

THE BELTED KINGFISHER



Editor — Andy Mason

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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Volume 39, Number 7, September 2007

COMING ACTIVITIES

<u>Friday, Sept. 21</u>	DOAS General Meeting, <i>Birds and Archaeology</i> , Dr. Renee Walker of SUNY Oneonta, 7:30 p. m. , Elm Park Methodist Church, Oneonta. (see pg. 2)
<u>Saturday, Oct. 6</u>	Annual Open House, DOAS Sanctuary. (pg. 4)
<u>Friday, Oct. 19</u>	DOAS General Meeting, TBA
<u>Friday, Nov. 16</u>	Charter Dinner, Sunrise Junction. (pg. 3)
<u>Saturday, Dec. 15</u>	DOAS Christmas Count, details TBA
<u>Friday, Jan. 18, 2008</u>	DOAS General Meeting
<u>Friday, Feb. 15, 2008</u>	DOAS General Meeting
<u>Friday, March 21, 2008</u>	DOAS General Meeting, <i>All About Bluebirds, and More</i> , John Rogers

IMPORTANT NOTICE

PLEASE BECOME A LOCAL MEMBER OF DOAS

Due to continued costs of printing and mailing *The Belted Kingfisher*, and the loss of the portion of National Audubon Society (NAS) dues that our Chapter receives, we are no longer able to send the newsletter to NAS-only members.

NAS-only members receive the September *Kingfisher*—this issue—each year. However, the other eight issues go only to those who have taken a local membership or are joint local/NAS members.

We encourage all NAS-only members to consider a local membership in order to help defray the costs of the newsletter and support our Chapter's education and conservation activities.

Local memberships are \$12 per year or \$20 for two years—a membership form can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Your mailing label will inform you of your membership status: an L indicates a local member, with expiration date (year and month, e. g. '0708' indicates August 2007); an N indicates an NAS-only member; both an L and an N indicates a joint local/NAS member. **If you are an NAS-only member, you will need to take a local membership in order to continue receiving *The Belted Kingfisher*.** If you are a local member or a joint local/NAS member, you will continue receiving the newsletter as in the past.

We appreciate the continued support of all members for our efforts to protect our natural world.

Conservation and Legislation

by Andy Mason

Renewables move ahead in Washington—Last month the US House of Representatives passed a broad energy bill which included a groundbreaking amendment increasing the nation's use of renewable power, and improving energy efficiency.

The amendment, sponsored by Reps. Tom Udall and Todd Platts, would require 15% of America's electricity to come from sources such as wind, solar and biomass or enhanced efficiency by 2020.

Experts say that the US can meet and exceed that goal with existing technologies. In addition, recent studies by the Union of Concerned Scientists found that increasing renewables and efficiency will generate high-paying jobs in manufacturing, construction and more. Due to the reduced demand for fossil fuels, the changes will save consumers on their electric and natural gas bills.

The legislation will establish a renewable energy standard requiring utilities to gradually increase the amount of renewable energy they use to generate electricity each year. It creates a market-based mechanism of tradable renewable energy credits—similar to the Clean Air Act trading system—allowing utilities to meet the requirements at the lowest cost.

Twenty-three states, including New York, currently have renewable standards, but involvement by the federal government provides a more level playing field for utilities, and broadens the movement away from coal and other polluting fuels.

The House bill also provides funding for alternative energy and efficiency programs. Environmentalists hoped the House would increase automobile and truck fuel mileage standards, but this failed due to opposition from automakers. Supporters vow to press this issue when Congress reconvenes.

What you can do—The energy legislation was supported by local Representatives Michael Ar-

curi, Kirsten Gillibrand, Maurice Hinchey, and Michael McNulty. A note of appreciation to them for their vision of a cleaner energy future for the nation is certainly in order.

The House bill must be reconciled with Senate legislation. New York's US Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton are generally supportive of environmental issues, but cannot be taken for granted. In addition, President Bush has threatened a veto if the energy bill does not increase oil, gas and coal production. They should be contacted and urged to support renewable energy.

Addresses

US Congress

20th Congressional District
(Otsego Co. towns of Cherry Valley, Roseboom, Decatur, Worcester, 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 www.gillibrand.house.gov

21st Congressional District (All of Schoharie Co.)
Rep. Michael McNulty
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-5076
fax: (202) 225-5077 www.house.gov/mcnulty

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 www.house.gov/hinchey

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 www.arcuri.house.gov

US Senate

Sens. Charles Schumer/ Hillary Clinton
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Schumer- (202) 224-6542
senator@schumer.senate.gov
fax- (202) 228-3027
Clinton- (202) 224-4451
senator@clinton.senate.gov
fax- (202) 228-0282

President

George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
(202) 456-1111
Fax- (202) 456-2461
President@whitehouse.gov

September Program on Birds and Archaeology

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society starts off its 2007-08 season of programs with Dr. Renee Walker, Assistant Professor and Acting Chair of the Department of Anthropology at SUNY Oneonta. Dr. Walker's presentation, entitled "Birds and Archaeology: The Role of Birds in the Study of Past Human Behavior", will explore what bird remains from archaeological sites can tell us about human behavior. Human hunting patterns, the environment they lived in, even the beliefs they held can be uncovered through avian archaeological finds.

The program will be held at 7:30 pm on Friday, September 21st in 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 Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, tomsalo@localnet.com.

President's Message—"Random notes"

At the August meeting, the Board of Directors asked me to serve as DOAS President for another year. I thank them for their support, and their faith in my ability to direct and manage such an effective organization. It is a pleasure to serve with our very committed directors and committee chairs.

Our Golden Eagle research fund raising continues. Thanks go to all who have donated to this project. Last winter, the board set a goal of \$6000 to fund a solar GPS transmitter and data fees for an eagle and we've passed the halfway point. If you did not receive our appeal letter last spring, we've created a Golden Eagle research page on our website (www.doas.us). Consider helping us fund research to identify where wind power projects can be safely located for Golden Eagles.

The Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch needs help. It is completely covered by volunteers. As part of the Golden Eagle research, we are collecting data on individual eagles as they migrate. During the peak of the eagle flight, we are hoping to recruit extra help to record this data. Whatever your level of raptor identification skills, you can help. Please consider volunteering some time at the hawk watch this year.

One of the best things about the internet is it allows me to be a vicarious birder. I do this by being a member of E-mail groups, or "listserves". These groups of birders allow me to keep track of birds are seen where. I know when the first local phoebe arrives in the spring. I know when juvenile Merlins start flying in the Adirondacks. During the fall, before I go to bed each day, I read what was counted at Franklin Mountain. There are a number of these groups in New York. Some cover a few counties; one covers the whole state north of the Thruway (I-90). The local group is OSBirds, which was originally for Otsego and Schoharie Counties, but has grown to include active members in Delaware and Montgomery.

These groups are a community of like-minded friends. Many members have a great amount of local expertise on a variety of subjects. Birders working to improve their state and life lists find these groups useful. Osbirds is at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/osbirds>. You can find a list of other New York State bird listserves on the NYSOA web site (<http://www.nybirds.org/>).

—Tom Salo

Annual Charter Dinner Scheduled for Nov. 16

The DOAS annual Charter Dinner will be held Friday evening, Nov. 16 at Sunset Junction (formerly Falco's) in Colliersville on Rte. 7 east of Oneonta. A social hour begins at 5:30 p. m. , dinner will be 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 populations. 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 or reservations, contact Julia Gregory, (607) 563-2924, or mail to PO Box 641, Unadilla, NY 13849.

Name	Menu Choice
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Phone _____ Amount enclosed _____ (please make checks payable to DOAS)	

DOAS Open House Oct. 6

DOAS will hold its annual Open House on Saturday, Oct. 6, from 10AM to 2PM, at our Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain.

Hawk watching, a trail walk and a hawk identification workshop for beginners are scheduled and refreshments will be available at the barn.

The DOAS Sanctuary is home to the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch—one of the best locations in the Northeast for fall migrations of Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles. Early October is noted for species diversity when migration of early and late raptors overlap. It's also the peak of the fall leaf season.

One of the long time Franklin Mountain hawkwatchers will conduct a 45 minute beginner's workshop on identifying flying hawks at 10:30 by the barn. This will include the basics of hawk identification, focusing on the species typically seen in the area. The ID workshop can be complemented by immediate use of the newly acquired skills at the hawkwatch. The watch will be staffed through the day.

The trail walk will start at 11:30AM and participants are encouraged to arrive 10-15 minutes early so as not to be left behind. For more information contact Andy Mason 607-652-2162, andy@earthling.net or Tom Salo at 607-965-8232, tom-salo@localnet.com.

To reach the DOAS Sanctuary, travel south on Oneonta's Main Street to Route 28 and go straight at the light. After crossing Route 28 turn immediately left at the T onto Southside Drive. Turn right on Swart Hollow Road (.8 mile). Go 1.5 mile and take a sharp right on Grange Hall Road. After .2 mile take a sharp left into the driveway or park nearby on Grange Hall Road.

All are welcome!

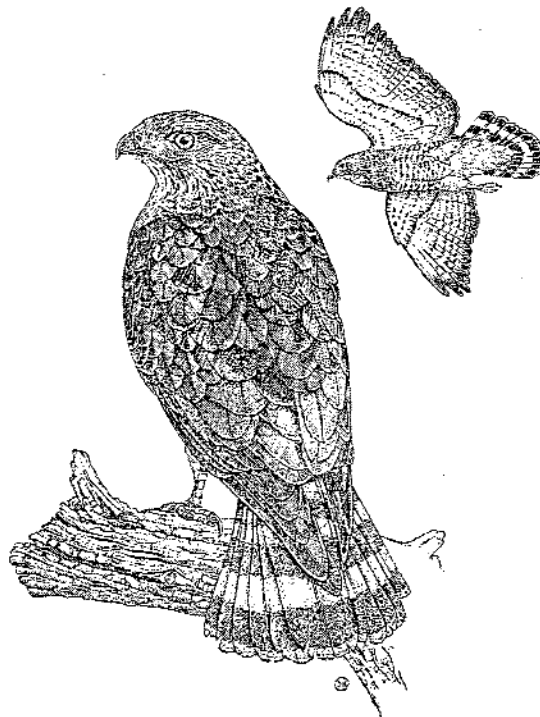
Hawkwatch News

The 19th season for the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch is now underway. Counting began in the third week of August and will continue through December.

Dedicated volunteers record thousands of raptors each season. The 2006 season brought over 5000 birds of 15 species past the site. This included site record high numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks and Merlins. The Golden Eagles count topped 200 for the 4th consecutive year. Coverage was again excellent, with 871 hours over 124 days put in by dedicated crew of volunteers. Visitors, spotters and counters are always welcome at the hawkwatch. Several dates in the schedule remain open for experienced hawkwatchers.

For more information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, tom-salo@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 to the hawkwatch at the DOAS Sanctuary can be found in the Open House article in this issue.



Broad-winged Hawk by Dave Kiehm

Board Meeting Highlights

Here are some key points from the DOAS Board meetings of May 15 and September 21. Members are always welcome at board meetings, as are your comments!

- The Board re-elected its officers for the 2007-2008 year (see elsewhere for election details).
- Educational grants have been awarded to four area schools, and the Audubon Adventures program is in process for several schools.
- Summer Day Camp 7/30-8/3 was a real success, with Peter Pollock and Meg Subik providing outstanding leadership for 7 campers.
- Planning continues for the November 16 Charter Dinner (see details elsewhere).
- The DOAS position statement on wind power is posted at www.doas.us. DOAS is also sending out comments in a similar vein on proposed wind power projects in Jordanville; Chateaugay, north of the Adirondacks; and Delaware County.
- A flyer for our Golden Eagle tracking project is being distributed widely (see President's Message).
- An extensive list of possible programs for the 2007-08 general meetings was discussed; see announcements as they appear in the Kingfisher.
- A recent visit to our Burlington wetland found that the rare Black Maples there are apparently not reproducing.
- The Catskill Astronomical Association has requested and been granted permission to observe the skies from the Sanctuary (see elsewhere).
- Two copies of the movie, *An Inconvenient Truth* are available for loan. Contact Barbara Marsala.
- Board and general members represented DOAS at four recent area environmental events.
- The Milford State Forest cleanup on April 28th removed 360 pounds of trash and a kitchen range from the forest. Thanks to the participants!
- A plan is underway to enlist more member

volunteers for various activities, including serving refreshments at meetings.

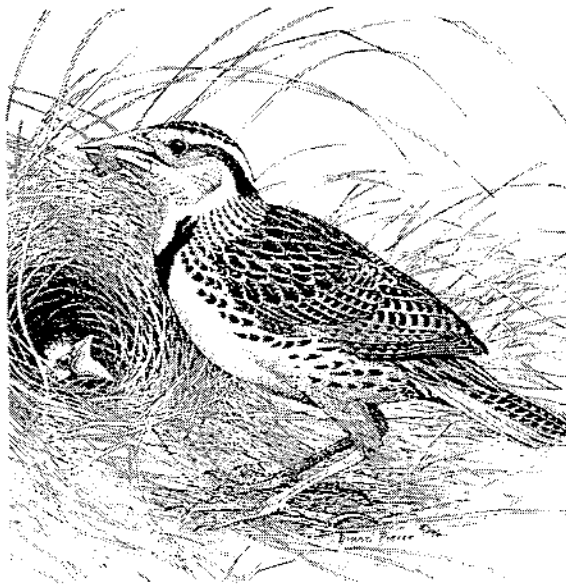
- The Board voted for Ralf Graves for Director of the newly formed NE Region of National Audubon.
- DOAS members continue to monitor 10 bird boxes on Cooperstown's Leatherstocking Golf Course; one box successfully fledged bluebirds.
- The next Board meeting will be held on September 18 at the home of Stephen Rice.

—John Davis, Secretary

Grassland Field Trip Report

On June 23rd, DOAS had a fieldtrip looking for grassland birds. Twelve birders went out on a sunny, but windy morning and found the following open country species: Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Kestrels, Upland Sandpipers, Horned Larks, Eastern Meadowlarks, Bobolinks, Savannah Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, a Henslow's Sparrow, Goldfinches. The Henslow's Sparrow was not heard due to the wind and its weak call, but all could see the bird "singing" from its low perch.

—Bob Donnelly



Eastern Meadowlark

Contacting DOAS Officers & Directors

Tom Salo	965-8232	tomsalo@localnet.com
John Davis	547-9688	davi7is4@hughes.net
Bob Donnelly		rsdonn@yahoo.com
Nancy Cannon	746-6037	
Andy Mason	652-2162	AndyMason@earthling.net
Barbara Marsala		barbaramars@stny.rr.com
Stephen Rice	829-3111	

NYSOA Annual Meeting Oct. 5-7

The 60th Annual Meeting of the NY State Ornithological Assoc., of which DOAS is a member club, is scheduled for Oct. 5-7 in Batavia, NY. This meeting, which was held in Oneonta last year, brings together birders and ornithologists from across the state for a weekend of field trips, research papers, business, and social events.

Hosted this year by the Buffalo Ornithological Soc., the NYSOA meeting will feature Jeff Price, PhD., of California State University, Chico, discussing impacts of global climate change on avian communities. Dr. Price is an author of many important publications including the joint American Bird Conservancy/National Wildlife Federation publication "The Birdwatcher's Guide to Global Warming."

Also speaking are Marianne Hites and Judith Seiler of Messinger Woods Wildlife Care and Education Center. Their topic is *All About Owls*.

For registration information, visit the NYSOA web site, www.nybirds.org and click on the Annual Meeting link, or contact Doug Beattie 585-343-4767, beattie@2ki.net, or Jerry Lazarczyk 716-773-7452, lazarcgl@netzero.net.

Blasted Squirrels Keep Out!

My personal battle continues, as I'm sure is true of most of us who feed birds. Lately I've come up with a double-baffle deterrent, using flapping, center-holed, orange plastic "No-Trespassing" signs on the wire above my hanging feeder! It's a cheap plastic feeder anyway that had been nearly chewed to bits by the darned critters, put up with some trepidation to replace the metal feeder destroyed by a bear back in May. So far so good as the furry creatures continue to sail off to the ground.

As for "the latest" on *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*, some readers may have noted "Crafty Squirrels Outwit Trees" in the Cornell Lab's



The Davis Squirrel Baffler

BirdScope for Summer 2007. It seems that Lab scientist Andre Dhondt has found that some red squirrels have gotten one up in "the evolutionary arms race between the trees and the squirrels" by anticipating a high mast year (abundant acorns and other forest fruits) to rev up their reproductive capacity in advance for enough offspring to handle all of those nuts and seeds, and thus make up for poorer survival in low mast years. So it looks as though there will always be plenty of squirrels to continue thwarting our attempts to outfox those bushy-tailed rodents. Meanwhile, back to my own efforts to refine my approach to an even more effective level. . . .

—John Davis

Summer Bird Sightings

There have been very few reported bird sightings since the June issue of *The Belted Kingfisher*. On 5/14 Trina Bassoff saw an Eastern wood-pewee in Esperance. Tom Salo saw a black-billed cuckoo in Burlington on 5/17. The next day he also reported 2 mourning warblers in W. Burlington. On 5/23 Trina also reported a wood thrush in Blenheim. Tom Salo saw a cedar waxwing in W. Burlington on 6/8. I didn't receive any sightings for the month of July. On 8/17 Andy Mason heard an Eastern screech owl in Jefferson and heard what he thought might be his last calls of the season of a veery and a wood thrush and flushed an American woodcock.

I did however, receive a very nice letter from the George Robinson family who have resided in the Stamford area for summers since 2003. They live on 6 acres of land which is 45% "natural" field and have observed 69 bird species there.

Please send sightings to Dianne Benko; 607-829-5218; 6815 Co. Hwy. 16, Delhi, NY 13753; caged@wpe.com by 9/16/07 for the next issue.

DOAS Elections

At the DOAS Annual Meeting, May 18, 2007, the following directors were elected to two year terms: Cheryl Boise, Gerianne Carillo, John Davis, Bob Donnelly, Stephen Rice, and Joe Richardson.

Outgoing director Lisa Gorn was thanked for her fine service to DOAS.

At the Aug. 21 board meeting, the following officers were elected to one year terms: Tom Salo, President; Cheryl Boise, Vice-president; John Davis, Secretary; Bob Donnelly, Treasurer.

Astronomers to Use DOAS Sanctuary

In the mid 70's a group of amateur astronomers in the Oneonta area formed the Catskill Astronomical Society. It met regularly for about 2 years then slowly faded. As a founding young member of the club with my father we thought it was time to rekindle the astronomy spirit in Oneonta and to again form the Catskill Astronomical.

We are a fledgling group of only 7 current members but that we hope is soon to change. In September we will begin to advertise our regular meetings at the St. James Church and hope to build our membership.

One thing an astronomy club needs, besides a place to hold meetings, is a place to view the stars. The Audubon Sanctuary south of Oneonta is a perfect place to observe the stars and we appreciate being warmly welcomed by your organization.

Our plan is to hold monthly star parties for our members beginning in September. We would select nights in advance and, weather permitting, meet to observe.

We would like to extend an invitation to any DOAS member and their family and friends to join us in observing at any of our star parties. Dates will be provided to DOAS in advance as well as posted at our "Under Construction" Web Site at www.catskillastronomicalsociety.com.

—Phil Cooper

Crops to Fuel

Crops selected for production of ethanol and biodiesel vary widely in cost, fuel yield, and environmental degradation. Many crops are used also for human or animal uses, many use immense acreages to produce, and some are causing tremendous loss of forest biodiversity in the tropics.

Comparing fuel yield per acre in gallons: of

the ethanol crops, sugar beet (714), and sugar cane (622) have higher yields than corn (354), cassava (410), sweet sorghum (374) and wheat (277).

Of the biodiesel crops, algae (5,000) tops switchgrass (1,150), hemp (1,000) and palm oil (508), and all are far ahead of coconut (230), jatropha (202), canola (102), peanut (90), sunflower (82) and soybean oils (56).

Environmentally, palm oil is bringing slash/burn devastation to hundreds of thousands of acres in Malaysia and Indonesia, with forest destruction, loss of wildlife, and proliferation of smoke-filled skies across wide areas. Sugar cane based ethanol has led

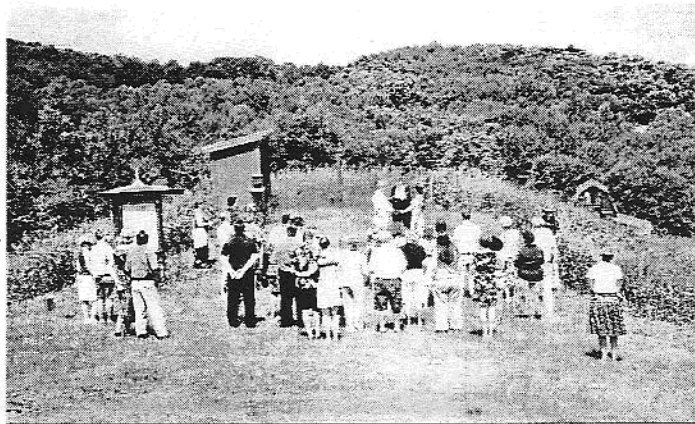
to immense swaths of deforestation in Brazilian rainforests, following explosive demand for biofuel from dozens of countries. Algae as a biofuel source uses a tiny fraction of the acreage of corn and other plant sources, but production can suffer from temperature fluctuations, evaporation, and takeover by other algae. The adaptable switchgrass grows rapidly and efficiently, and can be grown in

many areas of US. Its net energy output is about 20 times that of corn and holds great potential as a biodiesel source. Jatropha (not a food product), grown in India, uses marginal land, and its byproduct is a seed cake used as organic fertilizer. Hemp can be grown almost anywhere, but is illegal if grown in USA. It has high yield potential for biodiesel.

Corn ethanol takes 30% more energy to grow and process than it produces as fuel. We must be wary before we invest heavily in increasing US corn production for ethanol (already up 24% this year) and building hundreds of corn ethanol plants in the midwest.

(World Watch J/A '07)

—Jean T. Miller



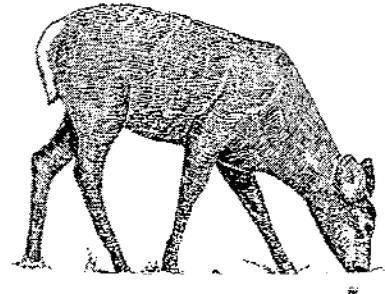
Nuptials at the Sanctuary
Sandy Bright and Charlie Scheim were married at the DOAS Sanctuary on 7/7/07. Sandy and Charlie are both counters at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch. Congratulations to the happy couple!
 (photo by David Arnold)



Switchgrass

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
 PO Box 544
 Oneonta, NY 13820
 www.doas.us

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 Julia Gregory Andrew Mason Jean Miller
 Stephen Rice Joe Richardson

Committee Chairs* & Other Assignments

Conservation* Andrew Mason
 Education* Cheryl Boise, Barbara Marsala
 Field Trips* Bob Donnelly
 Hawkwatch* Andrew Mason, Tom Salo
 Charter Dinner Julia Gregory
 Memorial Fund* Tom Salo
 Bird Counts Bob Miller
 Programs* Gerianne Carillo
 Membership* Bruce Milavec
 Sanctuary* Andrew Mason
 Sales Stephen Rice

Membership Application

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc. includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*. Cost is \$12 for a one year membership and \$20 for two years. Please make check payable to DOAS.

All meetings are free and open to the public. Mail checks to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544, with name, address and phone.

(Note - Please mail National Audubon renewals to address indicated on renewal notice.)

 NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____

 PHONE _____
 EMAIL _____

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