



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Inc.

Founded 1968 P.O. Box 544, Oneonta, N.Y. 13820

Volume 39, No. 9, Nov. 2007

Editor — Bob Miller

## COMING ACTIVITIES

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- Nov. 16 Annual Charter Dinner. Sunset Junction. Nina Schoch will speak on the Adirondack Loon Program. Details below.
  - Dec. 4 Board Meeting at home of Cheryl Boise.
  - Dec. 15 Annual Christmas Bird Count.. See page 5.
  - Dec. 29 Fort Plain Christmas Count
  - Jan. 12 Eagle Trip with Andy Mason.
  - Jan. 13 Annual January NYSOA Waterfowl Count. Andy Mason in charge.
  - Jan. 15 Board Meeting. Joe Richardson's home.
  - Jan. 18 DOAS General Meeting. Nigel and Kim Mann present *Rainforest Conservation. Applying New Strategies.*
  - Feb. 6 Short-eared Owl Trip. Bob Donnelly leader.
  - Feb. 15 DOAS General Meeting. TBA
  - Mar. 21 DOAS General Meeting. *All About Bluebirds, and More* — John Rogers
  - Apr. 18 DOAS General Meeting. Program by Jilian Liner of Audubon NY.
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### Annual Charter Dinner Nov. 16

The DOAS annual Charter dinner will be Fri. evening, Nov. 16 at Sunset Junction (formerly Falco's) in Colliersville on Rte. 7 east of Oneonta. A social hour begins at 5:30 PM, with dinner at 6:30 and the evening program at 7:30. Speaker will be Nina Schoch, coordinator of the Adirondack cooperative Loon Program, sponsored by the Wilderness Society. She will discuss the efforts to understand the natural history of the loon and how humans and contaminants impact loon population. Our annual raffle drawing will be held after dinner also, with a bird motif quilt and a framed original Dave Kiehm drawing as the main prizes.

Menu choices are Montreal Rubbed London Broil, Chicken Cordon Bleu, and Vegetable Lasagna.. Reservations must be made by Nov 12. Cost is \$27.00 per person, including gratuity.

For more information/reservations, Julia Gregory, 563 2924, or PO Box 641, Unadilla, NY

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Name	Menu Choice

Phone : \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (checks payable to DOAS please)

### President's Column

Last month I announced Gerianne Carillo's resignation from the board. Our by-laws allow the board to fill vacancies. In September, the board voted unanimously to appoint Eleanor Moriarty to this vacant Director position. Eleanor is a long-time active member of DOAS. She is often found on field trips and at meetings. She helps at events, staffing tables and providing refreshments. We are all very pleased she has accepted the appointment. Eleanor has also agreed to be the chair of the Program Committee. I hope to see you at a DOAS event in the coming months. There are field trips planned. The hawk watch will continue to New Year's Day. Good eagle flights are expected into December. The charter dinner program on loons will be excellent. Consider participating in a bird count. Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) are a fun and social way to add to our knowledge of early winter bird distribution. This becomes increasingly important as the effects of global warming become more evident.

DOAS will conduct the Oneonta CBC on December 15. The Fort Plain CBC, a little to our north, will be December 29. It is not an official DOAS count but many DOAS members participate. We also contribute to the annual waterfowl count conducted by the New York State Ornithological Association on January 13.

If you would like to participate in any of these activities, use the contact information provided in this newsletter, or, you can contact me.

Tom Salo

### Eagle Research Funding Goal In Sight

Fund raising for Golden Eagle research continues. We have raised 85% of our goal of \$6000. That amount will purchase a GPS transmitter for an eagle, and cover the cost of data fees for 2 years. Please help us reach this important goal. Send donations to DOAS Golden Eagle Research, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820. The paths of currently telemetered eagles can be seen on the National Aviary's web site - [www.aviary.org](http://www.aviary.org).

Tom Salo

### Sanctuary Openhouse

A beautiful fall day brought around 75 people to our fall openhouse at the sanctuary. It was a highly successful day, with good attendance at Tom's rapid ID hawk course, John's trail walk around the grounds, and for hawk watchers up at the site on the hill.

Photo on page 6.

### Cluster Flies

by Cheryl Boise

Flies' lives put fiction to shame. While the critters themselves range from gorgeous to grotesque, some of their life stories enter the realm of bizarre to creepy. Disease-carrying and crop-destroying flies have shaped history. The good news is that, of the 17,000 or so fly species found in North America, most are not pests. And the ones gathering around the windows and buzzing on the floor at this time of year fall into the latter category. They spent their youth eating flesh and likely will succumb to "summit disease, but they are pretty harmless.

Cluster flies, these sluggish invaders, begin entering homes in the late summer as the adults seek safe shelter for winter hibernation. If the hibernation site they find is some loose tree bark, they will spend the winter there. But light-colored siding and buildings surrounded by lawn or pasture especially attract these flies, so lots of them wind up inside walls and living spaces. Here, instead of the falling temperatures conducive to a long winter's sleep, they get heat. Sunny weather warms walls and windows, particularly those with southern exposure, causing the flies to abandon their hibernation plans and look for a way out. This is their natural response in the artificial spring of indoors: time to exit and mate. Trapped in a building, though, they will continue this hibernate/wake pattern until they are exhausted. So cluster fly rallies can plague a household for months.

What cluster flies won't do while they're inside is eat. During summer months, cluster flies carry on a perfectly respectable life as parasites. Adults lay eggs in soil, and the larvae burrow into earthworms, which they proceed to consume. When they pupate and become adults, they restart the cycle, which occurs several times during the summer. The short days of August signal emerging adults to break the cycle and hibernate.

Neither the flies nor their specific earthworm hosts are native North Americans. Most likely both were accidentally imported long ago, and have become well-established and widespread. Apparently they are here to stay. Of course the earthworms thrive in lawns and pastures, creating a perfect setup for a fall fly invasion.

Sealing up a home to eliminate fly access sites, the only sure way to keep them out, is a challenge. Cluster flies don't bite or carry disease, so they pose no real health threat. Chemical warfare to eliminate the flies or their earthworm hosts hardly seems warranted. So the vacuum cleaner is probably the best way to get rid of them. A good many of these flies are already dying because they are infected with a fungus that will kill them; it may leave them decorating lampshades or the other pinnacles they ascend as the fungus takes over their brains.

Most of the earth's million insect species weave the fabric of life without harming humans. Some bite, infest, infect and destroy. Others, like the cluster fly, merely annoy. That may not be so bad.

**Conservation and Legislation**

by Andy Mason

Global warming a hot topic--The recent announcement that this year's Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded to former US Vice-President Al Gore and the United Nations' International Panel on Climate Change has kept the focus on this overarching environmental issue. Climate change is being discussed by presidential candidates, foreign leaders, the general public, and perhaps most importantly, state and federal legislatures.

Nearly every aspect of life on earth will be affected by global warming, and nearly all for the worse. Of great concern to Auduboners is the changes it will bring to birdlife. The American Bird Conservancy and the National Wildlife Federation have joined forces to produce a comprehensive report on songbirds, including a state-by-state analysis of current trends of greenhouse gas emissions continue. (The entire report is available at [www.abcbirds.org/climatechange/statepage.htm](http://www.abcbirds.org/climatechange/statepage.htm)).

The list of species that may disappear completely from NY State includes such common birds as Least Flycatcher, Bank Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Blue-headed Vireo, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Purple Finch and Northern Cardinal, among many others.

The early signs of this trend are already being seen. For example, a pilot study of 35 North American warbler species found that the range of 20 percent of the species has shifted significantly north in the past 24 years. This is consistent with what would be expected as birds seek climates to which they are adapted.

Some species may face extinction from these changes. Scientists believe the already at risk Bicknell's Thrush, which has a remnant population in NY State, and depends on high-elevation spruce/fir forests for breeding habitat, may disappear as a result of global warming.

What you can do--At the state level, Gov. Elliott Spitzer this summer vetoed legislation to create a Climate Change Task Force. The governor has not taken the bold steps needed to face up to global warming. Let him know NY must take action now.

Gov. Spitzer needs to:

- issue regulations to implement the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a ten-state pact to cut emissions from the region's power plants, and increase investment in clean energy and efficiency.
- establish an economy-wide cap on carbon dioxide emissions the way California and other states have done
- allow more consumers to sell their excess electricity back to the grid, or "net meter"
- eliminate state subsidies that encourage wasteful uses of energy, such as the state's flawed "Power for Jobs" program (a pet project of local State Sen. James Seward)
- amend the regulations related to the State Environmental Quality Review Act to require a review of projects' contributions to climate change
- help convince Congress to raise automobile fuel efficiency standards

In line with the last recommendation, the US Congress has energy legislation and anti-global warming measures on its docket. Both houses have passed versions of an energy bill which now must be reconciled in conference. This is wide-

-ranging, complicated legislation, but our US Senators and Representatives should push for keeping the renewable electricity standard in the House bill; keeping fuel economy improvements in the Senate bill; and improving the biofuels provisions in the Senate bill.

Congress is also gearing up for legislation aimed specifically at reducing global warming. Key committees are in the initial stages of drafting cap & trade legislation that would limit overall emissions of global warming pollution primarily carbon dioxide and reduce the amount of emissions over the next several decades.

Again, our federal representatives need to hear that this is an important issue to us. They likely don't have bird and other wildlife impacts from global warming in mind, and it is our job to let them know!

<u>Addresses</u>	
<p>NY State Gov. Elliott Spitzer State Capitol Albany, NY 12224 (518) 474-8390 fax (518) 474-1513 <a href="http://www.ny.gov/governor">www.ny.gov/governor</a></p>	<p>21st Congressional District (All of Schoharie Co.) Rep. Michael McNulty US House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-5076 fax (202) 225-5077 <a href="http://www.house.gov/mcnulty">www.house.gov/mcnulty</a></p>
<p>US Senate Sens. Charles Schumer/ Hillary Clinton US Senate Washington, DC 20510 Schumer (202) 224-6542 <a href="mailto:schumer@schumer.senate.gov">schumer@schumer.senate.gov</a> fax (202) 228-3027 Clinton (202) 224-4451 <a href="mailto:senator@clinton.senate.gov">senator@clinton.senate.gov</a> fax (202) 228-0282</p>	<p>22nd Congressional District (Delaware Co. towns of Deposit, Hancock and Tompkins) Rep. Maurice Hinchey US House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-6335 fax (202) 226-0774 <a href="http://www.house.gov/hinchey">www.house.gov/hinchey</a></p>
<p>US Congress 20th Congressional District (Otsego Co. towns of Cherry Valley, Roseboom, Deatur, Womaster, Maryland, Westford, Milford, and Middlefield Delaware Co., except towns of Deposit, Hancock and Tompkins) Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand US House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-5614 <a href="http://www.gillibrand.house.gov">www.gillibrand.house.gov</a></p>	<p>24th Congressional District (Otsego Co. towns of Springfield, Otsego, Hartwick, Laurens, Oneonta (including City of Oneonta) and west All of Chenango Co.) Rep. Michael Arcuri US House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-3665 fax (202) 225-1891 <a href="http://www.arcuri.house.gov">www.arcuri.house.gov</a></p>

**Membership Information**

Please note the expiration date on your mailing label: the first two numbers indicate the year your membership expires, and the second two numbers indicate the month. For example, '0806' indicates June, 2008.

Your last issue of The Belted Kingfisher will be stamped as such. This is the only renewal notice, so please check your label. We value your membership!

## Hawkwatch News

The Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch is in full swing as we enter the most exciting part of the movement of large numbers of Red-tailed Hawks and our most special species, Golden Eagles.

Already one seasonal record has fallen at Franklin Mt., with 1639 Broad-winged Hawks tallied to date, topping the previous high of 1487 in 2004. Four triple-digit broad-wing days in mid-September pushed the numbers up.

We likely will break another record high. 627 Sharp-shinned Hawks had been counted through mid-October. The record is 645 in 2003. This is good news for this small accipiter that has been in a long term population decline.

The first Golden Eagle of the season passed by on October 12. We have averaged over 200 goldens in recent years, and again hope for a good tally. We also await with interest data from Golden Eagles fitted with satellite telemetry devices last year. If these birds do pass our lookout, we will have concrete information of where they travel in migration.

We are also recording flight elevation, direction and other information on Golden Eagles this fall, as part of the migration study. This is often difficult for the counters to do on a busy day, so we are seeking volunteers to help with this effort.

For more information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net), or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, [tomsalo@localnet.com](mailto:tomsalo@localnet.com). Forecast of anticipated good flights at the hawkwatch are sent out by email a day or two in advance. To receive these alerts, visit <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/hawkcast/> to sign up. Daily tallies from Franklin Mt. are also available by email contact Andy Mason as above. Directions and more information on the hawkwatch are available at [www.franklinmt.org](http://www.franklinmt.org).

## September-October Bird Sightings

I usually associate the fall with the beginning of the new football season and of course the World Series, but this year it also brought some interesting bird sightings. September's temperatures were quite mild while October's were more seasonal.

On 8/22 Sue Whitney saw a large group of common nighthawks in Delhi. Andy Mason heard a singing Carolina wren and reported a red-breasted nuthatch in Jefferson on 8/26. On 9/10 Dave Keihm reported a black-throated blue warbler, a black-throated green warbler, an ovenbird and 3 Eastern wood-pewees in Milford. Germaine Connolly saw an evening grosbeak in Springfield Center on 9/15. Cynthia Waterman in Delhi, reported a yellow-breasted chat on 9/25. She also saw blackburnian and yellow-rumped warblers and a blue-headed vireo also in Delhi on 9/29.

On 10/10 I saw a Northern harrier in Hobart, Elliott Adams reported pine siskins and an Eastern screech owl in Sharon Springs and Craig Nunn reported 30 pine siskins and a white-crowned sparrow in Roxbury. Tom and Sue Whitney heard Eastern screech owls calling in Delhi on 10/11.

On 10/12 John Davis reported a white-crowned and a white-throated sparrow in Cooperstown.

10/13 brought several sightings. Andy Mason reported an American woodcock, a wood thrush, golden-crowned kinglets, yellow-rumped warblers and red-tailed hawks in Jefferson while Tom Salo saw a flock of wild turkeys in W. Burlington. On my way home from work on 10/15 in Treadwell, I saw a belted kingfisher perched on a telephone wire scanning a pond in search of its next delicious meal.

Please send sightings to Dianne Benko; 607 829-5218; 6815 Co. Hwy. 16, Delhi, NY 13753; [caged@wpe.com](mailto:caged@wpe.com), by 11/18/07 for the next issue.

## Board Meeting Highlights

Here are some highlights from your DOAS Board meeting of October 16.

- Eleanor Moriarty was welcomed as the newest member of the Board of Directors; she takes over the Programs Chair from Gerianne Carillo, whom we are sorry has left the Board after distinguished service!
- The Treasurer's Report showed that we are close to our goal of raising \$6,000.00 to fund a Golden Eagle tracking device. A draft budget for 2008 is being prepared.
- A plan to sponsor the Audubon Adventures program for area home schoolers, successful elsewhere, is being considered.
- The Hawk Watch raptor season continues apace despite fewer designated counters; there is now a picnic table at the Hawk Watch, used with gusto at the October 6 Open House!
- Plans for the November 16 Charter Dinner at the Sunset restaurant in Cooperstown Junction are complete; the loon program will be complemented by door prizes as well as the auction of a beautiful birding quilt made by Jean Miller and an original bird drawing by Dave Kiehm.
- A letter opposing lengthening of the bear-hunting season in Otsego County has been submitted to the DEC.
- Andy Mason has finished his two-year term as President of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA). (Congratulations for a time-consuming job well done, Andy!) At the NYSOA fall meeting a resolution on birds and wind towers (similar to the DOAS position statement) included the need for a two mile border around major lakes to be free of wind towers, in terms of migratory waterfowl.
- It was decided that an offer to DOAS of 140 acres near NY 28 where it is close to Gocy Pond would not be in our best interests; another environmental organization is looking into it.
- The Environmental Education Network of Otsego County (EENOC) held a meeting of local environmental groups at the Hawk Watch, hosted by Andy Mason; the members will start planning for next year's area Earth Festival.

John Davis, Secretary

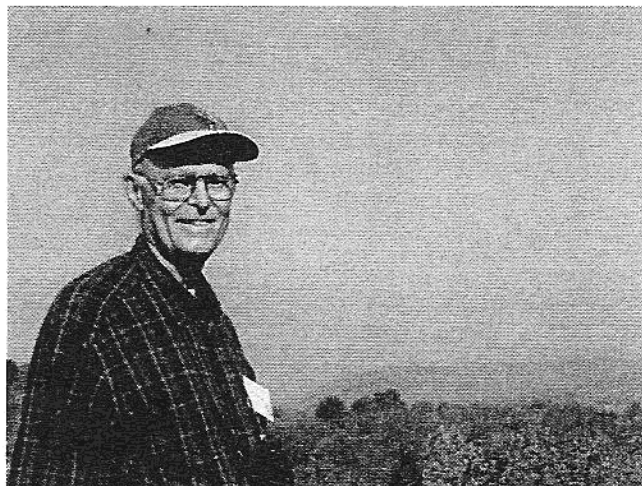
### New DOAS Board Member – Joe Richardson

At the May monthly meeting I was honored to be nominated and elected to the DOAS Board, and I look forward to an enjoyable and fulfilling term of service. My wife Alice and I moved to this area from southern Pennsylvania in 2001, and live near Morris on a very pretty rural property that suits well our desire to spend our retirement as naturalists, gardeners, and conservationists.

Prior to our move I taught biology for 33 years at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, my subject areas being ecology, freshwater biology, evolutionary biology, and biosocial/environmental concerns (a course exploring “human nature” and its relationship to the ills of ancient and modern societies). The closest I came to ornithology, aside from casual birdwatching, was to bring birds into my ecology course whenever they provided good examples of adaptation. We learned, for example, how coexisting species of warblers or vireos minimized competition for the same foods or nest sites when living cheek by jowl in the same forest - or, conversely, how different bird breeding patterns were suited to different habitats. Most of this was book learning, but my students also did independent projects that sometimes involved birds. One student, for example, did a year-long study of the composition of mixed-species feeding flocks of birds, and of how the species interacted with one another.

Soon after arriving in Morris I volunteered to be part of the New York Breeding Bird Atlas project, and was assigned by Tom Salo to monitor two 5 km by 5 km atlas blocks whose common boundary conveniently ran through our property. This was a wonderful learning experience for me, though probably I was too unskilled as a birder to be entrusted with such a responsibility. Nonetheless, over three years of observation I think I gradually got better, in spite of an inability to hear many bird songs unless the singers were right on top of me. Luckily Alice has much keener hearing than I, and sometimes she accompanied me on my atlas rounds. Without her, I scarcely would have been aware that black-throated green and golden-winged warblers were regular nesters in our grove of hemlocks.

Our backyard bird feeders make us prime year-round customers of Brandow's Feed and Seed. We'd never fed the birds in summer down in Pennsylvania, but the gaudy purple finches and rose-breasted grosbeaks that crowd our Morris feeders give us so much enjoyment that they deserve special treatment. And this past summer, downy woodpeckers learned to drink regularly from our hummingbird feeders, and at least one hairy woodpecker seems to be following suit. Our meadow doesn't seem to be big enough to attract bobolinks, but recently we had it mowed for the first time since moving here, and next year maybe they will come. What a treat that would be!



### Christmas Bird Count

The DOAS annual Christmas Bird Count is Saturday, December 15. This will be our 39th year of participating in this national count. Everyone, novice or experienced, is welcome to join us on that fun day. Small groups in one or two cars count all the birds they see in their assigned area for whatever hours they choose. Each group has a leader who will have received appropriate materials beforehand. Alternatively, instead of joining a group, you can count birds at your own feeder off and on throughout the day. If you are a new counter for either the group counts or the feeder counts please phone Bob Miller at 607-432-5767. People who have participated before will be contacted.

### US ENERGY FACTS

Renewable energy use is up 7% from a year ago, according to a report by DOE (Dept. of Energy). Overall US energy consumption dropped 1%, mostly due to declining fossil fuel use.

Renewable energy supplied 4% of all energy used in 2006, and a little over half of that was used to generate electricity.

Wind energy supplies 4% of all renewable energy, and showed the largest increase. Solar energy supplies 1%. Hydropower still remains the largest overall renewable energy source, at 42%.

Biofuel consumption increased 27%, mostly due to nearly 5 B gallons of ethanol production. This was the primary force behind the demand for more corn. A new Asian market for meat from corn-fed animals also produced a demand for more corn. About 14% of the US corn crop was used for ethanol production, and corn prices increased to well above the historic average.

... Jean Miller

from Chemical and Engineering News Sept. 2007

## Basic Eagle Identification

By Tom Salo

Illustrations by Dave Kiehm

Distinguishing between our two eagle species can be difficult. People who spend a lot of time watching raptors look for specific identification traits that make it possible to separate Bald Eagles from Golden Eagles. If you've ever found yourself puzzled after a large dark bird passes out of sight, remember these key questions to help identify these species:

*Are you certain it is an eagle?*

*Where is there white on the bird?*

*Is the head more or less than half the length of the tail?*

*Is the profile flat or a dihedral?*

More information can help clinch the ID.

Consider:

*Other physical details.*

*The date.*

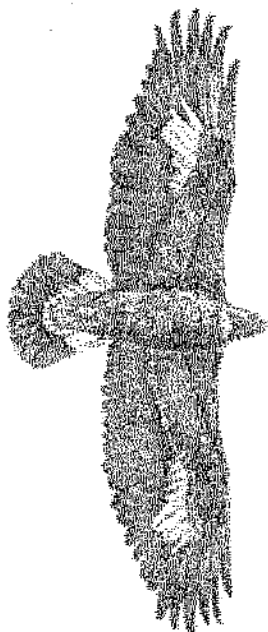
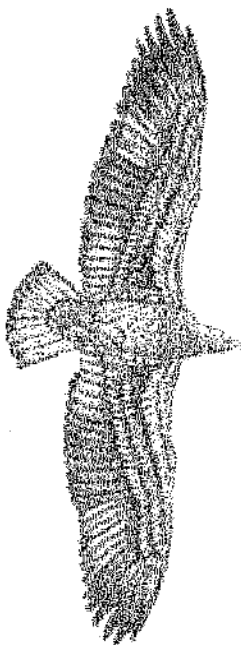
*The habitat.*

*The bird's behavior.*

*Are you certain it is an eagle?* Dark Rough-legged Hawks greatly resemble immature Golden Eagles. They are smaller, lighter and hold their wings in a dihedral that levels at the wrist. Their secondaries and primaries show much more white underneath than an eagle. Both species of vultures are large black birds. The way Turkey Vultures rock in flight is very unlike a stable eagle. Black Vultures have light primaries and a very short tail. Study your field guide to rule out these species.

Immature Bald Eagle

Immature Golden Eagle

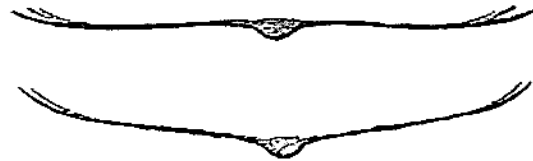


*Where is there white plumage?* Adult Bald Eagles are obvious because of their all white head and tail. Birds with noticeable white on the body or in the wing linings are Bald Eagles. Immatures of both species can have a white tail with a dark terminal band. Birds with white plumage limited to the base of the tail and a patch in the flight feathers of the wing are Golden Eagles. Adult Golden Eagles have no white feathers of note (occasionally a small amount of white at the base of the tail or some small spots of down can be seen).

*Is the head more or less than half the length of the tail?*

Bald Eagles have large heads with large beaks relative to Golden Eagles. A rule of thumb for separating these species: if the head is more than half the length of the tail, the bird is a Bald Eagle. Golden Eagles' heads are about a third the length of their tail. Flying overhead, goldens present a shape similar to a buteo.

*Is the bird's profile flat or dihedral?* Bald Eagles soar on flat wings. Golden Eagles generally soar with their wings held up in a dihedral.



Bald Eagle profile top, Golden Eagle bottom

*Other physical details:* In good light, look for the iridescent gold head and nape that gives the Golden Eagle its name. If visible, a bare, scaled leg belongs to a Bald Eagle. Feathers down to the foot are found on a Golden Eagle.

*Date:* Bald Eagles are found in New York all year. Relatively large numbers will congregate in some areas in winter. Golden Eagles in New York are mostly migrants observed in mid-late fall and early spring. A small number winter in New York. Others may linger into early winter and depart when severe weather arrives. Golden Eagles are quite rare in New York from May to September.

*Habitat:* Bald Eagles are associated with open water. Golden Eagles are open country birds. Occasionally, individual goldens will be found among the Bald Eagles in the Delaware watershed in winter. Both species will travel long distances searching for food. When goldens are in NY, either species may be found where there is carrion, regardless of habitat. During the migratory period, goldens can be found perched or foraging in the open areas of upstate New York.

*Behavior:* Bald Eagles prefer the most efficient way of acquiring a meal - often scavenging. Golden Eagles are more apt to be hunting. Goldens are regularly reported attacking turkeys in New York. Bald Eagles are often perched above rivers waiting for a morsel to float by.

## Boreal Destruction

Picture this! - A modern day Klondike in Canada's beautiful mosaic of boreal wetlands in northern Alberta. A 100 mile highway leading to a sprawling city of 64,000 - "hastily carved out of swampy groves of spruce". Thousands of trucks, convoys of wide loads, SUVs, buses, itinerant workers, all speeding along this "Highway of Hell" to the tar sands being rapidly exploited for new oil.

This hydrocarbon center represents the planet's largest source for new oil - 175 B barrels in proven reserves and no doubt much, much more. It is an enterprise of epic proportions, growing at breakneck speed. Al Gore calls the whole thing "truly nuts".

For Canada, these tar sands are rapidly becoming an environmental disaster. The oil is buried in bitumen, a 'thick, sloppy mess of oil, water, clay and sand'. Great machines mow down forests, roll up muskegs, scoop out tons of sand, and wash it in hot water to get the oil - one of the world's dirtiest fuels. Capturing it costs over 10 times as much as Saudi light oil.

The process is fueled by enormous quantities of natural gas, enough to heat 4 million homes to produce 1 M barrels of oil. With profits so high, little is being done to prevent the environmental impacts of such a large energy project, run by many different oil companies.

The Athabaska River flows northeast 950 miles from the Canadian Rockies across Alberta, and empties into wild Lake Athabaska. The delta serves as perhaps the largest nesting and rest area for migrating birds in North America - "the Missouri of the North" as Ernest Thompson Seton called it. Today the majestic river is reduced to 1/3 of its flow. One company alone uses enough water each year to supply one third of Denver.

Giant trucks carry off the earth that sustained the primeval forest. Open-pit mines have replaced fertile areas abundant with ducks, moose, muskrats and beaver. What is left of the river is polluted. Massive tailings impoundments build up behind dams, awaiting questionable reclamation processes. They are full of heavy metals, PAHs, naphthenic acids, salts, and bitumen. The dams are in danger of slipping and failing, dumping huge quantities of the toxic mess into surrounding areas.

The Canada government, which will gain nearly \$51B by 2020, has not bothered to do a comprehensive EIS; nor has Alberta. These tar sands now represent Canada's largest source of greenhouse emissions.

Caribou populations have crashed by 50% in 10 years. Fur bearing animals and songbirds will decline by 80% in many sites. Archeological artifacts are lost forever.

This will basically destroy much of Alberta - all for quick profit - a terrible shortsighted loss. And most of the oil is for US consumers!

Will we drastically cut our oil consumption?

-- Jean T. Miller

From Fall '07 ONEARTH - Natural Resources Defense Council

## NYSOA Annual Meeting Report

The 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the NY State Ornithological Assoc. was held October 5-7 in Batavia, NY, hosted by the Buffalo Ornithological Society.

One hundred and forty registrants from across the state, including delegates from NYSOA member organizations, gathered for a weekend of field trips, presentations, research papers and socializing.

Friday night's speakers were Marianne Hites and Judith Seiler of Messinger Woods Wildlife Care and Education Center. They presented information on the natural histories of the state's owl species, and were accompanied by several rehabilitated birds.

Saturday morning brought three field trips, including the renowned Batavia Wastewater Treatment plant, as well as Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. Among the avian highlights were two Eared Grebes at the treatment plant.

The business part of the meeting, the Council of Delegates meeting, took place Saturday morning. Committee reports were delivered, and elections held, with Bill Ostrander of the Chemung County Audubon Soc., replacing Andy Mason of DOAS as president.

Two resolutions were presented for delegates to consider. One dealt with wind power projects, and called for full and open reviews of wind proposals, and a 2 mile setback from major bird migration routes in the state, including the Great Lakes, Finger Lakes, Susquehanna and Hudson River Valleys and Long Island Sound, among others. An amendment to increase the setback distance to 5 miles was defeated, but the resolution passed with the addition of Chautauqua Lake to the list of migration corridors. A second resolution urging increased management by DEC to benefit declining Spruce Grouse populations passed unanimously. Both resolutions are available on the NYSOA website, [www.nybirds.org](http://www.nybirds.org).

Saturday's papers session brought presentations on banding Saw-whet Owls; orientation and navigation mechanisms in migratory birds; and a remembrance of birding with Elon Eaton by his son Stephen Eaton.

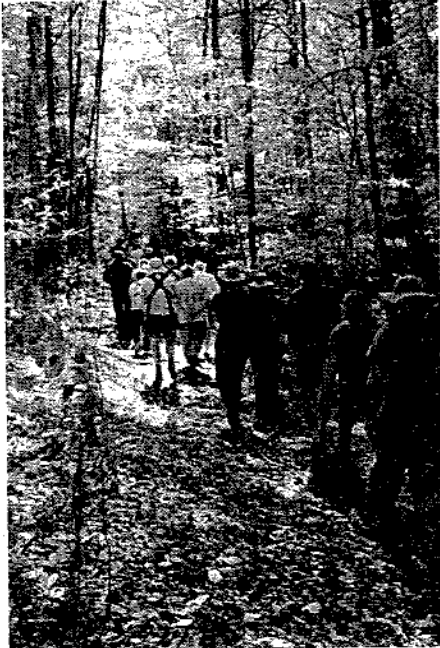
Saturday night's speaker was avian ecologist Dr. Hector Galbraith, discussing *Birds and Climate Change: Current and Future Impacts and Conservation Implications*. Dr. Galbraith provided a sobering picture of changes in bird populations and distribution from global warming.

Awards presented over the weekend included honors to Jeanne Skelly for her exemplary work as NY State Avian Records Committee Secretary, and Willie D'Anna for his efforts in documenting the avifauna of western NY.

The meeting concluded Sunday with another round of field trips, including one to Goat Island at Niagara Falls, where a flock of migrant warblers and other songbirds entertained participants, just above the dramatic cataracts.

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society  
 PO Box 544  
 Oneonta, NY 13820-0544  
[www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us)

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DOAS October sanctuary openhouse

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Bird Counts	Bob Miller
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Kingfisher	Bob Miller
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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 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.)**

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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.

All meetings are free and open to the public.