



Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival

May 21 – 23, 2026
Activity Descriptions

Wednesday, May 20 – SPECIAL PRE-FESTIVAL OPPORTUNITY!

63. Stockton Island Cruise (FT-4)

7:45 am – 3:00 pm

Enjoy a scenic cruise aboard the Ashland Bay Express to Stockton Island, the largest and most biologically diverse island in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Join leaders for four hours of birding amid the forests, dunes, savannahs, bogs, lagoons, and beaches along the Tombolo Trail. The island has pit toilets but few other facilities, so bring potable water and lunch, dress in layers, wear stout water-resistant footwear, and pack out what you pack in. Be prepared for a rugged hike up to five miles in length.

Meet at the [Apostle Islands Cruises office](#) by the Bayfield City Dock at 7:45 am. Return to Bayfield at 3 pm. *Additional Cost: \$65*



Thursday, May 21 – Morning

1. Birding Copper Falls State Park (FT-3)

6:30 am – 11:30 am

Ancient lava flows, deep gorges, and spectacular waterfalls make Copper Falls one of Wisconsin's most scenic parks. Retired DNR Forest Ecologist Colleen Matula will lead

participants of all ages and skill levels along the park's trails to absorb the spectacular scenery and glimpse the many warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other forest birds that call Copper Falls home.

Optional: Meet at [Copper Falls State Park](#) at 7:15 am.

**Note:* Expect some stair climbs and uneven terrain on trail.

Additional Cost: Parking fee per car (\$13 WI plates, \$16 out-of-state plates)

2. FULL Bibon Swamp Birding (FT-3)

6:45 am – 11:00 am

The Bibon Swamp is one of the area's best places to find Golden-winged Warblers. This trip will walk a very lightly traveled, dead-end dirt road through sedge meadow, alder, ash, and mixed lowland forest while enjoying a few Golden-wings amidst a potpourri of birds in a peaceful setting. Brad Gingras, local birder and naturalist, will help participants find and pick out numerous species, including various warblers and other neotropical migrants.

Optional: Meet leader at [Grand View general store](#) at 7:15 am.

3. FULL Birding by the Bay (FT-3)

6:45 am – 11:15 am

WDNR Conservation Biologist Ryan Brady will lead participants to multiple lakeshore points near Ashland and Washburn to search for waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Interspersed will be short hikes along shoreline trails to find warblers, orioles, sparrows, and other migrating landbirds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

4. A Bird in the Hand... (FT-2)

7:00 am – 11:00 am

In this free activity, any festival registrant can come and go as they please within the listed timeframe to experience the wonders of bird banding from expert researchers. Marvel at the beauty of warblers, sparrows, finches, and other birds up close and personal – an unforgettable experience for all ages. Learn identification features, natural history, and research techniques as leaders demonstrate the how's and why's of bird banding. If you want to see birds up close, then this is the trip for you!

5. FULL Birding & Sustainable Farm Tour (FT-2)

7:00 am – 11:00 am

Hogs, hens, native plants, and wild birds – you'll find them all at Elsewhere Farm! Enjoy a hike along Horse Creek, past a beaver pond, and through a hayfield in search of bitterns, bobolinks, raptors, warblers, and other songbirds. On good migration days, this area is hopping with migrants! Finish with a tour of the orchard and learn how this Wild Farm Alliance demonstration site is creating habitat for birds and pollinators. After, stop by Bark Bay Slough SNA, bird the Lake Superior shore, or visit Herbster or Cornucopia for a delicious lunch.

Optional: Meet at Elsewhere Farm, [16550 Nicoletti Road](#), Herbster, at 7:45am.

6. FULL Birding Along Pikes Creek (FT-2)

7:00 am – 11:00 am

This walk will start at the Les Voigt Fish Hatchery and follow Pikes Creek as it wanders inland for about a half-mile. Then walk the adjacent Salmo Trail toward the Lake Superior shore. Led by local birding expert Neil Howk, the hike will pass through a variety of bird habitats, including holding ponds, mixed forest, and shrubby wetlands with open water. Possible species include waterfowl, 10-15 species of warblers, woodpeckers, American Bittern, Ruffed Grouse, Winter Wren, thrushes, and more.

Optional: Meet at [Les Voigt Fish Hatchery](#) at 7:30 am.

7. Birding Little Sand Bay (FT-3)

7:15 am – 11:30 am

Join retired Park Service biologist, Peggy Burkman, to explore the woodlands and wetlands of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore near Little Sand Bay. We'll look for waterbirds, warblers, raptors and more in this spectacular coastal location overlooking Lake Superior and the Apostle Islands.

Optional: Meet at Little Sand Bay [parking lot](#) at 8:00 am.

8. Birding the White River Wildlife Area (FT-4)

7:15 am – 11:30 am

Located just south of Ashland, this state-owned property features a variety of forest habitats hosting grouse, deer, hares, and numerous songbirds. Hike a grassy trail with DNR Wildlife Biologist Eddie Shea, passing first through younger aspen forest, then towering red and white pines, and ultimately finish at the White River, which is an important tributary of the Bad River. Possible sightings here include American Woodcock, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, Red Crossbill, and Brown Creeper, among other common migrants. Knee-high waterproof boots and bug protection are recommended.

9. Exploring Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge (FT-2)

7:30 am – 11:00 am

Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge welcomes you to a little refuge with a big impact. The refuge hosts many terrestrial species as well as a spawning stream for coaster brook trout and other migratory fish from Lake Superior. Look for migratory birds and learn about their habitats during this guided tour and hike with US Fish and Wildlife Service staff.

10. Loon Pontoon (FT-2)

7:30 am – 11:30 am

Search for nesting loons and other birds on Lake Owen during this pontoon trip led by Cable Natural History Museum Naturalists, Emily Stone and Heaven Walker. Learn all about loons, threats to their populations, and what you can do to help them survive, all while soaking up the birds and scenery of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

Optional: Meet at the [Lake Owen Station Rd boat launch](#) at 8:15 am.

Additional Cost: \$20

Thursday, May 21 – Afternoon

11. Forest Lodge Estate Tour & Natural History Walk (FT-4)

12:30 pm – 4:45 pm

Explore the fascinating history and architectural design of the Forest Lodge Estate, on the south shore of Lake Namakagon, with Cable Natural History Museum Naturalist Emily Stone. Experience the natural and cultural history of the property including flora, fauna, geology and cultural influences. Dress for the weather and walking on uneven surfaces.

Optional: Meet at 1:15 pm at the Forest Lodge Nature Trail [parking lot](#) on Garmisch Road 10 miles east of Cable, WI.

12. FULL Hiking Frog Bay Tribal National Park (FT-3)

12:45 pm – 4:45 pm

This two-mile hike begins with an easy walk to the beach and spectacular views of the Apostle Islands. The return path on the Ravine Trail loops inland through a century-old hemlock hardwood forest. Search for thrushes, Winter Wrens, vireos, and various warblers, including good chances of Black-throated Blue, on this scenic northwoods excursion with local expert, Neil Howk.

**Note:* This is a moderately difficult hike crossing several ravines on a narrow trail with many roots and rocks.

Optional: Meet on south side of [Legendary Waters Casino](#) near base of flags at 1:15pm.

13. Wildflower Walk - Spring Ephemerals (FT-3)

12:45 pm – 4:45 pm

US Forest Service Plant Ecologist, Stephen White, leads you on a hike in search of spring ephemeral wildflowers among a northern hardwood forest en route to Morgan Falls. Species that may be seen include Spring Beauty, Large-flowered Trillium, Wild Ginger, Bloodroot, Dutchman's Breeches, and Bellwort.

Optional: Meet at [Morgan Falls parking lot](#) at 1:15 pm.

14. Spring Discovery Walk at the Lincoln Community Forest (FT-3)

1:00 pm – 4:45 pm

Nearly 400 acres in size, the Lincoln Community Forest is comprised of a wild and scenic forest surrounding two miles of the Marengo River, a 10-acre wetland and lake complex, and 5 miles of nature-based recreation trails, all thanks to a partnership between local citizens, the Friends group, and Landmark Conservancy. Explore these habitats and their spring wildflowers, frogs, birds and more with Conservancy staff Erika Lang and retired biologist, Pam Dryer. Discover how species and natural communities are benefitting from restoration such as streamside habitat projects, improving aquatic habitat in the Marengo River, and tree planting efforts.

15. FULL Birding by the Bay – Washburn (FT-2)

1:15 pm – 4:45 pm

Local birding expert Rick Burkman will lead participants to multiple lakeshore points in and near Washburn to search for waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Interspersed

will be short hikes along shoreline trails to find warblers, orioles, sparrows, and other migrating landbirds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

16. Northwoods Nature Hike at Houghton Falls (FT-2)

1:15 pm – 4:45 pm

The 76-acre Houghton Falls Nature Preserve north of Washburn is one of the most unique sites in Bayfield County. This trip will hike the mile-long nature trail to view Echo Dells, Houghton Falls, and ultimately a shoreline view of Lake Superior! Along the way, U.S. Forest Service ecologist Eric North will help identify various flora and fauna among the beautiful hemlocks, majestic pines, and rock outcrops, including birds, plants, and even land snails!

Optional: Meet at [Houghton Falls trailhead/parking lot](#) at 1:30 pm.

17. Native Landscaping & Butterfly Gardens (FT-2)

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Both beautiful and beneficial, native plants can bring more than just vibrant color to your gardens. Enjoy birds, wildlife, and butterflies from spring to fall with the right mix of native plants. Susan Nelson, retired Interpretive Specialist with the US Forest Service, will take the group on an informative tour of the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center's gardens and Aldo Leopold Native Seed Orchard to help participants get ideas for their own backyards.

18. Mushrooms of Paradise: The Incredible Fungi of Wisconsin (Indoor Program)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Join Arne Martinson, owner of Northern Mushroom Tours and former Vice President of the Wisconsin Mycological Society, for a look at some of the rare, beautiful, and fascinating mushrooms of Wisconsin. View a presentation to learn about some of our most interesting local species, followed by an opportunity to ask questions on species ID, foraging, and more.

19. Bats of Wisconsin (Indoor Program)

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Brian Heeringa, Wildlife Biologist for the Washburn District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, will discuss the bats of Wisconsin, and which bats call the Chequamegon Bay area home. Explore the diversity and importance of bats and the role they play in ecosystems around the world. An update will be provided about the impact of White Nose Syndrome and how some bat populations are showing a small glimmer of hope. Stick around after the presentation for a live bat encounter with Echo the Big Brown Bat.

20. Whoo's Hooting: All About Owls (Indoor Program)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Ever wonder who's hooting in your neighborhood? Join U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Park Ranger Ariana London for this beginner program to learn about the owls that call this area home and their incredible adaptations that make them excellent predators of the night.

Thursday, May 21 – Evening

21. FULL Owl Prowl & Other Night Sounds (FT-2)

7:30 pm – 10:30 pm

Venture to the Long Lake and Birch Grove areas of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to listen for Barred and N. Saw-whet Owls, Whip-poor-wills, Common Loons, frogs, coyotes, and other night sounds. The trip will briefly start out near NGLVC to listen for American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, and frogs. Bring a flashlight or headlamp.

22. Woodcock Walk (FT-2)

8:30 pm – 10:00 pm

Venture on a nocturnal foray in search of American Woodcock performing their spring courtship flights along the NGLVC's boardwalk trail. There's also potential to hear Wilson's Snipe, Ruffed Grouse, Great Horned Owl, and several frog species. Bring a flashlight or headlamp to help guide the way.

Friday, May 22 – Morning

23. FULL Birding at Bark Bay (FT-3)

6:15 am – 11:30 am

This two-part trip will feature visits to Bark Bay Slough State Natural Area and nearby Bark Point. Bark Bay Slough SNA is an exceptional coastal wetland hosting a wide variety of birds. Bark Point is a peninsula of land jutting into Lake Superior and can sometimes host spectacular concentrations of migrant landbirds, including a great diversity of warbler species. You never know what you might find here. If time allows, we'll venture to the Herbster or Cornucopia lakefronts for some additional birding.

Optional: Meet at the [Bark Bay Slough SNA canoe launch](#) at 7:00 am.

24. Sea Caves Nature Hike (FT-4)

6:15 am – 11:30 am

Local birding expert and former Park Service ranger Neil Hawk will lead participants on this rugged trail at the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Look for warblers, woodpeckers, and other birds amid beautiful birch and fir forests ultimately leading to spectacular views of sandstone cliffs and caves along Lake Superior.

Optional: Meet at the Lakeshore's [Meyers Beach parking lot](#) at 7:00 am.

**Note:* 4-5 miles roundtrip with some steep ravines and mud.

Additional Cost: Parking \$5/car

25. FULL Birds of Morgan Falls & St. Peter's Dome (FT-4)

6:30 am – 11:30 am

Hike through a beautiful northern hardwood forest to the lush, scenic cascades of Morgan Falls with retired DNR Forest Ecologist Colleen Matula. Watch for Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Mourning, and other warblers, as well as vireos, thrushes, flycatchers, and other forest species. If time allows, we'll continue farther on

trail toward St. Peter's Dome, yielding a 4-mile round trip hike. Also expect a diverse plant community including wildflowers such as Spring Beauty, Wild Ginger, Bloodroot, Dutchman's Breeches, and more.

Optional: Meet leader at [Morgan Falls parking lot](#) at 7:00 am.

26. Beavers & Birds at the Big Ravine (FT-4)

6:45 am – 11:00 am

Explore the small beaver pond and surrounding wetland that is a hub for biodiversity at the Big Ravine Headwaters! Some birds we may observe include various species of ducks, as well as belted kingfishers, great blue herons, sandhill cranes, sedge wrens, eastern kingbirds, eastern bluebirds, Wilson's snipe, common yellowthroats, solitary sandpipers, and other edge-loving songbirds. Learn about beaver behavior and biology, and what it means to be 'busy as a beaver' by seeing how they are shaping and reshaping the landscape at this site.

Optional: Meet at Big Ravine North parking lot, [35555 Meyers-Olson Rd](#), Bayfield, at 7:15 am.

27. A Bird in the Hand... (FT-2)

7:00 am – 11:00 am

In this free activity along the Chequamegon Bay shoreline at Long Bridge, any festival registrant can come and go as they please within the listed timeframe to experience the wonders of bird banding from expert researchers. Marvel at the beauty of warblers, sparrows, finches, and other birds up close and personal – an unforgettable experience for all ages. Learn identification features, natural history, and research techniques as leaders demonstrate the how's and why's of bird banding. If you want to see birds up close, then this is the trip for you!

28. FULL Grassland Birding (FT-2)

7:00 am – 11:00 am

The northwoods typically don't conjure up thoughts of grassland birds but the rural areas of Ashland feature a variety of open habitats where Bobolinks, Upland Sandpipers, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Savannah Sparrows, Northern Harriers, and other grassland birds can be found. WDNR Conservation Biologist Nick Anich guides you in search of these open-country species.

29. Discovering Caroline Lake State Natural Area (FT-3)

7:00 am – 11:30 am

Sitting at the headwaters of the Bad River, Caroline Lake is an undeveloped lake with a diverse mix of high-quality plant communities. Matt Dallman, Director of Conservation with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), will share the story behind this important conservation effort and lead you on a beautiful hike in search of loons, eagles, ospreys, warblers, and other northwoods species. Learn about TNC's climate change forestry work and potential impacts of iron mining on this site.

Optional: Meet at [Gilman Park in Mellen](#) at 7:30 am.

30. Birding by the Bay – Washburn (FT-2)

7:30 am – 11:00 am

Local birding expert Rick Burkman will lead participants to multiple lakeshore points in and near Washburn to search for waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Interspersed will be short hikes along shoreline trails to find warblers, orioles, sparrows, and other migrating landbirds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

31. A Bird in the Hand... (FT-2)

7:30 am – 11:30 am

In this free activity at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, any festival registrant can come and go as they please within the listed timeframe to experience the wonders of bird banding from expert researchers. Marvel at the beauty of warblers, sparrows, finches, and other birds up close and personal – an unforgettable experience for all ages. Learn identification features, natural history, and research techniques as leaders demonstrate the how's and why's of bird banding. If you want to see birds up close, then this is the trip for you!

32. Birding Basics with Erik Bruhnke (FT-2)

8:00 am – 11:00 am

Take this special opportunity to hike with Erik Bruhnke, an international tour guide and renowned birding expert, to learn the basics of birding. Field guides, apps, binoculars, eBird, identification tips – you name it, Erik's got you covered! See new birds, learn new ways to remember their songs, and take those first steps down the lifelong path of birdwatching.

Friday, May 22 – Afternoon

33. FULL Exploring the Pileated Woodpecker Trail (FT-4)

12:30 pm – 4:30 pm

The Pileated Woodpecker Trail is part of an extensive trail system meandering throughout the beautiful woodlands of the Bayfield Peninsula and Pikes Creek. Search for thrushes, warblers, vireos, Winter Wrens, wildflowers, and other forest birds on this scenic northwoods excursion with local expert, Ted May.

**Note:* Four-mile roundtrip hike on hilly terrain.

Optional: Meet at [Les Voigt Fish Hatchery](#) (where hike begins) at 1:00 pm.

34. Nature Hike to Lost Creek Falls (FT-4)

12:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Venture through meandering woodland trails lined with aspen, fir, and towering pine en route to the remote, serene, and scenic Lost Creek Falls near Cornucopia. Enjoy birds, flowers, and other jewels of nature in one of the region's most beautiful settings.

**Note:* Round trip hike around 3 miles; sturdy, waterproof footwear for rugged terrain recommended.

Optional: Meet at [Lost Creek Falls parking lot](#) at the end of Trail Road at 1:00 pm.

35. Wetlands Exhibit & Museum Tour (FT-1)

12:45 pm – 4:30 pm

Join the Cable Natural History Museum for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes tour of our new exhibit, The Wetland Way! Follow Museum Naturalists through the exhibit while getting a taste for how our exhibits are designed in-house and turned into an educational venue for hundreds of visitors each year. Afterwards, the behind-the-scenes fun continues as we explore specimen highlights with our Curator and end with an interactive demo in the Collections Look-in Lab.

Optional: Meet at [Cable Natural History Museum](#) at 1:30 pm.

36. Paddling Lower Chequamegon Bay (FT-3)

1:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Take a guided kayak tour along Lake Superior's coast to explore the shallow, near-shore waters of Fish Creek and Whittlesey Creek Estuaries. Look for ducks, shorebirds, and other waterbirds while learning what makes lower Chequamegon Bay special for fish, birds, and other wildlife. EQUIPMENT NOT PROVIDED: Participants should have their own equipment and basic paddling skills.

37. Plants of Bogs & Barrens (FT-2)

1:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Understanding that geology drives ecology helps us understand the plants that grow in bogs and barrens, sometimes side-by-side and yet in very different habitats. Join Conservation Specialist Quita Sheehan in exploring the geology and ecology of the pitted outwash-dominated Moquah Pine Barrens. We'll look at the formation of the kettles and potholes in the area and identify some of the hard-working plants that make a living in such difficult environments. Knee-high water-proof boots are recommended but not required.

38. Birding by the Bay – Ashland (FT-2)

1:15 pm – 4:30 pm

Local birding expert Tim Oksiuta will lead participants to multiple lakeshore points near Ashland to search for waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Interspersed may be short hikes along shoreline trails to find warblers, orioles, sparrows, and other migrating landbirds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

39. Birding by the Bay – Washburn (FT-2)

1:15 pm – 4:30 pm

WDNR Conservation Biologist Nick Anich will lead participants to multiple lakeshore points in and near Washburn to search for waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Interspersed will be short hikes along shoreline trails to find warblers, orioles, sparrows, and other migrating landbirds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

40. Beginning Birding (FT-2)

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Step outside with a local birding expert to start putting sights and names to the birds you see and hear. Even if you have never gone “birding” before, this enjoyable walk has the sweet sounds and smells of spring along area trails. Learn how to pick out bird sounds and develop clever ways to identify birds and remember their songs.

41. Spiders of the Northwoods (Indoor Program)

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Spiders are some of the most misunderstood creatures on the planet. Join Larry Weber, author of the popular field guide *Spiders of the North Woods*, on a wild ride through the wonderful world of this amazing and diverse group of organisms. Scared of spiders? Find out why you shouldn't be! Following the presentation, expect a short walk around the visitor center building in search of spring spiders, if weather allows.

42. Woodworking for Wildlife - Bluebirds (Indoor Program)

1:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Eastern bluebirds are a great conservation success story, and much of that can be attributed to artificial nest boxes deployed around the country. Join the movement by building your own bluebird house to take home with you. All materials provided, including instructions for monitoring and maintenance. Learn how the bluebird movement started, best locations for a box, types of boxes, and other tips for bluebird success from experts, Rich and Carol Becker.

Additional cost: \$8

43. Birds We Hate to Love (Indoor Program)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Some birds have bad reputations, but should they? Sit back and relax with local birding expert Rick Burkman to discuss local birds that get a bad rap and how we might view at least some of them in a new way.

Friday, May 22 – Evening

**All Friday evening activities will take place two miles south of Ashland at [The Gathering Barn, 50467 State Hwy 13](#).*

44. Silent Auction & Social

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Join us at *The Gathering Barn* to relax with fellow participants and share stories, birding tips, & adventures of the day. Sip your favorite beverage from the cash bar and enjoy a spectacular silent auction sponsored by Chequamegon Audubon. A perfect finale to your busy day of birding!

45. Dinner Banquet

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Celebrate the evening with the companionship of fellow birders at *The Gathering Barn*. Dinner will feature a mouth-watering buffet of broiled cod, roast beef, baked chicken with stuffing, wild rice pilaf, honey glazed carrots, tossed salad, and dessert.

Additional Cost: \$25.00/person, plus optional cash bar

46. Sightings of the Day & Welcome

7:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Discover the festival's most exciting finds so far and the stories behind them as we gather, fittingly, at *The Gathering Barn* to tally a master checklist of birds seen during the festival. A popular, can't-miss event! We'll also settle in for the evening's keynote presentation immediately following.

47. KEYNOTE PRESENTATION – Traveling with Birds: The Joys of Birding Near & Far

7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Birding thrills our senses and completes us in different ways, providing feelings of both fulfillment and wonder. Birds – their colors, songs, and feats of flight – bring us joy, and being outside observing them instills happiness and improves mental health. These shared pleasures are in large part why we are gathered at this festival, right? In this presentation at *The Gathering Barn*, renowned international birding guide Erik Bruhnke will share experiences that have left deep impressions on him. He will highlight some of the most memorable birds he's enjoyed throughout the United States, including right here in northern Wisconsin, and introduce some spectacular birds of more distant regions in Central and South America. Along the way he'll showcase outstanding photos, relatable stories, and birding anecdotes that he has accumulated during his lifelong birding treasure hunt.

Additional Cost: \$10

Erik Bruhnke is a professional birding guide for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) who has travelled the world from Alaska to South America in search of birds. A Wisconsin native, he graduated from Northland College in Ashland in 2008, later working various field positions at such famed birding sites as Duluth's Hawk Ridge, Corpus Christi in Texas, and Cappy May, New Jersey. Erik has written for BirdWatching magazine and Bird Watcher's Digest, won national awards for his photography, and presents frequently at North American festivals, including the well-known Biggest Week in American Birding in Ohio. In addition to his deep field-based expertise on birds, Erik is highly esteemed in the birding community as one of the nicest and happiest humans on earth!



Saturday, May 23 – Morning

48. Birding at Port Wing (FT-3)

6:15 am – 11:30 am

WDNR Conservation Biologist Nick Anich leads the group to Port Wing in search of a wide diversity of birds at the beautiful coastal town. Visit the harbor for waterbirds like shorebirds, gulls, terns, loons, and waterfowl. Hike among towering pines in the Port Wing Boreal Forest State Natural Area, where warblers, thrushes, woodpeckers, and other forest birds abound. Scan the Michele Wheeler Wetland Restoration for ducks, cranes, rails, bitterns, swans, and more! Dress warm and bring a scope if you have one.

49. FULL Birding Sutherland Area (FT-3)

6:30 am – 11:30 am

Explore the meadows, fields and riparian woodlands along the White River just northwest of Bibon Swamp for songbirds, raptors, and waterbirds. We'll begin by looking for open country birds in the agricultural fields around the farming hamlet of Sutherland, and then scan the banks of the White River on either side of the bridge at the nearby canoe landing. Next, we'll head south through the riparian and floodplain forest just west of the river along Mason-Delta Road and visit a shrubby marshland at the road's end. We'll then return north to Sutherland Road, where we'll stroll along a trail across a 50-acre meadow en route to the White River just downstream of Sajdak Springs State Natural Area. We'll be traveling by car and occasionally on foot along 3 miles of road; the walk across the meadow is just over a half-mile round-trip.

Optional: Meet at county garage in Mason at [intersection of Hwy 63/E](#) at 6:45 am.

50. Birding the North Country Trail (FT-4)

6:45 am – 11:30 am

WDNR Conservation Biologist Ryan Brady guides you along the North Country Trail south of Ashland in search of woodland songbirds, spring wildflowers, and scenic vistas. We'll hike a narrow, hilly section of the North Country Trail to the Juniper Rock Overlook and Marengo River bridge. Intrepid hikers can continue farther on their own to the Swedish Settlement—the farmstead ruins of a very tough family. If time allows, we'll also bird by foot on adjacent forest roads in search of warblers, flycatchers, and other forest birds.

51. Wildlife & Fire in the Moquah Pine Barrens (FT-3)

6:45 am – 11:30 am

The ecosystems of the sand plains of Northwest Wisconsin have been shaped over the millenia by frequent fires, which many species of plants and animals depend upon to create the conditions they need to thrive. Wildlife Biologist Brian Heeringa will lead a tour of sites being restored to the pine barrens ecosystem through prescribed burning and other treatments. Participants will learn about the relationship of fire and birds such as the black-backed woodpecker, clay-colored sparrow, and brown thrasher, as well as the very rare Chryxus Arctic butterfly and numerous other animals and plants. Weather permitting, this trip should yield a good mix of bird, insect, and mammal sightings!

52. A Bird in the Hand... (FT-2)

7:00 am – 11:30 am

In this free activity, any festival registrant can come and go as they please within the listed timeframe to experience the wonders of bird banding from expert researchers. Marvel at the beauty of warblers, sparrows, finches, and other birds up close and personal – an unforgettable experience for all ages. Learn identification features, natural history, and research techniques as leaders demonstrate the how's and why's of bird banding. If you want to see birds up close, then this is the trip for you!

53. FULL Bibon Swamp Birding (FT-3)

7:00 am – 11:30 am

The Bibon Swamp is one of the area's best places to find Golden-winged Warblers. This trip will walk a very lightly traveled, dead-end dirt road through sedge meadow, alder, ash, and mixed lowland forest while enjoying a few Golden-wings amidst a potpourri of birds in a peaceful setting. Local birding expert Tim Oksiuta will help participants find and pick out numerous species, including various warblers.

Optional: Meet leader at [Grand View general store](#) at 7:30 am.

54. FULL Birding at Beaver Hollow (FT-2)

7:00 am – 11:30 am

The headwaters of North Pikes Creek are an expansive area comprised of marshes, ponds, shrub thickets, and wetland forests teeming with wildlife. Thanks to a local Friends group, portions can be accessed via boardwalk and community outdoor education area known as Beaver Hollow. Join birding expert Anne Geraghty and Friends group President Kathy Wendling, to glimpse a heron rookery, explore beaver-created wetlands, look for migrating warblers, and learn how this 410-acre property became protected in perpetuity. Waterproof footwear is recommended due to wet, muddy conditions.

Optional: Meet at [Beaver Hollow parking lot](#) at 7:30 am.

55. FULL Birding at Long Lake & Birch Grove (FT-3)

7:15 am – 11:30 am

Situated less than 10 miles from Washburn in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Long Lake Day Use Area and Birch Grove (Twin Lakes) Campground provide beautiful scenery and excellent birding opportunities. Join our keynote speaker Erik Bruhnke on hikes at both locations to scope the waters for loons, ducks, beavers, and otters and scan the treetops for warblers, grosbeaks, flycatchers, vireos, sapsuckers, and more.

Saturday, May 23 – Afternoon

56. Exploring the Tyler Forks Community Forest (FT-3)

12:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Adjacent to Copper Falls State Park near Mellen, the 590-acre Tyler Forks Community Forest features forested wetlands, ridges, and ravines that provide critical habitat for migratory birds, brook trout, and countless other species. Beyond wildlife protection, the forest safeguards water quality for the Bad River watershed and Lake Superior and has become a hub for outdoor recreation, conservation, and education. Hike on trail with ecologist and birding expert Joan Elias in search of spring wildflowers, riverside views, and a variety of songbirds, hopefully to include plenty of warblers!

**Note:* 3-mile roundtrip hike on hilly terrain

Optional: Meet at Tyler Forks Community Forest trailhead [parking lot](#) at 1:15pm.

57. Tracking Mammals in the Field (FT-4)

12:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Visit the Moquah Barrens or nearby national forest site to learn the basics of identifying mammal tracks from wildlife biologists Adrian Wydeven and Erik Olson. From squirrels to hares and foxes to wolves, they'll share their decades of experience in deciphering the strides, gaits, and patterns of footprints left behind by our furred friends. Finding wolf tracks is a good possibility on this trip!

58. Seeds of Hope: Native Landscaping Tour (FT-2)

12:45 pm – 4:30 pm

Visit the Aldo Leopold Native Seed Orchard at NGLVC to see thousands of native plants that produce seed and plant materials for habitat restoration projects in the Chequamegon Bay region. This orchard, named for one of America's foremost conservationists, is also a nectar and seed source for many native butterflies, bees, moths and birds. Then drive to a nearby native plant nursery to learn about growing native plants, restoring habitat, how conservation easements work, and purchase your own wildflowers to get started at home! Led by U.S. Forest Service retiree Susan Nelson, in partnership with the Chequamegon Chapter of Wild Ones and Whittlesey Creek Wildflower Farm.

59. Birding by the Bay – Washburn (FT-2)

1:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Birding expert and keynote speaker Erik Bruhnke will lead participants to multiple lakeshore points in and near Washburn to search for waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Interspersed will be short hikes along shoreline trails to find warblers, orioles, sparrows, and other migrating landbirds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one.

60. Shorebirds Made Simpler (FT-3)

1:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Shorebirds are among the most difficult groups of birds to identify. WDNR Conservation Biologist Nick Anich will point out key identification features while this trip visits shorebird hotspots along Chequamegon Bay. Depending on available habitat, which

varies each year, up to 10 species of shorebirds are possible, with potential to spot locally uncommon species such as American Golden-Plover, Willet, Marbled Godwit, American Avocet, and other waterbirds.

61. Beginning Birding (FT-1)

1:15 pm – 3:30 pm

Step outside with a local birding expert to start putting sights and names to the birds you see and hear. Even if you have never gone “birding” before, this enjoyable walk has the sweet sounds and smells of spring along nearby trails. Learn how to pick out bird sounds and develop clever ways to identify birds and remember their songs.

62. SOS: Saving Birds at Home One Window at a Time (Indoor Program)

1:15 pm – 3:30 pm

Bring the dimensions of a window from home and make an Acopian Bird saver. These Zen window curtains are a simple way to save birds. The design is elegant and really works to prevent bird collisions. You will leave the workshop with one Zen window curtain and the knowledge to make more for your home. We'll also discuss outdoor attachment options. All materials will be provided.

Important: Bring dimensions of the window you wish to protect!

Additional Cost: \$3

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