



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

May

May 5 – Spring Bird Walk

May 11 – Greenway Bird Walk

May 15 – Wildflower Walk

May 17 – DOAS Program

May 18 – May Big Day Bird Count

May 19 – Charlotte Forest

May 21 – DOAS Board Meeting

May 25 – South Hill Bird Walk

May 26 – Canoe at Weaver Lake

May 26 – Schoharie Birds/Brunch

June

June 1 – New Island Trail

June 2 – Birds, Brunch & Beer (*see pages 3-4 for details*)

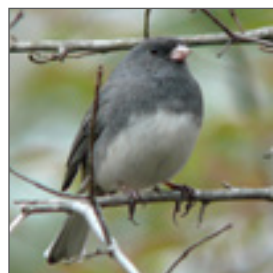
June 16 – Lordsland Conservancy

More information on page 9

All DOAS programs are free and open to the public

What Is It Like to be a Bird?

A well known paper in philosophy was “What is it like to be a bat?”. Well, I don’t think it would really be so strange upon suddenly finding oneself to be either a bat, or a bird. I mean a small bird like a



Dark-eyed Junco, by Ken Thomas (public domain)

junco -- where some snowflakes would be as big as your head! On first consideration, you might think that it must feel like being in a film made before the First World War and you are moving about like Charlie Chaplin. Pretty giddy! The smaller something is the more rapidly it accelerates (twists and turns). Try to catch a mouse in a barrel with our hands, or a fly on the wall. To the mouse your hand would seem like a backhoe; you just have to step aside and the clumsy thing has to grind to a halt and reorient, groaning. To a junco, then, I must seem to be something like the Frankenstein monster when I emerge from my cave with the seeds. Big things are in this sense slow, small things fast. That is -- more exactly -- big things when perceived by small ones seem to be slow, and small ones when perceived by big ones seem fast. But not only ‘seem’ because big ones really can’t catch small ones twisting about, or evade them (midges!) either.

From Olive Miller’s ‘Second Book of Birds’ (1901) “...a hummingbird... will even attack an eagle. He beats him too, for he comes down on top of his head, where the big, clumsy fellow cannot get at him. There he pecks and pulls out feathers till the eagle is glad to get out of his clutches.”

Well, but what is it actually like to ‘be like’ a junco? Can we imagine it? One thing I don’t believe is that it would feel like being Charlie Chaplin in films. I think that everyone necessarily feels normal, at least most of the time. We get habituated to feeling like ourselves, presumably beginning already as infants. Juncos seem to be, and indeed are, fast mostly because we are bigger than them. But juncos must feel normal too. Any other supposition would be ridiculous. In fact, I think that we would seem ponderous to one of them just because (s)he feels normal! ‘Feeling like’ is a continuing experience, a qualium. It can have no size at all. The qualia problem is why neurobiology is hampered as a science; all science is based only on measurement of quantities. So, I think it’s reasonable to suppose that it wouldn’t feel very peculiar to be a small bird (or a bat either). A fact supporting this view was the discovery some years ago that the nerves connecting to wings in birds are the same nerves connecting to arms in other animals. In both cases the control and action must necessarily feel the same.

Stan Saltho

President's Message

Think Twice About Using Pesticides

I believe one of the most difficult things for me as a transplant to upstate NY (even though we come from only a few hundred miles south) is enduring the length of the winters, and waiting almost an entire extra month or more to reach consistently milder temperatures. With the change in the season, we have begun to finally witness the return of our summer birds, particularly our neotropical migrants, which have journeyed from their wintering grounds in South and Central America. These birds (around 200 species, mostly songbirds) seek nesting grounds that will give them the best chance for breeding success; some will stay in our region, while others will continue their collective journey into Canada.

The timing of migration has always fascinated me. Birds travel along flyway routes to take advantage of abundant food sources along the way to provide the energy needed for their journeys. Shorebirds reach the eastern coastal estuaries at the same time that horseshoe crabs are laying their eggs, a vital source of energy for the birds; songbirds take advantage of newly hatched insects in field and forest. It is a beautiful example of nature in sync, of perfect timing, but the journey is not without its perils. Impacts to habitats and prey populations can be devastating to these migrating birds.

In the US, we use about 1.2 billion pounds of pesticides to control weeds, fungi, insects and rodents. Many pesticides are persistent - they remain chemically active for long after application. Because they are soluble in fats, non-lethal doses accumulate in fatty tissue and become more concentrated as you move up the food chain (biomagnification).



Black-throated Green Warbler
by Dave Kiehm

It is estimated conservatively that about 65 million birds die each year from direct ingestion of pesticides. They consume tainted prey; they mistake granules for seeds; they drink or bathe in contaminated water; they absorb toxins through their skin and they inhale poisons when exposed to aerial applications. These birds die as a direct result of pesticide exposure. What is not known is how many birds are impacted by indirect contaminant effects which include: eggshell thinning, deformed embryos, slower nestling growth rates, decreased parental attentiveness, reduced territorial defense, lack of appetite, weight loss, lethargy, suppressed immune system, vulnerability to predation, body temperature regulation, hormonal disruptions, migration orientation difficulties. Detriment to the bird depends on toxicity of the chemical, magnitude and duration of exposure and whether exposure is recurring or not. Pesticides can also reduce available food supplies and alter habitats. Breeding seasons coincide with insect abundance; not surprisingly, that's when we use the most insecticides. Herbicides eliminate weeds that house insects and produce valuable seeds, reducing food supplies. They also reduce plant cover that serves as a means for predator avoidance and nest concealment.

Reducing pesticide use can only benefit birds. There are many simple things that we can do to reduce the use of pesticides, starting in our own yards. For resources and tips on caring for your lawn and garden without the use of pesticides, check the NYSDEC website or consult with a lawn care professional in your area. The birds and other wildlife will thank you!

Susan O'Handley

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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To contribute notes or articles for

The Belted Kingfisher, email:

editor@doas.us

Conservation and Legislation

Campaign and lobbying reform in Albany—a green issue?—

There has been much discussion this legislative session regarding campaign reform—including limiting donations to candidates—and putting caps on lobbying of legislators. This has rarely been viewed as an environmental issue, but this year a broad coalition of environmental and public interest groups known as the Green Panel has made it a priority. The rationale is that sound environmental policy too often falls victim to a legislative logjam – particularly in the State Senate – as impacted industries funnel contributions to prevent bills from ever reaching a floor vote.

As Roger Downs, Conservation Director for the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter puts it, “Year after year the environmental community has watched key legislative priorities die in Albany because of the millions of dollars in industry lobbying expenses and campaign contributions that insulate decision-makers from doing the right thing. In spite of unprecedented public support, it is difficult to turn the tide against issues like fracking or climate disruption when there is an unfair advantage given to wealthy industries that block even the most basic environmental safe guards and policies. Now more than ever, campaign finance reform must be seen as a critical environmental issue.”

For example, the oil and gas industry spent over \$1.5 million in 2010 lobbying NY officials—largely to stop legislation that would put controls on hydrofracking for natural gas. Their efforts have been successful, as these bills never came up for a vote in

the Senate, despite passing the Assembly with overwhelming support.

In 2012 the industry increased its spending dramatically, with Exxon Mobil alone putting up \$2.1 million for lobbying in NY, making it the second largest spender in the state.

Clearly, the petroleum producers, along with many others who wish to exploit our state’s natural resources, are using their financial clout to influence legislators and keep pro-environmental proposals from even being seriously considered.

What you can do—Contact your state legislators and tell them that it is time to end the stranglehold these industries have in Albany. Urge them to support campaign and lobby reforms that put in place:

- A new, truly independent oversight and enforcement body.
- Contribution limits lowered for all political committees.
- Rules that clearly ban “pay-to-play” to reduce contribution limits for lobbyists and contractors doing business with the state.
- Improved disclosure requirements.

To find who represents you, along with contact onformation, check the Conservation page at doas.us.

Andy Mason

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SPRING FUNDRAISING EVENT

JUNE 2, 2013

BIRDS, BRUNCH & BEER

Our chapter’s educational goal is to expand and enhance outreach programs for the families of our community through grants, projects and events. Please indicate workshop choice in order of preference (i.e., 1, 2, 3 or 4):

WORKSHOP A ____ 1 2 3 4	BIRDING BY EAR 9:00AM-11:00AM-ANDY MASON AND BECKY GRETTON
WORKSHOP B ____ 1 2 3 4	DECAY USE AND CONSTRUCTION, NOW AND THEN 2:30PM-4:00PM, JONATHAN DOWDALL
WORKSHOP C ____ 1 2 3 4	PHOTOGRAPHING BIRDS 2:30PM-4:00PM, WARREN GREENE
WORKSHOP D ____ 1 2 3 4	BOTANICAL PAINTING, (SUPPLIES INCLUDED) 2:30PM-4:00PM, DAVE AND ANN KIEHM

NAME: _____ NUMBER OF PEOPLE _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ (FOR BIRDS, BRUNCH AND BEER UPDATES ONLY)

TELEPHONE: () _____ \$30 EACH, AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO DOAS AND MAIL TO: DOAS, PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

DELAWARE OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY
presents

Birds
runch &
eer

Join us for our first
Birds, Brunch & Beer at the Ommegang Brewery!

June 2, 2013

11am - 4pm

\$30 per person

- Morning bird walk
- Coffee
- View raffle and silent auction items
- Tasty Ommegang brunch
- Mike Burger - Director of Conservation and Science, Audubon, NY - Presentation
- Workshops: Limited to 15 participants!

9am - 11am

- **Workshop 1** - Birding by Ear - Andy Mason & Becky Gretton

2:30pm - 4pm

- **Workshop 2** - Decoy use and construction - Now and then - Jonathon Dowdall
- **Workshop 3** - Photographing Birds - Warren Greene
- **Workshop 4** - Botanical Painting - Supplies included - Dave & Ann Kiehm

(Limited to 60 people, so be sure to sign up early!)

For registration information call Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435 - 2054

OR

view at www.doas.us

Please arrive by 11:00am and no later than 11:30am. Brunch menu choices have to be submitted during this time frame. Participants will be picking up their reserved tickets, workshop choices, program agenda. During this time frame, The Impressive Art Items for raffle and auction will be on view.

See registration form on page 3, or download from the Events page on doas.us.

American Birding Association

Principles of Birding Ethics

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

Code of Birding Ethics

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

- 1 (a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.
- 1 (b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.
Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.
Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.
Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.
- 1 (c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance can be minimized, and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.
- 1 (d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law and the rights of others.

- 2 (a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.
- 2 (b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.
- 2 (c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

- 3 (a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.
- 3 (b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

- 3 (c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

- Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a Group Member.
- 4 (a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as those of people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.
- 4 (b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.
Group Leader Responsibilities [amateur and professional trips and tours].
- 4 (c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.
- 4 (d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment and does not interfere with others using the same area.
- 4 (e) Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practices this code.
- 4 (f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (eg, no tape recorders allowed).
- 4 (g) Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences, and submit records to appropriate organizations.

Please follow this code—distribute it and teach it to others.

Additional copies of the Code of Birding Ethics can be obtained from ABA. The ABA Code of Birding Ethics may be reprinted, reproduced, and distributed without restriction. Please acknowledge the role of ABA in developing and promoting this code.

<http://www.aba.org>

Appalachian Eagle Project in New York

The winter of 2013 was an exceptional one for camera trapping in upstate New York. 12 sites operated across the state this winter. 7 sites in Delaware, Madison and Otsego Counties photographed 14 or more individual winter resident Golden Eagles feeding. One site in southern Delaware County had at least 5 different individuals during the winter. Tens of thousands of photos from that site would need to be examined closely to get a more accurate count. New migrating golden started showing up at some sites that were still operating at the end of February.

While we had good numbers of both Golden and Bald Eagles, the central Appalachians where golden usually concentrate had fewer than expected. They had fewer balds also. It seems the eagles did not go as far south as usual. On February 2, Franklin Mountain counter Randy Lynch counted 44 individual balds around Cannonsville Reservoir. Bald Eagle numbers exceeded 20 at some of our sites through the season. It is hard to count eagles in these photographs because many look alike. 80 is my conservative estimate of the number of feeding Bald Eagles at DOAS sites in Delaware and Otsego counties.

For the first time in NYS we photographed more than one Golden Eagle feeding at a time. At the southern Delaware County site 2 adults fed together. Another time, 2 juveniles were feeding there with 3 Bald Eagles keeping their distance on the edge of the bait pile. Typically, ravens and balds give golden plenty of space.

We sometimes get banded Bald Eagles. We report them when we do. This year we had the interesting experience of having banded birds at 2 sites switch locations 26 miles apart. One went from

southern Delaware to southern Otsego in spite of no geographic features that would lead it to that spot. The other did the reverse during the same period. I suspect wandering eagles see groups of ravens from miles off and are drawn to a site knowing food will be nearby.

We seem to have had fewer Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks feeding this season. They were certainly present locally. The lack of photographs may have been because many sites were mobbed with large groups of juvenile ravens. Ravens in groups can be hard on the hawks. Another possible reason for fewer hawks may be the large numbers of mice and voles present. The food supply was ample for any animal that can make a living off small rodents. Who needs cold venison when fresh mouse is available?

An exceptional dark-morph western Red-tailed Hawk of the calurus subspecies was photographed in Madison County. Transient raptors tend to be juveniles but this was an adult bird. Another exceptional Red-tailed Hawk appeared in Worcester. This one demonstrated exceptional behavior. Judy Zurbrick, who operates that site with Ted MacDowell, told me the ravens “treat this hawk as if it were a Golden Eagle”. In other words, they treated it like it was dangerous. And, dangerous it was. A few days after my conversation with Judy a raven harassed this bird. One photograph shows the hawk grabbing the raven in the chest with its talons. The hawk then resumed feeding on the carcass.

Other scavengers locally included fishers, foxes, coyotes, Barred Owl, Great-horned Owl, skunks, raccoons, a bobcat and a flying squirrel.

Tom Salo



DOAS at Earth Day event in Milford: Left: Tom Salo; Right: Eleanor Moriarty and Andy Mason. Photos by Barbara Marsala

DOAS Adopts Birding Code of Ethics

At its April meeting, the Board of Directors officially adopted the American Birding Association Principles of Birding Ethics as DOAS policy. There are 4 main areas addressed in this document: The welfare of birds and their environment; Respecting the law and the rights of others; Ensuring that feeders and nest structures are safe; and, Group birding. Please read the details of this document. It is printed elsewhere in this issue. It will also be posted on our website.

We ask all members to carefully read the section that asks you to “limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting

birds”. We agree completely with this concern. We also approve of the limited use of recordings for educational and scientific reasons. We will continue to carefully use such methods for field trips and organized surveys. We are aware that the playing of calls and songs stresses birds. We also feel that educational and scientific benefits justify these methods when we use them responsibly. If you have any questions about whether the use of recordings is appropriate, please email us at info@doas.us.

Participants attending DOAS activities will be expected to comply with this Code of Ethics. In addition, no participants at DOAS events will play sound recordings without first seeking and receiving the permission of the event leader.

Keystone XL Continues to Threaten Disaster for the Environment

The State Department recently released their third Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline, a review that essentially gives a green light to the Obama Administration for final approval of the project as early as this September.

According to a report by Oil Change International, the research and advocacy group whose mission is to expose the true cost of exploiting fossil fuel resources, this review is woefully inadequate. The SEIS finds that building the pipeline will have little impact on climate change, even though the pipeline would increase emissions so much it would be like adding almost five million cars to the roads. The State Department's argument is that the tar-sands would be exploited regardless, and therefore, the emissions in question are not considered as additional carbon dioxide emissions. Oil Change International along with others, argue that exploitation of the tar-sands habitat and subsequent carbon emissions are not inevitable, but with continued exploitation, spell environmental disaster.

The International Energy Agency claims that the carbon embedded in the tar-sands significantly exceeds our global "carbon budget." Both the IEA and the World Bank have assessed that "business as usual" is not the way forward and argue that a 4 degrees Celsius temperature increase in 2100 would be a disastrous scenario. Oil Change International along with the IEA, the World Bank and a host of noteworthy environmental organizations, are promoting the age old environmental philosophy of implementing plans for energy conservation and efficiency while developing and using cleaner renewable sources of energy.

Tar sands oil is claimed by many experts to be some of the dirtiest fuel on the planet. Its extraction and refinement is particularly energy and water-intensive, polluting, and environmentally destructive. On March 29th, Exxon's Pegasus pipeline ruptured and leaked 150,000 gallons of tar-sands heavy crude oil into the environment of Mayflower, Arkansas. This was an extremely serious environmental event/local disaster. Tar-sands oil

is more dangerous to transport than conventional oil because it is more corrosive to pipelines. When something goes wrong, as it inevitably does, it is difficult to clean up a tar sands spill.

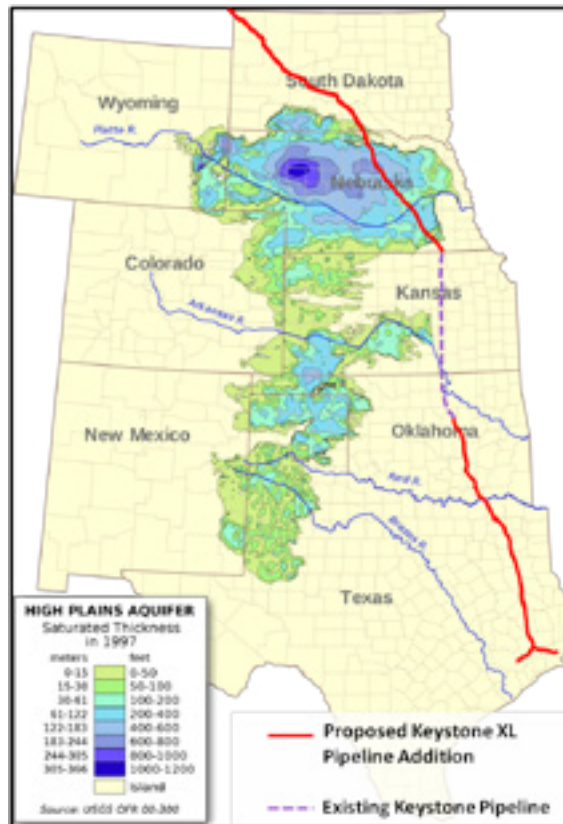
Trans-Canada's existing Keystone I tar-sands pipeline has reportedly leaked 14 times since it went into operation in June 2010, including one spill of 24,000 gallons. The State Department's environmental reviews have pointed out that spills from Keystone XL are likely to occur, estimating that there could be as many as about 100 spills over the course of the pipeline's lifespan.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, strip mining of oil from Canada's tar-sands will destroy tens of thousands of acres of boreal forest, vital habitat for wildlife, including many of our songbirds. Many millions of gallons of surface water will be polluted in the process of extraction and refinement. Tar-sands oil produces two to three times more greenhouse gases per barrel than conventional oil and represents a massive new source of fossil fuels that leading climate scientist Dr. James Hansen has called "game over" for our ability to avoid a climate catastrophe. As the XL pipeline would cross the heart of the Midwest and deliver oil to the Gulf of Mexico, it would be cutting through rivers, streams and prime wildlife habitat, including habitat for at least 20 imperiled species like the whooping crane, the piping plover, and the pallid sturgeon.

Increasing numbers of individual citizens along with environmental and legal organizations and some political leaders have been putting pressure on President Obama and Secretary Kerry who have both said that they are committed to acting on climate change. With the final

say in the president's power, the pressure to halt the Keystone XL must continue.

In addition to the **National Audubon Society**, the extensive but not all inclusive list of environmental groups opposing this pipeline includes: **350.org**, **Environmental Defense Fund**, **Sierra Club**, **Natural Resources Defense Council**, **Greenpeace**, **National Wildlife Federation**, **Friends of the Earth**, **Rainforest Action Network**, **League of Conservation Voters**, **Alternative Environment America**, **Union of Concerned Scientists**, **Center for Biological Diversity**, **Oil Change International**, and the recently formed "**All Risk, No Reward**" Coalition. Please check their websites for further information and steps for citizen action. *Eileen Kline*



Ogallala Aquifer - Keystone XL Pipeline route, Kbh3rd - Aquifer Map [FAL], via Wikimedia Commons

Birds and Conservation of Ecuador

The monthly program meeting to be held on Friday, May 17th will present speaker Rudy A. Gelis, biologist, owner and tour leader of Pluma Verde Tours of Ecuador. Rudy's vast experience and knowledge of birds, rainforests, and wetland, places him in high demand by numerous Audubon groups. His fellowship awards brought travels through the diverse habitats of Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, and as far away as Poland.

Program starts at 7:30 PM, at the Elm Park United Methodist Church at 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Free and open to the public, and refreshments are served. For further information contact Eleanor Moriarty at eleanormrmt955@gmail.com or 607-435-2054.

John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp Returns

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society is now accepting pre-registrations for the John G. New Audubon Day Camp at Franklin Mountain Sanctuary. Adventures in Nature will run from July 22 through July 25, 2013 from 9:30 AM to 3 PM each day and is available for children entering grades 3-6 in the fall.

The program provides fun, hands-on experiences in natural science and environmental education through field investigations, crafts and games.

Campers will explore a variety of habitats and learn about creatures that live there. There is limited space in this program, so registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Registration forms and additional information are available for download from the DOAS website at doas.us. If you need additional information, please contact Susan O'Handley at 607-643-5680 or sjohandley@gmail.com.



Camper with an eft



Golden-naped Tanager

By Doug Janson (Own work)

[CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>), via Wikimedia Commons]

Nominees for Director Positions Starting May 2013

The Nominating Committee consisting of Dianne Benko, Barbara Marsala, Joe Richardson and Tom Salo has presented a slate of nominees for the position of Director.

Bob Donnelly, Eileen Kline, Eleanor Moriarty, Susan O'Handley, Stephen Rice, Joe Richardson, and Julie Smith are nominated for two year terms that begin after the election on May 17, 2013. Becky Gretton is nominated to fill out the remaining year of a currently open Director position.

The election of Directors will take place immediately before the program at Elm Park United Methodist Church on May 17.

Tom Salo

May Big Day Bird Count

Saturday May 18 is this year's Big Day for DOAS, the day on which small groups enjoy trying to locate the maximum number of bird species in any amount of time they choose within that 24 hours. Everyone is welcome, novice or experienced.

If you are interested and have not participated before, please contact Bob Miller at 607-432-5767 to join or start a group. People who have participated before will be contacted by their leaders. Leaders will receive materials before the count. The DOAS data obtained are pooled with that of the Delhi Bird Club for a report of the results in *The Belted Kingfisher*. Wish for favorable weather and southerly winds the night before.



Chestnut-sided Warbler
by Dave Kiehm

Bob Miller

Upcoming Activities

May

May 5 – Spring Bird Walk: DOAS Sanctuary, 8 AM, duration about 2 hours. Returning spring migrants including warblers, vireos, orioles, flycatchers, as well as waterfowl, can be expected. Participants can either meet at the Sanctuary at 8 AM, or at the McDonalds in Oneonta at 7:45 AM. Trip leader is Andy Mason, 607-652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net. The DOAS Sanctuary is located on Grange Hall Rd., outside Oneonta. Directions can be found on the DOAS website: doas.us.

May 11 – Greenway Bird Walk for returning birds along the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway, starting at 8 AM and led by Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright. An easy hike on level ground, lasting about two hours. For more information, contact Charlie Scheim at (607) 434-4880 or email scheimc@hartwick.edu.

May 15 – Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk: Meet at the beach, Gilbert Lake State Park, 10 AM. Walk is approximately a mile around the lake and takes about two hours. Bring water, insect repellent, binoculars if on hand, and your curiosity. Every year is different depending on how early or late Spring progresses. Leaders will be Julia Gregory, Barbara Marsala and Joe Richardson. For more information contact Joe Richardson: arichardson@stny.rr.com

May 17 – DOAS Program: *Birds of Ecuador* by Rudy Gelis, biologist. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054 or email eleanormrirt955@gmail.com.

May 18 – May Big Day Bird Count for more information contact Bob Miller at (607) 432-5767.

May 19 – Charlotte Forest: For more information, contact Bob Donnelly at (607) 264-8156 or email rsdonn@yahoo.com.

May 21 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM

May 25 – South Hill Bird Walk: For more information,

contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054 or email eleanormrirt955@gmail.com.

May 26 – Canoe Trip at Weaver Lake: We will meet at the access point on Route 20 at 7 AM. Bring a canoe/kayak and life jacket for each person. Weaver Lake is an excellent spot to find rails, bitterns and other unusual waterfowl. For more information, contact Bob Donnelly at (607) 264-8156 or email rsdonn@yahoo.com.

May 26 – Birds and Brunch in Schoharie: The Schoharie Land Trust is sponsoring a bird walk at its Paulson Preserve in Jefferson, Schoharie Co. at 8 AM. The walk will be followed by brunch at Buck Hill Farm for interested participants. More information, including directions to the preserve, is available at www.schoharielandtrust.org.

June

June 1 – New Island Trail Bird Walk: Participants should meet at 8:00 AM in Catella Park (accessed through Neawha Park, Oneonta). This will be an easy walk of two to three hours on mostly flat terrain. Part of the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway, New Island provides varied habitat and an interesting variety of bird life. For more information, contact Charlie Scheim at (607) 434-4880 or email scheimc@hartwick.edu.

June 2 – Save the Date: *Birds, Brunch and Beer* at the Ommegang Brewery. Registration form on page 3, or download a copy at doas.us/documents/BBB_reg_form.pdf. For more information contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054 or email eleanormrirt955@gmail.com.

June 16 – Lordsland Conservancy: We will meet at 8 AM at the corner of State Routes 165 and 166 in the hamlet of Roseboom. This will be a walking trip through gently rolling terrain. For more information, contact Bob Donnelly at (607) 264-8156 or email rsdonn@yahoo.com.

DOAS Membership Application

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*. Cost is \$15 annually or \$25 for two years. Please make your check payable to "DOAS" and mail payment with this form to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544.

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March–April Bird Sightings

On one of the days of this past miserable March weather month I noticed a ruffed grouse pecking and scratching under a Scotch pine in my backyard. I knew its appearance would foreshadow some great bird sighting finds.

On 3/14 Gerianne Carillo saw her FOS Common Grackle in Milford and two days later noticed her FOS Song Sparrow scootin' around under her feeders. On the 18th Dorian Huneke saw and heard Eastern Bluebirds in Treadwell. In the middle of the next evening and also in the middle of a snowstorm whiteout Bob Donnelly saw an American Woodcock drop down into a drainage ditch in Cooperstown. Amazingly Sandi & Bruce Milavec photographed a lone Yellow-headed Blackbird among 500 Red-winged Blackbirds in Milford on 3/21. The next day Kathy Dawson's Eastern Screech Owl returned to Guilford for its third year in a row to the big old maple on Gospel Hill Road. However its daytime sleep was being severely interrupted by the hard work of a Pileated Woodpecker on the same tree. That same day Elsie Myers enjoyed watching the arrival of Black Ducks

and Canada Geese to Charlotte Creek. Just before sunset on 3/24 Marge Mathis saw a Fox Sparrow. On the 27th Eleanor Moriarity saw a pair, or two soon to become a pair, of American Kestrels in West Davenport. On the 29th Jessie Ravage heard a calling Killdeer at the Clark Sports Center grounds, Tom Salo saw a Red-shouldered Hawk in Burlington, Pam Peters heard a singing Song Sparrow in Treadwell, and Kay Crane saw Wood Ducks on a neighbor's pond and heard a Carolina Wren in Walton. On Easter Sunday 2 Common and 2 Hoary Redpolls visited Diana Teta's feeder in Gilbertsville. What a treat!

On the first of April Dorian Huneke saw a Great Blue Heron flying down the river in Oneonta. The next day Gerianne Carillo observed a female Northern Harrier hunting the fields of Cooperstown as the wind challenged its flight. April 4th was a big birding day. Stacey Grocott saw 2 Eastern Meadowlarks and a Belted Kingfisher in Edmeston. JoAnn Salo saw a Common Snipe and a displaying American Woodcock on an early morning walk in W. Burlington. On a late day walk Tom Salo saw 4 Red-tailed Hawks, a male Northern Harrier and 2 Rough-legged Hawks and he flushed out a Barred Owl. In Treadwell



White Robin in Otego, by Barbara Marsala

Dorian Huneke noticed the arrival of nesting Eastern Phoebe to her barn. On that same day Jason Wanaselja was still seeing about 20 Common Redpolls at his house in Unadilla and wondered if that was unusual. On 4/5 Edna Straney had her FOS American Robin in Oneonta. The next day Andrew Cooper watched a Merlin in the Glenwood Cemetery in Oneonta. Some firsts appeared on April 7th. Charlie Scheim saw a Chipping Sparrow in Oneonta and Tom Salo saw a Winter Wren and Tree Swallows in W. Burlington. A couple of days later he also saw a Hermit Thrush and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. From a window that overlooks the hill of her Davenport Center home, Eleanor Moriarity excitedly watched 7 Northern Flickers on 4/10. On that same day Leslie Preston was greeted by White-throated Sparrows in Oneonta. Feeding on black oil seeds a lone Pine Warbler visited Dave Kiehnm in Milford and a Rufous-sided Towhee appeared in Sandy Bright's backyard on the 12th. So ends another great bird sighting month.

If you have bird sightings to report, contact me at dbenko@frontiernet.net, or 6815 Co. Hwy 16, Delhi, NY 13753, or at 607-829-5218 for the next issue of *The Belted Kingfisher*.
Dianne Benko