



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

October

October 13 – Open House DOAS Sanctuary

October 16 – DOAS Board Meeting

October 19 – Charter Dinner

October 20 – Field Trip

November

November 16 – DOAS Program

December

December 8 – Field Trip

December 15 – Oneonta CBC

December 29 – Fort Plain CBC

January

January 12 – Eagle Field Trip

More information on page 7

All DOAS programs are free and open to the public

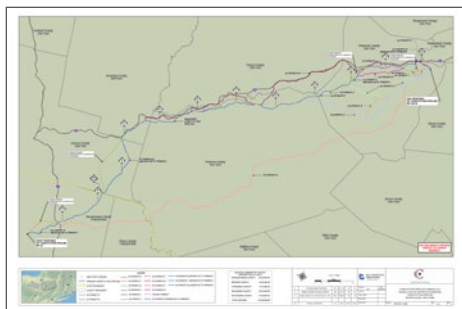
Constitution Pipeline Update: You Need to Voice Your Concerns

If you've been following local news on the progress of the proposed Constitution Pipeline and supporting compressor stations (refer to September issue of the Kingfisher), then you know that the pipeline company, in response to public opposition, has suggested an alternative to their preferred, initially proposed route. Williams/Cabot, the pipeline construction company has proposed another route known as "alternative M", which moves part of the original proposed line closer to Interstate 88 and into Otsego County. Several hundred new landowners have been notified about the possibility of the pipeline crossing their properties.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), who has the final say in deciding whether this pipeline will be constructed, has notified the public of their intent to

prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the planned Constitution Pipeline Project. According to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FERC must address concerns that the public may have about this proposed project in their Environmental Impact Statement before they can issue a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

The public can contact FERC and possibly slow down, or halt the project by providing input dealing with specific concerns about



Constitution Pipeline Alternate Routes Map
See: constitutionpipeline.com/maps/

this project. Concerns can include, but are not limited to impacts on the following general areas: geology and soils; land use; water resources, fisheries and wetlands; vegetation and wildlife; endangered and threatened species; cultural resources; air quality and noise; socioeconomics; cumulative impacts; public safety.

To voice your concerns, the best way to contact FERC is by electronically filing your comments at efiling@ferc.gov. Refer to the project docket number (PF12-9-000). You can also contact FERC at (202) 502-8258 for additional help in filing your comments. Please file your comments with FERC as soon as possible to ensure they will be considered in the decision making process.

~ Eileen Kline

President's Message

The Spice of Life

Once again this year, there will be variety in this column, as DOAS will be headed by three Co-Presidents: Susan O'Handley, Joe Richardson, and myself. If variety is, in fact, the spice of life, this is a plus. As for the effects of this arrangement on our organization, it is hard to say, but it does ease the burden on each member of the troika, so probably all three of us will be able to put more energy into our 4 month 'term'.

This arrangement was in place last year also, and appeared to work well. Each person is on the board and up to speed on our activities, so the transitions went smoothly. I do know that both of my colleagues are well-qualified and hard-working Auduboners. Joe Richardson is a known quantity, having served on the board for several years. He has a good perspective on our environment and on life itself as an experienced educator, world traveler and outdoorsman. Joe, along with Jean Miller, brought DOAS into the issue of hydrofracking, which has become the number one environmental item in our region.

We are very fortunate to have Susan O'Handley share her abilities with DOAS. Susan has a lengthy and broad resume as an environmental educator, businessperson, publicist, even a wildlife rehabilitator, and much more. She jumped into action this fall in organizing our bird seed sale on short notice, and did an excellent job. (We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to help DOAS and get high-quality bird seed at the same time!)

We also have a new director this year, Charlie Scheim, who fills the spot vacated by Barbara Marsala. Charlie is a member of the Hartwick College faculty, and is an accomplished birder. He brings youth and enthusiasm to the board, as well as continuing an important connection between DOAS and local academia that we have had for years. We welcome Charlie to the leadership of our Chapter.

These, and the other dedicated conservationists that make up our organization are to be commended for their efforts. We always invite others to join us in helping bring DOAS into its fifth decade. Many of the tasks of keeping the group functioning well take only an hour or two a month. If you are interested in putting your talents to good use for a good cause, contact me at (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or through the DOAS web site, www.doas.us.
— *Andy Mason*



Wolf Pond, by Dave Kiehm

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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Hawk Watch*: Andrew Mason
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Hospitality*: *vacant*
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Programs*: Eleanor Moriarty
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ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Delaware Otsego Audubon Society
P.O. Box 544
Oneonta, NY 13820

Email: info@doas.us

ON THE WEB:

www.doas.us

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To contribute notes or articles for

The Belted Kingfisher, email:

editor@doas.us

Conservation and Legislation

Elections 2012—We are in the homestretch of the long presidential race, as well as the federal and state legislative contests that will largely determine the environmental attitude of government for the next couple of years.

It is difficult to discern the environmental stances of the presidential candidates, as these issues have not come to the forefront, with the exception of some debate over energy issues. Barack Obama's record is somewhat mixed: he put the damaging Keystone pipeline from Canada on hold, but has been a proponent of natural gas drilling, including the type of hydrofracking that now threatens NY State. His administration put the brakes on new offshore oil drilling following the BP Gulf disaster, but is now allowing it to proceed with limited improvements in safety regulations. He has pushed for tax credits for alternative energy, both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to promote this industry in the US. Under his watch, the Environmental Protection Agency has attempted to regulate CO2 as a pollutant, but is currently stymied in the courts.

As for wildlife issues, the big disappointment with Obama has been his wholesale transfer of wolf management to the western states. The immediate effect has been virtually open hunting seasons on this wilderness icon in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho.

Mitt Romney's primary pronouncements on energy and climate change have been calls to increase oil and coal production, and to dismiss greenhouse impacts with statements such as, *"I'm not in this race to slow the rise of the oceans or to heal the planet."* His platform includes legislation to prevent the EPA from regulating CO2. Romney's record as governor of Massachusetts was considerably more moderate, including appointments of officials that drew praise from environmentalists. However, as a presidential candidate, he has largely reversed field and adopted the positions of extractive industries.

NY has a US Senate race this year, with incumbent Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand facing Republican Wendy Long. The NY League of Conservation Voters (www.nylcv.org) has endorsed Gillibrand, citing her support for clean energy and climate change legislation, and co-sponsorship of the FRAC Act, which aims to repeal the exemption for hydraulic fracturing in the Safe Drinking Water Act. Wendy Long is a political newcomer, and her website provides little insight into her environmental views, except a statement appearing to oppose increasing fuel economy in cars.

Much of our region falls into the newly-drawn 19th Congressional District, where Republican incumbent Chris Gibson is opposed by Democrat Julian Schreiber. In the House of Representatives, Gibson has voted to open the continental

shelf to gas exploration, and to prevent the EPA from regulating CO2. Julian Schreiber has received the endorsement of NYLCV, who state, *"He has advocated to protect the natural resources of the Hudson Valley and Catskills region against the practices of hydrofracking..."*

All of NY State's Assembly and Senate seats are up for election this year. Locally, incumbent Republican James Seward faces Democrat Howard Leib. Over his career in the Senate, Seward has consistently had among the lowest rankings on environmental issues by watchdog groups, scoring even below the average of his Republican Senate colleagues. His preliminary score from the Environmental Planning Lobby for 2012 is 16% positive. Howard Leib lists *"Water as our most precious natural a resource"* at the top of his priority list, with *"Protecting our environment from unsafe fracking"*, a short distance down that list. In the Delaware County portion of our Chapter area, Republican John Bonacic is unopposed. His EPL score is 9% positive.

On the Assembly side of the state legislature, our region has been split among three plus districts. Those that cover the majority area include the 121st, where Democrat Bill Magee faces Republican Levi Spires. In 2011, Magee received a modest 80% positive score from EPL. Spires is a political newcomer whose web site provides little indication of his environmental views, although he does approve of hydrofracking with DEC control.

In the 122nd Assembly District, long-time office-holder Clifford Crouch is unopposed. Crouch's EPL score in 2011 was a poor 52%.

The contest in the 101st District brings new faces to our region. Democrat Daniel Carter will run against Republican Claudia Tenney. Carter is calling for a ban on hydrofracking. Tenney is an incumbent with a 50% EPL vote rating in 2011.

What you can do—First and foremost, be sure to register and vote! Second, take advantage of any face-to-face meetings with candidates to ask them about their environmental stances. Third, utilize online resources to check their records and ratings. EPL will be coming out with 2012 ratings of state legislators shortly (see www.eplvotersguide.org), and the NY League of Conservation Voters (www.nylcv.org) has a list of its endorsed candidates. For ratings of the federal candidates on environmental and other positions, check www.votesmart.org.

DOAS Officers for 2012-2013

Co-Presidents:	Andy Mason Susan O'Handley Joe Richardson
Secretary:	Eileen Kline
Treasurer:	Charlie Scheim

Raptors of the Pyrenees

This past August we rented a house in the high Pyrenees for a week as part of a trip to France to visit our son and his family. One of my goals while in the Pyrenees was to see a Lammergeier. These “mythical” Bearded Vultures are distinctive with their tapered wings, long pointed tail and a wing span that can exceed 9 feet. I also hoped to see many of the other raptor species for which the Pyrenees are famous. I hauled my scope and heavy tripod to France for the first time. I wanted to see these birds well.

The high Pyrenees around Caunteret and Gavarnie are stunning. They are some of the most beautiful mountains I’ve ever seen. Shortly after arriving, we visited the National Park interpretive center to find out where to look for Lammergeier and izard. IZARD – pronounced izar - is the French name for the Pyrenees sub-species of chamois. Chamois are a goat-antelope that was almost hunted to extinction because of its desirable hide. The park naturalist told us where to find izards. Unfortunately, he said the local Lammergeier pair had fledged their single young and could be anywhere. His message was, forget Lammergeier, you’ll see Griffon Vultures!

Early the next morning we went on a wild izard chase. We drove then hiked to high elevation and found ourselves in a cloud, unable to see more than 50 yards at times. We found some interesting open country birds and a Dipper, but no izards. However, the clouds that engulfed the peaks surrounding the narrow valley at Caunteret and so limited our vision would soon change from a curse to a blessing.

Returning to the house to join late-rising family members at breakfast, I set up the scope in the garden. There was a great view of the surrounding peaks and cliffs. The low sun was heating rocks on the west side of the narrow valley. Dozens of Griffon Vultures soared above those cliffs and crags just below the cloud ceiling that obscured the tops of the mountains. Ravens

and falcons buzzed the vultures. Most of the falcons were Eurasian Kestrels but one heavy bird was probably a Peregrine. After an hour of tea, conversation and the occasional scan with binoculars, I spotted an adult Lammergeier. It flew into sight just below the clouds, its distinctive shape, tawny body and contrasting dark wings and tail were clearly visible at 8 power. It was accompanied by an all dark juvenile and another bird seen

less well in the bottom of the cloud. This must have been the local family group. We took turns viewing them in the scope for the several minutes before they went out of sight.

The next day the cloud cover remained the same well into the morning. Two more Lammergeier were seen from the yard. Other raptors seen below the clouds those days included Black Kites, Short-toed Eagle, Eurasian Kestrels, Golden Eagles and Common Buzzards. What a great house my son had found. After a neighbor showed us where to look, we watched the elusive izards from the yard. Their behavior reminded me of North American mountain goats.

After the sky cleared the third day, the morning raptors quickly went out of sight. A trip up the gondola and chair lift out of Caunteret to the top of the Cirque de Lys found many of them at 9000’ including scores of Griffon Vultures, another Lammergeier and an Egyptian Vulture.

Hundreds of Black Kites were seen from both the house and at the top of the Cirque de Lys,. They traveled in groups of 50-70 birds, moving the

way Broad-winged Hawks do in migration. All were moving SW. It was a week into August and they may have started migrating. Migration counts at some Pyrenees sites start in mid-July.

Other raptors seen in the area were Booted Eagle, Marsh Harrier and Red Kite. Common Buzzards seemed to be everywhere, filling the role Red-tailed Hawks do here.

The High Pyrenees are a great destination for anyone passionate about raptors.



Lammergeier from Brehm's Tierleben Volume 2 birds – retrieved from commons.wikimedia.org (search term lammergeier)

Tom Salo

Hawk Watch News

Counting has now been underway for over three weeks at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, and the season is off to a decent start. Near mid-September, nearly 2000 raptors had been spotted, with almost 1500 of these being Broad-winged Hawks.

Other good counts included 56 Bald Eagles and 42 Osprey.

The first half of October provides the greatest diversity of the season. On a good day a dozen or more species can be seen, as the later season species join the birds already moving. We may even get the season's first Golden Eagle.

Best flights are on north or northwest winds, often the day or two following passage of a cold front. Counters will be present each day except when rain grounds the hawks.

Visitors, spotters and counters are always welcome at the hawkwatch. For more information, contact:

Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, salothomas@gmail.com.

Forecasts of anticipated good flights at the hawkwatch are sent out by email a day or two in advance. To receive these alerts, visit www.pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/hawkcast/ to sign up. Daily tallies from Franklin Mt. are also available by email—contact Andy Mason as above.

More information and directions to the hawkwatch at the DOAS Sanctuary can be found at www.franklinmt.org.

Scary Bird Lovers Story

This is a true story about an incident that happened to my son Kris who happens to love the birds and other wildlife that used to frequent his back yard. The friendly neighbor up the hill from him is a cat lover and has nine that she lets roam free, the result of which has been the decimation of all small creatures furred and feathered. Kris has a very friendly relationship with his neighbor and doesn't want to do anything to upset it. The cats have occasionally left him a gift of a bird or a chipmunk and this gave him an inspiration for a plan. He would collect road killed songbirds especially pretty and brightly colored ones and bring them to the neighbor and claim that they were killed by her cats and left on his doorstep and that she really should pen in the cats.

He started the collection process with full knowledge that it is a federal crime to possess even a feather of a protected song bird, much less the whole bird, but anyway he would take the chance as the real and moral end goal was to protect the birds. His collection process started slowly and with great caution as he did not want any one to see him doing same and report him to the authorities. Not only could the fine be great, but also the fact that he works for the DEC such a violation could also be career ender.

Open House: Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch

On Saturday, October 13, 2012 from 10 AM to 2 PM, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will host an open house at the sanctuary. At 10:30, there will be a 45 minute beginners workshop on Identifying Flying Hawks. A trail walk will leave the barn at 11:30 AM and will cover most of the sanctuary grounds. The hawk watch will be staffed through the day and refreshments will be served at the barn.

For more information visit www.doas.us or contact Tom Salo at 607-965-8232 or salothomas@gmail.com or Andy Mason at 607-652-2162 or andymason@earthling.net.



One morning on his way to work he spotted a male cardinal dead on the side of the road, made a U turn further up and returned to the site. He decided to pull over the bird and stop when it was just below the trunk of his car. The road was busy with traffic as was the walkway with pedestrians so he fumbled inside his trunk feigning to look for something and biding time until the coast was relatively clear. One of the passers by was a young kid in a hoodie that gave him a rather furtive glance. About now to pick up the bird a big shiny car pulled up behind him, waited momentarily then pulled out and sped off. When what appeared to be the right time he picked up the Cardinal quickly and threw it in the trunk, closed it up and was about to move off when a marked police car with dome light ablaze pulled from the oncoming side to directly in front of him and another directly behind him. He was done, nailed caught in a trap set up by the feds and enforced by the local police.

The cops grabbed the kid in the hoodie, put him in cuffs and as they led him to one of the police cars an officer gave Kris what appeared to be a nod of apology for any inconvenience caused by their activities. Whew!

If the plan is successful, part of it will be Kris building the cat compound for his neighbor.

Jack McShane

Annual Charter Dinner

**Birding in New Zealand:
A Brief Travelogue of
New Zealand's
North and South Islands**

On October 19th, Cynthia and Frank Waterman will present *Birding in New Zealand; A brief travelogue of New Zealand North and South Islands* with a focus on New Zealand birds; their characteristics, habitats, songs and predator problems. Sanctuaries that have been established for endangered species will be discussed.

Cynthia Waterman is the President of the Delhi Bird Club and an avid birder. Upon her retirement as a special education teacher from New York State and Virginia after 32 years, she pursued her love of birding, monitoring bird boxes, playing the hammered dulcimer and accordion with the Delaware Dulcimers. Frank is a retired professor of Medical Physics from Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. He is currently



New Zealand Tui, by Cynthia and Frank Waterman

president of the Meredith Historical Society, supporting his passion for historical research. Both Cynthia and

Frank love to travel in their restored 1955 MG hoping to survive many more tiki tours.

Annual Charter Dinner – October 19, 2012

DOAS will hold its 44th Annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 19, 2012 at the Brooks Roost Banquet Room. We will gather at 6 PM for a social time before the buffet at 6:30 PM. The program for the evening begins at 7:30 PM and is free and open to the public.

Our speaker will be Cynthia Waterman, President of the Delhi Birding Club, presenting *Birds of New Zealand*.

The buffet cost is \$20 per person, and \$15 for children under twelve.

Reservations must be made by October 15th by calling 607-563-2924 or mailing a check to:
Julia Gregory, PO Box 641, Unadilla, New York 13849-0641

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Amount enclosed: _____

Upcoming Activities

October

October 13 – Open House at DOAS Sanctuary: 10 AM - 2 PM.
For details see page 5.

October 16 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM at the home of Tom Salo (607) 965-8232.

October 19 – Annual Charter Dinner: Cynthia and Frank Waterman will present *Birding in New Zealand; A brief travelogue of New Zealand North and South Islands*. See details on page 6.

October 20 – Field Trip to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge: DOAS will join the Delhi Birding Club's Fall Montezuma Trip, led by Randy Lynch, to view migrating waterfowl and shorebirds on their annual journey to warmer climates. Eleanor Moriarty is the trip coordinator for DOAS. Participants will meet Eleanor at 7:30 AM at the Dietz Street Parking Lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta. Please pack a picnic lunch for our break at the Audubon Center at Montezuma. For further information, please contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

November

November 16 – DOAS Program: *Journey from Delaware County Eagles to an African Safari* by local photographer John Adams. 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.

December

December 8 – Short-eared Owl Field Trip: DOAS will lead a field trip for owls and other late afternoon raptors, especially targeting Short-eared Owls. We will leave from the

Cooperstown Cooperative Extension Office on Lake Road in Cooperstown at 3:00 PM. For information contact Bob Donnelly at (607) 264-8156 or rsdonn@yahoo.com.

December 15 – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count (CBC):
Contact Bob Miller at (607) 432-5767.

December 29 – Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count (CBC):
Contact Tom Salo at (607) 965-8232.

January

January 12 – Eagle Field Trip: Visit rivers and reservoirs in Delaware County where birds concentrate to feed. Meet at Dietz St. parking lot at 7:30 AM; participants can be picked up en route in Delhi and Walton. Return to Oneonta mid-afternoon. Contact Andy Mason (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net for details.



Snow Geese at Montezuma, by Dave Kiehm



www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety

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.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____



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August-September Bird Sightings

As I write this article the beginning of Autumn is only days away. *Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?* This is a line from a Francois Villon poem literally meaning *Where are the snows of yesteryear?* and figuratively meaning *Why does life fade so quickly?* That's how I feel about the end of each season. However I'm rejuvenated and excited knowing that a new birding season is beginning.

Dorian Huneke and her friend Suzanne Gaynor went on a hike out and about her property in Treadwell on 8/18. Not far into the walk they stopped at a White Pine that sat on a slope downhill from a pond and watched a young bird sitting on a low branch of the pine. As they were trying to identify the bird an adult Eastern Kingbird showed up to feed the fledgling. Mystery solved. On 8/30 the Salos were canoeing in the wetland that surrounds Oaks Creek at the south end of Canadarago Lake. They flushed out a Merlin perched by the side of the creek channel who was eyeing hungrily

the hundreds of Cedar Waxwings and Red-winged Blackbirds.

While kayaking the north end of Otsego Lake on a very "Glimmerglass" morning Sept. 3rd, Becky Gretton observed an adult Bald Eagle and 2 immatures, 4 Great Blue Herons, a Great Egret, an Osprey, a Red-tailed Hawk and numerous Kingfishers. What a day! Peter Clark in Cooperstown watched 2 juvenile Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers high up in a Maple search quite noisily for grubs under the tree's bark on 9/4. On Jo Ann Salo's early morning walks in the dark in W. Burlington she heard a Great-horned Owl the first week of September and during the 2nd week she enjoyed the hoots of a Barred Owl and an Eastern Screech-Owl as they kept her company. On the morning of 9/15 3 Bald Eagles were feasting on a deer carcass on the shoulder of the road near Tom Salo's W. Burlington property. As the eagles were feeding they were forced to fly in front of approaching cars so Tom dragged the carrion 50 ft. off the route. On 9/17 Marilyn Huneke on Elk Creek Road in Delhi watched a Pileated Woodpecker in a

neighboring tree, saw a Great Blue Heron and a Little Blue in her section of the creek but at different locations and observed a Red-tailed and a Broad-wing hunt on her farm. Bird watching is alive and well and certainly not fading.

If you have bird sightings to report, contact me at dbenko@frontiernet.net, or 6815 Co. Hwy 16, Delhi, NY 13753, or at 607-829-5218 for the next issue of *The Belted Kingfisher*.
Dianne Benko



Barred Owl, by Dave Kiehm