



THE BELTED KINGFISHER
Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Inc.
Founded 1968 P.O. Box 544, Oneonta, N.Y. 13820

Volume 38, No. 8, Oct. 2006

Editor — Bob Miller

COMING ACTIVITIES

- Oct. 14 Open House DOAS Sanctuary 10AM - 2 PM. See page 4.
 - Oct. 17 Board Meeting 7.00 PM. Home of Tom Salo.
 - Oct. 20 General Meeting. Nelson and Gail DuBois present *Images of South Georgia, South Orkneys and Antarctica*. Elm Park Methodist Church. 7:30 PM See below.
 - Nov. 11 Otsego Lake Watershed Field Trip with Bob Donnelly. See page 4.
 - Nov. 17 DOAS Charter Dinner. Oneonta Country Club. See page 5.
 - Dec. 5 Board Meeting. 7:00 PM. Home of Lisa Gorn
 - Dec. 16 Annual Christmas Bird Count
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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.

Images of South Georgia, South Orkneys and Antarctica

Nelson and Gail DuBois

We are pleased to have Gail and Nelson DuBois joining us to present their photographic journey of the Antarctic region. "Images of South Georgia, South Orkneys and Antarctica" will offer a narrated photographic presentation of penguins and other birds, as well as seals and whales, followed by a musical slide show emphasizing the enthralling beauty of the scenery, glaciers and innumerable forms, textures and colors of icebergs found in the waters of Antarctica. Gail and Nelson DuBois are avid photographers who have amassed over 20,000 world-wide images. They are repeat presenters for the DOAS, and their beautiful photographs and excellent presentations are always well-received. You won't wanna miss this one! The program is scheduled for 7:30PM on Friday, October 20th at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. It is free and open to the public, and refreshments will be served. For further information contact Gerianne Carillo at 286-3855, email gerianne@earthlink.net

President's Message

On behalf of the Directors and members, I express our gratitude to outgoing President Barbara Marsala. Her dedication and organizational skills kept DOAS running smoothly and productively these past 4 years. We look forward to continuing to working with her as she changes focus to our educational activities. I hope I can do as well in keeping DOAS actively engaged with our members and the community.

Since I was elected President at the August Board meeting, I've been giving a lot of thought to what we do. One of Barbara's priorities has been the quality of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*. We are proud of its high quality and local content. We will continue to work to improve this publication. Members are welcome to submit commentary and articles, even photos.

We also use our website to communicate. Anyone who has visited it recently has seen the ongoing improvements. Being on the web allows us to share our calendar and activities with those who don't get the *Kingfisher* in the mail. If you haven't been there, go to www.doas.us and see what we are doing.

We stay quite busy through the year. 8 educational programs are held each year. One of these takes place during our annual Charter Dinner. Knowledgeable people lead field ~~trips~~ Each fall we have an Open House at the sanctuary. Part of this event is our fall hawk watch on Franklin Mountain which tallies 900 hours and thousands of raptors each season. We organize 2 bird counts each year. We manage 3 properties including the DOAS sanctuary, a nearby parcel that was donated by Dr. and Mrs. Wilk, and a 12 acre wooded wetland in Burlington.

Each summer we organize an environmental day camp. Conflicts this year caused its cancellation. We were able to hold a one day family event surveying dragonflies at the sanctuary. This past Earth Day we picked up trash in the Milford State Forest. It is one of several activities we've done in partnership with DEC. We recently sponsored the annual meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association, a 3 day event.

Legislators are approached when environmental issues need attention. Recently, this seems to involve a lot of energy issues. We provide opportunities for individuals and families to learn about the natural world. In a world that seems full of bad news, we show people beauty that is worth saving.

Would you like to help our efforts? Do you have an idea you would like to pursue? Are you knowledgeable enough to present a program? Is there a citizen science project you want to tell people about? Would you write a *Kingfisher* column? Contact me if you want to help.

..... Tom Salo, DOAS President
tomsalo@localnet.com 607-965-8232

Meet the Board



Gerianne Carillo

I was born and raised on Long Island and, as a child and young adult, had little sensitivity for or understanding of our fauna and flora. My folks had a small cabin in the Catskills and we vacationed there often; that's where my exposure to things wild began. College and professional pursuits soon took center stage, and my career as a Physical Therapist, along with my passion for triathlons and racing, left no room for the natural world.

In 1995 a disability changed my life, and I was forced to slow my hectic pace; the first thing I did - a prescribed intervention, mind you - was to sit in my yard and just "be". In my quiet time I began to notice and appreciate nature's abundant gifts, my favorite of which was the birds. I so enjoyed watching them - their vibrant colors and agile movements; their behavior, inquisitiveness and innate intelligence - that "be-ing" became one of my favorite activities. I joined my local Audubon Chapter, and my passion for birding was fueled by the enthusiasm and contagious love for birds that I found in our DOAS leaders (those same talented leaders are still with us today). I also got involved with Sierra Club and NRDC, and learned much about how a blind eye can damage mother earth - and our own wellness! I've spent the past 11 years as an informal, but devoted, student of birds and our environment.

My partner Marion and I live in Milford; we enjoy birding, hiking, kayaking, and camping. Oh, and did I mention birding? Thank goodness Marion is an extremely graceful "birder's partner"!

I am honored to be serving on your Board of Directors! Please feel free to contact myself or any other board member with your input - we are here for you!

Conservation and Legislation

by Andy Mason

Wolves under fire--One of the premier wildlife species, the wolf is a symbol of the magnificence of the wild lands that remain relatively untouched by humans. They are important in maintaining the balance of nature--a fact we see in NY where deer populations have risen dramatically since the extirpation of this top predator.

Our nation has not treated wolves well, however. Millions were trapped, poisoned or shot during the first half of the 20th century, in many cases encouraged by government bounties and policies.

Establishment of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the 1970s likely saved the wolf from extinction. After a long and hard-fought battle, wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park, where they have thrived. Today, 5,000 grey wolves can be found in Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and the desert southwest--still a fraction of their original numbers.

The Bush administration is pushing to remove the ESA safeguards for grey wolves, clearly a premature action. If this change comes about, wolf management and protections will be left to the states. An example of what would happen under this scenario occurred in January of this year, when the Interior Department signed an agreement giving the state of Idaho management authority over wolves in the state. Less than a week later, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game announced its proposal to kill up to 75 percent of the wolves within the Clearwater National Forest's Lolo district, due to unsubstantiated concerns that wolves were causing unacceptable impacts to elk populations there.

In addition, over the past 3 years, Alaska has engaged in an annual aerial kill where wolves are tracked and gunned down by aircraft. Now the program is set to expand the areas where aerial gunning is permitted and to expand the use of snowmobiles to chase and kill wolves.

The Federal Airborne Hunting Act was passed in 1971 specifically to prevent this sort of aerial wolf kill. However, the Bush administration is unwilling to enforce this law and the state of Alaska claims that its actions are technically legal, because it doesn't allow "hunting" of wolves, but rather the "control" of wolves to protect game populations

This year, 152 wolves have already been killed by aerial shooting. Despite two ballot measures in past years that have banned this practice, the Alaska Board of Game continues to promote wolf kills and is now considering killing plans like these to "control" the populations of brown and black bears as well.

What you can do--Contact President Bush and tell him it is too soon to remove the wolf from the Endangered Species Act. Also insist that his administration enforce the Airborne Hunting Act and put an end to Alaska's wolf killing practice. Be sure to send a copy to your federal legislators and to Alaska's Governor, Frank Murkowski (P.O. Box 110001 Juneau, AK 99811-0001; fax--907-465-3532).

An online letter to protect Alaska's wolves can be found at www.alternet.org/savethewolves.

Addresses Federal: President George W. Bush, The White House, Washington, DC 20500, (202)456-1111
President@whitehouse.gov Washington, DC 20515
 U.S. Sens. Charles Schumer/Hillary Clinton; US Senate Washington, DC 20510 senator@schumer.senate.gov
 Clinton-(202) 224-4451 senator@clinton.senate.gov

Elections 2006--The November election is approaching, and the contest for governor of NY State will likely bring about a significant change in the state's approach to the environment--for better or for worse.

Democratic candidate Elliott Spitzer had an excellent environmental record as Attorney General, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Bob Abrams. He used that office to sue the federal government and states that pollute NY's air from power plants outside the state. He also pushed for significant improvements in emissions from in-state plants. Other areas in which Spitzer has been active include appliance efficiency, water quality and illegal dumping.

Republican John Faso has not made the environment a priority in his campaign, with no mention of it in his 'Faso Plan'. His record as a legislator was also lackluster, receiving low ratings in the annual environmental reviews provided by Environmental Advocates.

What you can do--Be an informed voter and seek out the positions of candidates, including those for State Senate and Assembly. Good sources of information are the NY League of Conservation voters (www.nylcv.org), and Environmental Advocates (www.eany.org).

Hawkwatch News

Counting is proceeding on schedule at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, with Broad-winged Hawks making their mid-September appearance, along with Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawks and American Kestrels, among others. Through the third week of the month, 629 broad-wings had been tallied, from a total of over 1100 raptors.

October should bring increasing numbers of Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, and the first Golden Eagles of the season. Best flights are on north and northwest winds which typically follow the passage of a cold front.

Visitors, spotters and counters are always welcome at the hawkwatch. Several dates in the schedule are still open, but most promising days will be covered.

For more information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, tomsalo@localnet.com. Directions to the hawkwatch at the DOAS Sanctuary can be found at www.franklinmt.org.

September Bird Sightings

Bird migration is in full swing, but some ruby-throated hummingbirds haven't gotten the message yet. Many birdwatchers still had female hummingbirds at their feeders as late as Sept. 14th this year. They probably need to get their last "slurps" in before the long migration journey.

On 8/24 John Birkett reported 6 common nighthawks in Bainbridge and Larry Dake saw 2 great egrets in Walton. On 9/4 Rod Carter also saw a great egret on Otsego Lake. On that same day Tom Salo saw a variety of species: American woodcocks, Northern flickers, wild turkeys & American kestrels in W. Burlington. He also had a ruby-throated hummingbird there on 9/13. Trina Bassoff was the last to report a ruby-throated hummingbird on 9/14 in Blenheim. On 9/15 Tom & Sue Whitney reported Eastern woodpeewees singing along the river in Delhi. On the next day Andy Mason heard a singing Lincoln's sparrow and the drumming of a ruffed grouse in Jefferson.

Please send sightings to Dianne Benko at (607) 829-5218, at 6815 Co. Hwy. 16, Delhi, NY 13753, or at caged@wpe.com by 10/15/06 for the November issue of The Belted Kingfisher.

Waterfowl Field Trip

DOAS

will have a waterfowl trip led by Bob Donnelly on Saturday, November 11. We will meet at 8:30 PM in Cooperstown at the foot of Fair St. where it meets Otsego Lake. The Otsego Lake watershed attracts numerous species, and often in large quantities. All are invited. There will be a moderate amount of easy walking. For further information please contact Bob Donnelly at 547-8654 or rsdonn@yahoo.com.

Sanctuary Open House

DOAS

will hold its annual Open House on Saturday, October 14 from 10 AM to 2 PM at our Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain. Hawk watching, a trail walk and a hawk identification workshop for beginners are scheduled. Refreshments will be available at the barn. The DOAS Sanctuary is the home of the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch —one of the best locations in the Northeast for fall migrations of Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles. Our dedicated volunteers record thousands of raptors each season. Fall of 2005 brought more than 5000 birds past the site. This included two eastern continental records for Golden Eagle — the most in a day and for a count season. An astounding 71 Golden Eagles were recorded on Nov. 11 by Ron Milliken and Steve Hall. Those birds helped push the seasonal total to 252. The hawk watch started its 18th year of counting on August 20th.

One of the long time Franklin Mtn. hawk watchers will conduct a 45 minute beginner's workshop called "Identifying Flying Hawks" at 11:30, focusing on the species typically seen in the area. The ID workshop can be complemented by the immediate use of the newly acquired skills at the hawk watch, which will be staffed through the day.

The trail walk will start at 11:30 AM sharp. For more information contact Andy Mason 607-652-2162, andymasoon@earthling.net or Tom Salo at 607-965-8232, tomsalo@localnet.com.

Insects and Global Warming

Ordinary people all over the world are beginning to notice the effects of a warming planet. As winters become warmer and shorter, even by a few days and a few degrees, insects and plants are often finding the change a severe challenge. One example is the lodgepole pine, which is being devoured by voracious beetles formerly kept in check by cold winters. Vast areas of Canadian forests in British Columbia are being devastated, and the damage is also being seen farther south in the Rocky Mountains in some areas. The average temperature in B.C. has risen 4° F. in the past century. Insects and animals can move to a better area if the temperature rises, but plants can only flower earlier or die because the growing cycle becomes too short. Birds can suffer when the emergence of food for the young falls before the eggs are hatched, or the fruits have fallen before migration needs are filled.

Growing Pains and Solutions

San Joaquin Valley (CA) now rivals Los Angeles and Houston for the unenviable status of our nation's smog capital. The valley is the most productive farm belt in the nation, and as a consequence it is suffering severe growing pains, resulting in crowded highways, rapid subdivision and bad air. Many other rapidly growing metropolitan areas across America are also suffering similar problems, and we even see them here in our Oneonta and Cooperstown area to a lesser degree.

The CA valley is tackling the problem by providing incentives and rewards to developers to "build green or pay green", and this involves using advanced clean diesel technologies for vehicles, adding walking and biking paths, building houses near stores, and designing energy efficient houses, thus reducing traffic and air pollution.

In New York City five miles of industrial waterfront is being transformed into a multi-use park, providing trees, lawn, bike trails, walking paths, etc. They are helping to build a healthier community through use of inner city parks.

In London, England commuters are charged a "congestion fee" for driving into the central business district during the workday. Traffic has decreased 30%, traffic delays have been cut by half, and the air is cleaner. Their "peak pricing" system, started in 2003, has been a successful answer to their gridlock and smog.

... Jean T. Miller
from *Environmental Defense*

Going Fast

Glaciologists are worrying about draining the two dominant ice reservoirs left on earth — in Greenland and in the Antarctic. The Greenland glacier is three thousand feet thick and is rapidly sliding ^{into} the ocean. It has doubled its speed in just the past five years. Glacier ice shelves in Antarctica are breaking up due to melt water on the surface seeping into cracks and breaking up the shelves. Both surface ice and shelf bottom ice are melting rapidly. Greenland is experiencing more earthquakes recently, due to the retreating glaciers. More Global warming effects.

... Jean T. Miller

38th ANNUAL CHARTER DINNER

The DOAS Annual Charter Dinner will be Friday, November 17, 2006 at the Oneonta Country Club, as always open to the public. A social hour begins at 5:30 with dinner at 6:30 and the program, to which the public is invited, is at 7:30. Menu choices are Montreal London Broil, Chicken Cordon Bleu and Vegetable Lasagna.

Our speaker will be Dr. P. Jay Fleisher, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at the College at Oneonta, whose topic will be "Glacial Field Research in Remote Sites; the Challenge is Half the Fun". His images will illustrate a talk that focuses on the three main factors related to planning and conducting field research at remote sites. Identifying realistic research goals, selecting competent and compatible colleagues, and careful logistics all lead to the fun part of being there.

Join us for a wonderful evening! The cost is \$26.00 per person; the program alone is free. Reservations for the dinner must be made by November 13. Call 607-563-2924 or mail to: Julia Gregory, PO Box 641, Unadilla NY 13849.

| NAME | MENU CHOICE | COST |
|----------------|-------------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Total enclosed | | _____ |

Our Challenge

Our political leaders need to produce national policies that will provide incentives for Americans to cure our oil addiction:

1. stringent fuel efficient standards on a national basis will be essential (CA has proved this to be effective already.)
 2. reduced speed limits nationwide would add to the savings
 3. a "cap and trade" system for greenhouse gas emissions should be supported by the administration (see McCain-Lieberman bill)
 4. carbon-free nuclear energy may be risky, but is it more risky in the long run than global climate change?
 5. more imaginative research on biofuels and other alternatives to carbon should be encouraged and supported
 6. gas tax (Even at \$4 per gallon Americans would still be getting a bargain compared to Europeans.)
- ... Donald Kennedy, Editor-in-chief *Science*, May 06

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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.)

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.