



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## Coming Activities

### February

**Feb 17** – DOAS Program

**Feb 17-20** – Great Backyard Bird Count

**Feb 21** – DOAS Board Meeting

**Feb 25** – DOAS Field Trip

### March

**Mar 16** – DOAS Program

**Mar 20** – DOAS Board Meeting

**Mar 24** – DOAS Field Trip

### April

**April 7** – DOAS Field Trip

**April 20** – DOAS Program

### May

**May 13** – DOAS Field Trip

**May 18** – DOAS Program

*More information on page 7*

**All DOAS programs are free and open to the public**

## Meditation on Our Mimids

We have two. The catbird dresses soberly, but elegantly. Brown thrashers get their more sporting sartorial idea from a concept used also by thrushes and a warbler. It must be a woodsy concept. This is, depending upon how you take it in evolutionary theory, a result of either parallel evolution or convergent evolution. It would be parallel if the families of the birds are closely related, but convergent if they are far apart in descent from a common ancestor. So, reddish browns of various shades and a fine white vest with, in the thrasher's case, very bold black spots. The thrasher is bold in habits as well, dashing about here and there, tossing leaves this way and that, making a clatter. I like to think about how this works. Even with close watching it's hard to tell whether a bird is looking up (say, to the right) or down to the left. Whichever, it must be making the choice by switching in its mind. But in this leaf tossing I think we can tell. The leaf is tossed, say, to the left. This action places the thrasher's right eye exactly on the spot uncovered!

The catbird is excessively more modest,

lurking in thorny thickets. Very demure in habits as well as in dress -- impeccable! I like the way the tail flicks in what seems to reflect a thought process, and, of course, it must be doing just that. No boisterousness here! I find the singing ravishing, made as though trying it out for himself, thinking it up as he goes. No repeats as with the thrasher and mockingbird. And almost

whispered. How can that be a territorial call? And then there's the famous mewling for which they're named. It has such an emotional quality of dismay and feeble protest! -- how could you be so insensitive! Whenever I hear it I fade away. This last spring I witnessed



*Catbird, by Dave Kiehm*

an interesting little play. One popped out of the rhododendrons lining our back porch. He held a yellowed rhodie leaf almost as long as himself crosswise in his beak. He took two or three mincing steps, then bowed up and down; two more steps; bowed again, and again, making his way across the porch in suchwise, and then jumping under the rhodies on the other side. Courtship? I saw no other bird, but, of course, they're very circumspect.

*Stan Salth*

## President's Message

### The Bird Show at Your Feeder

While I was on Cape Cod last week, we took the dog for a walk along the beach. There was a long swath of rippled ice covering the wet sand below the high tide line. The sun was shining and it was lovely. Winter walks often turn up something special whether along a beach, through a field or woods, or along a river.

For those of you willing to bundle-up, DOAS has some winter field trips for you. See page 7 for more information. One nice thing about finding winter eagles or ducks in open water is that they are likely to be there all day. No need to get out at the crack of dawn. Grassland birds will be there for those who look. I encourage you to do so.

And for those of you who wish to stay indoors on cold days, there is a show going on at your bird feeder. Watching backyard birds becomes more interesting when you write down which birds you are seeing and how many you see. An easy way to get started is to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count held every February over the President's weekend. See page 6 for more information. If you enjoy counting and reporting birds for one weekend, you may want to participate in Project FeederWatch and report your bird counts to Cornell Lab of Ornithology during the winter feeding months of November to April ([www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw)).

To make things more interesting, while you are watching your feeder birds, notice which ones arrive at the feeder alone and which tend to travel in groups. Which birds share food with others and which birds chase all others away? Which birds eat at the feeder and which feed on the ground? If you have a squirrel-proof feeder, how many birds can feed at the same time and how many weigh down the perch to close off access to the seed? Which feeder bird is so heavy, it can never take seed from the squirrel-proof feeder and must eat seed that has fallen to the ground? Take note of these things and enjoy winter.

*Barbara Marsala*



*Siskins eating thistle seed, by Dave Kiehm*

### THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

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FOUNDED 1968

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Helen McLean

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To contribute notes or articles for *The Belted Kingfisher* please send to "Kingfisher Editor" at the above address, or email:

[editor@doas.us](mailto:editor@doas.us)

# Conservation and Legislation

**Successes!**—Two recent pronouncements by the Obama administration mark significant victories for the environment. In early January, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar finalized plans to protect one million acres surrounding the Grand Canyon from new uranium mining for the next 20 years. Corporate mining interests have been staking out thousands of new mining claims and working to re-open old mines near the Grand Canyon. The damage from uranium mining not only threatened this iconic natural feature, but also the drinking water of 26 million people from radiation and toxic waste.

Also in January, President Obama announced that the controversial Keystone XL oil pipeline through the country's heartland would not be approved as planned. This 1700 mile pipe would transport oil produced from tar sands in western Canada to refineries on the Texas coast. It would have passed over the huge Ogalla aquifer and crossed the Missouri and Arkansas Rivers, posing dangers to sensitive environmental areas.

Production of the oil is perhaps more problematic than the pipeline itself. Tar sands are far and away the dirtiest form of all fuels. It demands enormous amounts of energy and water to simply extract and then process into crude that can move through a pipeline. It has a 20-percent larger carbon footprint than conventional crude oil—and it leaves toxic wastelands wherever the sands are removed. Last year 86 environmental groups sent a letter calling on the Obama Administration to reject the pipeline proposal.

At the end of 2011, Congress added an unrelated provision to a payroll tax agreement that forced the President to make a decision on the pipeline before this year's elections. To his credit, Mr. Obama did the right thing.

This battle is likely not over, however. The oil industry can

reapply to build the pipeline on a less environmentally threatening route, but the climate change and pollution dangers from tar sand oil production remain. This will no doubt be a campaign issue this November.

**What you can do**—Thank President Obama for his actions to protect the environment in these matters. His record has been far from perfect, but these were courageous decisions. President Barack Obama, The White House, Washington, DC 20500.  
president@whitehouse.gov

**Hydrofracking—comment period ends**—Thanks to all who contacted the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation regarding their draft impact statement and regulations for hydrofracking. The agency received 40,000 comments, and reports indicate that most opposed or found problems with this method of natural gas production.

DEC will now weigh the comments and finalize their rules. At worst, this will likely delay drilling until next year, and at best will result in Governor Cuomo deciding to not proceed with hydrofracking.

**What you can do**—Continue to keep pressure on the governor and state legislators with letters and emails asking them to oppose hydrofracking. They are likely to defer to DEC until the review is completed, but they need to know that this issue is not going away. Contact information is available at:

[http://doas.us/page0003\\_2012.html#Addresses](http://doas.us/page0003_2012.html#Addresses)

Also attend your local town board meetings to ensure they consider local bans on hydrofracking. A number of municipalities have already done this, while others are sitting on the sidelines to see the outcome of legal challenges. This is the closest form of government to the people—and the most responsive.

*Andy Mason*

## Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society – Environmental Education Grants

Every school year, during the spring semester, Environmental Education Grants are made available to classroom teachers in the DOAS area (Delaware, Otsego, eastern Chenango, and western Schoharie Counties). These grants enable teachers to add new environmental education activities to the curriculum. The grants are competitive, with a maximum award amount of \$250. Previous grants have funded projects such as an

environmental field day; construction of a weather station; backyard birds and animal habitats study kits; and pond studies.

The deadline for grant submission is February 29, 2012. For more information or for application forms, see the Educational Activities page of the DOAS web site, [www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us), or contact Barbara Marsala at [barbaramars@stny.rr.com](mailto:barbaramars@stny.rr.com).

## Hawkwatch News

The 23d consecutive season at DOAS' Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch came to a close on January 3 with cold temperatures and a brisk NW wind. Three birds were tallied; an adult Bald Eagle at 12:52 was the last raptor of the season.

A total of 4609 raptors were counted through the season, 14% below the 11 year average since full time counting began in 2001. Most species were likewise below average; bright spots included a new seasonal record of 238 Bald Eagles, and a modest increase in Sharp-shinned Hawks. Red-tailed Hawk numbers were 1/3 below average, which accounts for most of the total dropoff. Also notable is that for the first season in 23 years, no Rough-legged Hawks were counted.

Golden Eagles rebounded from last season's very low count. 160 Goldens were tallied, 10% down from the average of 179. The big Golden Eagle day came on October 30, when 31 were spotted. December 1 brought another good flight of 17. Interestingly, this season both October and December had more Golden Eagles than November--usually the peak month for the species.

The hawkwatch had 760 hours of coverage, beginning August 21. Steve Hall once again carried the biggest part of the coverage load.



*Osprey, by Dave Kiehm*

The balance was spread among Andy Cooper, Larry Dake, Fred Fries, Becky Gretton, Marilyn Leahy, Andrea Lodovice, Randy Lynch, Ralph Niederlander, Andy Mason, Ron Milliken, with help from regular spotters Richard Hendrick, Leslie Preston, Bob Shultis, and numerous others. Many thanks to all who made this another successful season.

2011 totals are below. Complete Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch statistics are available at [www.hawkcount.org](http://www.hawkcount.org).

Species	2011 Season Total
Turkey Vulture	352
Osprey	96
Bald Eagle	238
Northern Harrier	44
Sharp-shinned Hawk	593
Cooper's Hawk	87
Northern Goshawk	17
Red-shouldered Hawk	37
Broad-winged Hawk	1424
Red-tailed Hawk	1384
Rough-legged Hawk	0
Golden Eagle	160
American Kestrel	88
Merlin	27
Peregrine Falcon	19
Unidentified Raptor	44
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4609</b>

*Andy Mason*

## Middlefield Needs Our Help!

Most readers are aware of the controversies swirling around the concept of "horizontal hydrofracking" for natural gas, as it may be about to descend on our bucolic area. Many, including this writer, see the issue as driven by projected company profits for a complex -even reckless- industrialization with problems too many to re-list here, perhaps the most serious being potential (?inevitable) permanent, toxic contamination of ground water, on which we, our progeny and all of nature depend.

Last year, the Town Board of Middlefield in Otsego County, with the overwhelming support of its citizens documented by a careful survey, unanimously updated its existing, comprehensive, zoning ordinance and Master Plan to prohibit heavy industry, including the extraction process for natural gas, from being carried out in the town. In crafting the revisions as an example of the "home-rule" concept, the Town Board received sophisticated legal advice. Then last month the Town of Middlefield was presented with

a lawsuit (Cooperstown Holstein Corporation vs. the Town of Middlefield) by a farmer who had signed a lease with a gas-drilling company, disputing Middlefield's authority to override regulation of gas drilling by the Department of Environmental Conservation secondary to state law. This is a precedent-setting lawsuit for New York State, challenging home rule and going far beyond the Town of Middlefield. First to be heard by the Otsego County Supreme Court, the suit will inevitably make its way to the Court of Appeals, New York's highest court. All of which will cost the town many thousands of dollars, money it doesn't have.

So, please consider a donation of any amount to offset these certain legal expenses for the Town. You may make a tax deductible contribution by a check made out to the Town of Middlefield, remembering to write in the notation space "for legal and planning expenses related to zoning" and mailed to "Beth Moakler, Middlefield Town Clerk, PO Box 961, Cooperstown NY 13326.

*John Davis*

## Surviving Winter Interesting Adaptive Strategies

When I volunteered to write the February Column I was imagining myself sitting by my woodstove staring out at a winter wonderland of snow. At the same time I was pondering the many adaptations of animals that live through our, typically, brutal winters. Alas, this winter has been different, but nonetheless poses different challenges. To write this column my primary source is *Winter World* by biologist Bernd Heinrich. My brother, Ted, who recently passed away, used to work with Bernd on raven research, and my brother-in-law, Jim, who is an entomological physiologist at Penn State, did his PhD at the University of Vermont under the tutelage of Bernd. Another fascinating book that covers this topic to a lesser degree is *Swampwalkers Journal* by David Carroll. The latter book is one of my all time favorite natural history books.

So, where should we begin. Since this is the Audubon Society, we should begin with a bird. In this case the Golden-crowned Kinglet. The biggest challenge for this tiny bird is at night when it is no longer able to forage and temperatures typically drop dramatically. The kinglet puffs up its feathers for greater insulation and it tucks its head into its back feather to prevent heat losses from the bill and eyes. This leaves the feet. The kinglet prevents heat loss in the feet through a mechanism that is dear to my heart as a nephrologist, countercurrent exchange. This is the basis for how we conserve water in our kidneys. Specifically, in the kidney, the loop of Henle lies parallel to the collecting tubule. The loop of Henle creates a progressively increasing isotonic gradient in parallel with the collecting tubule. Under the influence of vasopressin, or anti-diuretic hormone, pores in the collecting tubule open and allow us to create very concentrated urine (maximum osmolality of 1200 compared with roughly 300 for blood). In the kinglet, the countercurrent exchange is used to conserve heat. Specifically, the arterial blood supply to the feet and the venous blood returning from the feet are parallel. This maximizes heat transfer by allowing a continual temperature gradient. The kinglet may also constrict the blood supply to the feet at these times.

Another adaptive strategy for the kinglet is environmental heat conservation. In his book, Heinrich cites a report that kinglets may enter squirrel nests at night; however, he examined squirrel nests and found no kinglet feces. Also, he never observed this behavior. However, one of his students did find two kinglets huddling in a small snow cave on a branch in a brush pile in order to conserve heat. Thus, the absence of snow this winter could adversely impact animals that rely on snow for insulation.

*Eric Knight*

## Waterfowl Count Results

Local birders scoured waterways in our area in mid-January to tally waterfowl as part of the NY State Ornithological Assoc.'s annual waterfowl count. Areas covered included: West Branch Delaware R., Delhi to Deposit, including Cannonsville Reservoir; Otsego Lake and tributaries and surrounding ponds; Susquehanna R., Portlandville to Unadilla, including Goodyear L.; Ouleout Cr. including East Sidney Lake; Unadilla R., Unadilla Forks to Sidney; Buckhorn Lake and vicinity.

Common Loon	3
Canada Goose	2386
Mallard	867
Am. Black Duck	68
Am. Black Duck/Mallard hybrid	2
Wood Duck	1
Redhead	4
Ring-necked Duck	8
Bufflehead	2
Common Goldeneye	22
Hooded Merganser	48
Common Merganser	206
Red-breasted Merganser	2
Am. Coot	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>3691</b>

Participants put in 73 party hours. This was the first time Red-breasted Mergansers were found on the DOAS portion of the count

Other sightings of interest included Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawk, Bald Eagles, Wild Turkeys, Ring-billed Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls, Horned Larks, Common Raven, Snow Buntings, Am. Robins, Eastern Bluebirds.

Thanks to participants Matt Albright, Kay Crane, John Davis, Ed Deitch, Bob Donnelly, Lisa Gorn, Kathy Griswold, Jennie Johannesen, Carol Lynch, Randy Lynch, Andy Mason, Marge Mathis, Bob Miller, Eleanor Moriarty, Katie Ray, Tiffany Wilkie.

*Andy Mason*

## Ft Plain CBC Highlights

Many members of DOAS participated in the latest Ft Plain DOAS Christmas Bird Count (CBC). 62 species of birds were identified. Highlights included the first ever Sandhill Crane, 2 Merlins, 2 YB Sapsuckers and around 10,000 Canada Geese. Over 700 Robins were found. There were few or none of many of the northern irruptive species. For the second year in a row, we had very mild weather, making it easy to search outside of the car. *Bob Donnelly*

## February Program

### The Eastern Bluebird

In 1970, the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) thrush was designated the state bird of New York. The male and female are of a medium size songbird, chunky bodies, short tails, large round head, and a black bill. During the mating season, the male is in glorious colors of blue and orange russet on his chest, while the female retains her drab gray-blue with a much paler orange chest. The male attracts the female during a “Nest Demonstration Display”. Materials are brought to the hole, with a number of flights in and out and perching above the box with wing waving. The nest is made from woven grasses or pine needles, and lined with fine grass, hair and feathers. The female will lay the eggs, but both are responsible for the feeding of the young with a diet that consists mainly of insects and small fruits. Bluebirds prefer an open habitat such as orchards, parks and large lawns. Traveling throughout New York State, on view are numerous bluebird boxes placed in locations from private backyards to golf courses.

The DOAS outreach committee is planning to establish a local bluebird trail in the Delhi location in cooperation with the Delhi College students. We are looking at the College golf course as one such possibility. All volunteers are welcome on this project. Bluebirds are beloved by all ages and give hours of enjoyment to those of us who have been fortunate enough to view their mating, breeding and fledgling activities.

Our February program will be presenting DOAS members who have three different experiences with their bluebird projects. Please refer to the program section for details. For specific information and facts on bluebirds refer to the homepage of New York State Bluebird Society ([www.nysbs.org](http://www.nysbs.org)).

*Eleanor Moriarty*



*Bluebird,  
by Dave Kiehm*

### Great Backyard Bird Count Perfect for New Birders

*15th annual count takes place February 17-20*

Hosted by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada, anyone can participate in this free event and no registration is needed. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count, February 17-20. Enter your results at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org), where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent. The four-day count typically records more than 10 million observations.

### Successful Eagle Trip

Nine intrepid participants showed up on a snowy morning for this year's eagle trip into Delaware County on Jan. 21. Their bravery paid off as over 20 Bald Eagles were spotted along the West and East Branches of the Delaware River, and Cannonsville Reservoir.

Particularly good views included 6 immature eagles perched in close proximity in two trees, and terrific views of vocal adult eagle perched over the river, then dropping into the water to snare a fish, returning to a branch to devour it.

Other sightings included Rough-legged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, and a variety of waterfowl. The group enjoyed a well-deserved lunch in Downsville after 6 rewarding hours of eagle watching.

*Andy Mason*



*Eagle watchers scan the Cannonsville Dam area, by Andy Mason*

# Coming Activities

## February

**February 17 – DOAS Program:** *Local Bluebird Projects by Three DOAS Members:* John Davis, Gail DuBois, and Dorothy Scott Fielder. John Davis will discuss the Cooperstown golf course bluebird trail that he and Marion Karl have monitored and overseen for the past several years. Dorothy Scott Fielder initiated the bluebird project a year ago at The Plains in Oneonta, where she and her husband Doug have a residence. Gail and Nelson DuBois reside in the outer areas of Oneonta, and she will present exquisite photos from her backyard bluebirds. All three members are well known contributors to DOAS and have presented exciting programs in past. Program will begin at 7:30pm at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments are served. Free and open to the public. For further information contact: Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054

### February 17-20 – Great Backyard Bird Count

More information at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)

**February 21 – DOAS Board Meeting:** 7 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

**February 25 – Short-eared Owl Field Trip:** DOAS will lead a late afternoon field trip to southern Montgomery County looking for Short-eared Owls and other winter grassland birds. There have been numerous owls around this winter, so if the weather is good we should see some. We will depart at 3:30 PM from the parking lot at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Institute on Lake Road at the edge of Cooperstown. There will be minimal walking, but dress appropriately for cold windy weather. For more information, contact Bob Donnelly at [rsdonn@yahoo.com](mailto:rsdonn@yahoo.com) or (607) 435-2054.

## March

**March 16 – DOAS Program:** *Montezuma Birding Habitats* by Frank Moses, Director of the New York State Audubon Center

at Montezuma. The program will begin at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Program Chairman Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

**March 20 – DOAS Board Meeting:** 7 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church.

### March 24 – Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge Trip:

This is our annual trip to see Montezuma NWR's big flocks of migrating ducks, snow geese, and if lucky the Sandhill Cranes. Meet at 7:30 AM in the Dietz Street parking lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta. Participants may also be picked up en route through the Cooperstown area. This trip is all day; dress for the weather, which could be quite cold. Please pack lunch - we break for lunch at the wonderful Audubon Center at Montezuma. For more information contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

## April

**April 7 – Lake Otsego Waterfowl Trip:** The annual spring waterfowl trip around Lake Otsego and environs will leave from Cooperstown's Lake Front Docks at the foot of Fair Street at 8 AM sharp. Co-leaders will be Matt Albright, Bob Donnelly and John Davis. Sponsored by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society for several years, the trip has always attracted many area birders. Cars will be pooled and radio connected, and the trip will last until around noon. For more information, contact John Davis at (607) 547-9688.

**April 20 – DOAS Program:** *The Everglades - Florida's Jewel* by birders and activists Scott and Denise Stoner. The program will begin at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Program Chairman Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

For more information on DOAS events, see:  
<http://doas.us/page0002.html>

## 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.

**Note: Please mail National Audubon renewals to address on renewal notice.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



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## November – December Bird Sightings

We've been having a relatively mild late fall in our area resulting in the lack of variety of birds at my seed and suet feeders. Apparently there is still plenty of natural wild food available. A smattering of snow here and there in my yard allows the birds free range to several food sources. A typical day at my feeders welcomes a constant flow to and fro of black-capped chickadees and as a rule several dark-eyed juncos and mourning doves forage through the grass beneath the feeders. On occasion both a hairy and a downy woodpecker show up to feast on my peanut butter suet loaf. A little way down the road from my house a ruffed grouse casually pecks around the partially frozen ground finding success. Life is good for the birds.

Back in earlier fall on 10/23 a Japanese Green Pheasant passed across Stan Salthe's backyard on the berm of Highways 8 & 10 in the village of Deposit. After a little research by Stan, apparently the Japanese Green Pheasant is a subspecies of the Ring-necked found on the Japanese Islands. He thinks it

probably escaped from someone's collection of exotic fowl.

On 11/19 Andy Mason saw his first of the season American Tree Sparrow eating beneath his feeder in Jefferson. On 12/5 Tom Salo was driving south along the west side of Canadarago Lake when a group of 28 interesting ducks caught his eye. They turned out to be Common Goldeneyes and were very close to the shore. Continuing further south he saw a large group of Canada Geese that clearly were divided between larger dark geese and smaller light ones. He believes the larger Canada Geese were Common and the smaller were either Lesser or Richardson's according to *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Two days later a Red-bellied Woodpecker appeared at Tom's house feeder in W. Burlington, quite a rare sight for him. On 12/11 Ted Buhl watched a Bald Eagle flying low over the ice on his mostly frozen pond on County Route 26, a mile from Allan's Lake. The eagle was in hot pursuit of a mink or an otter resting on a log. The animal slithered into the water and disappeared, foiling the disappointed eagle. On that same day Tom Salo was watching one of his feeders in W. Burlington. An



*Tree Sparrow, by Dave Kiehm*

adult Northern Shrike flew in very casually, grabbed a House Finch by the back of the neck, broke the bird's neck and flew off with the dead bird in its mouth. The shrike landed in the top of a tree, finch still in mouth, transferred the prey to its feet and then flew out of sight to enjoy a tasty treat. A Red-bellied Woodpecker made another appearance and visited Flo Loomis' suet in Garrettsville. She'd never seen that bird at her feeder before and was completely surprised. Starting on 12/21 and for a few days afterwards, Stan Salthe reported seeing a Pileated Woodpecker hammering out at least six big holes in a dead sugar maple standing in a flood plain of the West Branch of the Delaware River in the village of Deposit. On a Christmas Day walk Sandy Bright & Charlie Scheim saw a lone Turkey Vulture and a juvenile Golden Eagle in Riddell State Park. It was a nice way to end the bird sightings for 2011.

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