

Grand Haven, Michigan

September 15 @ 7:30p.m.

Volume 21 Number 1
September, 2009

WOLVES OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION

**Dr. Paul Keenlance, Dept. of Biology at GVSU
will give the history, ecology, and
current status of Gray Wolves.
Also the deer population issues in Grand Haven.**

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

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

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Fall migration is upon us . . .
In the yard and out and about.
There are always surprises awaiting you.
Go out and see what you can see.

Everyone is invited. Our programs are free.



Photo by
Charlie DeWitt

Merlin

Falco columbarius

Judi Manning

This small uncommon falcon is found in northern forests and prairies and is the least well marked of the American falcons. They are widely distributed, but nowhere common. In Michigan it is State Threatened and rare.

The male is 9-11 inches, 4.5-6.6 oz with a 21-23 inch wingspan, a blue-gray back and bold black tail bands.

The female is 11-12 inches, 6.4-8.3 oz with a 24-27 inch wingspan, a brown back and buff colored tail bands. This blue jay sized bird has long, pointed wings, a long, heavily barred tail, a faint malar stripe, whitish throat, streaked breast, and a voracious appetite. Their call is a crackling ki-ki-ki-ki-kee. The female food call is a series of eep-eep-eeeps. They are not a social bird, except during mating season. After the young leave, each parent returns to a solitary life style.

Their flight speed is 30 to 40 mph. They are very agile in the air making rapid changes of direction to keep up with their quarry. They soar low to the ground when hunting, plucking prey out of the air with the talons. They also use tail-chasing, power dives, ringing flight, and surprise attacks to flush birds snatching individuals that are too slow to react. They prefer tail-chasing: tracking the prey from behind, overcoming it with a great burst of speed with a more rapid wing beat than peregrine falcons. Their success rate for catching birds is 20-25% sometimes catching two birds at once. They also eat small mammals no larger than a small rabbit, snakes, insects, butterflies, and dragonflies. Their diet is comprised of 80% birds, 5% mammals, and 15% insects. Occasionally they hunt at dusk and take bats. A family of Merlins during breeding season can eat approx. 53 pounds of prey.

Adults will cache food for later use. They prey upon injurious agricultural insects such as grasshoppers and crickets. Juveniles often eat large numbers of dragonflies.

They can be found in open country, grasslands, open cultivated fields, sand dunes, marshes, estuaries, and seacoasts. They breed in coniferous forests, rarely residing in the forested areas. In Michigan they prefer lake shores and islands with fewer inland nest reports. They are becoming a regular breeder in urban areas from open coniferous woodland to prairies and occasionally in adjacent suburbs.

Merlins are found from Alaska to Nova Scotia, California to Florida. However, they are very rare in the Midwest and the eastern seaboard states. They breed in Alaska, most of Canada, parts of the north and western states.

Males arrive to the breeding area first, usually returning to the same general area year after year. They do not necessarily use the same actual nest site each year. They do not build their own nest, but take over old nests of other raptors or crows. They prefer abandoned crow stick nests and are primarily monogamous and aggressive toward intruders in the nesting area. The nest is usually 15-35 feet above

Con't Pg. 3

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 Oct. 1st**

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



FAR FLOWING WATER

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Merlin Con't from Pg. 2

ground. Two to six eggs are laid at two-day intervals from early April to early May in the southern ranges. The eggs are incubated for 28-32 days by the female. The male does the hunting. He does not visit the nest, but leaves prey nearby for her to retrieve. The eggs hatch in intervals and both parents share food gathering. The young fledge 25-30 days after hatching. Quills appear after 14 days and by 18 days, the down is almost completely covered with feathers, except in the head. Adult plumage begins to appear at about 10 months of age and complete their molt only at the end of their second summer.

The young remain near the nest several weeks after they leave the nest. A week after they leave the nest, they make distance flights. After two weeks, they begin to catch insects. Six weeks later they are skilled in catching small birds and shortly afterwards they are mature enough to migrate south. The success rate of the young is exceptionally high. Often three birds per nest survive to continue breeding.

Falco columbarius become highly aggressive towards other raptors and crows in the nesting area. This aggressive behavior towards other predatory birds is beneficial to other woodland song and ground birds in the nesting range since *Falco columbarius* hunts only in open country, leaving the woodland birds relatively free from predators during the mating season.

Merlins may be confused with the American Kestrel which is slightly smaller. The Kestrel hovers, the Merlin does not. The Kestrel is more colorful and has two prominent black facial streaks. Merlins are closer in color and size to a Sharp-shinned Hawk. The Merlin has long, pointed wings and the sharpie has short, rounded wings.

With expanding human development, the breeding habitats and hunting grounds of the Merlin are being rapidly destroyed and having a major affect on their population.

The first confirmed nest in Michigan was in the Huron Mountains in 1955. The Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas 1991 results showed there were seven confirmed nests in the Upper Peninsula and Alpena and Antrim counties in the northern lower Peninsula. In 2009, one of our Ottawa County parks had a confirmed nest with two youngsters.

They arrive in Michigan in late April though mid-May following the main migration of small birds. By mid-October most have migrated out of Michigan. If you see any in the winter in Michigan, they should be documented.

Falco (refers to sickle-shaped talons or the shape of the wings in flight). columbarius (refers to dove or pigeon, which it resembles in flight).

They are also known as pigeon hawk because of its pigeon-like flight, little blue corporal, and bullet hawk.

Falco columbarius columbarius breeds in northern Europe, Asia, and North America and winters n the Gulf States, eastern Mexico, northern Venezuela, Ecuador and the West Indies. *Falco columbarius bendireii* breeds in northwestern Alaska to northern Saskatchewan and into northern California and winters in California, New Mexico, and northwestern Mexico. *Falco columbarius richardsoni* breeds in the Great Plains from southern Alberta and the middle Saskatchewan valley to northern Montana and North Dakota.

References: Merlin, <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Merlin/id> (Cornell); Raptor Species, Merlin <http://www.carolinaraptorcenter.org/merlin.php>; Lake Milton Raptor Education Center, <http://www.raptorcenter.org/merline-falcon.asp>; Merlin, <http://www.peregrine-foundation.ca/raptors/Merlin.html>; Michigan Natural Features Inventory pdf article.



Carl Manning 2009

Photo by
Carl Manning

**P
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Birds of Peru

Marilyn Crane; October 20

Natural History of the Grand Tetons

Fred Bevis; November 18

Bat Conservation

Amy Russell; January 19

Birds and Transmission Towers

Joelle Gehring; February 16

Birding Nearby

Judi and Carl Manning; March 16

Birds of Madagascar

Angie and Steve Hamberg; April 20

Annual Potluck & Members' "Show-and-Tell"

Slide Show; May 18 - 6:30 Everyone is encouraged to bring up to 20 of their favorite nature shots to share.



The Land Conservancy of West Michigan & Korth Family Foundation Present the 9th Annual Korth Conservation Speakers Series

**A Land Ethic for the 21st Century:
Integrating Land Conservation and the Built Environment**

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Cost: \$18 per person

Evening: 7 pm registration — 7:30 pm presentation

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
1000 East Beltline Ave. NE — Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Price includes admission to Frederik Meijer Gardens' English Perennial Garden and Indoor Greenhouses from 6:30 pm to 11:30 pm. (Gardens & sculpture park close to general public at 5 pm.)

Space is limited - register by 10/22/09
(Register online at www.naturenearby.org)
Please reserve space for _____ attendees / \$18 each
My check for \$_____ is enclosed.
(Payable to Land Conservancy of West Michigan)
Please bill my credit card \$_____.
Card (please circle): Visa Mastercard
Card # _____
Exp. Date _____
Card Holder Name: _____
Signature: _____
Billing Address: - Same as on the right

Attendee Name(s): _____

Company: _____
Address: _____
Daytime phone: _____
Email: _____

Please mail or fax your reservation by 10/22/09:
Land Conservancy of West Michigan
1345 Monroe Ave. NW, Ste. 324, Grand Rapids, MI 49505
Phone: (616) 451-9476 Fax: (616) 451-1874
lcwm@naturenearby.org • www.naturenearby.org

Shade-Coffee - YES

Judi Manning



Is the coffee you drink helpful to birds? Acres of tropical forest are lost while one drinks a cup of sun-grown coffee. Birds and other creatures are lost with the lost forest.

Coffee was originally grown under shade with sun-intolerant plants. In 1972 new hybrid, sun-tolerant coffee varieties were developed that yielded 2-3 times more coffee than shade grown, resulting in more money and clearcutting shade farms and rainforest habitat. Of the 6 million acres of coffee lands, 60% have been stripped of shade trees since 1972.

Coffee shrubs for shade-grown coffee are grown in the shade of tall trees. Over the past 30 years, shade-coffee farms have been converted to “sun-coffee” farms to increase production, along with the use of agrochemicals, herbicides, and pesticides, which scientists believe contributes to the decline in the number of many of the birds that migrate to Latin America.

Shade-coffee provides habitat for myriad insects, orchids, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other less well-known denizens of tropical forests. **Native shade trees provide nutrients and suppress weeds, reducing or eliminating the need for chemical fertilizers and herbicides, and lowering farming costs. Farmers also harvest and sell from shade trees an assortment of fruits, firewood, lumber, and medicines.**

Shade Grown Coffee	Sun Grown Coffee
Historical, traditional, sustainable method of farming preserves tree-canopy habitat for songbirds & other animals	Crop requires full sun, resulting in clearcutting of rainforest habitat causing soil erosion and depletion; unsustainable
Usually organically grown, free of chemical applications	Requires chemical fertilizers, pesticides and/or herbicides
Better taste – beans mature slower in shade allowing natural sugars to fully develop creating a rich, intense flavor	Sun-grown hybrid coffees produce higher yields, but do not taste nearly as shade-grown coffee

Coffee from shade grown beans has a better taste and aroma because of the formation of a slower growing bean, causing it to be a denser, harder bean for quality coffee.

Americans drink one-third of the world’s coffee. The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) “Bird Friendly®” seal of approval farmers are rewarded for their organic ecologically beneficial practices. If you buy “Bird Friendly®” you are helping to support bird conservation, no chemical pesticides, a healthy environment, and the livelihood of many small-scale farm owners. These farms provide food and shelter for over 150 species of migratory birds such as warblers, vireos, orioles, grosbeaks, hummingbirds, and tanagers that over-winter, as well as resident birds in tropical landscapes. Companies that sell coffee with the “Bird Friendly®” seal of approval contribute 25 cents per pound to support SMBC research and conservation programs.

The coffee berry borer is estimated to do a half billion dollars worth of damage to coffee crops every year.

Farms are now realizing the benefit of insect-eating birds. Jamaica estimated that warblers can reduce damage by \$237 an acre for a coffee company and other high mountain crops.

In 2007, there were 2,400 coffee producers with 7,600 hectares of certified shade-coffee that are bringing more than 8,000,000 pounds of “Bird Friendly®” coffee to the market. The coffee must meet certain criteria some of which is organic standards, tree height of the canopy over the coffee, foliage cover, number of bird species, and the diversity of the trees being managed, among other things.

SMBC has developed the only 100%-organic shade-grown coffee certification. Three Rainforest Alliances also certifies shade-grown coffee, but SMBC has a stricter program.

Song Bird Coffee is a shade-grown coffee brand and is a joint venture between the American Birding Association (ABA) and Thanksgiving Coffee Company. Fifteen cents from each package is donated to the ABA.

Thanksgiving Company uses verified shade grown coffee and has been a socially and environmentally aware coffee producer for over 34 years.

Beware, some companies market coffee as shade-grown but have no criteria or standards. Not all coffee labeled “Shade Grown” means it is a good environment for the birds. Some shade grown coffee is grown in the shade of non-native trees that do not attract native birds or grown on farms that rely on pesticides. Look for the “Bird Friendly®” seal, or do some research on your own to find out where shade grown coffee is actually grown.

References: Shade-Grown Coffee Plantations, <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Coffee/>; The Facts on Bird Friendly Coffee, http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/funbirds/birdnews/bird_coffee.aspx; Bird Friendly coffee, <http://www.birdwatching-bliss.com/bird-friendly-coffee.html>

Recycle Your Cell Phone

Judi Manning

Very few people who upgrade their cell phones recycle it. If more people did recycle their old cell phones, hazardous waste in landfills would be reduced and enough manufacturing energy saved to power more than 18,500 U.S. homes for one year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA estimates only 10% of the 140 million cell phones which are replaced each year are recycled.

Dangerous substances such as lead and chromium are in cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) and should be kept out of landfills. Nineteen states have now enacted laws regarding disposal of electronic devices. It is estimated more than 1 billion unused cell phones are in landfills or collecting dust in America's closets and drawers.

If the precious metals, copper and plastics that are in cell phones and PDAs are recycled or reused, it:

- ♦ conserves these materials
- ♦ prevents air and water pollution
- ♦ reduces greenhouse gas emissions that occur during manufacturing and when extracting and processing virgin materials
- ♦ keeps reusable materials out of the landfills
- ♦ makes a greener world by helping the environment by saving energy
- ♦ great way to conserve resources



Make sure to wipe clean the personal data from your cell phone before disposing of it.

You can locate places to dispose of cell phones and other recyclables via <http://earth911.com>. If you donate your working cell phone or PDA to a charity, this helps to raise funds for them by providing them for discounted sale.

Here are some other donation options from PlanetGreen:

- 1. Donate it to victims of domestic violence.** [Verizon's HopeLine program](http://aboutus.vzw.com/communityservice/hopeLineRecycling.html) (<http://aboutus.vzw.com/communityservice/hopeLineRecycling.html>) accepts wireless phones and equipment, regardless of condition or service provider. Verizon donates wireless phones, airtime, and funding to nonprofit domestic violence shelters and prevention programs across the nation.
- 2. Trade it in for carbon offsets:** [RipMobile](http://www.terrapass.com/cell-phone-recycling.html/) (<http://www.terrapass.com/cell-phone-recycling.html/>) is willing to dole out top dollar for in the form of gift certificates you can redeem for carbon-offset credits from TerraPass. Have an old Motorola Razr V3 gathering dust? It's worth \$21, which is enough to offset almost 6,000 lbs of carbon dioxide emissions.
- 3. Sell your cell phone:** Get your moola straight up at [Cell for Cash](http://www.cellforcash.com/) (<http://www.cellforcash.com/>), which will pay big bucks for your unwanted talkie. The Palm TREO 700w you have socked away in a drawer, for instance, is worth \$65 in the bank. The company will even send you a free postage-paid box.
- 4. Help out a soldier serving abroad:** Thirteen-year-old Brittany Bergquist and her 12-year-old brother, Robbie, launched [Cell Phones for Soldiers](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/) (<http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/>) in 2004 to provide as many overseas soldiers as possible with prepaid calling cards, which the siblings purchase with funds raised from recycling used mobiles.
- 5. Save gorillas in the Congo:** Cell phones contain coltan, a mineral extracted in the forests of central Africa, home to the world's endangered lowland gorillas. Not only has coltan mining dramatically reduced the gorillas' habitat, but it has also resulted in the widespread slaughter of great apes for the illegal bush-meat trade. [Eco-Cell](http://eco-cell.com/) (<http://eco-cell.com/>) collects old cell phones at 46 American zoos. (You can also request a free shipping label.) Proceeds from phone sales go to supporting myriad zoos and conservation groups, including the [Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund](#)."

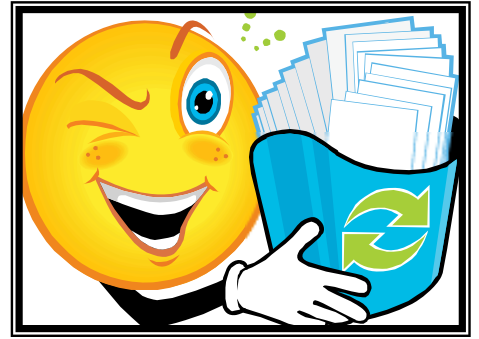
References: A New Push for Cellphone Recycling, Parade, 7/12/09, Pg. 9; Recycle Your Cell Phone for Fun, Profit, Jasmin Malik Chua, <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/tech-transport/recycle-your-phone.html>; EPA Challenges Americans by Launching National Cell Phone Recycling Week 4/2/09, <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nf>

Remember:

**Christmas Bird
Count**

in December

More details later



Dues are due for 2009-2010

Check one

2009-2010 OIAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / APPLICATION

Name _____

Street _____ E-Mail _____

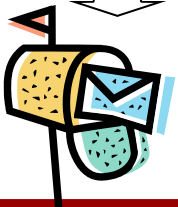
City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ How did you hear about OIAS? _____



Check Member Type: \$12 Individual or Family
 \$100 Individual Life \$15 \$20 \$30 Contributing

9/2009



Make checks payable to: Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society
Mail to: OIAS, Post Office Box 1654, Holland, Michigan, 49422

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

Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society

Mission Statement

a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation

Provide stewardship of local Grand River island wildlife sanctuaries owned by the Michigan Audubon Society;

Achieve through education, public recognition of the value and need for protecting and preserving wildlife, plants, soil, water and other natural resources as well as an understanding of their interdependence;

Promote an interest in our native birds and as well as native flora and fauna, and their habitats because of their great economic, cultural and recreational value; and

Aid the Michigan Audubon Society in its study, conservation and research efforts.

A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO
CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE OF
far flowing water

Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society

Judi Manning, Editor

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PLEASE FORWARD

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**WOLVES OF THE
GREAT LAKES REGION**

SEPTEMBER 15