



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

January

January 11 – Eagle Field Trip

January 17 – DOAS Program

January 19 – Waterfowl Count

January 21 – Board Meeting

February

February 18 – Board Meeting

February 21 – DOAS Program

March

March 21 – DOAS Program

June

Early June – Second Annual *Birds, Brunch and Beer*

June 20-22 – Adirondack Boreal Birding Trip

More information on page 7

**All DOAS programs
are free and open
to the public**

Burrowing Owls: A National Love Story

In 2008, in the San Francisco Bay Area, a campaign took place developed by a group of wildlife enthusiasts to protect a colony of Burrowing Owls, threatened by the usual suspect, land development and construction. This campaign became *The Burrowing Owl Conservation Network*, which was eventually folded in under the *Urban Bird Foundation*. This established a North American-wide movement to restore the habitat of these little owls who are the only known species to live underground and create homes using existing spaces left by fox, coyote, prairie dog, skunk, etc.

Burrowing Owls are migratory with the exception of the Florida subspecies which are year round residents and have one other difference from the Western

Burrowing Owls; they dig their own nests. The Breeding range for the migratory Burrowing Owl is from Canada's Southern Prairie province, south throughout the Western United States to Southern California, and Texas. Mexico and Central America are wintering grounds for the Colorado Burrowing Owl, vacating their Prairie Dog burrows in October that they

have inhabited from late March.

These small Owls are approximately 9 inches in height, wingspan of about 21 inches, lack ear tufts (similar to the woodland owls), have bright yellow eyes, unusually long legs that provide ability to sprint as well as fly for hunting, and gaining a better view out over the burrow. Courtship and mating occurs between



Burrowing Owls, photo by Eleanor Moriarty

February and July, producing a clutch of 2 to 6 eggs. As early as October and as late as May it has been known a clutch of eggs might be produced. Eggs are round, the size of a quarter, and the female incubates for 28-30 days. (In rare cases, two clutches are produced in a year). The female raises and feeds the owlets. The male role is

(continued on page 6)

Citizen Science – An Audubon Strength

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read the results of the 2013 Oneonta Christmas Bird Count—the 45th consecutive year for this census—quite a record! For the first 44 years of the count, it was organized and compiled by the late Bob Miller—again, an outstanding accomplishment. With Bob's passing, we were fortunate to have Sandy Bright step up as a replacement. Sandy knows the birds and the birders of the area, and will do a fine job of continuing Bob's legacy.

The Audubon CBC, now in its 114th year, is the longest running "citizen science" effort in ornithology, and possibly in all scientific observation. Citizen science, although not yet coined in 1900, is defined as, "projects that engage the public in making observations and collecting and recording data".

DOAS has a long history of participating in citizen science. In addition to the CBC, we conduct an annual spring migration count, participate in the statewide waterfowl census, and of course our Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch has been compiling fall raptor migration data for 24 years. Members have participated in the US Fish & Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Surveys, and the NY State Breeding Bird Atlas projects. Most recently our winter camera trap project and plans to fit Golden Eagles with transmitters expand our efforts in this area.

This work, carried out by Audubon Chapters, bird clubs, and other birders, has resulted in an invaluable body of information that probably exceeds what is known about any other group of species. No doubt a big reason for this record of success is that we are doing something we love—and would be doing anyway—when we observe birds. Keeping track of what we see is a natural and easy extension of our pastime.

Avian citizen science continues to grow, in large part through the efforts of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, who have created user-friendly ways to document birds, such as Project FeederWatch, NestWatch, eBird, and others. More information can be found at www.birds.cornell.edu.

Participating in citizen science is a great way to give back to the feathered creatures that bring us such joy. Please consider getting involved in a DOAS count, or through the Cornell Lab. You'll be glad you did!

Andy Mason

DOAS 2014 Environmental Education Grant Program

Every school year, during the spring semester, Environmental Education Grants are made available to classroom teachers in the DOAS area (Delaware, Otsego, eastern Chenango, and western Schoharie Counties). In 2014, this competitive grant program is also available for Home School Programs as well as Student Service Organizations. These grants enable educators in our region to add new environmental and conservation focused activities to their curriculum. The number of awards and grant amounts are determined based on funds available and the number of qualifying proposals received. Previous grants have funded projects such as an environmental field day; construction of a weather station; backyard birds and animal habitats study kits; and pond studies.

The deadline for submission for a 2014 DOAS EE Grant is Friday, February 28, 2014. For more about Grant guidelines, applications or to donate to the DOAS EE Grant Fund, please visit the Education section of the DOAS web site, www.doas.us, or contact Susan O'Handley, sjohandley@gmail.com.



*S. Kortright Tree Planting Project 2012,
photo by E. Kline*

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

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FOUNDED 1968

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Helen McLean

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The Belted Kingfisher, email:
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Conservation and Legislation

2013 Environmental Scorecard out—The most recent edition of the EPL/Environmental Advocates guide to the voting records of NY State legislators is now available. The *Environmental Scorecard* presents a summary of the past year's action on environmental legislation in Albany, as well as specific votes on bills that were important—good or bad—to conservationists.

Unfortunately, as in past years, the picture is not pretty. None of the high priority legislation promoted by a coalition of environmental groups reached the Governor's desk. These included measures promoting solar energy, limiting greenhouse gases, phasing out toxic chemicals in children's products, and placing a moratorium on fracking. These bills each passed the Assembly, but died in the Senate—even though shared leadership in that body suggested change this year.

The Senate leadership—Republican Dean Skelos and Democrat Jeffrey Klein—even appeared to override the wishes of their own parties. As an example of how ludicrous the Senate procedures are, two measures—the Child Safe Products Act, and legislation to require drilling companies to properly dispose of hazardous waste—had more co-sponsors than the 32 votes needed to pass a bill. Yet neither were brought up for a vote!

Snowy Owls Invade the US!

This winter is shaping up to be a big—some say historic—invasion, or irruption, year for Snowy Owls. This periodic phenomenon occurs when food supplies, primarily lemmings, crash in the northern latitudes that are the birds' normal range. The birds pushed south are often under-nourished and may well not survive, depending on prey availability in the US.

By early December, many reports of snowies had come from across NY State, including the Niagara, Syracuse, Oneida and Hudson Valley regions, as well as the south shore of Long Island. New England was also experiencing an influx, as were the Midwest and mid-Atlantic states. One wayward individual even reached Bermuda!

There have been a few local reports of Snowy Owls. The birds favor open areas, perching on fences, poles or on the ground, and are often active in the day. In other irruption years, the extensive farm fields of northern Otsego and Schoharie Counties and southern Madison, Herkimer and Montgomery Counties have produced Snowy Owls.

If you should be fortunate enough to encounter one, keep your

If there was anything remotely positive about the legislative session, it was that some terrible proposals were stopped, including bills to make it more difficult for the state to recover oil spill costs from responsible parties, to place economic considerations above health, safety and environmental protections, and to allow oversized off-road vehicles to be registered in NY.

As for the voting records of our local legislators, the view is just as bad. In the Assembly, out of a possible score of 100, low environmental scores were earned by Clifford Crouch at 53, Claudia Tenney at 46, and Peter Lopez at 61. William Magee earned a modest 78. In the Senate, James Seward and John Bonacic were both near the bottom of the barrel with scores of 42.

What you can do—Let your legislators know your opinion of their environmental voting records, and insist they improve their performance in the upcoming session. As the Environmental Scorecard points out, “You didn't vote to pollute New York State. Did your legislators?”

To find out who represents you in Albany, check the conservation page at www.DOAS.us.

Andy Mason

distance, especially when photographing, and try not to disturb the birds. Remember they are likely stressed already and do not need to burn energy unnecessarily.

Andy Mason



*Immature Snowy Owl, one of two recently seen in Harpersfield,
photo by Carol Lynch*

DOAS Christmas Bird Count Summary – 1969–2013 – 45 Years, 107 Species

Compiled by Sandy Bright

Species	2013	# years	high # of birds (year)	Species	2013	# years	high # of birds (year)
Snow Goose	-	3	1169 (11)	American Crow	360	45	1040 (08)
Common Loon	-	2	1 (73, 79)	Common Raven	6	10	31 (07)
Double-crested Corm.	-	1	1 (06)	Black-capped Chickadee	329	45	799 (07)
Tundra Swan	-	1	1 (99)	Boreal Chickadee	-	1	3 (75)
Great Blue Heron	-	21	4 (91)	Tufted Titmouse	17	37	93 (09)
Canada Goose	42	26	2681 (11)	Red-breasted Nuthatch	7	45	40 (93)
Green-winged Teal	4	2	4 (13)	White-breasted Nuthatch	24	45	91 (07)
American Black Duck	-	28	44 (95)	Brown Creeper	-	35	9 (99)
Mallard	48	35	238 (07)	Winter Wren	-	1	1 (12)
Canvasback	-	2	13 (01)	Carolina Wren	-	17	4 (06)
Ring-necked Duck	-	1	12 (99)	Golden-crowned Kinglet	3	27	20 (82)
Bufflehead	-	2	3 (88)	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	-	2	4 (99)
Common Merganser	3	24	100 (12)	Eastern Bluebird	-	5	35 (07)
Hooded Merganser	2	6	97 (12)	Swainson's Thrush	-	1	1 (71)
Osprey	-	2	1 (93, 00)	Hermit Thrush	-	1	1 (07)
Golden Eagle	-	3	2 (04)	Wood Thrush	-	1	1 (71)
Bald Eagle	4	9	4 (13)	Varied Thrush	-	2	1 (71, 83)
Northern Harrier	-	9	1 (73, 80, 83, 94, 98, 00, 07, 09, 10)	American Robin	2	18	16 (07)
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	21	2 (81, 90, 98, 05, 08)	Gray Catbird	-	2	1 (72, 07)
Cooper's Hawk	4	19	5 (09)	Northern Mockingbird	-	8	2 (81)
Northern Goshawk	-	13	2 (87)	Cedar Waxwing	18	26	42 (07)
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	4	1 (74, 99, 03, 04)	Northern Shrike	-	21	5 (95)
Red-tailed Hawk	11	45	46 (09)	European Starling	826	44	2741 (00)
Rough-legged Hawk	-	37	10 (74)	Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	1	1 (75)
American Kestrel	-	32	10 (73)	Northern Cardinal	29	44	76 (76)
Merlin	-	1	1 (00)	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	-	1	6 (79)
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	18	3 (71, 84, 86, 00)	Eastern Towhee	-	3	2 (80)
Ruffed Grouse	-	34	24 (82)	American Tree Sparrow	63	45	269 (71)
American Coot	-	1	1 (09)	Chipping Sparrow	-	1	8 (83)
Wild Turkey	33	33	1225 (95)	Field Sparrow	-	1	2 (77)
Northern Bobwhite	-	2	5 (75)	Savannah Sparrow	-	1	1 (71)
Killdeer	-	2	1 (79, 85)	Fox Sparrow	-	1	1 (97)
Ring-billed Gull	4	23	206 (01)	Song Sparrow	-	32	41 (75)
Herring Gull	-	4	9 (92)	Swamp Sparrow	-	1	6 (75)
Rock Pigeon	734	38	1517 (98)	White-throated Sparrow	5	27	39 (72)
Mourning Dove	270	43	409 (98)	White-crowned Sparrow	-	6	3 (69)
Common Barn-Owl	-	1	1 (71)	Dark-eyed Junco	294	45	1051 (71)
Eastern Screech-Owl	4	14	11 (12)	Snow Bunting	34	19	500 (76)
Long-eared Owl	-	1	1 (12)	Red-winged Blackbird	-	14	150 (11)
Great Horned Owl	1	32	5 (04, 07, 12)	Rusty Blackbird	-	1	2 (74)
Barred Owl	-	12	3 (12)	Common Grackle	-	9	65 (71)
N. Saw-whet Owl	-	4	2 (04, 07)	Brown-headed Cowbird	-	23	200 (84)
Short-eared Owl	-	1	1 (08)	Bullock's Oriole	-	1	1 (70)
Belted Kingfisher	-	28	5 (99)	Baltimore Oriole	-	1	1 (11)
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	3	1 (80, 82, 99)	Pine Grosbeak	-	15	80 (72)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	10	6 (12)	Purple Finch	22	37	102 (82)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	6	3 (93, 97)	House Finch	52	38	452 (86)
Downy Woodpecker	41	45	85 (08)	Red Crossbill	-	5	20 (86)
Hairy Woodpecker	16	45	59 (71)	White-winged Crossbill	-	2	3 (85)
Northern Flicker	-	12	2 (69, 00, 03, 05, 06, 09)	Common Redpoll	-	26	101 (99)
Pileated Woodpecker	2	28	9 (08)	Pine Siskin	-	25	149 (08)
Horned Lark	-	6	25 (72)	American Goldfinch	188	45	418 (08)
Blue Jay	270	45	500 (72)	Evening Grosbeak	-	32	696 (86)
				House Sparrow	56	45	947 (74)

45th Christmas Bird Count

On December 14th, 9 field teams of 20 people braved snowy roads and cold temperatures to conduct this season's CBC. Six Feederwatch participants added their numbers to this count. The weather put a damper on both participants and birds, with far fewer being reported. Ponds were all frozen; streams partially. In the 24-hour period, 3479 birds of 39 species were found. While no new species were recorded, Dave Kiehm's team did find 4 Green-winged Teals, the first to be seen during our CBC in 32 years. Perhaps not surprisingly given the recent weather, two of the few species that showed an increase from last year were visiting from the north country: 34 Snow Buntings and 63 Tree Sparrows. Two Robins and 18 Cedar Waxwings were the only hangers-on from the summer. The total list with numbers and a summary of all our counts 1969-2013 is on page 4. *Sandy Bright*



Green-winged Teal,
By Alan D. Wilson, via Wikimedia Commons

Hawkwatch News

It has been a rather lackluster late October and November at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch. With a couple of exceptions, flights have been modest, and Golden Eagles in particular have not shown up in their usual numbers.

The total count as of early December stood at 4817 raptors—fairly respectable, but heavily weighted by September's early count of nearly 2000 Broad-winged Hawks. Other than broad-wings, all species look to end up below the 12 year average since full-time counting began at the lookout.

The Golden Eagle tally was at 98, with three double-digit days in November: 16 on the 3rd, and 11 on the 12th, and 15 on the 19th. There are occasional good flights in December, and we will pass the 100 mark, but it looks like an off year for these big birds.

Counting will continue through December, but possibly with coverage only on promising days. If you plan on visiting, check with the contacts below.

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

Andy Mason

Golden Eagle Research on Track

Our fund raising for Golden Eagle research has resulted in enough funding to proceed with the trapping and tracking program this winter. The Norcross Foundation awarded us \$2500 – enough to pay for a transmitter. Your donations have also been generous. Thank you to all those who have contributed. As of this writing we have raised enough money to purchase the hardware. Four solar powered telemetry devices are on order along with a remote controlled net launcher. The NYSDEC has given permission for one of its wildlife biologists to do the actual trapping and fitting of transmitters. This saves us the expense of transporting and housing trappers from West Virginia. Employees of the DEC Green Thumb Program have built mock net launchers to place at the most promising sites prior to trapping. These mock launchers will be replaced with the real thing the day of trapping.

NYSDEC Biologist Scott Van Arsdale will receive training from experts in the use of the transmitters. He will also benefit from their experience having used the same net launcher we purchased. DEC owns and uses a rocket net which is much too big for many of our camera sites.

We could use several pop-up hunting blinds. If you have one that is no longer used, please consider donating it. The blinds will be well hidden in forest cover at a distance from the baited site prior to trapping. The trapper will hide in the blind before daylight the day of trapping and await the arrival of Golden Eagles.

We will have ongoing costs as this project moves forward. There are quarterly data management fees for each device. Depending on our success rate, we are considering trapping one or two eagles each winter for several years. Donations can be sent to our PO Box or done through Pay Pal on our website.

If this season is anything like the last 2 winters, we are optimistic about successfully trapping eagles. Please watch our website through the winter for breaking updates and photos of the trapping effort. Our April Educational program will focus on this winter's trapping activities. Assuming success, tracking maps will be on our web site once we start receiving data. *Tom Salo*



Affixing telemetry unit on Golden Eagle
photo by Dr. Todd Katzner

Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

17th Annual Count



Evening Grosbeak
by Dave Kiehm

The 2014 GBBC will take place February 14– 17.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website. See birdcount.org for details.

January Program

Some Shorebirds of Bunche Beach and Sanibel Island

Break up the winter, after-holiday blahs by attending our monthly program on Friday, January 17, 2014: "Some Shorebirds of Bunche Beach and Sanibel Island," presented by Richard "Rick" Bunting. This wonderful presentation is a collection of photos from that area in Florida known for its birding possibilities. Anyone familiar with Rick Bunting's work is aware of the incredible photos he has taken over the many years in our local area as well as his six weeks annually during the winter in the Fort Meyers area in Florida for the past several years.

Rick considers himself an amateur naturalist who has pursued his passion for photography since his retirement as Professor Emeritus from SUNY Potsdam and the Crane School of Music where he served as Chair of Music Education and conductor.

The program starts at 7:30 PM, at The Elm Park United Methodist Church, Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Free and open to the public; refreshments are served. For further information contact Eleanor Moriarty @ 607-435-2054, or eleanormrرت955@gmail.com.

Burrowing Owls: A National Love Story

(continued from page 1)

to provide the food to the female who in turn feeds the young. At approximately six weeks of age, the young emerge from the burrow. At four weeks, the young are able to take a short flight, and at six weeks fly well. Fledging occurs about 42-45 days after the hatching, and the youngsters stay with the adults until twelve weeks. The primary diet is insects, small vertebrates, beetles, grasshoppers, and crickets, but are known to eat lizards, snakes, rodents, and various species of birds. They will hover over and eat road kill as well.

The Florida Non-Migratory Burrowing Owl is listed as Special Concern by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (1979), and are protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (even though they do not migrate). The Western Migratory species is listed as endangered.

In the Southwest, particularly Arizona, the rate of new construction is taking a major toll on the population. The potential nest burrows left by wildlife often exist in agricultural fields, vacant lots, undisturbed natural desert, grasslands and open spaces, even near commercial buildings and in parks. The continual threats of vehicle collisions, predation by domestic animals, human harassment, and the never-ending real estate development in Florida has created a crisis in their reproduction rate. The result is far fewer replacement Burrowing Owls. In the Southwest, the attempt to build man-made burrows has resulted in lower success rates with fewer eggs and hatching. Lets hope the bulldozers don't win.

Eleanor Moriarty



Rick Bunting

Upcoming Activities

January

January 11 – Eagle Field Trip: The outing visits rivers and reservoirs in Delaware County where the birds concentrate to feed. Recent trips have turned up 20+ eagles. Other raptors and waterfowl are usually sighted also. We will stop at a local restaurant for lunch for interested participants.

The trip will leave the Dietz St. parking lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta at 7:00 AM. Carpooling is strongly encouraged and participants can be picked up en route in Delhi and Walton. Return to Oneonta will be mid to late afternoon. For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

January 17 – DOAS Program: *Some Shore Birds of Bunche Beach and Sanibel Island*, by Rick Bunting. See details on page 6.

The program starts at 7:30 PM, at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

January 19 – Waterfowl Count: The NY State Ornithological Association's annual statewide waterfowl count. DOAS covers Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River above Unadilla, the Unadilla River, and Cannonsville Reservoir and the W. Branch of the Delaware River. This effort involves surveying waterways where they can be seen, and identifying and counting ducks and geese. The totals are used by the Department of Environmental Conservation in managing these species over the upcoming year.

Anyone interested in helping with the census, please contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

January 21 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7PM

Problems with November *Belted Kingfisher*: Unfortunately, miscommunications with our printer resulted in the November newsletter not being mailed on the usual schedule. The November issue will be arriving shortly.

We apologize for the delay and any inconvenience. – DOAS Board of Directors

February

February 18 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7PM

February 21 – Owls of Central New York: Fred von Mechow will present "Owls of Central New York". Fred says several owl species that breed in Central NY and a few others visit regularly or irregularly. We will be treated to his knowledge and expertise on owls from the George Lesser Taxidermy collection housed at Rogers Environmental Education Center. He will discuss the special adaptations owls have to survive in their habitat and niche. Program is held at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, Chestnut Street, Oneonta New York and begins at 7:30 PM. Refreshments are served and it is free and open to the public. For further information, contact Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054.

March

March 21 – Everything and More About Bluebirds: Speaker will be John Rogers.

June

Early June – Birds, Brunch and Beer: Look for details in upcoming issues for the Second Annual Birds, Brunch and Beer event at the Ommegang Brewery in Cooperstown.

June 20-22 – Adirondack Boreal Birding Trip: This trip will be limited to 15 people, and will be led by an expert birding guide. Trip will not involve hiking but limited walking. Details, on trip and reservation form will be in the February newsletter.

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; family memberships \$20 annually or \$30 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: _____

Support DOAS education and conservation programs with an additional donation: \$_____



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Tree Sparrow, by Dave Kiehm

October–December Bird Sightings

On a very mild day in mid-November while on our daily walk in Delhi, my husband and I surprisingly happened upon a lone American Robin. It wondered why we were on this not much used path and in turn we wondered why it was still sticking around with winter just around the corner.

On 10/26 Tom Salo watched as a juvenile Turkey Vulture seemed very interested in some slaughtering remains that were in a trailer by his barn in W. Burlington. The next day Randy Lynch observed a Long-tailed Duck in Harpersfield and Snow Buntings in Maryland. On the 29th Andy Mason had his first of the fall Fox Sparrow in Jefferson and Eleanor Moriarty had an Eastern Phoebe hanging around the shrubby bushes in the back of her Davenport Center home. Dorian Huneke watched a group of 5 male Eastern Bluebirds fly about the top end of a dead cherry tree out in back of her Treadwell barn on 10/30. They flitted about peering into all the cavities other birds had

used as nesting sites over the years.

On Election Day Nov. 5th Tom Salo saw 6 Snow Buntings in W. Burlington on his way to vote. On the 8th he also sighted 2 Northern Harriers hunting in Pittsfield and Jo Ann, his wife, heard an Eastern Screech Owl on her daily walk in Burlington. The next day Angelika Rashkow excitedly noticed a Barred Owl perched on a now leafless tree at the edge of her woods in Hartwick. Ted Buhl had a spectacular sighting on Allen Lake on Nov. 14th. In error he flushed out a pair of Sandhill Cranes. What a sighting! Two mature Bald Eagles were spotted by Gerianne Carillo at the north end of Canadarago Lake flocking about, circling and chasing each other on 11/10. From a window of her house Eleanor Moriarty watched a Yellow-rumped Warbler flit from one small tree to another in Davenport Center on 11/15. The next day Ted Buhl was on the hunt again and checked out Allen, Summit, Warren, and Weaver Lakes searching for the Sandhill Cranes but with no luck. However he was greeted by hordes of Hooded Mergansers, lots of Ring-necked

Ducks and maybe 30 Common Goldeneyes. Not a bad day of birding.

In the first week of December Stacey Grocott observed a pair of adult Northern Harriers and a mature Bald Eagle in Edmeston. She watched a Cooper's Hawk kill pigeons off her silo, an awesome sight, and she spotted a Northern Saw-whet Owl completely motionless in a spruce. It had been a busy week for birds of prey up on her hill. On 12/5 Andy Mason heard a Great Horned Owl calling from a nearby house in Jefferson. Cynthia Campbell saw Snow Buntings fluttering about on old farm fields in Sharon Springs on 12/13. The next day after returning from a lackluster Christmas Bird Count Andy Mason saw a Red-winged Blackbird on his feeder in Jefferson and his first of the season American Tree Sparrow. So ends another eventful birding period.

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