



Volume 29, Issue 2
October, 2017

October 17 7:00 P.M.

Things with Feathers that Migrate

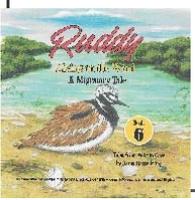
Presented by **Janet Hasselbring**, Author and OIAS Member and **Ruddy**.

Millions of birds will take to the skies this fall, flapping thousands of miles for hours, chasing summer. Exhaustion, dehydration, disease, predators, satellite towers, windmills, and adequate feeding grounds are just some of the challenges they face. The miracle of these long-distance fliers is presented through the story of Ruddy, a turnstone, who is heading south to Patagonia from his home in the Arctic mudflats.



Photo by Terry O'Brien

Introducing "Ruddy: Living on the Wind," Book 6, from the Tales from Pelican Cove series, which features the wild/shorebirds of FL and beyond. Janet's Country Dairy series features her family farm, a 4th generation touring, working farm in west MI.



"At the moment you are reading these words, day or night, there are birds aloft in the Western Hemisphere, migrating." (Scott Weidensaul, *Living on the Wind*)

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Grand Haven

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

We welcome everyone to OIAS's free programs.

2017-2018 Programs



November 21: *Current Conservation Research on Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes*, Jennifer Moore, Professor, Assistant Professor, GVSU

January 16: *Ephemeral Wildflowers: Remarkable Blooming Wonders of Spring*, Carla Kocher, OIAS Member & President, Conservation Outreach Solutions, LLC

February 20: *Ornithology and Taxidermy*, Roger Tharp, OIAS Member

March 20: *Nest Wars: Research on Eastern Bluebirds and their Nestbox Competitors*, Kathy Winnett-Murray, Professor of Biology, Hope College

April 17: *A Birder's Guide to Muskegon County*, Ric Pedler & Charlie DeWitt, Muskegon Nature Club

May 15:

6:00: Potluck, Annual Meeting, and Member Photos

7:00: *Feather Brained – My Bumbling Quest to Become a Birder and Find a Rare Bird on My Own*, Bob Tarte, Author to talk about his latest book



Mark Your Calendars Christmas Bird Count December 16th

If you are interested, contact Carl at oias@oias.org



Fall Field Trip

Saturday, November 18

8:00-12:00

Look for more details in the November newsletter.



SNOW POLICY: No meeting if Grand Haven Schools are closed.

Common Gallinule

Gallinula galeata

Judi Manning



In a marshy area or reedy pond or on slow-moving waters you may see a dark chicken-like bird bobbing its head as it swims. If an adult, it will have a very intense red frontal plate over the bill onto the forehead. Related to the American Coot, it is very secretive and spends most of its time hiding in the marsh. They have not been very commonly seen in Ottawa County, but this year was a very good year for seeing and/or hearing them in Grand Haven and Holland.

They had a name change from Common Moorhen to Common Gallinule. It is more closely related to cranes and rails than ducks and to the moorhen species in the Old World. It has a wide distribution but not abundant anywhere and is found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica.



This 14-inch long bird has a gray-brown back with a slate-gray neck, head, breast and undersides. The yellow-tipped short red bill is triangular like a chicken's bill.

They have a white stripe on both sides of the tail with gray down the middle.

All ages have a white flank stripe line. Its long legs and unwebbed toes enable it to walk on soft mud and floating vegetation. There is no webbing or lobes on its feet, but it is an excellent swimmer. The juvenile is brownish-gray.



They pick food from the surface of the water or emergent plants while walking on land, climbing through marsh vegetation or swimming. They eat leaves, stems and seeds of many water plants and berries and fruits of terrestrial plants. They will also eat insects, spiders, earthworms, snails, and other mollusks and sometimes carrion and eggs of other birds.

The floating nest is a wide bowl of grasses and sedges anchored to emergent vegetation with 36 inches of water. The newly hatched birds have spurs on the wings to help them climb into the nest or grab emergent vegetation.

Its call is comprised of loud, hen-like squeaks, clucks, screams and a single, explosive frog-like "kup". Its alarm call is "kik-kik" or "cuk".

Their populations have decreased between 1966 and 2014. It is a threatened species in Michigan as well as threatened or a species of special concern in several Midwestern and Northeastern states due to loss of wetland habitation, predation by introduced mammals, human disturbance, and other factors. The Hawaiian Common Gallinule is on the on the 2014 State of the Birds Watch List, which lists bird species that are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered without conservation action.

SIMILAR BIRDS

American Coot



Sora

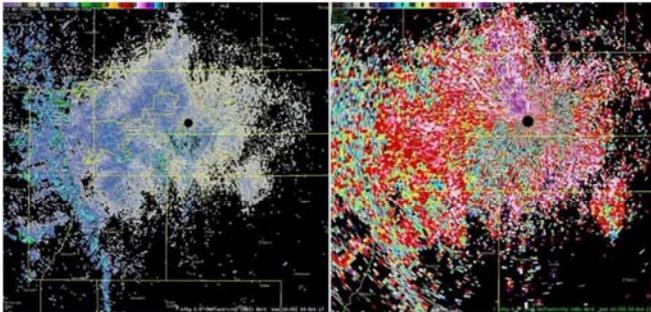


References: Common Gallinule, Gerrit Vyn, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Common_Gallinule/id; <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/common-gallinule>; Gary Owen Dick, <http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/464/> / [Common Moorhen.aspx](http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/464/overview/Common_Moorhen.aspx); Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas, Michael Sanders, www.mibirdatlas.org/portals/12/mba2010/comoaccount.pdf; https://identify.whatbird.com/obj/464/overview/Common_Gallinule.aspx

Butterflies on Radar

Judi Manning

The National Weather Service posted an image of a great mass of colors that spread all across Denver and surrounding counties in early October. The Boulder meteorologists first thought they were birds and had ruled out insects because insects “rarely produce such a coherent radar signature”.



Radar image showing the painted lady butterfly swarm. Courtesy of the National Weather Service.

Meteorologist Paul Schlater asked birdwatchers on social media what it might be and soon had the answer. A loosely spaced group of painted lady butterflies drifting across the wind. Insects with big wings actually could show up if they were all flying in the same direction. The colors on the radar are the butterflies’ shape and direction, not their own colors.

The butterflies appeared to cover an area about 70 miles wide and to float along winds to the northwest on Tuesday. That was another big clue, as migratory birds would likely have been headed straight south. Butterflies can take a less direct route, following the winds.

Research on painted ladies in North America is limited, but scientists believe they migrate from north to south and travel between the southwestern United States/northern Mexico and the Central U.S. in the fall. In Europe, studies using radio tracking have shown they migrate south from Europe to Africa in the fall and return in the spring.

Studies also show that the larger monarch butterflies often use wind to their advantage and glide on currents for periods of time as they migrate, according to Sarah Garrett, a lepidopterist at the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, Colorado. The longest single-day flight by a monarch was longer than 250 miles, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

For more information on the migration of the painted lady butterfly, click on this link: according to [The Prairie Ecologist](http://ThePrairieEcologist.com).



Painted Lady

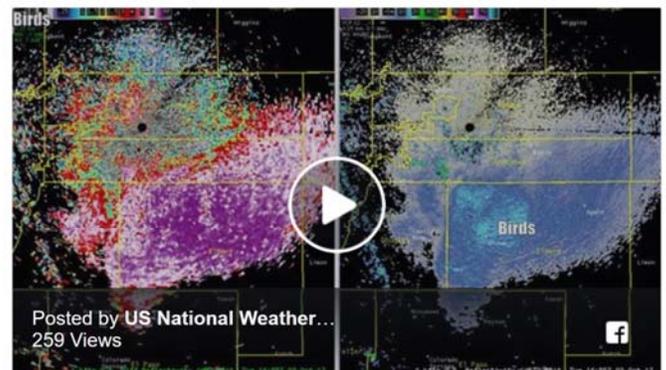
Thanks to Carolyn for mentioning this to me.

Reference: There are so many butterflies in Denver that they showed up on radar, Andrew Kenney Follow, Denver News, 10/4/17, <https://www.denverite.com/many-butterflies-denver-showed-radar-43632/>; <https://www.usatoday.com/story/weather/2017/10/06/huge-butterfly-swarm-detected-weather-radar-colorado/739669001/>

“We believe migrating butterflies are the cause of yesterday’s radar signature. Insects rarely produce such a coherent radar signature. Migrating birds do all the time. Things with big wings need to fly together in the same direction with the wind to generate that signature in ZDR (purple image). Migrating butterflies in high quantities explains it. Today, the butterflies are staying close to the ground. Thanks for all the reports and sightings!”



Denver/Boulder Colorado



Look at what’s flying into Denver! Radar from last hour showing what we believe to be birds. Any bird experts know what kind? #ornithology

Butterflies left

Birds right

RADAR

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/weather/2017/10/06/huge-butterfly-swarm-detected-weather-radar-colorado/739669001/>

Radar works by sending out a beam of energy then measuring how much of that beam is reflected back and the time needed for the beam to return. If more of the beam is sent back, the object is said to have a high reflectivity and is indicated by a bright color.

Objects that return a small part of the beam have a low reflectivity and are indicated by darker colors.

In recent years, birds, ants, bats, termites, mayflies, grasshoppers, and beetles have all been spotted on radar. Birds last year were even seen [taking refuge](#) in the eye of Hurricane Matthew.

They also spot debris blown around by tornadoes. This gives forecasters high confidence that a tornado exists, ramping up the danger level of the warning to more people in its potential path, according to the Storm Prediction Center.

Poison Dart Frog

Judi Manning

Dendrobatidae family

There are 175 different species of poison dart frogs known to be inhabiting the jungles across Central and South America. The Amerindian tribes called them poison arrow frogs. Indigenous Emberá people of Columbia used these frog's powerful venom for centuries on the tip of their blowgun darts when hunting.

Three species are very dangerous to humans. The most lethal is the golden poison dart frog (*Phyllobates terribilis*) found in Columbia. It has enough venom to kill 10 adult men! Many animals get extremely sick if they lick a poison dart frog.



Blue Jean Frog
Costa Rica

Poison dart frogs are between one-half inch to two and a half inches long and have some of the most brilliant and beautiful colors. Depending on its habitat they can be yellow, gold, copper, red, green, blue or black. Color shades vary among frogs within a species. The yellow-banded species appears painted with yellow and black. The black and green species has black spots is all red with blue legs

The poison toxin is excreted through the skin. Its designs and hues are warnings to potential predators they are poisonous. Some of their patterns act as camouflage in the forest shadows.

Eggs stick to the mucus on the female's back as she carries eggs to a water-pool in a flower high in the trees. She lays an unfertilized egg for the young to eat.

The source of the poison dart frog's toxicity is not known. It is possible they acquire the poison from arthropods and other insects they eat in the wild. These insects probably acquire the poison from the plant diet that are carried by their prey. They capture flies, insects, spiders, ants, termites, and beetles with a long sticky, tongue. When poison dart frogs are raised in captivity and isolated from insects, they do not develop venom.

Many species of poison dart frogs are critically endangered because of habitat loss and pollution.

A synthetic version of one compound of the venom has been developed that could be used as a painkiller.

References: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/amphibians/poison-frog/>; Smithsonian National Zoo Park, <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/amazonia/facts/fact-poisondartfrog.cfm>; <http://a-z-animals.com/animals/poison-dart-frog/>

OIAS welcomes all of the new members.

The newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Innovative Nest Protection

Constantino Macías Garcia at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and his colleagues, have studied for years the cigarette habit in urban house finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*). Preliminary evidence indicated nicotine and other chemicals in cigarette butts might help deter insect pests from living in nests, but it was inconclusive. Experts think the chemicals in cigarette butts are a form of self-medication and can help to ward off the pests.

This team experimented with 32 house finch nests. A day after the eggs hatched, the researchers removed the natural nest lining and replaced it with artificial felt so all parasites that might be in the nest would be removed. Live ticks were added to 10 nests, dead ticks to another 10 and the remaining 12 were tick free.

Adult finches added cigarette butt fibers to the nest if it contained live ticks. No cigarette butts were put in the nests that had no tick or dead ticks.

However, Macías Garcia's earlier studies suggest the habit is harmful too. "The butts cause [genetic] damage to finches by interfering with cell division, which we assessed by looking at their red blood cells," he says.¹

"I think the anti-parasite effects the cigarette butts provide must outweigh any negative problems they cause," says Steve Portugal at Royal Holloway, University of London. "Alternatively, the genotoxic effects take longer to manifest, and the adult birds aren't aware of any problem."¹

The team put traps in nests of 27 house sparrows and 28 house finches on the university campus. The traps had fibers and filters from smoked or unsmoked cigarettes and emanated heat to attract parasites. The traps with unsmoked cigarettes had twice as many parasites on average than the traps with smoked cigarettes.

References: ¹Birds use cigarette butts for chemical warfare against ticks, By Natasha Khaleeq, New Scientist, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2138655-birds-use-cigarette-butts-for-chemical-warfare-against-ticks/>, 6/26/17, *Journal of Avian Biology*, DOI: 10.1111/jav.01324; Cigarette butts help birds keep nests free of pests, <http://www.cbc.ca/beta/news/technology/cigarette-butts-help-birds-keep-nests-free-of-pests-1.1188978>

Judi Manning

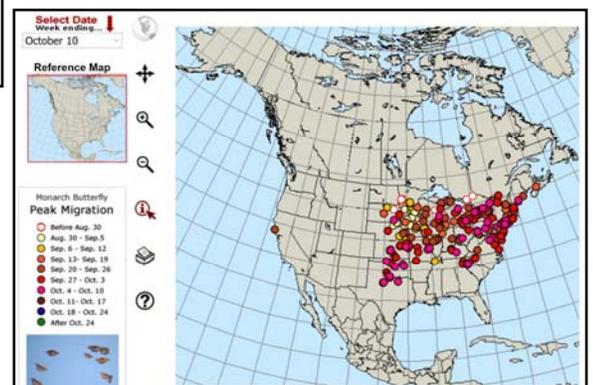


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Monarch Butterfly Peak Migration
Fall 2017

This monarch butterfly map shows where people have reported monarch eggs and monarch larvae, evidence as to when and where monarchs are breeding in the summer and fall.

<https://www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/monarch.html>



Maps

- Adult Butterfly Sightings
- Peak Migration
- Overnight Roosts
- Eggs and Larvae
- None/Few Monarchs
- Captive-reared & Other

Animation
Archives
All JN Maps

Go to the learner.org website and click on the links listed to the right for lots more information.

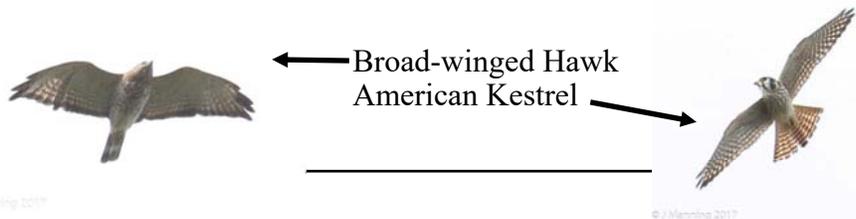
A Day Birders Dream of

September 19th - we started the day at Holland State Park. To our surprise there were a lot of American Kestrels flying down the lake. We also noticed a lot of Blue Jays flying over Mt. Pisgah on their way south. We decided to see what migrating birds we could see from Boardwalk West. To our surprise, a lot more American Kestrels, Blue Jays, and Northern Flickers were flying south.

We went home and while eating lunch a bird was spotted winging its way south. Whew, we finished lunch and grabbed the binoculars and sat in the driveway. WOW, 12 Broad-winged Hawks and 10 kestrels passed over our house that afternoon. Hawk migration slowed down so we went inside. We had a total of 55 migrating kestrels in all in three locations. More than we have ever seen in one day.

But the day was not over. There were birds in the 50 gallon pond and foraging again in our native plants. At 4:50 I looked out at the pond and I could not believe my eyes. Warblers were zipping in and out of the Rhododendron as well as the pond. Oh no, 5:35 and we had to leave for the OIAS Board meeting. Who knows how many more species showed up that evening. We have never had a migration day like this day. 56 species total!

19 species at Holland State Park
11 species at Boardwalk West
39 species in our yard



2017-2018 OIAS Membership Application Date _____

SEND BY EMAIL _____ Email: _____

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ How did you hear about OIAS? _____

Check Member Type: \$18 Individual or Family \$30 Contributing
 \$100 Individual Life

My contribution to speaker fees \$ _____

Make checks payable to: Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society,
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Receive by email

 Grand Haven, Michigan

10/2017

FAR FLOWING WATER

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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 November 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.

When out birding, you do not know what kind of habitat or weather you may encounter. Lisa was prepared to walk in the high grass and I was ready for rain that fortunately ended just prior to the Ottawa County field trip.



Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society
 Judi Manning, Editor
 P.O. Box 1654
 Holland, MI 49422
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OCTOBER 17, 2017
7:00 Things with
Feathers that Migrate

Janet Hasselbring