



Chequamegon Chirps

Newsletter of the Chequamegon Bird Club

Medford, Wisconsin

October 2008

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NEXT MEETING:

Date: Monday, October 20, 2008

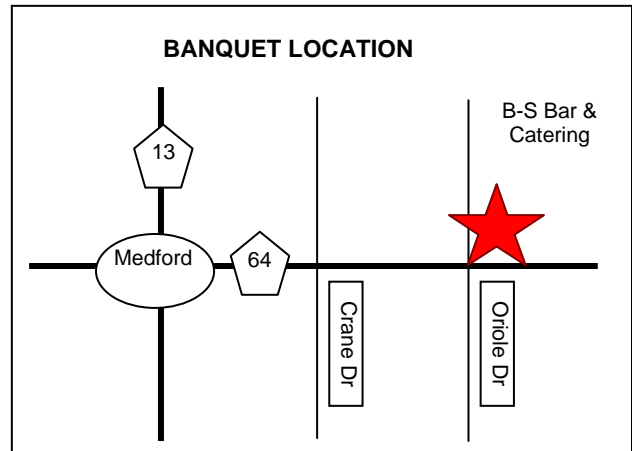
Time: 6:00 p.m. – Get-together
6:30 p.m. – Dinner

Location: B-S Bar and Catering
W4782 Hwy 64
Medford

Program: Annual Banquet
(The ticket deadline was Oct. 10)

Speaker: Andy Paulios

“Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and
the Wisconsin Birding Community”



Birder's Bookshelf

The LBJ: Avian Life, Literary Arts

I recently received a copy of a new creative writing journal, *The LBJ: Avian Life, Literary Arts*. The title “*The LBJ*” derives from the acronym for “little brown job”, which is often used to describe those small brown bird, such as sparrows, that defy positive identification as they flit through dense vegetation or otherwise make themselves hard to identify. “*LBJ*” also stands for “literary bird journal”. It features poetry, essays (both fiction and non-fiction), book reviews, and art – all dealing with birds.

I have only had time to read a small part of this issue but have enjoyed what I have read. Birds are

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woven into essays and poems about human nature, life and death, hypocrisy, and many other topics that help tell us who we are. One notable essay features a quest to get close to a great blue heron. A poem tells of seeing a blue-gray gnatcatcher – for some unknown reason, a bird that caught my imagination when I was small. Although published by the University of Nevada, the journal features works from all areas of the country.

The LBJ will be published biannually by the University of Nevada Department of English. It is a non-profit venture. Subscriptions are available for \$15, or \$25 for two years. More information is available at www.literarybirdjournal.org.

- CM

The Canada Goose

Autumn looks like gold, smells like wood smoke, and sounds like crunching leaves and the honking of Canada Geese. No matter how often I hear them, the honking always causes me to pause in the middle of whatever chore I've invented to keep me outdoors. I scan the sky until I see the 'V' and am satisfied.

Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) are distinctive and even people who recognize few other birds know them. Males and females look alike. Several subspecies are recognized. The subspecies vary mostly in size, although they also tend to be darker further west. Based in large part on genetic studies, what were once considered the four smallest subspecies have been completely split into a different species, the Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*).

The remaining subspecies still show a considerable size range, with a length of 30-43 inches and a wingspan from 50-67 inches. Weight ranges from 6½ pounds to almost 20 pounds. Males are generally somewhat larger than females.

Canada Geese are found in all of the United States except Hawaii and in all Canadian provinces. At the end of the 19th century, hunting for both meat and feathers had reduced their populations to near extinction. That changed as a result of protective hunting regulations, most notably the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916, but fifty years ago they were still rather uncommon. Reintroductions in the 1960s, as well as changes in land use, led to a great increase in their numbers. In some areas they have become a nuisance, especially in parks, on golf courses, and around residences. Fifty geese can produce 2½ tons of excrement per year, and not many people enjoy walking through areas covered by goose droppings.

Like many other birds, most of them spend their summers in the north and their winters in the southern U.S. and Mexico. One travel route from northern Canada to the southern U.S. is the Mississippi Flyway, which includes Horicon Marsh and many other sites in Wisconsin. As many as 200,000 geese may stop at Horicon in fall. Not all geese make such a long trip; some have shortened their migrations or become year-around residents in northern areas, taking advantage of farming practices, golf courses and other large grassy areas, and open water.

Grasses of various types are a major food source,



Canada Geese

Victor Loewen photo
Animal Diversity Web

as are agricultural crops such as corn, rice, beans, and wheat. In Wisconsin, Canada geese are one of four species that are covered under the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program, for which payments are made for crop damage. Crops are especially important during migration. Other foods include aquatic plants; Canada Geese will tip up like puddle ducks to reach these foods.

Canada Geese are known for mating for life. They mate at about two to three years of age and may live to be twenty. The female (goose) lays four to seven eggs, which she incubates for twenty-five to thirty days. Both parents, but especially the male (gander), guard the nest, which is usually a large mound of vegetation lined with down and located near water. Their vigorous nest defense does not endear them to some people. Canada Geese have also been known to nest in an abandoned Osprey or Eagle nest in a tree. Within a day of hatching the young are led to water. Goslings from different clutches often group together and are tended by all the parents. The young stay with their family until after they return north on their spring migration.

And in spring I will again by listening for their calls and watching for their 'V' in the sky.

- CM

Bird Reports (August - September 2008)

Checklist observers: *Rhoda Barbre*, *Connie Decker*, *Dennis Larson*, *Ken Luepke*, *Cathy Mauer*, *Gordy Ruesch*, *Annabel Neitzel*, *Doug and Willa Pledger*, *Larry Ruhde*, *Claire Romanak*.



Total Number of Species Observed this month is: 155

- Canada Goose, Mute Swan (Multiple observers), Trumpeter Swan (Ruhde), Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck
- Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey
- Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron
- Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin (Multiple observers)
- Sora, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane (Decker/Luepke), American Golden Plover (Decker/Luepke), Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Red Knot (Multiple observers), Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock
- Pomarine Jaeger ** (Multiple observers), Parasitic Jaeger * (Multiple observers), Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Caspian Tern (Multiple observers)
- 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, Three-toed Woodpecker ** (Pledger (extremely rare)), Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker
- Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (Luepke, Romanak), Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird
- Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Horned Lark
- Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow
- Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch
- House Wren, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren
- Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin
- Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling
- American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing
- Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler (Romanak (early)), Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Connecticut Warbler (Mauer), Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler
- Scarlet Tanager
- Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow (Ruesch), Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated 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, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, 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.

Blue Ridge Center
for Environmental
Stewardship photo





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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

October - November Outdoors

- Full moon – October 14, November 13
- Frogs begin burrowing into muck
- Wood ducks head south
- Red-winged blackbirds depart
- White-tailed bucks begin rut
- White-throated sparrows depart
- Redhead ducks and canvasbacks migrate
- Teddy Roosevelt born October 28, 1858
- Black bears begin denning
- Last of sandhill cranes leave



A Black-throated Green Warbler enjoys a morning snack.

Cathy Mauer photo