Chequamegon Chirps

October 19, 2026 Volume 44 Number 10

Banquet Time

The Stetsonville Centennial Hall is the place you want to be at on Monday, October 19. The social hour will be 5:00 to 6:00 with a fine meal at 6:00 and Brian Heeringa, Wildlife Biologist for the Washburn District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest will present information about the natural history, diversity, and role bats play in the ecosystems of the world. You will find out which bats live in northern Wisconsin and much more about these flying marvels/mammals. (If you see strange exclamation points and odd words at times as I go along on the next couple pages, it's because of bats—being swung by the Brewers and Dodgers tonight). Back to the banquet: since the caterer always has extra food, you slow-pokes (within reason) can still reserve a place for Monday night. Cost is $25 and members are encouraged to bring a dessert. Non-members, family and friends are welcome. If we run out of food, you won't be charged. Call Sue Vick 715-305-3492 to let her know your intentions.

Migration Continues

Does migration ever stop? Not really, depending on how you define the word. Numbers of migrants can be huge and spectacular in sightings and/or in distance. Others may dribble along in small numbers for much shorter distances and still get to where they need to go to survive lesser food supplies and availability. What can migration groups be called? Some of these terms are used for various species. Here are some descriptive terms for a batch of migrators who appeared at Dean and Nadine's farm near Spencer for several days in mid-September. Swarm, roost, rabble, swirl, flutter or kaleidoscope are all names of these migrants. They fly up to 3,000 miles in their fall migration to sites they have never been to before. Do you ever lean back in your chair and think—that can't be possible. But it is. In this example, the multi-named travelers are Monarch butterflies. The thousands, tens of thousands, that showed up on the Willet farm fed on a field of red-clover in blossom. They provided a kaleidoscope of color as they swarmed, swirled, fluttered

during the day and gathered in large roosts at night before they continued on their journey to Mexico. Maybe there were a few rabbles along the way.

The Monarch species is divided into eastern and western groups with the Rocky Mountains separating them. The following information isn't my writing but I wasn't able to find the source or author. Is that plagiarism?

"Monarchs only travel during the day and need to find a roost as they gather close together during cool autumn evenings. Roost sites are important to their migration; many of these locations are used year after year. Often pine, fir and cedar trees are used for roosting. In the mornings, they bask in sunshine to warm themselves."

"The eastern population of North America's monarchs overwinters in the same 11 to 12 mountain areas in the states of Mexico and Michoacan from October to late March. They roost in oyamel fir forests, which provide an ideal microclimate about two miles above sea level. Here temperatures range from 0 to 15 degrees Celsius. If the temperature is lower, they are forced to use their fat reserves. The humidity in the oyamel forests assures they won't dry out, allowing them to conserve their energy. Tens of thousands can cluster on a single tree. Individual Monarchs weigh less than a gram but enough of them can gather to break some limbs." That would be a sight to see. The arrow points to eastern Mexico, but the Monarchs overwinter in the states of Mexico and Michoacan which are west of Mexico City. (Brewers! 2-1)

Eastern North American monarchs fly south using several flyways then merge into a single flyway in Central Texas. It is truly amazing that these monarchs know the way to the overwintering sites even though this migrating generation has never before been to Mexico!

Odds, Ends and a Brain Teaser

"The Great Sparrow Campaign was a plan instituted in 1958 by Mao Zedong. The goal was to rid China of its tree sparrows, the flying pests which each year ate tons of grain intended for China's growing and hungry populace."

"The only problem was that they ate more insects than they did grain and the locust population exploded, causing widespread famine. Mao's decree was rescinded two years later, but not soon enough to prevent the killing of 9 million birds and the deaths of 38 million people from starvation."

This information is from the book Bird Brain-Teasers by Patrick Merrell. Fill in the boxes with a bird species to complete the letters to up and down words.

Emu Trivia

Emus can run 30 mph and jump straight up 7 feet.

Emus are good swimmers.

Emus have small claws at the end of each wing.

An emu's body contains three gallons of oil.

Neither the emu nor the kangaroo, its mate on Australia's coat of arms, can walk backwards.

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Club contacts

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October and November

Full moons: October—

November— ibis

Deer rut begins. robin

Color is just past its peak here. tern

Near record heat now to be followed by snow. loon