



THE BELTED KINGFISHER
Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Inc.
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Editor — Bob Miller

COMING ACTIVITIES

- May 6 Bird Walk in the Milford area with Andy Mason. See below.
May 7 Bird Walk at Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway with Andy Mason. See below.
May 16 Board Meeting. Bob Donnelly's home.
May 19 General Meeting (7:30 pm) and Potluck Supper (6:30pm). Larry Federman speaks on Odonates. Elm Park Methodist Church, Oneonta. See below.
May 20 Annual May Big Day Count. Page 3.
May 24 Wildflower Walk. Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway trail with Jean Miller. See below.
May 27 Weaver Lake Trip with Bob Donnelly. See below.
June 4 An 8--11 Field Trip with Tom Salo — Birds and trails of Basswood Pond State Forest. Call Tom at 9965-8232 for more information.
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DOAS field trips are open to the public. Participants should meet at the stated time and location — please be prompt. We encourage carpooling — please help with expenses if you are sharing a vehicle. Most trips include a moderate amount of easy walking; leaders will note any strenuous hiking. Please expect to provide your own food and drink unless a food stop is indicated. In case of bad weather, check with the leader about cancellation.

MAY PROGRAM: "Damsels and Dragons - an Introduction to Odonates and the NYS Odonate Survey"

Larry introduces us to the Odonates — the variety of species, life cycles, activities he has been involved with, and the protocol of the current NYS Odonate Survey. Larry is the assistant Warden/Educator for Audubon New York, and is president of the Northern Catskills Audubon Society.

Spring Bird Walks. May 6 is a beginner's bird walk in Milford State Forest in conjunction with the Earth Festival. Meet at 8 am at the Milford Central School. May 7 is a walk at the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway, starting at 8 am. Meet at the OSG parking lot on Silas Lane, off Rte. 205 in Oneonta's West End. Both are about 2 hour easy walks. Andy Mason at 607-652-2162 or andymason@earthling.net if you have questions.

Wildflower Walk. Wednesday, May 24 at 10 to about 12 am at the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway trail. It's an easy trail. You can turn back any time. Parking on Silas Lane as in bird walk above. Info? Call Jean at 432-5767.

Weaver Lake Field Trip. On Saturday, May 27 DOAS will lead a canoe/kayak trip to Weaver Lake. The lake is a unique wetland in this part of New York. Bird species there include bitterns, herons, rails and numerous other marsh birds. The trip will start at 7:30 AM. For more info please contact Bob Donnelly at 607-547-8654 or at rsdonn@yahoo.com

Conservation and Legislation

by Andy Mason

Environmental issues still pending in Albany--With a budget now in place, the NY State Legislature is turning its attention to other legislation, including some important environmental bills. As mentioned here at the beginning of the legislative session, some of these have come close to passage over the past couple of years, and a good push this time could put them over the top. Also, this is an election year for all State Senators and Assemblymembers, so they should be receptive to hearing from constituents. Among the bills that are worthy of support are:

The Community Preservation Act--This would give towns in NY the authority to create a community preservation fund by enacting a local real estate transfer fee of less than 2% on property transactions over a certain dollar amount. These dollars would be used to preserve open space, working farms and historic properties. This would provide much needed funds to help protect the character of communities especially those facing heavy development pressures. This bill has strong support in the Legislature and has already passed the Assembly this year, but has been blocked by pressure on the leadership from big developers. Senators need to hear that this Community Preservation Act should be brought to the floor for a vote.

The Clean Water Protection & Flood Prevention Act--Necessitated by the Bush Administration's interpretation of a 2001 Supreme Court decision removing long-standing protections under the Clean Water Act for smaller and intermittent wetlands and streams, this bill would lower the threshold for state authority to protect wetlands from 12.4 acres to 1 acre. These smaller areas are critical wildlife habitat and provide flood and drought protection by holding water during periods of extreme weather. They are now vulnerable to draining and filling due to a lack of legal protection. This bill has also passed the Assembly but is held up in the Senate.

SEQRA Standing--The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), enacted in 1975, governs the environmental review process for significant projects in which a government agency has a role. This is the law that requires environmental impacts be considered prior to approval of projects and actions. A court decision has also significantly weakened this law, by requiring that individuals must meet an almost

impossible legal threshold in order to appeal SEQRA decisions. This decision is contrary to the original legislative intent of the law. Legislation has been put forward to correct this and clarify who has legal standing under SEQRA. Again, this has passed the Assembly but languishes in committee in the Senate.

Bigger Better Bottle Bill--This perennial, but common-sense legislation has been in legislative limbo due to opposition from the beer and beverage industry, which are heavy contributors to legislators. Strongly supported by the public, it would add non-carbonated drinks such as juice and bottled water to the list of beverages that have a deposit, as soda and beer currently do. These drinks now make up a large portion of beverage sales in the state, and a similar segment of the discarded trash on our roadsides. The bill would also direct the unclaimed deposits that are now kept by bottlers to environmental programs, including recycling. Pressure needs to continue to be applied to move this bill forward. With a new Governor and potentially more enlightened legislature next year, the Bigger Better Bottle Bill could become law.

What you can do--Contact your state Senators and Assemblymembers and ask for their public support for these bills. Let them know that you are aware of their actions on these and other bills and will remember in November! Stress that they need to stand up to their leadership and get these measures to the floor for votes and approval.

Bluebirds Houses

A reminder that bluebird house plans and ready-built bluebird houses are available from DOAS. Plans are free and houses are \$11.00 each. Plans and houses can be obtained at DOAS functions or by mail. Contact Andy Mason, 1039 Peck St., Jefferson, NY 12093, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

April 15th Waterfowl Trip another success

On April 15th cool, perfect weather spurred on over thirty birders and friends in the annual waterfowl trip in the environs of Lake Otsego and parts of its northern watershed. The "best" bird was actually a female Northern Harrier floating over the fields north of US 20 near Weaver Lake. Other land birds identified included Eastern Meadowlarks, an early Yellow-rumped warbler, a nesting Eastern Phoebe and several Killdeer. Waterfowl particularly noted were a Bufflehead and Ring-necked Ducks on Clarke Pond (along with the lone Mute Swan that has been there for several years), Common Loon, Green-winged Teal, Common Mergansers, American Coots, nesting Great-blue Herons and of course Mallards and plenty of Canada Geese. A Swamp Sparrow was singing at Weaver Lake. Impossible to see by scope if the Bald Eagles were on their deep nest north of Lake Otsego, but they were noted there a couple of weeks earlier.

John Davis

Hike to Lordsland

On May 20th John Davis will lead a general nature walk at Lordsland, The Nature Conservancy's property in the Town of Roseboom in north-eastern Otsego County. The walk is under the auspices of the Otsego County Conservation Association, and the general public is invited to participate. Lordsland is in the town of Roseboom, and the hike will start at the east-side entrance on Doc Ahlers Road. For more information contact John at 607-547-9688 or davi7js4@hughes.net.

John S. Davis 190 Ottaway Road Cooperstown NY 13326 (607-547-96880)

Hawkwatch T-shirts Available

DOAS now has a Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch T-shirt for sale. In addition to helping fund our hawkwatch and other activities, these shirts also help the earth. The Patagonia brand "Beneficial Tees" are unbleached, organic cotton. The FMHW Golden Eagle logo was designed by DOAS member Beth Firmin. The shirts cost \$15 and will be available at DOAS programs and other activities.

May Big Day Count

On May 20th several small teams from DOAS and several from Delhi Bird Club will be going to a number of areas in Otsego and Delaware counties, mostly centered around Oneonta/Milford and Walton/Delhi. Each group will be out whatever hours they choose. The goal is to see how many species of birds one can see in 24 hours. Always there is the hope that we will hit a day when there are many species of warblers present and moving through. In the past 37 years, beginning in 1969, we most often saw somewhere in the 120s. In only 6 years have we been in the low 130s. Anyone and everyone is welcome to join in. No particular level of expertise is needed. People who have led teams in the past will be contacted by mail about ten days prior to the Big Day. Leaders will then be in touch with folks who have gone out with them before. If you wish to join in you can contact Bob Miller at 607-432-5767.

Have you checked the website lately? www.doas.us

Galloping Glaciers

Sea level rise from melting of polar ice sheets is one of the largest potential threats to future climate change. Polar warming by the year 2100 may reach levels similar to those of paleoclimate years which were associated with sea levels several meters above modern levels. Both the Greenland ice sheet and parts of the Antarctic ice sheet may be vulnerable. The rate of past ice sheet melting indicates that a rate of future melting and related sea level rise could be faster than widely thought. *Science, 24 Mar. '06. ...Jean T. Miller*

Mangrove Lessons

Mangroves are tropical trees that border the sea and send out many prop roots that build up and hold coastal land. Coastal areas buffered by mangroves were much less damaged in both the 2004 tsunami and hurricane Katrina.

Coastal storms occur many times every year in the tropics and create considerable destruction, especially to areas where the mangroves are removed by man. Mangroves provide a valuable ecological service to the communities they protect.

World Wildlife Fund ... Jean T. Miller

April Bird Sightings

April showers usually bring May flowers, but they also bring new and interesting bird sightings in our area. On 3/20 John Birkett reported a merlin in Bainbridge. Kay Crane had a brown creeper in Walton on 3/26. On 3/28 Gerianne Carillo spotted a Northern flicker in Milford. 3/29 was a big birding day. Eastern phoebes made their first appearance of the year. Andy Mason saw one on that day in Jefferson and Bob Donnelly saw one in Cooperstown. On that same day Tom Salo caught sight of a tree swallow in W. Burlington. On the next day 3/30 Trina Bassoff saw an Eastern phoebe while Bob Donnelly spotted 2 gadwalls on Otsego Lake. On 3/31 Trina Bassoff reported a fox sparrow in Blenheim and Charlie Dahan saw his first of the year Eastern phoebe in Otego.

4/1 brought the arrival of a pair of Eastern bluebirds to John Davis in Cooperstown. On 4/3 Andy Mason reported a chipping sparrow in Jefferson, Tom Salo saw a yellow-bellied sapsucker in W. Burlington and a pair of common mergansers were seen by Trina Bassoff in Blenheim. Gerianne Carillo saw her first pair of purple finches this year in Milford on 4/4. On 4/5 Bob Donnelly reported 3 common loons on Otsego Lake.

Tom Salo was delighted to see a golden eagle in W. Burlington on 4/6 and Andy Mason had his first evening grosbeak in Jefferson on 4/7. On 4/8 Tom Salo saw 8 male wild turkeys displaying for 1 female turkey in Edmeston. It is hard to say who was or who were the lucky ones in that group. Sandra Perry reported a pair of hooded mergansers in Oneonta on 4/10. John Davis spotted a Northern flicker in Cooperstown on 4/11.

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@wpc.com by 5/14/06 for the June *Belted Kingfisher*.

Electricity Conservation

In the US 21% of all our energy consumption takes place at home. Hot water heaters are the single largest electricity users in our homes. To save electricity turn your heater to 130° if you have a dishwasher and lower if you do not.



Nominating Committee Report

The DOAS nominating committee has put forth the following slate for the position of directors, terms expiring in June 2008: Nancy Cannon, Julia Gregory, Barbara Marsala, Andy Mason, Jean Miller, Tom Salo. The election will be held at the Annual Meeting, May 19, 2006, 7 p.m. in the Elm Park Methodist Church, Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY. Nominations may also be made from the floor.--

Nominating Committee: Debby Clough, Bob Donnelly, Gail DuBois, Nancy Garrison, AndyMason

Katrina

Katrina left 22 million tons of debris scattered over 90,000 square miles. This includes hazardous waste materials, mulch (vegetation), "white goods" (appliances, etc.) as well as flattened buildings. A mammoth cleanup still ahead indeed.

Financial Fix ?

The Bush administration is putting finishing touches on a long list of National Forests in 35 states that will be dismembered and sold behind closed doors, the proceeds to be used for the nation's deficit reduction. 300,000 acres of irreplaceable land has already been posted by the U S Forest Service on its website as "potentially eligible for sale". Even biogems like the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem, Alaskan rainforest, Greater Cumberland plateau region, and the Sierra Nevada are listed. And once these lands are sold to private interests, they will be closed to us forever.

These lands belong to you and me and will be sold to timber companies and developers, for fast cash for Bush's budget.

Tell your congressmen to shelve ANY plan to sell off our national forests. They are NOT for sale ! We must not tolerate this massive giveaway of our natural heritage.

From NRDC

... Jean T. Miller

DOAS Adopts Position on Wind Power

Our Chapter has adopted a formal position on wind power, a growing issue in our region and beyond. Our position has been forwarded to planning boards in local towns, which are the bodies having primary jurisdiction over wind projects.

Anyone interested in this issue, or in working with their local towns in enacting wind project regulations, should contact Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, tomsalo@localnet.com; or Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net. The DOAS position is below.

DOAS POSITION ON WIND POWER DEVELOPMENT

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society supports development of renewable resources to provide energy in our region, the state, and beyond. Continued dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear power carries with it serious environmental consequences including air and water pollution, toxic waste and the threat of global warming. Wind energy shows great promise as a renewable resource, and provides an opportunity to meet at least a portion of our energy requirements locally. Wind power is non-polluting, is essentially free beyond initial equipment costs and maintenance, and can be utilized immediately in the existing energy infrastructure.

However, all methods of energy production, even those using renewable resources, do have some environmental impacts. Wind power is no exception. Modern wind turbines are large structures, typically sited in groups of 10-50 towers, and may visually disrupt the existing landscape. The turbines also create moderate sound, similar to the wind itself, while operating. Some existing habitat may be disturbed by the footprint of the towers and related facilities, although this area is generally minimal.

Of greatest concern to DOAS is the potential of impacts to birds, and bats, from wind turbine blades and towers. Earlier wind farms, especially one located in a major hawk and eagle winter foraging area, did cause significant mortality from collisions with blades, towers and guy wires. However, more modern turbine designs with slower rotating blades, monopole towers, and minimal lighting have reduced dangers to birds. Even though little mortality has been found at many existing sites, few projects have been built in areas where raptors and other species are known to

concentrate during migration. Ridges and shorelines, which are closely followed by some species during migration, are often good areas for wind power development. These areas are increasingly being considered for such development. In addition, knowledge of specific bird migration routes and concentration areas is very limited. Without site specific surveys, it is impossible to assess the risk to birds from wind turbines.

A significant portion of the eastern population of Golden Eagle migrates through Delaware and Otsego Counties. The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch in Davenport has recorded more of this species than any other eastern hawk count site. This New York State endangered species has also been described by a researcher as being the raptor species at "the highest risk" for impacts from wind projects. Thousands of Red-tailed Hawks also pass through our area annually. Among raptors, this species is predicted to suffer "the most collisions" from wind turbines. Besides the observations at Franklin Mountain, little else is known about how Golden Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks travel through the area. With up to 60,000 wind turbines expected to be built in the United States in coming years, it is important that wind farms be sited away from areas of bird concentrations or movements.

Our organization recommends that for these projects full assessments on the impacts to bats and birds be prepared and reviewed prior to approval by the appropriate agencies, and, that these assessments include multi-year fall and spring surveys of bird migration in the vicinity of proposed wind power sites. Since the development of wind farms is increasing, and knowledge of their effects on flying species is limited, DOAS also supports additional studies, to be conducted after the projects are operational, to determine actual impacts to bats and birds. Such studies would also benefit the wind industry by providing information on siting projects to avoid conflicts with birds. In addition, we urge that any project's approval be contingent on the developer and operator following the most current version of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recommendations for reducing risk and avoiding bird collisions with towers.

--Approved March 21, 2006



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Lisa Gorn Julia Gregory Andrew Mason
Jean Miller Stephen Rice

Committee Chairs* & Other Assignments

Conservation*	Andrew Mason
Education*	Cheryl Boise
Field Trips*	Tom Salo
Hawkwatch*	Andrew Mason, Tom Salo
Charter Dinner	Julia Gregory
Memorial Fund*	Tom Salo
Bird Counts	Bob Miller
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Sales	Stephen Rice
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Kingfisher	Bob Miller

Membership Application

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc. includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*. Cost is \$12 annually or \$20 for 2 years. Please make check payable to DOAS and mail to DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544, with name, address and phone.

(NOTE: Please mail National Audubon renewals to address on renewal notice.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

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

All meetings are free and open to the public.