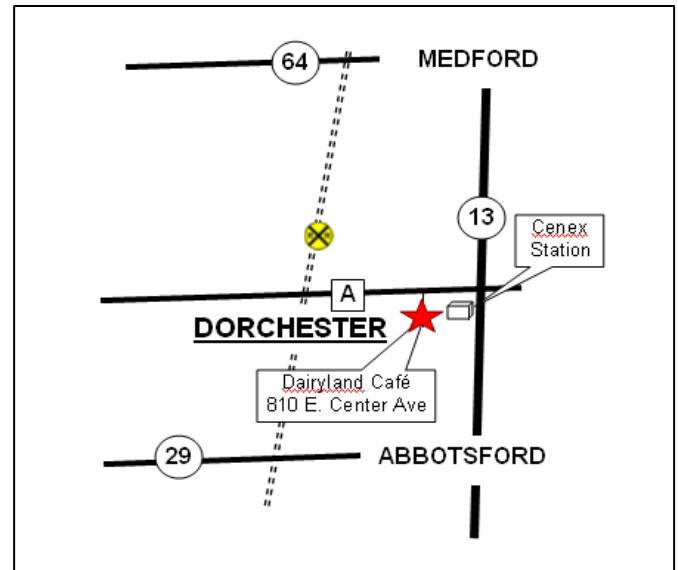
Time: **6:00 p.m. Get-together
6:30 p.m. Dinner**

Location: **Dairyland Café ***
810 E. Center Ave
Dorchester
(Just west of the Cenex)**

Program: **Annual Banquet –
Tickets needed to have been
ordered by October 5.**

Speaker: **Noel Cutright
“The Breeding Bird Atlas Project”**

Noel Cutright is an editor of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas and is a past president of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.



*** Note that this is a different location than originally planned. It is the same location as last year's banquet.

A Bit of Wisconsin Birding History by Cathy Mauer, ed.

While cleaning off some bookshelves the other day as part of a painting project, I ran across an interesting book that ties in with the presentation scheduled for our upcoming banquet. The book is *The Birds of Wisconsin* by L. Kumlien and N. Hollister, with revisions by A.W. Schorger. It was originally published in 1903 and the update was published by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology in 1951. The book is an annotated list of, as the title states, the birds of Wisconsin.

Starting to peruse the book was not particularly good for my cleaning project. What began as a quick glance at the book to decide if we wanted to keep it soon turned into an hour or so of skimming and reading and “hey, listen to this...” The book is fascinating in a number of ways. The first thing that struck me was some of the

species and subspecies listed. I do not pretend to be very knowledgeable about Wisconsin birds, but Canadian Ruffed Grouse and Snowflake were just two of many unfamiliar listed birds that caught my eye.

Another, and rather sad, aspect of the book is the frequent notations dealing with the demise of various birds. The first sentence for the first entry, *Aechmophorus occidentalis*, the Western Grebe, reads: “One specimen in the collection of L. Kumlien, killed with a pitchfork, from a bunch of six in an air-hole in the ice on Lake Koshkonong, January 4, 1878.” One of the last entries in the book is *Dendroica kirtlandii*, the Kirtland's Warbler. After a discussion of how rare the species is, there is an account of a sighting in 1893 of what was believed to be “a fine adult male of Kirtland's

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warbler. We stepped back a pace and fired.” The account continues with a chase of the apparently wounded bird, which managed to escape being found. Many of the other species accounts also mention collecting of nests, eggs, young, breeding adults, or single individuals that were sighted. Birds were most often taken by shooting, which frequently left the specimens useless as study skins.

Lest we pass judgment too quickly on these now unacceptable practices, we may want to remember that such collecting and general hunting of now protected species were very common into the beginning of the twentieth century. This was before the Lacey Act (1900), the Weeks-McLean Law (1913), and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which provided a variety of protections for migratory birds and other bird species. I was, however, surprised at the amount of collecting that, according to Schorger’s revision notes, occurred well into the 1940s.

Despite the acceptance of shooting for collections, the authors “express ... supreme disgust” at the shooting of large numbers of nighthawks by, as they put it “‘sportsmen’ (?)”. It makes me wonder what practices that are considered acceptable today may be looked on in an unfavorable light in a hundred years.

The nighthawk entry also includes a piece of information found in several other entries, as well – a decrease in bird numbers. In addition to the nighthawk, species for which this is noted include the woodcock, whip-poor-will, and brown thrasher – and others, I’m sure. Sound familiar? The 1903 reports sound very much like those of today. After noting a great decrease in brown thrasher numbers, the authors write, “That such a magnificent bird, with so fine a voice[,] should grow less in numbers at such a rate is a great pity, and the

species should be carefully guarded and protected in every way possible here in its summer home.” Amen!

To return to the unfamiliar species that I noted earlier. The Canadian Ruffed Grouse is one of many subspecies of ruffed grouse, *Bonasa umbellus togata*. The Snowflake is, evidently, our snow bunting.

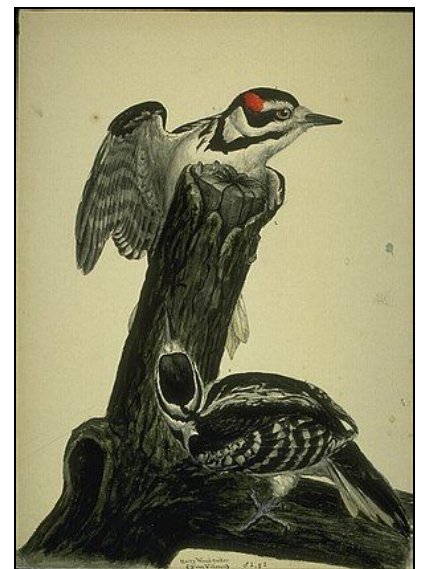
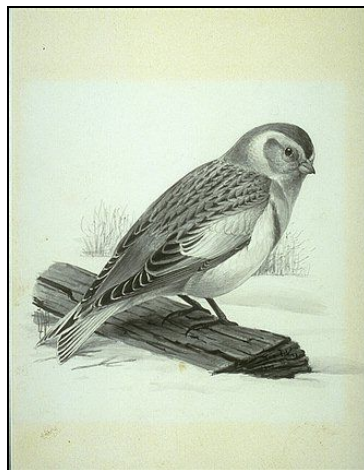
Another of these unfamiliar birds, the Northern Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus leucomela*), may lend some insight into the woodpecker seen by Doug and Willa Pledger in recent years. After noting that it was a regular visitor in winter in north Jefferson County [southern Wisconsin] until 1875, the authors go on to say that it was not found even in northern Wisconsin for the past ten or fifteen years [before 1903]. What characterizes this Northern Hairy Woodpecker? According to the authors, “the hoary whiteness is a more pronounced character even than the larger size.”

In an interesting twist on bird names, the authors state that the northern pileated woodpecker is “generally known as ‘wood-cock’ or ‘log-cock’ by deer hunters and people living in the timber regions”.

This book has been a very enjoyable distraction from my cleaning. Perhaps in a hundred years my great-granddaughter will be similarly distracted by the *Breeding Bird Atlas*.

Snow Bunting (l.) and
Hairy Woodpecker (r.)

Louis Agassiz Fuertes Illustrations
Cornell University Collection



Bird Reports (August – September 2007)



Checklist observers: Gayle Davis , Connie Decker , Hildegard and Loretta Kuse , Ken Luepke , Larry Ruhde , Greg and Cam Scott.

Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 147

- Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite (Scott)
- Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican (Davis / Decker / Luepke), 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, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin (Decker / Luepke), Peregrine Falcon (Decker / Luepke)
- Sora, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Decker / Luepke), Black-bellied Plover (Decker / Luepke), Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Luepke), Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe
- Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull
- Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove
- Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk, 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, Willow Flycatcher (Davis), Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird
- Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo (Luepke), Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo (Luepke), Red-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark
- Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow
- Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper
- House Wren, Sedge Wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin
- Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing
- Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler (Ruhde (late)), Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler
- Scarlet Tanager
- Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow (Decker / Luepke), Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink
- Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Oriole
- Purple Finch, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow

NOTE (If anyone has wondered about the bulleting of the species list): The species list is bulleted mostly to improve the readability of the list and only somewhat follows a breakdown by families or other ornithological categories. Space and the number of species as well as the family or other category, and sometimes the editor's whim, determine the location of the bullets.



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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.chequamegonbirdclub.org
- Email:* info@chequamegonbirdclub.org
- Newsletter Email:* newsletter@chequamegonbirdclub.org
- Bird sightings:* Connie Decker

October - November Outdoors

It will be interesting to see what effect our unseasonably warm weather has on phenology

October 25 – Full moon

White-tail bucks in rut

White-throated sparrows (which have been at our place in droves) depart

October 28 – Teddy Roosevelt was born in 1858

Black bears begin denning

Mallard and scaup migration peaks



Birder's Bookshelf

Roger Tory Peterson: A Biography
 By Douglas Carlson

Many of us have gone through multiple editions of Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds*, which was first published in 1934. It was the first of the many Peterson field guides, covering topics ranging from birds to flowers to astronomy. To me the Peterson illustrations still more closely match the birds I see in the field than any of the other field guides that I have, and it is still the book I most often take with me. I am looking forward to reading this biography. The reviewer in the *Audubon* magazine says that while the book includes many "charming anecdotes", its real focus is Peterson's professional life and his impact on conservation and the way we see the natural world.

Published by the University of Texas Press, 2007