



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## Coming Activities

### January

**Jan 15** – Waterfowl Count

**Jan 17** – DOAS Board Meeting

**Jan 20** – DOAS Program

**Jan 21** – Annual Eagle Trip

### 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

### April

**April 20** – DOAS Program

*More information on page 7*

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

## Birds of a Feather..... and of Different Feathers!

For many of us in winter, the birds gathering at our feeders provide our daily taste of nature – welcome splashes of color and activity in a quiet white landscape. The “regulars” (chickadees, juncos, doves, jays, nuthatches, downys) become so familiar that by January we find ourselves longing for more variety: siskins, perhaps, or refugees from further north - redpolls, tree sparrows, evening grosbeaks if we’re lucky!



*Redpoll, by Dave Kiehm*

It’s interesting to observe the interactions of these feeder birds. Taken together, the mixture of species at our feeder is not a true flock; rather, it is an aggregation of individuals drawn to a rich and reliable food source in a lean season. But within this aggregation we can easily recognize single-species groups that tend to arrive together and leave together – sociable species, at least with their own kind. These are true flocks – of goldfinches or mourning doves or juncos – flocks that forage as tight units even when far from our feeders. Each such flock normally contains individuals derived from many different parents.

But the flock of blue jays jousting at our feeder is of a slightly different sort. It typically is a single family of youngsters and parents that has remained together since fledging the summer before. They squabble like true family members, but stay together until the next breeding season. House finch flocks, similarly, may be single-family units.

A third type of flock cannot easily be recognized within the aggregation at your feeder, but is quite obvious if you encounter it during a winter walk through woods or meadow. One moment you are walking alone; the next, you are surrounded by small birds of several different species. This is a “mixed-species foraging flock” – a phenomenon that intrigues ornithologists because it often is unclear why the different species are travelling and foraging together. Each species that attaches itself to such

*(continued on page 6)*

*President's Message*

**What We Owe the Birds**

I hope I am making an accurate statement when I say all Audubon members appreciate and enjoy birds. In fact, I wouldn't be insulted if it elicited a "Well, duh!" response from readers. How much we each get from birds certainly varies: some are casual backyard observers, some may join us for an occasional field trip, and others—myself included—would call birds a passion.

However, we all receive pleasure and gratification from birds. Whether it is raising our head with a smile as a calling flock of goldfinches goes over while we are working in the garden, or staring at the sky for hours to pick out specks that turn into Broad-winged Hawks at the hawkwatch, or marveling at the spectacle of thousands of Snow Geese dropping into a marsh at a wildlife refuge, our souls are rejuvenated when birds enter our consciousness, and our lives are that much better.

Added to the joy is the fact that this pleasure is essentially free. Sure, we spend money on binoculars and a field guide, and sunflower seeds are going up in cost, but we are rewarded by birds every day, while a movie only lasts two hours, and a bottle of wine not much longer.

I have long had the sense of being indebted to the birds. Of course they are not there for my enjoyment—they are living their lives and I'm an outside observer. But early on in my birding experience I felt a responsibility to pay them back in some fashion for the delight and wonder they bring to my life. That is why I engage in conservation work—through Audubon and other avenues. Clearly the birds need our help, to at least partly counter the damage humans have done to them and their habitats—and in my mind, we owe it to them.

I hope others share this view, and similarly do something for the birds. If you are an Audubon member, you are helping with your support. If you write a letter to a decision-maker on an issue, you are doing more. If you keep track of your bird observations and report them, you are contributing. If you protect your own open space and habitat, it is a plus for the birds.

I encourage everyone to take at least one small step to pay back the birds for their gifts to us. They can't express their gratitude, but you will know you've done the right thing.

*Andy Mason*



*Snow Geese, by Dave Kiehm*

**THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO**

**AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**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

**Threat to clean air and National Park**—One of the best trips I have ever taken was a tour of the National Parks in Utah and Arizona. The grandeur of places such as Zion, Arches, Grand Canyon and others is stunning. Those who had the foresight to set aside these wonders are true American heroes.

Unfortunately, although the parks are protected, development can and does occur right up to their borders, and as the world's energy appetite grows, these pressures grow. Earlier this year, environmentalists turned back an attempt to mine uranium in the Grand Canyon!

Now the target is Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah. I remember this place as a unique, secluded park with expansive views, clear air and dramatic landscapes. However, the Bureau of Land Management is proposing to allow a massive 3,500 acre strip coal mine right next to the park that would operate 24 hours a day, polluting Bryce's air, water and quiet seclusion.

The Alton Coal Project would produce two million tons of dirty coal—a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Just last month, experts said greenhouse gases are now growing faster than previously anticipated worst case scenarios. How can we allow a scheme that will damage a national treasure and at the same time worsen climate change that threatens our entire society and environment?

**What you can do**—Please consider submitting comments to the BLM by the deadline of January 6, 2012. Let the agency know that the dangers to Bryce Canyon are too severe to permit this coal mine on public lands. Comments should be sent to: Attention: Keith Rigtrup; Bureau of Land Management, Kanab Field Office, 319 North 100 East, Kanab, UT 84741; or via email to: [UT\\_Kanab\\_Altoncoal@blm.gov](mailto:UT_Kanab_Altoncoal@blm.gov).

**Hydrofracking—comment period extended**—At nearly the last minute, the NY State Dep't. of Environmental Conservation added a month to the comment period for the pending impact statement and regulations on hydrofracked gas drilling in NY State. The deadline is now January 11, 2012. If you have not yet done so, please let DEC know that this industrial activity should not be allowed to alter the land, water and air of our state.

As noted in last month's Kingfisher, there is strong evidence that even with the strictest rules, hydrofracking poses significant dangers to ground water, including drinking water supplies—and also to surface waters used as withdrawal sites for the immense quantities of fresh water required for this activity. In addition, the regulations allow open pit storage of drilling wastes and flowback fluids, posing a threat to birds and other wildlife. Drilling wastes and other materials can be disposed of

on site under DEC's regulations. There are no extra safeguards for proper handling and disposal of radioactive wastes that are commonly found at drill sites.

The regulations gloss over the threats to habitat from disturbance and fragmentation. DEC says it will require additional review in very limited areas—carried out by the drillers—and that 'mitigation' will be permitted for damage to habitat.

The rules continue to allow drilling companies to hide the chemicals used in fracking fluids from the public. The known chemicals include carcinogens, diesel fuel and other toxic materials.

There is no discussion or consideration of the long-term effects of leaving fractured geologic strata contaminated with fracking fluids and solids to keep the fractures open. These will remain for millennia—threatening future generations for short-term energy gains.

**What you can do**—Get your comments to DEC before January 11. (A link to all the documents is at [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)) Even a one page list of your concerns can be effective. DOAS' position is that this activity is fundamentally unsafe and environmentally unacceptable, regardless of regulations. You may want to take the same tack.

Some additional points to make:

- Wildlife is still at risk under the proposed regulations. There should be a clear ban on open storage of any wastes resulting from drilling and fracking—no exceptions. Also, a site specific assessment of the habitat impacts of every drilling location should be carried out by independent agents.
- Drillers should not be permitted to take water from water bodies within the Marcellus and Utica shale areas. This area will be overburdened by withdrawals from the large scale operations.
- The prohibited distance for drilling should be increased to one mile from water bodies, aquifers, public water supplies, and existing water wells and springs in order to protect these waters and public health.
- There should be full disclosure to the public of all chemicals used in drilling and fracking prior to approval of a well.
- The environmental impact statement should consider the long-term ramifications of fractured geology and chemicals and other materials left underground.

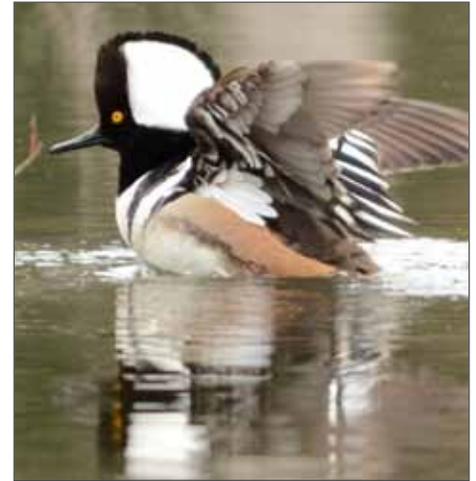
*Andy Mason*

## 43rd Christmas Bird Count

There were 9 small groups plus home feeder counters covering our official count circle centered near Milford. The weather was cloudy with occasional short snow showers leaving none to about half inch of snow, and still water was open. One surprise was a Baltimore Oriole, never seen before on our counts. It was seen by Bob Donnelly's group. And another was a huge flock of 825 Snow Geese flying ahead of a snow shower, reported by Helen New's group. Other groups saw 280 and 64. We have only recorded it one other year.

Late lingerers were Hooded Mergansers, Northern Flicker, Song Sparrow, Kingfisher and Redwing Blackbird. Occasionally a Flicker or Song Sparrow will stay the winter. The only wintering birds from the north country were American Tree Sparrows in good numbers and 6 Red Crossbills and 33 Redpolls reported by Charlie Scheim's group. Three groups saw only 14 species, five groups saw between 18 and 22 species and Bob Donnelly's group saw 30 species. Total species seen by the entire group was 48 and the total birds was 11,367. The detailed data of the count is on the next page.

*Bob Miller*



*Hooded Merganser, by Dave Kiehm*

## Favorite Places

### Emmons Bog Preserve

Delaware County's Emmons Bog lies just a couple of miles from DOAS' Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch Sanctuary, and the two can easily be combined in a single outing - but Emmons Bog is perhaps best visited by itself. Centered on a beautiful pond fringed with northern bog vegetation, the preserve lies nowhere near the village of Emmons - a fact that flummoxed me when I first tried to locate the bog on a map! Anita Este, former VP and Program Chair of DOAS, was very instrumental in the Nature Conservancy's acquisition of this 140-acre property about 30 years ago, so old friends can consider a visit to the bog to be a pilgrimage in Anita's honor. At an elevation of 1940 feet, the pond and bog lie in a "kettle depression" and drain by a steep stream to the Susquehanna River far below.

Kettle depressions in our region date to the end of the last ice age, when the melting ice sheet calved off "terrestrial icebergs" buried in moraine deposits. Further melting of the buried icebergs led to local subsidence of the overlying moraine, hence a hole in the landscape. (A fine example of an almost dry kettle hole lies in the rolling moraine at Index, just south of Cooperstown. Look for it right beside route 28 opposite the turnoff to Otsego Manor.)

My visits to the Emmons Bog Preserve have yielded nesting towhees, crested flycatchers and hermit thrushes in the mature woods near the pond, and woodcock, indigo bunting, bluebirds and an in-your-face chestnut-sided warbler in the brushy meadows further back. You can join the swamp sparrows for a close look at the bog vegetation by venturing onto a boardwalk constructed in 2005 as an Eagle Scout project by Alex Vogler with help from his troop members and Delaware County Americorps volunteers. From the "Vogler boardwalk" you can examine insectivorous pitcher plants and sundew, as well as leatherleaf, sheep laurel,

cotton grass, bog rosemary and sphagnum moss. (According to SUCO botanist Donna Vogler, shallows elsewhere in the pond also host a spectacular autumn flowering of yellow swamp candles.) Even though the boardwalk is presently submerged (due to beaver activity at the pond's outlet), if you don't mind getting your feet wet it is still the easiest and least disruptive way to see the bog up close. Just don't slip!

To reach the preserve from southside Oneonta, enter Southside Drive at the stoplight junction of Main Street and Route 28 near Home Depot. Follow Southside Drive 0.9 miles and take the right turnoff onto Swart Hollow Road. Continue up Swart Hollow Road past the Hawkwatch turnoff, taking a left turn onto White Hill Road at the top of the mountain. Another mile will bring you to the small Emmons Bog parking area on the left. A marked trail from the parking area leads downhill towards the hidden pond. After 1/4 mile you reach the Conservancy's sign-in box; from here a short branch trail leads left to the boardwalk. The main trail goes right from the sign-in box and makes a 1.4 mile circuit of the pond back to the parking area. Most of this trail lies within the preserve, but a section near the stream outlet runs through private property.



*Great-crested Flycatcher, by Dave Kiehm*

*Joe Richardson*

## DOAS Christmas Bird Count Summary – 1969-2011 – 43 Years, 105 Species

Compiled by J. Robert Miller

Species	2011	# years	high # of birds (year)
Snow Goose	1169	2	1169 (11)
Common Loon		2	1 (73, 79)
Double-crested Corm.		1	1 (06)
Tundra Swan		1	1 (99)
Great Blue Heron		20	4 (91)
Canada Goose	2681	24	2681 (11)
Green-winged Teal		1	1 (82)
American Black Duck	12	27	44 (95)
Mallard	46	33	238 (07)
Canvasback		2	13 (01)
Ring-necked Duck		1	12 (99)
Bufflehead		2	3 (88)
Common Merganser	55	22	81 (06)
Hooded Merganser	19	4	19 (11)
Osprey		2	1 (93, 00)
Golden Eagle		3	2 (04)
Bald Eagle	3	7	3 (09, 11)
Northern Harrier		9	1 (73, 80, 83, 94, 98, 00, 07, 09)
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	19	2 (81, 90, 98, 05, 08)
Cooper's Hawk	1	17	5 (09)
Northern Goshawk	1	13	2 (87)
Red-shouldered Hawk		4	1 (74, 99, 03, 04)
Red-tailed Hawk	16	43	46 (09)
Rough-legged Hawk		36	10 (74)
American Kestrel		31	10 (73)
Merlin		1	1 (00)
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	18	3 (71, 84, 86, 00)
Ruffed Grouse	5	33	24 (82)
American Coot		1	1 (09)
Wild Turkey	114	31	1225 (95)
Northern Bobwhite		2	5 (75)
Killdeer		2	1 (79, 85)
Ring-billed Gull	91	21	206 (01)
Herring Gull		3	9 (92)
Rock Pigeon	469	36	1517 (98)
Mourning Dove	284	41	409 (98)
Common Barn-Owl		1	1 (71)
Eastern Screech-Owl	3	12	6 (03)
Great Horned Owl	1	30	5 (04, 07)
Barred Owl	1	11	2 (07, 09)
N. Saw-whet Owl	1	3	2 (04, 07)
Short-eared Owl		1	1 (08)
Belted Kingfisher	1	27	5 (99)
Red-headed Woodpecker		3	1 (80, 82, 99)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	8	4 (09)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		5	3 (93, 97)
Downy Woodpecker	43	43	85 (08)
Hairy Woodpecker	21	43	59 (71)
Northern Flicker	2	12	2 (69, 00, 03, 05, 06, 09)
Pileated Woodpecker	1	27	9 (08)
Horned Lark		6	25 (72)
Blue Jay	226	43	500 (72)

Species	2011	# years	high # of birds (year)
American Crow	742	43	1040 (08)
Common Raven	12	8	31 (07)
Black-capped Chickadee	458	43	799 (07)
Boreal Chickadee		1	3 (75)
Tufted Titmouse	32	35	93 (09)
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	43	40 (93)
White-breasted Nuthatch	34	43	91 (07)
Brown Creeper		34	9 (99)
Carolina Wren		16	4 (06)
Golden-crowned Kinglet	5	25	20 (82)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		2	4 (99)
Eastern Bluebird		4	35 (07)
Swainson's Thrush		1	1 (71)
Hermit Thrush		1	1 (07)
Wood Thrush		1	1 (71)
Varied Thrush		2	1 (71, 83)
American Robin		16	16 (07)
Gray Catbird		2	1 (72, 07)
Northern Mockingbird		8	2 (81)
Cedar Waxwing		24	42 (07)
Northern Shrike		21	5 (95)
European Starling	987	42	2741 (00)
Yellow-rumped Warbler		1	1 (75)
Northern Cardinal	9	42	76 (76)
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		1	6 (79)
Eastern Towhee		3	2 (80)
American Tree Sparrow	48	43	269 (71)
Chipping Sparrow		1	8 (83)
Field Sparrow		1	2 (77)
Savannah Sparrow		1	1 (71)
Fox Sparrow		1	1 (97)
Song Sparrow	1	31	41 (75)
Swamp Sparrow		1	6 (75)
White-throated Sparrow		25	39 (72)
White-crowned Sparrow		6	3 (69)
Dark-eyed Junco	220	43	1051 (71)
Snow Bunting		18	500 (76)
Red-winged Blackbird	150	14	150 (11)
Rusty Blackbird		1	2 (74)
Common Grackle		9	65 (71)
Brown-headed Cowbird		23	200 (84)
Bullock's Oriole		1	1 (70)
Baltimore Oriole		1	1 (11)
Pine Grosbeak		15	80 (72)
Purple Finch	19	35	102 (82)
House Finch	52	36	452 (86)
Red Crossbill	6	5	20 (86)
White-winged Crossbill		2	3 (85)
Common Redpoll	33	25	101 (99)
Pine Siskin		24	149 (08)
American Goldfinch	125	43	418 (08)
Evening Grosbeak		32	696 (86)
House Sparrow	21	43	947 (74)

## DOAS January Program: Short-eared Owls

The DOAS monthly program meeting, will be held on Friday, January 20th, 2012, 7:30pm, at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, Oneonta, NY. Our presenter will be Paul Novak, DEC regional wildlife biologist who has been with New York State for about five years. Paul was responsible for the supervision and oversight of the Winter Raptor Project that our previously scheduled speaker, Jenny Murtaugh, was involved with. Due to circumstances beyond Jenny's control, she was unable to do the presentation and obtained Paul Novak to present our January program.

Before coming to New York State DEC, Paul worked for the Natural Heritage Program for fifteen years. He has overseen a number of studies and grants, one of which researched the Short-eared owl. Currently, he is involved with collecting data on the New England Cottontail rabbit whose habitat ranges from east of the Hudson River to Maine.

The program is free, open to the public and refreshments are served. For further information, contact: Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054.



*Short-eared Owl, by Dave Kiehm*

### ***Birds of a Feather...*** (continued from page 1)

a flock must benefit somehow – or it wouldn't join! Or perhaps one “core” species, sociable with its own kind, does not directly benefit from the mix, but serves as a magnet for the other species that do benefit in some way.

Some years back, when I taught college in southern Pennsylvania, my honors student Russel Smith undertook a cold-season study of mixed foraging flocks in two different habitats – one shrubby and weedy, the other a mature hardwood forest. The most common type of mixed flock in the shrubby habitat contained juncos as the apparent core species, joined quite typically by white-throated sparrows (or song sparrows as spring approached), and often also by field sparrows, tree sparrows (in midwinter) or goldfinches. Juncos also flocked alone in this habitat, and occasionally they were absent from a mixed flock, which might then contain white-throated sparrows as the apparent core species, along with goldfinches, cardinals or purple finches. Regardless of flock composition, the birds were all seed-eaters - not surprising, given their seed-rich scrubby habitat.

By contrast, the birds most prevalent in the mixed flocks of the forest habitat were chickadees, perhaps serving as the core and often accompanied by tufted titmice, golden- and ruby-crowned kinglets, and frequently also by downy woodpeckers, white-

breasted nuthatches and brown creepers. All of these species feed importantly on insects, often gleaned from beneath bark, though some are more specialized in this respect than others. Again we may ask about the benefits these species derive from flocking together. Perhaps the more generalized feeders acquire food that would be inaccessible without the chipping and dislodging of bark fragments by the specialists, whereas the latter may employ slightly different foraging tactics that help them minimize competition among themselves. Also, all species may profit from the “many eyes, many ears” aspect of togetherness: one study (not Russel's) found that downy woodpeckers interrupted their feeding to look for predators much less frequently, hence fed more efficiently, when in mixed flocks than when alone.

In upstate New York we can expect our mixed foraging flocks to differ somewhat in composition from those recorded 200 miles farther south by Russel Smith. During these winter months, DOAS members may want to keep an eye out for who flocks together in our fields and woods, and to speculate on how those species benefit from foraging together. But to do so, we'll have to get outdoors and away from our feeders! (Send your observations to Dianne Benko for her “Bird Sightings” column in *The Belted Kingfisher*.)

*Joe Richardson*

## Coming Activities

### January

**January 15 – Waterfowl Count:** The NY State Ornithological Association's annual statewide waterfowl count. DOAS covers Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River above Unadilla, the Unadilla River, and Cannonsville Reservoir and the West Branch of the Delaware River. This effort involves surveying waterways where they can be seen, and identifying and counting ducks and geese. The totals are used by the Department of Environmental Conservation in managing these species over the upcoming year.

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

**January 17 – DOAS Board Meeting:** 7 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church.

**January 20 – DOAS Program:** *Short-eared Owls and Winter Raptors* by Paul Novak, NYS DEC regional wildlife biologist. 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.

**January 21 – Annual Eagle Trip:** Annual DOAS field trip to view wintering Bald Eagles. The trip visits rivers and reservoirs in Delaware County where the birds concentrate to feed. Recent trips have turned up 20+ eagles.

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 AM. Carpooling is strongly encouraged and participants can be picked up en route in Delhi and Walton. Return to Oneonta will be mid to late afternoon.

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

### February

**February 17 – DOAS Program:** *Successful Local Bluebird Projects: John Davis and Marion Karl, Cooperstown Golf Course and Bluebirds; Scott Fielder, The Plains Bluebird Project; and Gail DuBois, Backyard Bluebirds.* 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.

**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.

**February 25 – Field Trip:** DOAS will lead a field trip to Salt Springville and the surrounding grasslands. Departure will be at 3:30 PM from the Cooperstown Cooperative Extension on Lake Street at the edge of Cooperstown. We will be looking for Short-eared Owls, plus other northern irruptive species that frequent the open lands around there. There will be very little walking required on this trip. For more information, e-mail Bob Donnelly at [rsdonn@yahoo.com](mailto:rsdonn@yahoo.com).

### 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.

### April

**April 20 – DOAS Program:** *The Everglades - Florida's Jewel* by Scott and Denise Stoner.

## 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.**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## October – November Bird Sightings

Since last month's article I've had some interesting bird sightings of my own. As I ventured down the road from my house, I saw a Ring-necked Pheasant scurrying along the edge of the pavement. I wasn't terribly surprised because a week earlier I had read a newspaper article announcing the release of pheasants on County Highway 16, my road. It still was fun to see a male with its strikingly colored head. A couple of days later a large clunky bird flew past our sunroom windows and landed in a maple tree. A Ruffed Grouse perched there regally to allow for over a 30 minute viewing. The next day a Cooper's Hawk landed in that same tree and suspiciously eyed our birdfeeder with the hopes of snagging an innocent chickadee or two. Thankfully, he wasn't successful.

On 10/16 Bob Donnelly saw a female Purple Finch along his driveway, heard

many White-throated Sparrows singing, observed a Rufous-sided Towhee and Hermit Thrushes and listened to the drumming of a Ruffed Grouse in Cooperstown. Two days later Tom Salo also watched active Hermit Thrushes in W. Burlington and Dorian Huneke noticed a flock of nearly 100 Red-winged Blackbirds in Treadwell. On 10/28 Tom Salo spent an hour and a half watching hawks on the ridge above his house in W. Burlington. There were a lot of birds which were mostly Red-tails and probably close to a hundred passed by him while he was up there. The highlight of his observations was the sighting of 3 Golden Eagles, all low in the sky, and seen through a good scope in perfect light; sun against a background of dark clouds. Red-shouldered Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks and Turkey Vultures rounded out the mix. Around that same date Eleanor Moriarity had regularly seen an adult Bald Eagle perched near the top of a large tree across her field near the banks of Charlotte



*White-throated Sparrow, by Dave Kiehm*

Creek. She has seen it 3-4 times per week and it usually has stayed for about two hours.

The first of November Andy Mason reported seeing a Red-bellied Woodpecker at his feeder in Jefferson. He's seen these birds on rare occasions, but as a rule they don't typically stick around. Jane and Jerry Hebbard were pleased to see a large flock of Cedar Waxwings in Franklin on 11/6. The birds seemed to be teaming up for migration and stripped clean all the berries on a holly hedge row and pierced the fruit of a flowering crab. They separated to forage in the neighborhood and then met on the tips of the tallest tree to leave. On Veteran's Day a large flock (100) of Pine Siskins visited Andy Mason's feeder in Jefferson.

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*