



Grand Haven, Michigan

April 18

7:00 P.M.

Volume 28, Issue 7

April, 2017

A Life List for Fishes of the Grand River

Dan O'Keefe, is employed by Michigan State University (MSU) as a Sea Grant District Extension Educator involving Great Lakes Fisheries Education and facilitation of communication between management agencies, stakeholder groups, and researchers. His district includes seven coastal counties on southern Lake Michigan.

In keeping a life list, birders learn to appreciate the diversity of natural habitats and the species they support. Life lists for fish accomplish the same thing in aquatic habitats. The lower Grand River watershed is a great place to start. Creeks, river channels, bayous, and lake environments support an amazing number of fish species. Learn more about how to identify, observe, catch, and film a variety of fish species in local waters.

Dan has a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from MSU, a Master's degree in Biology from Central Michigan University, and a Ph.D. in Wildlife and Fisheries from Mississippi State University. In addition to postdoctoral research on river fisheries affected by Hurricane Katrina, Dan has worked on research projects involving paddlefish restoration, round goby invasion, changes in the charter fishing industry, and communication related to invasive species prevention.

ALSO ● ● ●

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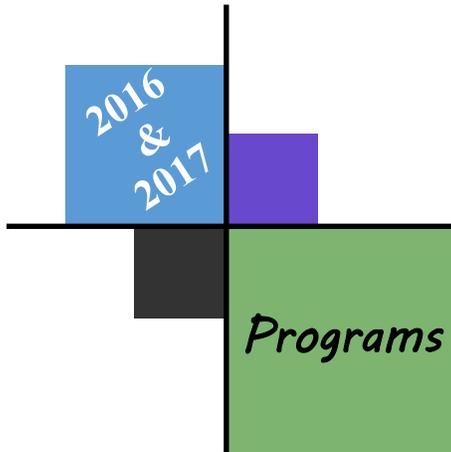
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John M will give a short program on oak wilt.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
524 Washington
Grand Haven

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

*We welcome
everyone to OIAS's
free programs.*



May 16th 6:00: **Potluck, Annual Meeting, and Member Photo Festival**

7:00 **How do birds do it?**

- Michael Lombardo, GVSU

May 19th **8:00 AM Field Trip Hofma Park**

More details next newsletter



Oreo Cows

While birding the Bingham/VanBuren birding area, we saw some cows that looked like this:

Carl Googled “Oreo Cows” and found out the correct name is Belted Galloway.

- ◆ Originated in western Scotland
- ◆ Nicknamed “Oreo Cows”
- ◆ Can adapt to thrive on low-quality pastures
- ◆ Regular Galloways are totally black so the Belted cattle are supposedly the result of crossbreeding with a Dutch cattle type called Lakenvelder. The Dutch Belted cattle primarily used in dairy production, are quite rare nowadays.
- ◆ Mature slower than their other European counterparts.
- ◆ Used in beef production. Beef is low in saturated fat and well-marbled, making for excellent meat-eating quality.



Reference: Synopsis: 16 Things You Should Know about Belted Galloway!, <http://www.thatsfarming.com/news/belted-galloway-cattle>



An example of a bird with leucistic characteristics spotted by Lisa C.

Unusual Species Behavior Observation

I was watching our trees for a Brown Creeper around St. Patrick’s Day and a few times I thought one had arrived. When I looked out with the binoculars, I was surprised to see an American Tree Sparrow clinging to the side of the tree and picking at various places in the bark. One day there were two American Tree Sparrows doing this. I have never seen this activity before by this species. Woodpeckers do this.

Another day we were at Windmill Island. As I scanned looking to see if anything was hiding in the marsh, the scope passed by a pair of Canada Geese. One of the geese did something I have not seen a bird do before. It dipped its head into the water, flipped on its back with its feet in the air, and continued to complete its somersault. After that, it continued to bathe and preen. Judi

Eastern Phoebe

Sayornis phoebe

Found in open woods, parks, deciduous woodlands, and woodland edges, Eastern Phoebes are often heard before seen. In spring and summer, the raspy two-note call “fee-ah-bee” or “whee-bee” is heard. They sit upright usually down low in trees or on fences. They sweep the tail widely up and down and then side to side when landing on a perch (tail-wag). They follow insect emergence on the way north and are usually the first flycatcher to return in the spring. Usually appearing in late March, the last several years they began appearing mid-March. As insects decline in the fall, they head south, wintering in the southern states from Texas to Florida.



This brownish-gray plump medium-sized flycatcher has no wingbars, a cream colored breast and belly and dark head, and black bill. In the fall, they show faint yellow on the belly and whitish edging on the wings. Mainly insectivorous, its short, thin bill is used to catch insects. In summer they eat many small wasps, bees, beetles, grasshoppers, airborne spiders, and ticks. They also eat fruits and berries during cooler months.



Nests made of mud and moss and lined with grasses, hair and feathers are built under the protection of an eave or ledge on buildings or bridge. Their nest is the most frequent victim of brood parasitism by Brown-headed cowbirds. Building nests on human structures has greatly helped these birds.

If you live in the right habitat, consider putting up a wooden platform for a nest well before breeding season. Click here [Attract Birds pages](#) for more information on nest boxes. You can find plans for [building a nest box of the appropriate size](#) on Cornell’s [All About Birdhouses](#) site. (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Phoebe/id).

Discovery of the Eastern Phoebe is credited to Thomas Say, who collected this species along the Arkansas River in Colorado during a 1819-1820 expedition to establish posts along the upper Missouri River (Mearns and Mearns 1992).

“The Eastern Phoebe holds the distinction of being the subject of the first bird banding experiment in North America. In the early 1800’s, J. J. Audubon tied thin silver wires on the legs of a brood of Eastern Phoebes. The following year, he was delighted to discover that they returned to breed in the same area. Phoebes are notorious for returning to build their nest, often right on top of the previous year’s nest.” (<http://www.wbu.com/chipperwoods/photos/ephoebe.htm>)

A similar species is the Eastern Wood-pewee. This medium-sized flycatcher has a peaked crown giving its head a triangular shape. It is olive-gray with dark wings. The sides of the breast are dark with an off-white throat and belly resembling a vest. They have thin, white wingbars. The underside of the bill is mostly yellow-orange.

If you should recover a banded Eastern Phoebe, please report the band number to the Bird Banding Lab by calling 1-800-327-BAND.

References: Eastern Phoebe: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Phoebe/id; <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/eastern-phoebe>; Wild Birds

Unlimited <http://www.wbu.com/chipperwoods/photos/ephoebe.htm>;
http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Sayornis_phoebe/



REMEMBER TO GET YOUR SUPPLY OF SUET cakes for the summer. OIAS receives a bit from each one sold to support supplies, foods, potluck, etc.



Come with ideas for main course for the potluck provided by our funds. Thanks, Pam

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory - Live data stream

[Mich-chat] Gary Palmer, Hawk Counter

If you are wondering what is happening at Whitefish Point, birds are starting to fly over the Hawk Deck.

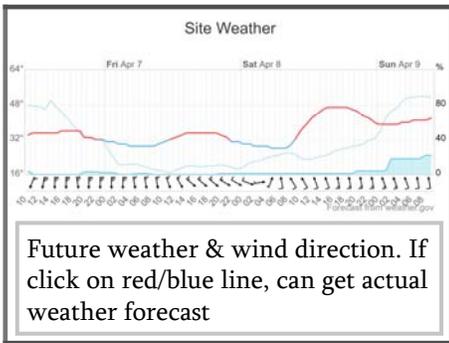
Now what kind of birds you may ask? Well in an exciting turn of events you can now know what the counters are observing as they see it! I am happy to announce that WPBO is collaborating with Dunkadoo, a non-profit that builds tools to allow us to collect our data electronically in the field and have it not only go straight into our databases, but to be shared with other groups like Hawkcount and eBird. Even better is they provide a display platform for the public to view the incoming data as the field counters record it! There are several different interactive graphs to explore and see not only what has been observed today, but for the entire season.

So right now, you can click on the following link to see what WPBO hawk counter is seeing right now!

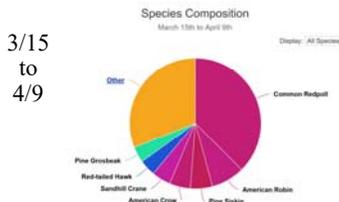
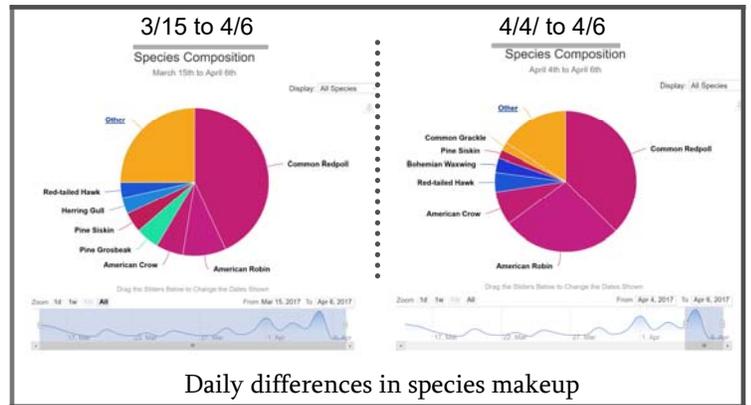
<https://dunkadoo.org/project/wpbo-hawk-count>

Check it out, and use it to whet your appetite for planning a visit to Whitefish Point, because the only thing better than watching the data stream across your computer monitor is to watch the hawks themselves stream across the lovely Superior blue skies.

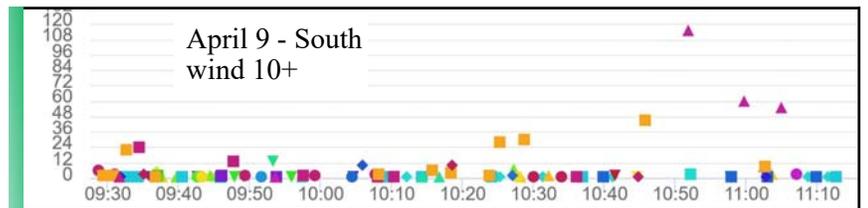
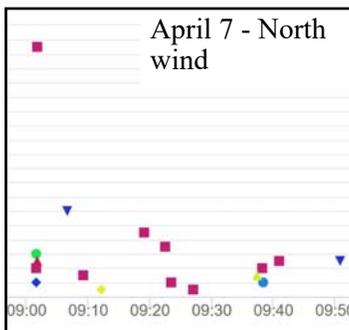
Read Gary's blog post: <https://wpbo.org/signs-of-spring/> for more details.



If you keep the page open, you can watch the time scroll left and bird sightings appear



WPBO Spring 2017 Hawk Count Live Updates

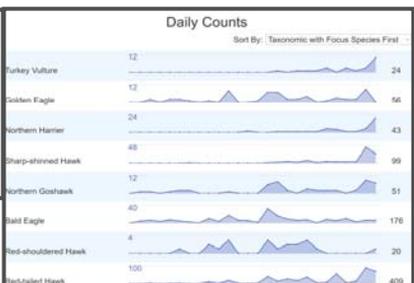


- Herring Gull
- Merlin
- American Crow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Bohemian Waxwing
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Red Crossbill
- Common Redpoll
- Pine Siskin

- Canada Goose
- American Black Duck
- Mallard
- Common Merganser
- duck sp.
- Turkey Vulture
- Northern Harrier
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Northern Goshawk
- Bald Eagle
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Rough-legged Hawk
- Sandhill Crane
- Killdeer
- Ring-billed Gull
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Northern Flicker
- American Kestrel
- Merlin
- Common Raven
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Brown Creeper
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Eastern Bluebird
- American Robin
- European Starling
- Myrtle Warbler
- Song Sparrow
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Common Grackle
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Purple Finch
- Common Redpoll
- Pine Siskin

- 5 Bohemian Waxwing at 9:50:54 AM
- 5 Common Redpoll at 9:40:56 AM
- 2 Herring Gull at 9:38:24 AM
- 4 American Crow at 9:38:17 AM
- 3 Black-capped Chickadee at 9:37:28 AM
- 1 Common Redpoll at 9:27:03 AM
- 2 Common Redpoll at 9:23:34 AM
- 7 Common Redpoll at 9:22:27 AM
- 0 Common Redpoll at 9:19:08 AM

Part of 4/9 chart. Sort species by abundance, taxonomic, or alphabetical



- 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk at 11:12:44 AM
- 1 Northern Harrier at 11:11:36 AM
- 1 Rough-legged Hawk at 11:09:55 AM
- 1 Northern Harrier at 11:08:46 AM
- 3 Canada Goose at 11:07:04 AM
- 55 Sandhill Crane at 11:04:59 AM
- 3 Northern Goshawk at 11:03:41 AM
- 1 Rough-legged Hawk at 11:02:57 AM
- 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at 11:02:50 AM

Things with Feathers – Ruddy, Living on the Wind

Janet Hasselbring, Author

“It is springtime at Pelican Cove and the fish are jumping. Ruddy sees them as floaters – black specks against the clouds. He lays, dazed, on the shellpath, a heap of tortoiseshell feathers and bones, exhausted from flying thousands of miles, for nearly ninety hours, without stopping, without eating, without a drink. “Kek, kek, kek,” he croaks feebly, as if to say, “Hello world. I’m here.” (Ruddy - Living on the Wind)

This spring, when you spot your first robin, a sure sign of spring in west Michigan, Ruddy will still be flapping north, high on the thermals.

It’s that time of the year. Though author Scott Weidensaul claims there are birds aloft in the skies of the Western Hemisphere, migrating, at any time of the year, spring and fall are certainly the great pivot points, when the continents are swarming with billions of traveling birds. Even the nonobservant and non-birders among us can’t help but notice skeins of geese and flocks of robins heading north.

I see the Ruddy Turnstones every spring at Pelican Cove, but until I began writing *Ruddy, On the Wind*,* I didn’t know from where they came or where they were heading.

Ruddy Turnstones migrate from the Arctic tundra to Patagonia, in the fall, and spend the winter finding what sustenance they can on the wind – raked coasts of South America. Now it is springtime and Ruddy is heading back to polar bear country.

Ruddy’s last meal is a distant memory, a rumble deep in his belly. Before leaving Patagonia, he’d fattened up on crowberries. Refueling on the coast of Brazil, he continued to a wind-swept beach in Venezuela, chowing down a meal of mollusks, more than doubling his weight. Now, hours and thousands of miles later, Ruddy is famished and dehydrated.

He can see the fish more clearly now. Fluffing out his feathers, Ruddy totters to the water’s edge to get a drink. He returns to the shellpath, and begins flipping stones and shells. A song trills out of his throat, as he anticipates filling his belly.

Flip, flip, flip it high
 Flip it right up to the sky,
 Kek, kek kek, what will I see
 Hiding under the shell for me?”

Turnstones get their names from their peculiar flipping, turning strategy; however, they will pick up insects, spiders, worms and snails, sea urchins, brittle stars and crabs, wherever they find them. They hammer limpets and barnacles open, dig for horseshoe crab eggs, and have been known to savor leftovers from a MacDonald’s happy meal. In the mudflats of the Arctic, they feast on sedge seeds.

For the next two weeks, Ruddy fills his belly, following orders from somewhere deep in his bones: “Eat, eat, eat. Gorge, gorge, gorge.”

A layer of fat is building under Ruddy’s skin, a thick, yellowish layer, along the sides of his body, in the hollow of his neck and under his wings. Ruddy is storing up energy for the next leg of his journey.

One evening, in early March, Ruddy sits on his perch, underneath a star studded sky. A breeze picks up and ruffles the mangroves.

Out of the breeze comes a whisper. “It’s time.”

Suddenly the sky is filled with a whoosh of feathers and a cacophony of twitters, screeches and chirps. Ruddy soars heavenward to join his fellows. I now know where he’s headed.

Twin migrations – one local and slow, the other global and swift, are about to collide. A miracle of nature. As Ruddy flaps along on the thermals, female horseshoe crabs, in solid waves of gray, emerge from the high tide on the shores of Delaware Bay. They drag along males that have clamped ahold of their abdominal spines, jockeying for a chance to fertilize the females’ eggs. Clambering for position at the high water mark, the females dig pits in the sand, depositing their eggs – billions of greenish globes the size of tapioca beads. Crabs push and shove, bullying each other, waving their telsons in the air, where they have flipped upside down. The beach, more olive green than brown, looks like it is blanketed by moving cobblestones, paving and repaving a seaside road.

Into the fray, comes Ruddy and his entourage, famished and exhausted from their marathon flight. After weeks of feasting on the eggs, Ruddy will take to the skies for the final leg of his journey. Home at last in the Arctic mudflats, reunited with his shebird, he’ll build their nest, breed, and raise a new brood of chicks – until fall, when the miracle will begin all over again.

Credits: Living on the Wind, Scott Weidensaul and Book of North American Birds,
 **Ruddy, Living on the Wind*, is the sixth book in Janet’s Tales from Pelican Cove series.



Larry Monat, photographer

Song Birds Use Roads

Judi Manning

Excerpts/Synopsis – reference below

A ground-breaking study in England that tracked the behavior of hundreds of 'garden' birds found they prefer to fly between the gardens in leafy suburban neighborhoods to visit feeders than city terraces or new-build estates. This research was done by Dr. Daniel Cox, an ecologist from the University of Exeter showed birds moved more frequently between gardens that have trees and shrubs and less likely to move between housing estates with manicured lawns and fewer trees or shrubs.

452 tiny tags each with a unique electronic number was attached to blue tits and great tits. They also attached scanners to 51 filled bird feeders in gardens with various habitats. Birds in green neighborhoods flew between twice as many gardens as birds in terraced streets with little vegetation.

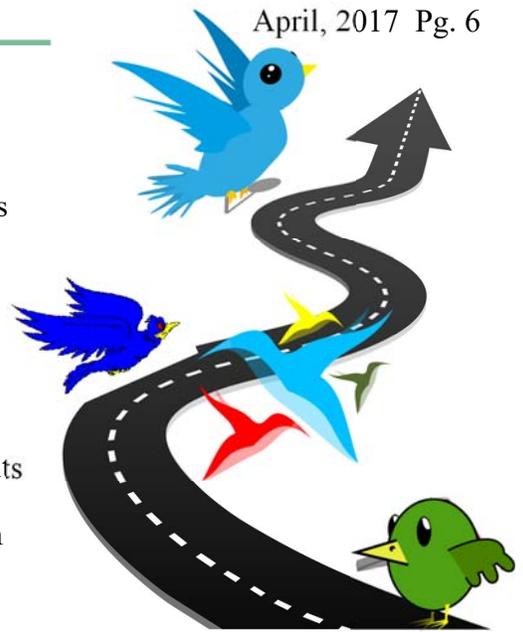
“The University of Exeter ecologist said: ‘The more greenery and more vegetation there is the more easily birds can fly between gardens. My research has shown that, for people living in cities, watching garden birds increases their connection to nature and makes them feel relaxed. Understanding how birds move through urban areas will help urban planners and policy makers to make cities better places to live.’

He added: ‘This was the first study of this scale, and the first in urban areas that used bird feeders with scanning technology to monitor when birds carrying a small tag visited the feeders. This allowed us to track movement of blue tits and great tits at an individual level. Neighborhoods with more connected vegetation and trees allowed birds to move between garden bird feeders more frequently.’”

Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2016-11-electronic-tracking-song-birds-roads.html#jCp>

Spring is around the corner. Start planning now how you can help.

Reference: Movement of feeder-using songbirds: the influence of urban features, published in the Journal *Scientific Reports*, November 23, 2016, Website article entitled: *Electronic tracking of song birds shows roads and urban features influence their choice of gardens*, <https://phys.org/news/2016-11-electronic-tracking-song-birds-roads.html#nRlv>



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OIAS welcomes all of the new members.

The newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Watching birds near your home is good for your mental health

Research done by academics at the University of Exeter, the British Trust for Ornithology and the University of Queensland involved 270 people of all ages, incomes, and ethnicities. The study found people living in a neighborhood with more birds, shrubs and trees are less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and stress.

Judi Manning



The study did not find a relationship between the species of birds and mental health, but rather the number of birds people could see from their windows, in the garden or in their neighborhood. Lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress were associated with the number of birds people could see in the afternoon.

University of Exeter research fellow Dr Daniel Cox, who led the study, said: "This study starts to unpick the role that some key components of nature play for our mental well-being".

More information: Daniel T. C. Cox et al, Doses of Neighborhood Nature: The Benefits for Mental Health of Living with Nature, BioScience (2017). DOI: 10.1093/biosci/biw173

Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2016-11-electronic-tracking-song-birds-roads.html#jCp>



References: Doses of Neighborhood Nature: The Benefits for Mental Health of Living with Nature, Daniel T. C. Cox Danielle F. Shanahan Hannah L. Hudson Kate E. Plummer Gavin M. Siriwardena Richard A. Fuller Karen Anderson Steven Hancock Kevin J. Gaston, BioScience, doi: 10.1093/biosci/biw173, published 13 January 2017, <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/316103.php>; <https://phys.org/news/2017-02-birds-home-good-mental-health.html>

2016-2017 OIAS Membership Application Date _____

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Check Member Type: \$18 Individual or Family \$30 Contributing
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Grand Haven, Michigan

4/17

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

Mission Statement
Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society
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.

April 22
Earth Day!

Saturday, April 22nd
Grand Haven Community Center
421 Columbus Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

OIAS has a table. Visit the celebration!

Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society
Judi Manning, Editor
P.O. Box 1654
Holland, MI 49422
PLEASE FORWARD
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

APRIL 18, 2017

**7:00 A Life List for
Fishes of the Grand
River
Dan O'Keefe**