

far flowing water



Grand Haven, Michigan

March 17 - 7:30

Volume 20 ❖ Number 6
March, 2009

Gray Wolves in the Upper Great Lakes Region

Dr. Paul Keenlance
Dept. of Biology at GVSU

will give the history, ecology, and current status of
Gray Wolves

Imagine this. You finish your bowl of cereal, walk to the kitchen sink, and put it in the sink. You look up and not 9 feet away staring straight at you is a Barred Owl! You guessed it, that happened to me the other day. I immediately moved away, but Carl could peer another window at it. When I peered out the window again, it immediately stared back, looking rather startled. My light hair color often startles the yard birds, just as the owl did this time. I decided not to too close and let Carl have all the fun. It was staring intently at the ground just below, then tensed up and dove out of sight. A few seconds on the ground, and away it went with a small, dark morsel in its talons.

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**United Methodist
Church of the Dunes**
717 Sheldon, Grand Haven, MI

Visit the OIAS homepage at
<http://www.oias.org>

**Everyone is invited.
Our programs are free.**

Programs 2008 - 2009

**More Directors are needed!!!
If you would like to be a Director,
let Michael L know.**

APRIL 21— Michigan's Important Birding Areas and Update on the Search for the Ivory Billed Woodpecker Caleb Putnam, Michigan IBA Coordinator
MAY 19 — Annual Potluck & Members' "Show-and-Tell" Slide Show. Start gathering photos to share.

Birding Techniques

- ♦ Wear subdued colors
 "Good birders don't wear white"
 Avoid alarm colors – birds see color
- ♦ Listen; speak little, quietly
- ♦ Walk slowly and quietly, stop often to look
- ♦ Don't loom suddenly into an open space
- ♦ Use actions appropriate to the setting
- ♦ Watch for movement
- ♦ Call birds with good judgment
- ♦ Don't get in others sight lines
- ♦ Be specific in helping others find birds

Carl Manning

Field Guides

Basic Library

- ♦ Petersen Field Guide to the Birds, Eastern Edition
- ♦ Sibley Guide to Birds, Full or Eastern Edition
- ♦ National Geographic, 4th Edition
- ♦ A Birder's Guide to Michigan – Chartier & Ziarno

Good Additions

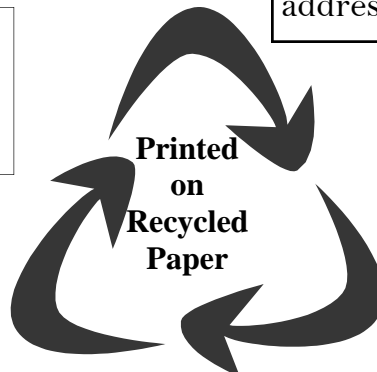
- ♦ Specialized – Gulls, Warblers...
- ♦ Michigan Butterflies & Skippers
- ♦ Birdscaping in the Midwest
- ♦ Bringing Nature Home—Douglas Tallamy



If you change your mailing address or email address at any time, please contact me at birds02@charter.net Mailing newsletters to outdated mailing addresses costs the OIAS money.

Far Flowing Water is published eight times per year. If you would like to contribute to the next issue, **please have your articles to me by April 1st**

Our programs are made possible, in part, by an Emilie Baker Fund for the Environment grant from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.



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4th ANNUAL LAKESHORE EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Saturday, April 18th

Mark your calendar now

Submitted by Doris Ducey

▲ 9 AM to 11 AM - Kay Charter on Birds

Kay is a nationally recognized speaker and author on bird conservation. See her award winning power point presentation at the Grand Haven YMCA, followed by a guided bird walk behind Mulligan's Hollow



▲ 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM - Green Parade

anything that doesn't use fossil fuels: your feet, your bike, your roller blades, etc. Meet at Franklin Street parking lot opposite the old courthouse, and end at Mulligan's Hollow

▲ 1:30 PM to 4 PM - Earth Day Fair

Mulligan's Hollow and the YMCA Multi-purpose room. Visit booths of environmental organizations and businesses, community groups, and educational groups. There will be food, games and music

▲ 8 PM to 11 PM - Earth Rock EnviroParty - Open Mic

YMCA Teens: Come and play at our open mike. Bands, individuals and poets. Music and words with earth friendly themes.

Saturday, April 25th

10 to 4 PM - A Day in the Park

Tai Chi demos, BYO picnic lunch, folk dancing for beginners, guided nature hikes. Hosted by Friends of the Ottawa County Parks at the historic Weaver House, Pine Bend County Park.



For more information on A Day in the Park visit the Friends of Ottawa County Parks website: www.Friendsofocp.org



Lakeshore Earth Day Committee

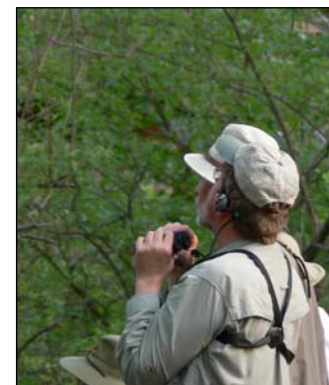
Buying Binoculars

Carl Manning

- ◆ Quality – Buy the best you can afford, you won't regret later
- ◆ Style – Porro or Roof, each has advantage, Porro typically less expensive
- ◆ Brightness = $1/\text{power}^2$, Exit pupil = obj/power
- ◆ Field of View – Wider is better, 400 ft@1000yd
- ◆ Depth of Field – The slice that is in-focus
- ◆ Eye Relief – distance from lens to focal plane, for eyeglass wearers, >15mm
- ◆ Close-focus – 10' or less
- ◆ Try as many as you can before buying, ask other birders

Finding birds

- ◆ Focus on bird without bins
- ◆ Raise bins while keeping the bird in sight
- ◆ Shift focal plane to "isolate" image (depth of field)
- ◆ Practice!



Pine Siskin

Carduelis pinus

Judi Manning



The Pine Siskin, a member of the irregular, irruptive, nomadic in winter finch family, is observed in our area during some winters, usually foraging large numbers. They may stay in their breeding area but migration is dependent on the distribution and abundance of seeds. If northern cone crops are small, they head south and may go as far as the Gulf of Mexico. The results of the Great Backyard Bird Count for 2009 have them reported as far south as the Florida Everglades.

They especially like thistle feeders. In winter they can be found in large numbers on the thistle feeders. Unfortunately, the dense concentration spreads salmonella, especially when the feeders are not properly cleaned.

They prefer open coniferous forests and can be found in parks and in mixed coniferous deciduous forests. They hang upside down on the tips of coniferous trees high in the tree canopy. They eat small seeds of the red alder, birch, spruce, thistle, and weeds make up the majority of their diet. They also eat insects such as caterpillars, grasshoppers, aphids, and scale insects. By eating a variety of insect pests, they help keep destructive insects under control.

Gregarious during breeding season, they nest in loose colonies with pairs visiting one another's nest. The nest, however, is defended against other siskins during egg laying and incubation. They breed from central Alaska across Canada, south to the northern states in the east through the mountain states in the West into Mexico and Guatemala.



They are 4 to 6 inches long with a relatively long, 7 to 9 inch, wingspan. The tail is notched. The short, thin bill is very pointed. They are brown and heavily streaked, paler underneath. They have two buffy wing bars and yellow in the wing at the base of the flight feathers. Females and young males are more brownish with a lot less yellow. The call is a harsh, grating upwardly inflected "zreeeeeeet". They have an undulating flight like many finches.

The nest is placed near the end of a horizontal branch of a conifer tree, 3 to 50 feet high. Built by the female it is a shallow saucer of twigs, grasses, leaves, weed stems, rootlets, fur, feathers, grass, moss or thistle down and is well concealed. The female incubates the three to four eggs for about 13 days. The male brings her food while she incubates and for the first few days after the young hatch. Then both parents feed the young by regurgitation until they leave the nest 13 to 17 days later. The parents feed them for another three weeks. The nest is heavily insulated to keep the eggs warm in the cold climates.

The American Goldfinch looks similar, but does not have the heavy streaking. They are often found on the thistle feeder at the same time, along with the Common Redpoll, which lacks the yellow in the wings, the heavy streaking and has a red spot on its head.

Because of the irruptive behavior assessing the population trends of this species is difficult. Brown-headed Cowbirds parasitize their nest and forest fragmentation increases their contact with cowbird. They are probably declining in some areas.

For excellent pictures for identification go to this website: <http://www.wbu.com/chipperwoods/photos/pinesiskin.htm>

References:

http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Pine_Siskin.html; http://birdweb.org/birdweb/bird_details.aspx; <http://www.enature.com>; <http://www.wbu.com/chipperwoods/photos/pinesiskin.htm>

Giant Swallowtail

Judi Manning

Papilio cresphontes

J Manning @2009

The Giant Swallowtail butterfly is widely distributed throughout the American continent, from Ontario into Central and South America and west to the Rockies. It is an easy to identify butterfly ranging from 3.5 to 5.5 inches across. The forewing of the male is smaller than the female. This swallowtail is the largest butterfly in much of the US. In the north they have two flights from May-September.

The wings are black with yellow markings near wing margins and spots forming a diagonal band across the fore wings. The tails are edged with black and filled with yellow.

They are found in rocky and sandy hillsides near streams or gullies and in woodlands in the north. In the southern US they are found in citrus groves. We have had glimpses of Giant Swallowtails in our yard for the last few years. Last year I saw two a couple times and later found lots of caterpillars on our Hop Tree. I fed them in the house and the chrysalis are currently outside in a screened in box. The adults sip flower nectar for food. They also sip liquid from manure.

The males patrol flyways through pine woods looking for females. Their flight is very strong and leisurely and they may glide long distances between wing beats. Once you see them in flight, you will easily recognize them when you see them again.

Courtship and copulation occur in the afternoon. Females lay their eggs singly on the upper surface of the leaves of host plants. The spherical, cream to brown eggs are 1 to 1.5 mm. The larval usually eat at night. Hosts plants are various members of the rue family (Rutaceae) including Common Prickly Ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*), Hop Tree (*Ptelea trifoliata*) and citrus species.

The five larval instars differ in appearance, but they all resemble bird droppings - dark brown with creamy white mottled markings. The youngest are mostly black with a white saddle. The older instars are dark brown with a complex pattern. The larvae also called "orange dogs" may pupate on a small twig of the host plant or travel a short distance to a vertically oriented structure. The brownish, bark-looking chrysalis is oriented at 45 degrees with the posterior end attached directly to the structure and the anterior end is attached by a thin silken thread.

The pupae is vulnerable to parasitic insects such as the tachnid fly. The larval stages are more protected against natural enemies. They defend themselves against predators (insects and vertebrates) and parasitic insects because of their cryptic coloration and pattern. The larvae also have an orange or reddish Y-shaped eversible gland just behind the head. When attacked the gland extends and attempts to wipe it against the attacker. This gland in the fourth and fifth instar contains a highly noxious, pungent mixture of chemicals (40:60 mixture of isobutyric acid and 2-methyl butyric acid) that smells like rancid butter. This is repellent and toxic to small predators, like ants and spiders. Birds are not repelled by the secretions but rarely eat giant swallowtail larvae.

Other black and yellow swallowtail butterflies include the common tiger swallowtail, *Pterourus* (*Papilio glaucus* (Linnaeus)), which has a 3-1/2 to 4 inch wingspan and fore wings that are mostly yellow and marked with four black lines and wing margins.

Excellent pictures of the life cycle of this magnificent butterfly can be found at:

<http://www.butterflygardeningandconservation.com/butterfly/st/giant.php>

This butterfly is currently secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.

References:

Giant Swallowtail <http://www.butterflygardeningandconservation.com/butterfly/st/giant.php>; <http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus/giantswallowtail.htm>; <http://insects.tamu.edu/fieldguide/cimg270.html>; <http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species>

The noisiest insect in the world is the male cicada; it can be heard 1,312 feet away

The shrew is one of the smallest, and most ferocious, mammals on earth.

Because they eat hundreds of insects per hour, night hawks are often called mosquito hawks.

2008-2009 OIAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / APPLICATION



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Post Office Box 1654, Holland, Michigan, 49422

3/2009

Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society

Judi Manning, Editor
P.O. Box 1654
Holland, MI 49422

PLEASE FORWARD
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**March 17
Dr. Paul Keenlance**

**May 9
North American
Migration Count**