



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

March

March 18 – Board Meeting

March 21 – DOAS Program

March 23 – Montezuma

April

April 5 – Lake Otsego Waterfowl

April 12 – Earth Festival

April 15 – Board Meeting

April 18 – DOAS Program - Eagle Research - in Cooperstown

April 19 – Snipe and Woodcock

May

May 3 – Glimmerglass Bird Walk

May 10 – Greenway Bird Walk

Mid May – South Hill Bird Walk

May 16 – DOAS Program

May 17 – Onderdunk Rd Bird Walk

May 17 or 18 – Big Day Bird Count

May 20 – Board Meeting

May 21 – Wildflower Walk

June

June 1 – Birds, Brunch and Beer

June 20-22 – Adirondack Trip

More information on page 7

Golden Eagle Research

As of this writing, we have successfully trapped 2 Golden Eagles and fitted them with tracking devices. The season is almost over so there is a slight chance we may catch another bird. NYSDEC Biologist Scott Van Arsdale spent many cold days sitting in blinds before catching the first eagle in Delaware County on February 8. This female was named Maxine by one of our project supporters. The second eagle was captured 4 days later at the same site. This was a very large, frisky female that we named Jean in memory of Jean Miller, Charter Member, past President and long-time Director. Golden Eagles have been trapped and banded in New York in the past. Four of those birds were tracked using an older technology. The tracking devices we purchased are solar powered, record very accurate data with a GPS receiver and transmit it through the cell phone network.

Maxine is a third-year female (hatched in 2012) that weighed 9 1/2 pounds. She had a 73" wingspread. This is small for a female Golden Eagle. The primary feathers were quite worn and should molt soon. She probably lost several inches of total spread due to feather wear.

Jean was a full adult bird. We do not yet know if she can be accurately aged. Experts have been sent the plumage documentation photos. However, after a certain number of molts adults becomes difficult if not impossible to age. What we do know is that she has attitude. We couldn't measure her wingspread because we couldn't control her well enough to hold both wings out at once. Scott took her vital statistics, photographed her and set her free.

Both eagles were captured and released in a cell phone dead zone. Maxine found herself near a cell tower several days after she was released. She has been back and forth across the Pennsylvania border in the area between Hancock and Roscoe. Jean was in the cell phone dead zone until just before this issue went to press. See map on page 5.

The weather this winter was unlike anything we've experienced since we started camera trapping. Even though regionally, numbers of Golden Eagles were consistent with previous years, both species of eagles were more scattered and less reliable at our sites. Bald Eagle numbers were lower than the past 2 years.

We are grateful for the success we have had, to the NYSDEC for its support, and especially to Scott for his help, attention to detail and the many below zero days he spent during a very cold winter waiting for the birds.

We plan to use the remaining transmitters next season. Thanks to everyone who has supported this project.

Tom Salo

For more photos and other observations, see pages 4 and 5.



Maxine (top) and Jean photos by Helen McLean and Abby Nelson

Gearing Up for Earth Festival

Earth Festival 2014, presented by Otsego County Conservation Association in collaboration with the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce and Central NY Mobile Marketing, will take place on Saturday, April 12 from 11am-3pm at the Milford Central School gymnasium. Master Gardeners of Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties will host Spring Garden Day in conjunction with Earth Festival, kicking off with a free presentation by Barbara Melera, president and CEO of the D. Landreth Seed Company – the oldest seed house in America – at 9:30am.

Now in its 9th year, Earth Festival is an annual event that brings together the region's environmental community along with vendors and exhibitors that offer earth-friendly products or services. It is an avenue for people in Otsego County to learn about and support the various environmental organizations and the activities that are taking place in our region.

DOAS has been a participant in Earth Festival since the first event in 2005. We help to kick off Earth Festival each year with a pre-festival Early Morning Bird Walk at a regional state park or state forest location. Our carpool leaves promptly at 8am from the school parking lot. Through the years, one of our most popular activities at the event has been a letter-writing campaign where people can learn about a topical conservation issue, modify template letters to provide their voice and opinions, then have their letter printed and mailed to our elected political representatives. Our letter this year will be to voice opposition to proposed 30 year eagle permits for wind energy companies.

From the beginning, Earth Festival has always offered avenues to recycle various items that might not be easily recycled locally. This year's event again will offer the opportunity for people to bring their confidential documents for shredding and recycling in the ConfiData Shredder from 11am-2pm. The event also offers collection of other items, such as clean white styrofoam, fishing line, shoes, cd's and vcr tapes, plastic bags, and more. Last year, the event began promoting TerraCycle - the ability to recycle a number of other materials like cheese wrappers, cereal bags, permanent markers, glue containers, etc. For a complete list of recycling opportunities available at this year's Earth Festival event, view the OCCA website at www.occainfo.org.

This year, in addition to our letter of opposition to the 30 year permits, DOAS will provide a display about our Golden Eagle Telemetry Project as well as information about educator resources (Audubon Adventures), upcoming programs and the



Sy Lloyd at the Articulated Skeletons Exhibit

2014 Summer Camp. Information will also be available about our special events including the 2nd Annual "Birds, Brunch and Beer" event and our June birding trip to the Adirondacks! Please be sure to stop by and say Hi.

Susan O'Handley

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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Helen McLean

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To contribute notes or articles for
The Belted Kingfisher, email:
editor@doas.us

Conservation and Legislation

Second chance for wolves—The gray wolf populations of the western US have a possible reprieve from decimation by state wildlife managers. In 2011, Congress overrode the Endangered Species Act, and turned wolf management in the northern Rockies over to the states. As expected, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming immediately began an all-out assault on this keystone predator. For example, the state of Idaho recently hired a hunter-trapper to completely exterminate two wolf packs at the behest of trophy hunters.

Then in 2013, despite over a million public comments in opposition, the US Fish and Wildlife Service made a decision to remove most populations of gray wolves from the endangered species list. This allows the states to nearly eradicate wolves to benefit ranchers and elk hunters. This decision was highly controversial, as such decisions are required by law to be based on the best available science. The service relied on one study, carried out by their own personnel, to justify its action.

Following an outcry by scientists, politicians and the public, the agency convened a panel to peer review the delisting decision. However, even this panel was tainted—made up of only pro-wolf control individuals. Again the Fish and Wildlife Service was forced to backpedal, replacing several panel members.

Finally, in February, 2013, the new review panel released its findings, and unanimously stated that the science used to delist

wolves was questionable and not sufficient to justify the decision. As a result, the public comment period on removing Endangered Species Act has been reopened through March 27, allowing conservationists to speak out in favor of continued protection of the species.

What you can do—Write Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and urge her to reconsider the entire proposal to delist gray wolves. Last year Sec. Jewell argued that she had no choice but to remove wolf protection, stating, *“It’s about science and you do what the science says.”* Tell her the science is wrong, and that she should heed her own words.

Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
feedback@ios.doi.gov

Comments on the delisting plan can be submitted to: Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–HQ–ES–2013–0073; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042–PDM; Arlington, VA 22203; or electronically at gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-06-13/pdf/2013-13982.pdf

Also, the Endangered Species Coalition has more information and an easy to use form letter to Sec. Jewell at www.endangered.org

Andy Mason

Waterfowl Count Results

The statewide waterfowl count was held the weekend of January 19, 2014. Participants from DOAS and others covered area water bodies with the following tally:

Canada Goose	343
Gadwall	9
Mallard	448
Am. Black Duck	147
No. Pintail	1
Redhead	40
Ring-necked Duck	6
Common Goldeneye	7
Hooded Merganser	21
Common Merganser	78
Am. Coot	50
TOTAL	1150

Other species of interest sighted include: Red-tailed Hawk; Bald Eagle; Ring-billed Gull; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Cedar

Waxwing; Purple Finch; Sharp-shinned Hawk; Northern Harrier; Rough-legged Hawk; Cooper’s Hawk; Wild Turkey; Great Blue Heron; Belted Kingfisher; Muskrat; Red Fox.

Waterfowl variety and total were down somewhat from recent counts. With the exception of Otsego Lake, most still water was frozen with streams and rivers open. The count was held during a cold period, but before the extreme weather of late January and February.

Areas covered include: Otsego Lake and tributaries and surrounding ponds; Susquehanna R., Cooperstown to Portlandville, and Wells Bridge to lower Unadilla bridge; Buckhorn Lake and vicinity; Canadarago Lake and tributaries; Unadilla River and tributaries, Leonardsville to Sidney; W. Branch Delaware R., Delhi to Deposit; Cannonsville Res.

Thanks to participants Matt Albright, Kay Crane, John Davis, Bob Donnelly, Lisa Gorn, Eric Knight, Carol Lynch, Randy Lynch, Marge Mathis, Katie Ray, Tom & Joanne Salo.

Andy Mason

Maxine

*Golden Eagle, Juvenile Female
Captured, tagged and released February 8, 2014*

When Tom Salo asked if I would be one of the photographers to document the process of attaching a telemetry unit to a Golden Eagle, I said yes! At 7am on February 8th, after several no-shows, finally a message that a Golden Eagle had been captured. I grabbed my coffee and was on my way.

When I arrived in Andes, there was Maxine (as she was later named), a quiet and beautiful bird who seemed rather comfortable on George Redden's lap. For the next few hours, as Scott Van Arsdale measured, weighed and took note of her physical status, several of us took photographs and simply marveled at the majestic beauty of this Golden Eagle. The process of placing the telemetry unit on Maxine was slow and deliberate. Taking time to place the teflon straps around her wings and body, Scott carefully took note of the leeway, concerned that it be neither too tight nor too loose.

Before releasing her, several worked together to measure her wingspan – 73 inches! After seeing her sit so quietly on George's lap, wings hugging her body, it was a striking contrast to see the wings fully spread.



Photo-documenting Maxine's plumage for aging, photo by Michael DiBenedetto

We all drove to the spot where Maxine would be released – happy to have had time with her and hopeful we will learn much from the travel information she sends back via the telemetry unit.

(Note to self - next time when photographing in 18 degree weather, keep extra camera batteries next to body! Thanks to Becky Gretton for helping me warm them up.)

Helen McLean



Peg DiBenedetto releases Maxine photo by Gerianne Carillo

Jean

*Golden Eagle, Adult Female
Captured, tagged and released February 12, 2014*

As a college student I have a pretty busy schedule, so when I received Tom Salo's phone call asking me if I could come see a Golden Eagle who had recently been trapped in Andes, I was very disappointed at the idea that I might not be able to make it. Ever the pessimist, I quickly called my professor to ask if there was a possibility that I could not only miss class that day, but also miss



Scott Van Arsdale and Michael DiBenedetto with Jean, photo by Wendy Redden

the scheduled quiz. Luckily, he was very understanding of what a big deal this was to me and I was able to make the trip!

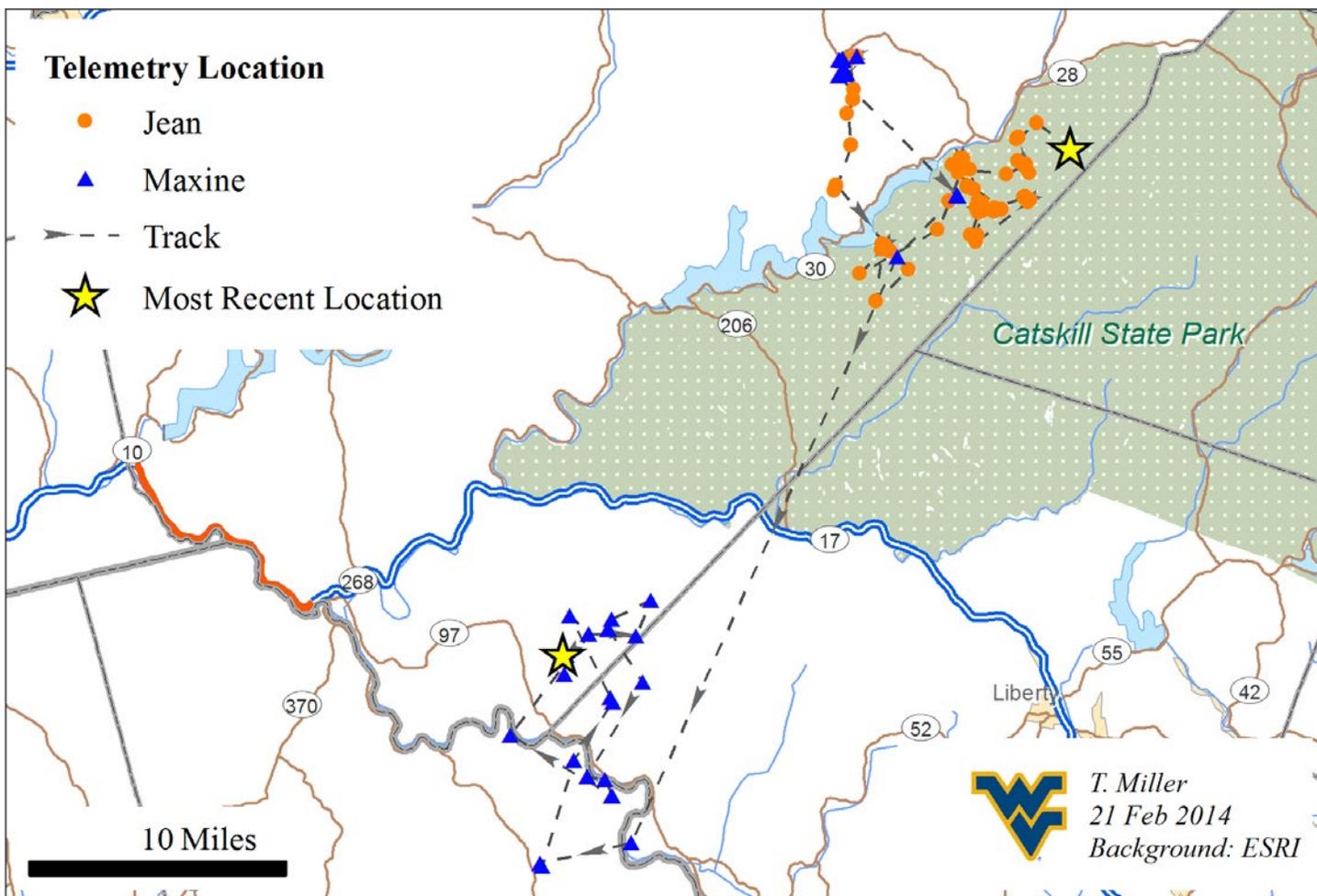
I originally became acquainted with Tom a few months ago when I participated in an internship with the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. Because I have worked with eagles before and am interested in working with them again at graduate school, I was invited to be part of a very small group of individuals who witnessed the processing of Jean, the Golden Eagle who was caught in Andes.

Meeting Jean was unlike anything I had ever imagined. Honestly, it was such a powerful moment in my life. The enormity of the situation and the eagle herself was almost overwhelming. She was a big, beautiful, feisty beast. She's the largest bird I've ever seen up close! Her talons were enormous, her bill powerful and her wingspan magnificent.

I was impressed by the sheer size of Jean, but even more than that I was impressed with the individuals involved in processing her. Everyone had one main concern and that was our guest of honor, Jean. She gave us a piece of her time and they did their best to make the process go as smoothly as possible. Jean was the priority and data collection came second. Scott, the leader of the procession, was very sensitive to the animal and was very competent on how to handle her. Never did it seem like Jean was in pain, or even much distress.

I am very impressed with the project Todd Katzner is running and it was fabulous to be able to witness a little piece of it.

Abby Nelson



Map showing travel locations of the two Golden Eagles fitted with telemetry units in February 2014
 Blue triangles show Maxine's location February 8-17. Orange dots show Jean's location February 12-20
 Map provided by Trish Miller, Wildlife Biologist, West Virginia University



Left: Wendy and George Redden with Scott Van Arsdale holding Maxine, by Peg DiBenedetto

Right: Scott Van Arsdale, Peg DiBenedetto, Tom Salo, Michael DiBenedetto and Abby Nelson with Jean, by Becky Gretton

There are many photos of both Maxine and Jean on our website under Golden Eagle Research. You can also learn more about the importance of this project at: doas.us

Adirondack Boreal Birding Trip

Friday June 20th to Sunday June 22nd 2014

Our guide will be John Thaxton, noted bird expert and guide for the Adirondacks. For the past ten years, John and his wife Pat have led trips for the Paul Smith’s Visitor Interpretive Center’s Great Adirondack Birding Celebration and for nine years, led trips for the Hamilton County’s Adirondack Birding Festival. Becky Gretton, Board Member, did the research onsite for the lodging and listed below are her findings which are excellent and practical.

Planned Itinerary:

Friday, June 20, noon - Leave Oneonta -Dietz Street parking lot. Car pooling is necessary, please specify on form if you have space in your car or if you need a ride

Bird trips:

On trip, walking will be limited and not strenuous.

Saturday AM: Whiteface Highway and Whiteface Mountain; species- Bicknell’s Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee.

Saturday PM: Bloomingdale Bog, Oregon Plains/Bigelow Road and the Paul Smith’s Interpretive Center: species - Gray Jay, Black-backed Woodpecker, Lincoln’s Sparrow, etc.

Sunday AM: Intervale Lowlands Preserve: expected species - warblers, including Bay-breasted Warbler.

Space is limited to 15 people. Contact Eleanor Moriarty to get on the list. After the first 15 people sign up, you will be placed on a waiting list.

Cancellations: please contact Eleanor so she can inform people on the waiting list there is an opening.

Lodging:

Two Choices are available: The preferred choice is Hungry Trout Resort, based on access to fridge and coffee maker in room and on-site restaurants. Reservations are to be made directly to the motel of choice. Mention Audubon Trip and Becky Gretton’s name. A block of standard rooms are being held until April 30th.

Hungry Trout Resort 518-946-2217, hungrytrout.com
Cost per night is \$131.80 (\$119 plus bed tax of \$12.80). Two nights stay will be \$263.60. A deposit of one night’s rental is required with a credit card. Up to four people may stay in the room for this rate. Each room as stated above has a small fridge and a four cup coffee maker. Two supplies of coffee are included and more may be purchased for \$1.00 at office. The Hungry Trout Restaurant (upscale) and McDougal’s Pub (bar style dinners) are located on the property. Not open for breakfast/lunch. Cancellation policy: 7 days prior to the reservation date, one night deposit minus \$10 is refunded. If within one week, the one night deposit is forfeited (unless room is rented).

Grand View Motel 518-946-2209, grandviewmotel.net
Rooms are \$99 per night plus bed tax. Two to a room, no fridge, no coffee maker in room, and no restaurant on property. Cancellation policy: 8 days prior, no charge. Up to 72 hours, forfeit one night deposit.

Expenses: Participants are responsible for their meals. Additional expenses will be incurred by participants to share gas and tolls. The mileage from Oneonta to Adirondack trip area is approximately 200 miles one way. Tolls for the Veteran’s Memorial Hwy (Whiteface) costs \$10 per vehicle, and \$7 for each additional passenger.

June Adirondack Birding Trip Reservation Form

Please reserve early: **Trip limited to 15 participants**

Contact Eleanor Moriarty to get on trip list – after the first 15, a waiting list will be established.

If canceling, contact Eleanor Moriarty – see contact information below

Lodging reservations are made by individuals, and meals are the responsibility of the individual.

Additional expenses: gas and tolls (approximately 400 miles round trip; tolls \$10 per vehicle + \$7 per person)

Name(s): _____

Contact information: _____ Number in party: _____

Lodging (check one): Hungry Trout () The Grand View Motel ()

Car pooling: Plan to drive () If space available, for how many? ()
Need a ride ()

For reservations or more information: Eleanor Moriarty 607-435-2054 or eleanormrrt955@gmail.com

Send form to: Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820

Upcoming Activities

March

March 18 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM

March 21 – Everything and More About Bluebirds:

Mr. Bluebird, John Rogers, Co-founder of the New York State Bluebird Society since 1982, a lifetime director since 2002 and one of America's foremost Bluebird experts will present *All About Bluebirds and More*. John has maintained over 450 bluebird boxes and he estimates that over 12,500 bluebirds have fledged in his boxes. His lifelong mission has been to protect New York's official State bird. The habitat of the Eastern Bluebird has been shrinking due to over development and sprawl.

John has taught numerous people to install and maintain boxes, securing the current and future success of the Eastern Bluebird.

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 23 – Annual Spring Montezuma Trip:

This year, interested participants are requested to contact Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054. The carpooling arrangements will need to be made ahead of time. The Spring migration of hundreds to thousands of waterbirds and Snow Geese returning north is a wonderful event. It is an all day trip, and participants should pack a picnic lunch as there are few opportunities to obtain food. For those participants going directly to the Montezuma Visitors Center, it is requested that you still contact Eleanor at the above number to coordinate with group leaders who will be meeting at the Center.

Expected time of arrival at center is 10:00am and departure from area is around 3:00pm depending on weather and sightings.

April

April 5 – Lake Otsego Waterfowl: Annual spring waterfowl trip around Lake Otsego and environs will leave from Cooperstown's Lake Front Docks at the foot of Fair Street at 8 AM sharp. Co-leaders will be Matt Albright, Bob Donnelly and John Davis. Sponsored by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society for several years, the trip has always attracted many area birders. Cars will be pooled and radio connected, and the trip will last until around noon. For more information, contact:

John Davis at davi7js4@hughes.net or 607-547-9688.

April 12 – Earth Festival

April 15 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM

April 18 – Eagle Research: Tom Salo will discuss the trapping and tracking of Golden Eagles this past winter. He will also show some highlights from this season's camera trapping effort. The camera trap sites are our eagle trapping locations. Following Tom's presentation, DOAS Interns and Hartwick College students Zach German and Jessica Henderson will each make a short presentation on their analysis of DOAS data. Zach is doing a demographic study of Golden Eagles passing the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch. Jessica is continuing the work started by Abby Nelson last year. She is counting the juvenile Bald Eagles that were part of a large congregation in Burlington in 2012.

Location: Program will be in **Cooperstown** at the Presbyterian Church at 7:30 PM. The church is on Pioneer Street one block south of the flagpole on Main Street (corner of Church Street).

April 19 – Snipe and Woodcock

May

May 3 – Glimmerglass Bird Walk

May 10 – Greenway Bird Walk

Mid May – South Hill Bird Walk

May 16 – Program: Larry Federman, well known bird expert, Education Coordinator for Audubon New York at the Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Center and the Buttercup Farm Audubon. Larry's program will be his expertise on dragonflies.

May 17 – Onderdunk Road Bird Walk

May 17 OR 18 – Big Day Bird Count

May 20 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM

May 21 – Wildflower Walk

June

June 1 – 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. Trip details and reservation form on page 6.

View membership benefits and download application from our website: doas.us/join-us/



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February Bird Sightings

Eagle sightings continue this winter, with Gerianne Carillo spotting a mature Bald in a tree near the Goodyear Lake dam, eying a deer carcass, waiting for cars to pass (1/23). On 1/27, Bonnie Graves observed an eagle sitting on the ice of the Chenango River near Oxford. Dorian Huneke watched a Golden lazily circling near her barn (1/31), and a Bald flying over the mostly-frozen Treadwell Creek the next day.

Tom Salo reported a male Red-bellied Woodpecker in Burlington Flats on Jan. 23rd. Gerianne Carillo found a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker enjoying suet in her Lilac, an unusual sighting for January 25th in Milford! Both Gerianne and Leslie Preston (Oneonta) appreciated the splash of color of male Purple Finches in otherwise drab winter scenes.

On Jan. 30th, B. Watson found 8-10 Robins enjoying the sunshine near the Richfield Springs Sportsmen's Club. Robins were

also reported by Tom Salo (14) and John Davis (1 in Cooperstown) on Feb. 16th. A Red-winged Blackbird visited Roger Hickey's feeder in Oneonta for a few weeks in January. Where there are feeder birds, there are predators; he also reported a Cooper's hawk making short work of a small bird it had caught.

After storm Nika (2/6), Kathryn Davino reported 23 Blue Jays and 35 Mourning Doves in a single day (2/6), plus a Red-breasted and two White-breasted Nuthatches and 4 Purple Finches.

When Otsego Lake is frozen, water fowl congregate in the water kept open by the bubblers at the docks in Cooperstown. On Feb. 5th, Leslie Preston reported Coots, Red-headed and Ring-billed Ducks, and several Scaups.

Snowy Owls continue in the area, with the Stamford owls being seen by several people, including Suzanne Gaynor and Randy Lynch. On 2/5, Tom Salo and Brian

Ryther flushed a member of another owl species visiting from the north, a Short-eared Owl. They watched it fly for a short time before it went out of sight. The silence of the owls in Treadwell was broken when Dorian Huneke finally heard a Great Horned on Feb. 10th. She also reported a Sharp-shinned Hawk in the village that same day. A Northern Goshawk scattered all other birds when



Carolina Wren
by Dave Kiehm

it landed outside Dave Kiehm's studio window, leaving the red squirrels peeking out from their tunnels (2/19).

A pair of Carolina Wrens has been working Lisa Gorn's suet feeder this winter. On Feb. 15th she also reported Purple Finches, including one leucistic individual that frequented her feeders for about a week. Birds with unusual coloring always make us look more closely at their other attributes. It's helpful for identification purposes when they are with others of their kind!
Sandy Bright