

THE BELTED KINGFISHER



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

FOUNDED 1968 ● P.O. BOX 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

Editor — Gerianne Carillo

Volume 38, Number 1, January 2006

COMING ACTIVITIES

<u>January 15, 2006</u>	Annual Waterfowl Count, sponsored by the NYS Ornithological Association (Page 3)
<u>January 17, 2006</u>	Board Meeting at the home of Cheryl Boise
<u>January 20, 2006</u>	General Meeting: <i>Treating Our Water With Respect</i> (see below)
<u>January 28, 2006</u>	Eagle Field Trip with Andy Mason (see below)
<u>February 17, 2006</u>	General Meeting: The O'Handleys present live birds of prey - details in the next issue
<u>February 18, 2006</u>	Owling Trip with Bob Donnelly - see next issue for details
<u>Feb. 17-20th, 2006</u>	The Great Backyard Bird Count (Page 6)
<u>February 21, 2006</u>	Board Meeting at the home of Barbara Marsala
<u>April 15, 2006</u>	Waterfowl Trip with John Davis (Page 3)

January Program: *Treating Our Water With Respect* **Speaker: Dr. Donna Vogler, Associate Professor of Biology at SUNY Oneonta,** **with teaching emphasis in Ecology**

Understanding and protecting the nation's water resources takes the awareness and effort of each one of us. This program should connect us with our responsibilities for water quality and conservation. We will show a 20 minute video, *AFTER THE STORM*, co-produced by the EPS and the Weather Channel in which three case studies focus on watersheds, water supplies, water quality and water uses. Then Dr. Vogler will give an illustrated presentation about some global water issues, the Catskill watershed, and our own local watershed. There will be time for questions.

This program will be at 7:30 p.m. January 20, 2006, at Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St., Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For further information contact Jean Miller (607) 432-5767.

Eagle Trip Scheduled for January 28, 2006

Jan. 28, 2006 is the date for the annual DOAS field trip to view wintering Bald Eagles. The trip visits rivers and reservoirs in Delaware and/or Sullivan Counties where the birds concentrate to feed. Our destination will be determined by reports and scouting prior to the trip date.

Other raptors and waterfowl are usually sighted on this trip. We also will stop at a local restaurant for lunch for interested participants.

The trip will leave the Dietz St. parking lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta at 8 a.m. Carpooling is encouraged and participants can be picked up en route. Return to Oneonta will be mid to late afternoon.

For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

Conservation and Legislation

by Andy Mason

Biomass energy plant for Oneonta—Catalyst Renewables Corp. is presently considering building a wood-burning power plant in the City of Oneonta. The plant would be located in the area of the former rail yards in the city's west end. Generating capacity would be 31 megawatts of electricity, enough to supply approximately 5000 homes. The power would be sold via the NY State electrical grid.

According to the company, the plant would be fired by wood waste from existing logging operations in a 50 mile radius of Oneonta. This would include tops, branches and unsalable trees. The wood would be chipped at the logging site and transported by truck to Oneonta. It is possible that clean construction wood waste and/or planted tree crops such as willow or aspen may also make up part of the fuel supply.

The plant would produce steam to run an electric generator. Significant quantities of water—300-400 gal./minute—will be needed to cool the steam after it leaves the turbine. This water may be treated water from the Oneonta wastewater plant, or groundwater from an on-site well. Remaining cooling water will be sent to the wastewater plant and ultimately to the Susquehanna River.

Air emissions from the plant would be treated by electrostatic precipitators to remove particulates, or soot. Other emission reduction devices would reduce NO_x and other pollutants by 75-80%. Leftover ash would be distributed to farmers as a soil additive and lime substitute.

As with any energy source, there are pros and cons to this proposal. It is a relatively benign fuel source—containing little in the way of pollutants. In addition it is considered renewable energy if the logging operations are conducted in a sustainable manner. The plant developers contend that it is CO₂ neutral, since new tree growth will take up as much or more CO₂ as that emitted. The plant will also create an estimated 150 jobs, mostly in logging and trucking, and spend \$8.5 million annually in fuel purchases.

However, it will marginally reduce air quality in Oneonta and increase truck traffic. The issue of water is significant, especially if it is drawn from the water table. Although the company states that there will be no increased logging to supply fuel for the plant, the economic benefit of selling wood chips may make some otherwise uneconomic logging operations now possible. Removal of wood wastes from the forests reduces the nutrients left for new growth.

Catalyst Renewables currently owns and oper-

ates the Lyonsdale Biomass wood-fired, combined heat and power facility located in Lewis County, NY. There have been no major environmental concerns expressed over the operation of this plant or the wood harvesting operations that supply its fuel.

What you can do—The company is applying to the NY State Energy Research and Development Agency (www.nyserda.org) for funding for the project. Without this support the project will not go forward. If it should move beyond this state, there will be a public involvement process, lead by the City of Oneonta. Citizens both in the city and beyond should monitor the progress of the proposal, educate themselves, and express their views to decision-makers.

Alaska drilling still up in the air—The effort by the Bush administration to open up the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas drilling has been caught up in budget battles in Washington.

A group of environmentally-minded Republicans in the House—including local Rep. Sherwood Boehlert—joined with Democrats to force removal of an ANWR drilling provision from the House's version of the pending budget bill. This unexpected but positive success has provided a temporary reprieve for our nation's largest and most spectacular wildlife area.

The nineteen million acres of ANWR wilderness stretch across Northeastern Alaska, home to a stunning diversity of ecological zones, from vast expanses of coastal tundra to boreal forests and spectacular snow-capped mountain peaks. Set aside more than 50 years ago, the refuge provides critically important habitat to over 250 species of wildlife, such as wolves, grizzlies, caribou, and migratory birds.

Even under the most optimistic estimates, ANWR would provide no more than a few weeks worth of energy for the US—hardly a sensible policy or an answer to national security concerns.

What you can do—First and foremost, contact Rep. Boehlert and thank him for his good work on behalf of ANWR and on other environmental issues. He has been a stalwart and a positive influence on his colleagues throughout his term in Congress. Urge him to continue to stand strong for ANWR. If not in Boehlert's district, contact your representative with the same message.

In the US Senate, Republicans have the votes to push ANWR drilling through. However, negotiations over the budget will be contentious and difficult and Senators Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer will play a role in this process. Let them know how important ANWR is and ask them to do all they can to protect it. (Please refer to facing page for contact information).

November and December Bird Sightings

The mystery of fall descended upon us. Many birds that usually took off during the early fall migration period decided to stick around here because the climate had been as inviting as the one that they might have found in Florida or further south. On Thanksgiving Day I looked out my kitchen window to see a red-winged blackbird enjoying its holiday meals at my birdfeeder.

On 10/19 Tom Salo reported 4 rough-legged hawks in W. Burlington. Andy Mason had 8 evening grosbeaks at his feeder in Jefferson. Bob Donnelly had his first ever red-bellied woodpecker in Cooperstown on 10/26. Gerianne Carillo was excited to see a flock (100+) of cedar waxwings, 3 European starlings, and 2 American robins in Milford. Tom Salo had his first pine siskin in W. Burlington on 10/29. A pine siskin was seen by Bill Miller in Freetown Corners and Trina Bassoff also saw one in Blenheim on 10/30. Tom Salo reported a fox sparrow that day in W. Burlington. On Halloween Andy Mason saw American tree sparrows at his feeder in Jefferson.

On 11/5 Cindy Bauer reported 4 fox sparrows in South Valley. On 11/11 Andy Mason was delighted to see 12-15 evening grosbeaks, several purple finches and American tree sparrows in Jefferson. 11/12 was a great birding day for Flo Loomis. She saw 4 fox sparrows, 4 Eastern towhees, several tufted titmice and 2 red-breasted nuthatches in Mount Vision. Tom Salo also had (12) evening grosbeaks in W. Burlington on 11/19. On 11/22 Kay Crane saw 6 pine siskins and 3 white-throated sparrows in Walton. On 11/23 Sue Gaynor reported a released red-throated loon in East Meredith. Bob Donnelly had a big birding day on 11/23. He saw 250 hooded mergansers, 50 common mergansers, 100 ringed-necked ducks and 6 black ducks in Richfield Springs. On that same day he reported 2 bald eagles on Otsego Lake.

On 11/26 John Davis had a wintry sighting. He saw 5-6 snow buntings in Middlefield. 11/27 was a busy birding day in W. Burlington. Tom Salo reported 2 flocks of geese with 300 snow geese in the first flock and 250 Canada geese and 150 snow geese in the second flock. Tom Salo also had 3 red-winged blackbirds in W. Burlington on that day while Gerianne Carillo saw several brown-headed cowbirds and red-winged blackbirds in Milford.

If you have bird sightings please reach me, Dianne Benko at (607) 829-5218, at 6815 Co. Hwy. 16, Delhi, NY 13753 or at caged@wpe.com by 1/15/06 for the February *Belted Kingfisher*.

Two Waterfowl Events Planned

On January 15, 2006 The NY State Ornithological Association (<http://www.nybirds.org/>) will sponsor its annual statewide waterfowl count. The count provides important information about the status of New York's waterfowl in winter. Several local area teams, coordinated by the DOAS, will cover Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River above Unadilla, the Unadilla River, the Cannonsville Reservoir and the West Branch of the Delaware River.

Anyone interested in helping with this census please contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

Also, on April 15, 2006 DOAS will host its now annual waterfowl trip around Lake Otsego and Environs. Please check subsequent *Kingfishers* for more information on this popular trip!

48 TONS!

Plows drop 48 tons of salt (sodium chloride) on EVERY mile of road every winter in N.Y. State. Mounting evidence shows that above and below ground water supplies are being contaminated by both sodium and chloride.

Chloride concentrations, more than 100 times higher than expected in Adirondack lakes, likely cause destruction of native lake species. High sodium in drinking water tastes bad, and is harmful to those with high blood pressure. Vermont uses sand on their roads.

Jean T. Miller

- The Conservationist

Addresses

U.S. Sens. Charles Schumer/
Hillary Clinton
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Schumer-(202) 224-6542
senator@schumer.senate.gov
Clinton-(202) 224-4451
senator@clinton.senate.gov

Rep. Sherwood Boehlert/ Maurice
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McNulty
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Sweeney: (202) 225-5614
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McNulty: (202)225-5076
mike.mcنulty@mail.house.gov

Audubon Council of New York Fall Meeting Report

Representatives from 22 of the 28 active New York Audubon Chapters, council members and New York State Audubon staff met in Ithaca, NY from October 21 to 23, 2005.

The Friday dinner speaker was Brian Sullivan from Cornell Lab of Ornithology who gave an introduction to *E-Bird*, the new, interactive website that allows you to share your birding information with others while you track your own observations over time. On Saturday, the bird conservation panel cited breeding and winter habitat loss from degradation, development and disturbance as the number one threat to watch list and priority species in NYS. The *Partners In Flight Program* focuses on land birds while they are still common, hoping to solve problems before they get in the court system. More coordinated monitoring is needed to know where our birds go in winter and where birds migrating through NY go in summer. Answers to these questions may help determine in which Central and South American countries we invest our conservation dollars. Perhaps some folks who were involved in the Breeding Bird Atlas may consider participating in the Breeding Bird Survey. Many routes are not covered currently.

A highlight of the weekend was an insider tour of the new Cornell Lab and hearing the editor of Cornell Lab's magazine *Living Bird*, Tim Gallagher, speak about his time spent seeking the Ivory Billed Woodpecker in the Arkansas swamps last winter.

It is always a privilege for me to give the DOAS chapter report. Though we are a small, all-volunteer chapter, our list of accomplishments rivals that of any other chapter. Audubon NY has led other states in creating measurable outcomes to show success. The strategic plan is built on science, education and policy. Bird science has indicated that grasslands protection is important. We work with NY Dept. of Conservation, The Nature Conservancy and others to reach our common goals of protecting at-risk species; protecting vulnerable species; protecting IBAs (Important Bird Areas) which are the habitats needed by the birds; and creating healthy landscapes consisting of large groupings of IBAs across NYS. Look for ways to get involved with local DOAS conservation activities in the coming spring and summer.

- Barbara Marsala, President

Hawkwatch News

The Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, located on the DOAS Sanctuary outside Oneonta, has had another excellent season. As of mid-December, the total raptor count stood at slightly over 5000, only the 4th year in its 17 year history that the hawkwatch has crossed that threshold.

An absolutely incredible event occurred on November 11 when Steve Hall and Ron Milliken tallied 71 Golden Eagles passing the hawkwatch. This set a new daily record for this species in eastern North America. Franklin Mt. had shared the previous daily high of 51 with Allegheny Front Hawkwatch in Pennsylvania. This spectacular flight contributed to this year's new record seasonal high for Golden Eagles, presently at 247.

Counting will continue through New Years Day. A full wrap-up of the season will appear in the next *Kingfisher*. Visit the Franklin Mountain website at www.franklinmt.org.

- Andy Mason

Is Your Lawn a Healthy Haven?

In the US, 21 million acres of land is converted to residential use every year. 80% of households have private lawns. This enormous green habitat can easily be managed as healthy havens for wildlife - as well as for humans. A lawn is a monoculture, yet it CAN easily be converted into a habitat that attracts birds, insects, and other wildlife.

- Jean T. Miller

Feeder Station Tips

Tired of seeing uneaten bird seed under your feeders? Most commercial mixes contain quantities of seed that are not popular with our local birds, including milo, wheat and rice. This results in wasted money, seed and a mess to clean up.

The solution? Mix your own. Research by the US Fish & Wildlife Service has shown that sunflower seed, white millet and cracked corn are preferred by most birds, and will attract a good variety of species.

Sunflower and cracked corn are available at most bird seed supply stores, and white millet is available at Feed and Seed on Rte. 7 west of Oneonta. Mixed in a ratio of two parts sunflower to one part corn and one part millet, you have an economical food supply for your birds, with little wasted seed.

- Andy Mason

DOAS Honors OCCA Director

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society presented Teresa Winchester, Executive Director of the Otsego County Conservation Association, with an award for environmental excellence at their annual dinner November 18th in Oneonta.

Ms. Winchester, now in her 11th year as head of OCCA, was recognized for her outstanding efforts on behalf of conservation in Otsego County and the region, according to DOAS director Andy Mason. "Teresa has likely done more for environmental protection over the past decade than any other single individual in the area." He listed OCCA's work to protect Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River, promotion of sound solid waste policies, and land preservation efforts among Ms. Winchester's achievements.

"Teresa has overseen OCCA's growth from a small local group to an effective county-wide organization," said Andy Mason. "We are pleased to recognize her good work and thank her for her leadership and coordination of the broad range of environmental efforts in which OCCA is involved."



Andy Mason presents Teresa Winchester with the Award for Environmental Excellence at our Charter Dinner

Can We Save the Ivory-Billed Habitat?

To save the habitat of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, legal action has been filed to halt construction of the Grand Prairie Irrigation Project. This project would draw 158 billion gallons of water from the White River each year, and would effectively drain the wetlands habitat where the bird was first seen. Also, a major pumping station continues to be constructed 20 miles from the most recent sighting area.

The action, taken against the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, claims that the project violated the law by not completing a thorough survey of their impact on the woodpecker's habitat. The legal action was taken by the National Wildlife Federation and the Arkansas Wildlife Federation.

Will the thrilling knowledge that a bird has been "brought back from extinction" end with the Ivory-billed Woodpecker becoming REALLY extinct due to habitat destruction? The construction must stop until an environmental assessment is completed.

- Jean Miller

Ornithological Newsletter of A.O.U.
and Wilson and Cooper Ornithological Societies.

Global Warming: Think Locally

"The debate is over. We have the science. We see the threat. And we know the time for action is now," said Governor Schwarzenegger, last summer.

Climate scientists, in a joint statement from 11 countries, assure us that Global Warming is indeed upon us. "The globe IS warming. At least 1° of warming is already inevitable, and serious, immediate action is needed to minimize further warming."

The Bush Administration has refused to take serious steps toward reducing the U.S.'s share of global warming pollution; however, leaders around the country are stepping up to fill that void by enacting their own solutions at local, state, and regional levels.

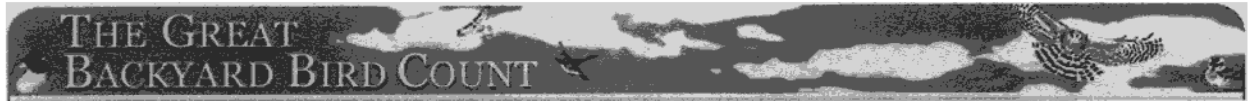
To date, 28 states have developed action plans: California has set strict targets for reducing global warming pollution, and a group of Northeast and Mid Atlantic states have been working together to reduce CO₂ emissions.

Seattle's mayor launched a campaign Climate Protection Agreement to lower emissions city-by-city. And a growing number of large corporations (e.g. GE) have begun voluntary emissions reductions.

More and more cities are signing the Climate Protection Agreement. We can urge officials here to sign on, and help stop global warming locally.

- Jean T. Miller

(from CATALYST
Union of Concerned Scientists)



TAKE PART IN THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT!

*Go to a special place.... and take someone with you!
Here's your chance to introduce someone to your passion – birding!*

February 17-20 marks the 9th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored jointly by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Here's a chance for all of us, including children, to join an important "Citizen Science" project, get to appreciate what and how many birds are coming to our feeders and have a lot of fun, all at the same time! During the four-day event, birdwatchers count birds for as little as 15 minutes or for as long as they like, keeping track of the highest number of each bird species they see together at one time. Participants report what they see online at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc> where the Cornell computers convert their sightings to maps, lists, and charts that anyone can explore by continent, region, state, or locality. Within minutes of filing a checklist, participants can, and do, see their sightings register on the maps. Schoolteachers have created whole curricula around the materials that are available on the BirdSource website. There is no registration required, and no fee to pay! Call 1-800-843-BIRD (1-800-843-2473) for more information.

- John Davis



Chlorine-Free Paper: Lend your Voice For Consumer Choice

My name is (Dorothy) Scott Fielder and I am a fairly new member of the Audubon Society. I have a great interest in environmental matters and serve as one of 23 people on the United Methodist Women's Green Team. The Green Team is an environmental advocacy group whose motto is "A Voice for the Voiceless". One national campaign that the Green Team is currently conducting is a letter-writing drive that calls on paper supplier chains - Office Max, Office Depot, and Corporate Express - to carry processed chlorine-free paper on their shelves. This campaign is not limited to United Methodist Women: in fact, the more people that write letters, the better the chances of seeing positive results sooner. There was a time that we could not easily find recycled paper, but we, the consumers, asked for it and now it is available and reasonably priced. We can do the same for chlorine-free paper.

Now, you may be wondering, "Why chlorine-free paper?" Paper is usually bleached with chlorine and this process uses 20 times more water than using a chlorine-free alternative, such as hydrogen peroxide or oxygen bleaching. It takes 10.15 gallons of water to produce a 6 1/2 oz. booklet with chlorine; using a chlorine-free alternative uses less than a half gallon per booklet.

Chlorine bleaching releases a toxin, dioxin, into the air, waterway, soil, and it ultimately enters our bodies. It is harmful to the environment and to human health and can increase a person's risk of developing cancer, harm the immune or the hormone system, and cause reproductive damage and birth defects.

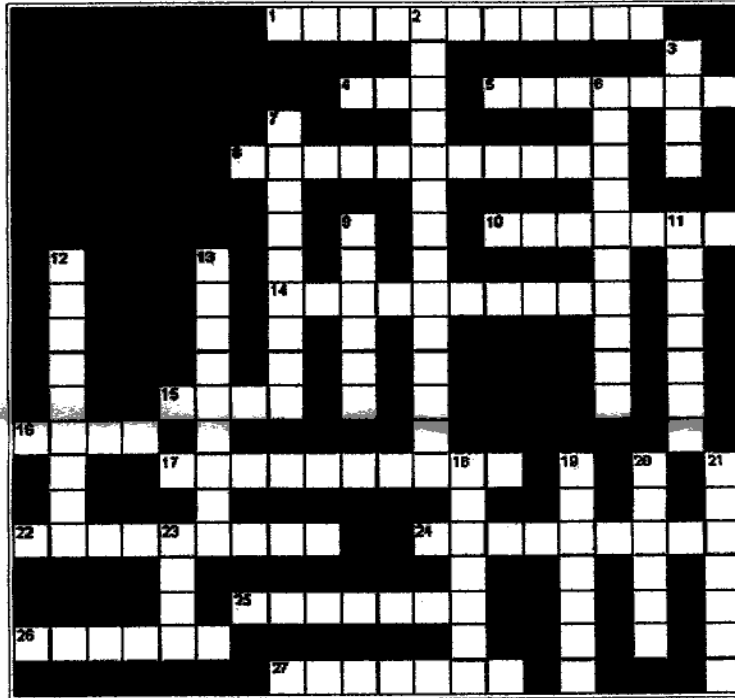
I ask that we all write to paper supply chains such as the ones mentioned above, and ask them to stock their shelves with processed chlorine-free third party certified paper. A form letter to Office Max can be found at www.doas.us. I encourage you to write to Office Max and you can use the same basic letter to write to Steve Odland, CEO, Office Depot Corporate Support Center, 2200 Old Germantown Road, Delray Beach, FL 33445 and Mark Hoffman, CEO, Corporate Express National Headquarters, Environmental Way, Broomfield, CO 80021.

The Women's Division of United Methodist Women has carried out a series of campaigns calling for processed chlorine-free (PCF) paper with Kinko's and Staples over the past several years. Kinko's stocks their copy machines with PCF paper and has it on their shelves. Staples is still in the process of making arrangements with the Cascades paper supplier in getting PCF paper on their shelves. Letters encouraging them to make PCF paper more available would be good as well. If you work for a business or organization that uses large amounts of paper, inquire about their paper supplier and whether PCF paper is available.

You may contact me for other addresses, more information on chlorine-free paper, and resources. Phone 638-5436 or email scottfielder@stny.rr.com.

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Board extends our best wishes to you for the coming year: May 2006 bring you good health, much happiness, and several new birds on your life list! We hope you enjoyed your holiday season. We were so busy, with Christmas Bird Counts and such, that we missed our chance in this issue to introduce you to another DOAS Board Member - and there are several of us you haven't met yet! Look to our February '06 issue for the continuation of our "Meet the DOAS Board" Series.
 Many thanks for your continuing support!

Crossword Challenge



Answers in next month's issue

ACROSS

- 1. Man o' war bird
- 4. Silent hunter at night
- 5. Raptor
- 8. Mimic at midnight
- 10. Ratite
- 14. Gull with black head and red legs
- 15. Only true stork in US
- 16. Desert woodpecker
- 17. Beep, beep
- 22. With a coal black cap
- 24. In the mangroves
- 25. Eurasian swan
- 26. Corvid

DOWN

- 2. Introduced back to Maine
- 3. Small ducks
- 6. Cardinal causing problems in Hawaii
- 7. Decorates it home in blue
- 9. Northern Atlantic seabird
- 11. Brood parasite
- 12. Sunshine at your feeder
- 13. Swan with pink bill and legs
- 18. Penguin dad who incubates egg on feet
- 19. Subfamily Thraupidae
- 20. Has a hanging nest
- 21. Naked head
- 23. Poor eyesight, no tail

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
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A Red-throated Loon, found in East Meredith,
is released into Pine Lake in November.

To read "The Belted Kingfisher" online, go to
www.doas.us and click on the newsletter link.

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Membership Application

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc. includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*. Cost is \$12 for a one year membership and \$20 for two years. Please make check payable to DOAS.

All meetings are free and open to the public.
Mail checks to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544, with name, address and phone.

(Note-Please mail National Audubon renewals to address indicated on renewal notice.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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To contribute notes or articles for *The Belted Kingfisher*, please send to: *Kingfisher* Editor, DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544.