



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## Coming Activities

### January

**January 16** – Program: Birding Year in Review, 2014

**January 18** – Waterfowl Count

**January 20** – Board Meeting

**January 31** – Eagle Trip

### February

**February 7** – Golden Eagle Count

**February 13-16:** Great Backyard Bird Count

**February 17** – Board Meeting

**February 20** – Program: Hiking the John Muir Trail

### March

**March 20** – Program: Ravens

*More information on page 7*

## The Struggle for Survival

The places set aside by careful planning as a development to provide habitat for our declining bird species are a measure of optimism towards possibly having future generations of birders view and love the unique and diversified world of birds.

This year, I finally made the trip via the South Florida Audubon, of which I am a member, to Stormwater Treatment Area 5 in southern Florida. This eight square mile habitat which consists of four cells (shallow ponds) provides a filtering system that serves food for billions and trillions of algae and water plants. The purified water that runs into the Everglades is the product of the captured fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides that are dissolved in the runoff from the agricultural farms. The phosphorous stimulates the growth of cattails that overrun the sawgrass which is poor in nutrients.

The habitat created in this amazing impoundment is Freshwater, Marsh, Wetlands, and Lake/Pond. It is home to a number of species, and provides a welcome landing/resting place for migrants in the travels to and from their wintering places. Experiencing Stormwater Treatment Area 5 reminded me of our exceptional place, Montezuma in New York State. I spotted a number of our birds that we have seen on our fall and spring trips to Montezuma, such as the Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, the Blue-Winged teal, the Red-Headed duck, the Ruddy Duck, and the Northern Shoveler.

One particular species, the Snail Kite, reminded me of our Northern Harrier in its low-flying hunting and at a distant glance the broad white band across the base of the tail. The flight pattern is flapping and the wings are cupped. Our Northern Harriers glide and tip, but both of these species fly close over the grasses and fields. We managed to get an up close view of an adult Snail Kite with its hook tip bill and red face. This bird is listed as endangered, due to the sensitivity of the habitat that provides the food necessary for its survival, which is the Apple Snail. Since 2005, an invasive species, the Island Apple Snail originating from South America has been introduced into the environment. This Island Apple Snail presents a problem for the young Snail Kite due to the considerably bigger size of this invasive species. The estimated number of Snail Kites left in the wild is stated to be around 700. The risk is great for extinction in about 30 years.

Our Northern Harrier in New York State is threatened due to loss of habitat. At Montezuma, great views of them flying low over the grasslands in search of small mammals are seen in the fall and spring. Again, the beauty

*(Continued on page 3)*



Snail Kite by RJ Wiley  
rjwiley.smugmug.com

## A Good Year for DOAS

I was casting about for an idea for this month's column when I ran across another Audubon Chapter's newsletter with a year-end wrap up on their activities. Since I had recently completed the report we are required to submit to the National Audubon Society to maintain our certification, I had a good starting point—so here goes.

In January, the big excitement was anticipation of capturing our first Golden Eagle for fitting with a GPS tracking unit. We had documented the presence of these special birds in Otsego and Delaware Counties with baited motion cameras. With the support of our membership, grants, and other contributions we used funds to purchase four of these units. This month also brought the annual waterfowl count and Bald Eagle field trip.

February had numerous reports of invasive Snowy Owls, and the Kingfisher had a stunning photo of a bird near Stamford. Dianne Benko noted a number of sightings in her bird column. Appropriately, our February program was *Owls of Central NY* by Fred Von Mechow. On Feb. 8, DEC's Scott Van Arsdale caught our first Golden Eagle in Andes, Delaware Co. Originally dubbed "Max", the bird was renamed "Maxine" upon closer inspection of photos. The second capture was four days later at the same site. This bird was named "Jean" in honor of Jean Miller.

In March a third Golden Eagle, "Greg", was trapped and released in New Lisbon, Otsego Co. Our monthly program was on a popular topic—bluebirds. In late March, DOAS presented testimony on the impacts of the Constitution Pipeline at a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hearing in Cobleskill.

April arrived with unhappy news for the Golden Eagle project. It became apparent that Maxine had disappeared in lower Delaware County. Her last known location was near carcasses of feral pigs shot by government agents with lead ammunition. This is toxic to birds and other wildlife, and a Bald Eagle was also found dead with three times the lethal level of lead in its blood. A ground search for Maxine was unsuccessful. April also brought our Otsego Lake waterfowl trip, a program in Cooperstown on the GE project, and DOAS presence at the 2014 Earth Festival in Milford.

May had an extensive series of spring bird walks at locations including Glimmerglass State Park, Stamford, the Susquehanna Greenway, the Kernan Property in Harpersfield, the DOAS Sanctuary, South Hill in Davenport, and Onderdunk Rd. in Schoharie Co. We continued our conservation efforts regarding hydrofracking in NY, and the Constitution Pipeline locally.

June 1 brought our *Birds, Brunch and Beer* event at Brewery Ommegang—a very fun and well-attended event. Another bird walk visited back roads in Morris. Eleanor Moriarty organized an overnight Adirondack Boreal trip that produced nearly all of those North County specialties we savor.

July is our "off month" with no programs or meetings. However conservation work continued including a fledgling program to educate hunters and the general public of the dangers of lead ammunition, prompted by the disappearance of Maxine.

The *John G. New Audubon Day Camp* took place the first week in August at the DOAS Sanctuary. Camp Director Megan Gigandet, with the help of guest instructors, led the group in four days of outdoor adventure and learning. The Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch began its 26th consecutive season on Aug. 19.

In September, our program season started with a wonderful presentation, *The Birds of Our Own Forest*, by Matt Perry. Activity at the Hawkwatch increased as the large flocks of Broad-winged Hawks passed by, including 427 on

(Continued on page 5)

### THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

#### AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

#### NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Helen McLean

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents	Andrew Mason Susan O'Handley
Treasurer	Charlie Scheim
Secretary	Rebecca Gretton

Bob Donnelly  
Julia Gregory  
Rebecca Gretton  
Dorian Huneke  
Eleanor Moriarty  
Stephen Rice  
Joe Richardson  
Tom Salo  
Julie Smith

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS\* AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Conservation*:	Andy Mason
Education*:	Susan O'Handley
Field Trips*:	Bob Donnelly
Hawk Watch*:	Andrew Mason Tom Salo
Hospitality*:	Julia Gregory
Membership*:	Andy Mason
Programs*:	Eleanor Moriarty
Publicity*:	Eleanor Moriarty
Research*:	Peg DiBenedetto Tom Salo
Sanctuary*:	Andrew Mason
Bird Counts:	Sandy Bright
Charter Dinner:	Julia Gregory
Finance:	Gray Mason
Historian:	Julie Smith
Sales:	Stephen Rice

#### ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Delaware Otsego Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 544  
Oneonta, NY 13820  
Email: [info@doas.us](mailto:info@doas.us)

#### ON THE WEB:

[www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us)  
[www.facebook.com/  
DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety](http://www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety)

To contribute notes or articles for  
*The Belted Kingfisher*, email:  
[editor@doas.us](mailto:editor@doas.us)

## Conservation and Legislation

### **Aquatic invasive species measure proposed for Otsego County**

— With invasive species such as the zebra mussel, Eurasian watermilfoil, and spiny water flea appearing in New York State waters and elsewhere, it is apparent that our local lakes and rivers are in imminent danger from these organisms that can wreak havoc on natural ecosystems.

Zebra mussels—one of the best known invasive species—are already documented in Canadarago, Goodyear and Otsego Lakes, Oaks Creek, and the Susquehanna River in Otsego County, and may well be elsewhere. These mollusks attach to docks and water intakes, creating serious problems for those maintaining these and other structures. In addition, the mussels filter large quantities of water, removing phytoplankton and other microscopic biomass that serves as the basis for the food chain in a waterway. This impacts invertebrates, fish and other wildlife, and ultimately the economy and well-being of human society.

Water chestnut, a vigorous aquatic invasive species (AIC) has a good foothold in Goodyear Lake and threatens to spread to other waters. This plant chokes waterways, causing problems for boaters and swimmers and negatively impacting aquatic ecosystem functioning.

According to the NY State Dep't. of Environmental Conservation: "Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*), also known as "rock snot," is a non-native invasive microscopic algae (diatom) that can produce large amounts of stalk material to form thick brown mats on stream bottoms. Didymo threatens aquatic habitat, biodiversity and recreational opportunities." Although not yet reported in Otsego Co., this bad actor is not far away, found in Delaware County rivers. DEC also notes, "There are currently no known methods for controlling or eradicating didymo once it infests a water body."

In response to these and numerous other invasive threats, NY State has instituted regulations controlling the possession, transport, and other activities in regard to such species. However, it will be difficult and most likely impossible for the state to reverse the spread of AISes and avoid the appearance of new ones. Local action, such as boat-washing facilities now in place in Otsego Co. and elsewhere will be needed to battle the invaders.

An AIS transport law has been proposed for Otsego Co. that would expand upon existing regulations, requiring draining, cleaning and drying of vessels before and after use in a waterway, and including invasive algae as an AIS. Such a law would enable law enforcement and local officials to address this threat, potentially avoiding loss of fisheries, water quality, and the great expense of attempting to remove AISes after the fact.

**What you can do**—Contact your Otsego Co. Representative (see [www.otsegocounty.com/depts/bor/](http://www.otsegocounty.com/depts/bor/)), and ask them to support an AIS transport law for the county. There is both positive and negative sentiment on the county board for such a measure. Emphasize that AISes pose a long-term economic and environmental threat, and that stopping them before they become established is in the best interests of Otsego Co.

**Bad news/good news on fracking**—As well-reported locally, the proposed Constitution Pipeline which will traverse our region, carrying hydro-fracked gas from Pennsylvania, has received approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. DOAS has been an intervenor in this proceeding, along with several other organizations, represented by environmental law firm Earthjustice. Although FERC's decision is a major setback, the battle is not over. Earthjustice is requesting a rehearing, a necessary legal step for any future challenges. If this is denied, appeal to federal court is an option. Although this decision has not been made, we will be involved in any such effort, providing information on environmental impacts, particularly the effects on birds of the major forest fragmentation the pipeline will create.

The good news on the fracking front is of course the Cuomo administration's decision to not allow horizontal high-volume gas fracking in the state. This is the culmination of an outstanding grass-roots effort that puts New York in the forefront of ending our dependence of fossil fuels, and the ongoing climate impacts it creates. Gov. Cuomo and his Commissioners of Health and Environmental Conservation deserve our thanks and gratitude for their hard look at the science rather than the rhetoric of fracking. *Andy Mason*

---

### ***The Struggle for Survival*** (Continued from page 1)

of the adult male Harrier is striking. Our grasslands are a struggle to keep or redevelop.

In the latest issue of Audubon (national) their main article is titled *A Gathering Storm for North American Birds*. The dire predictions of the impact of climate change on birds, and us, the creators of climate change, leaves one with little optimism. As I was leaving Stormwater Treatment Area 5, it struck me that I could be a living witness to species that will not be here in 20, 30 years. As birders who have lived 20, 30, 40 years before me, witnessed species that are now extinct, I too have possibly become a member in the same club. I don't think any of us should be ready to accept this future without putting our energy into whatever we can to assess the potential destruction to our environment and what we can do in even the smallest part, to provide optimism for ourselves and each other. *Eleanor Moriarty*

## DOAS Christmas Bird Count Summary – 1969-2014 – 46 Years, 107 Species

### Compiled by Sandy Bright

Species	2014	# years	high # of birds (year)
Snow Goose	-	3	1169 (11)
Common Loon	-	2	1 (73, 79)
Double-crested Corm.	-	1	1 (06)
Tundra Swan	-	1	1 (99)
Great Blue Heron	-	21	4 (91)
Canada Goose	419	27	2681 (11)
Green-winged Teal	-	2	4 (13)
American Black Duck	21	29	44 (95)
Mallard	292	36	292 (14)
Mallard/Black Duck Hybrid	1	1	1 (14)
Canvasback	-	2	13 (01)
Ring-necked Duck	-	1	12 (99)
Bufflehead	1	3	3 (88)
Common Merganser	20	25	100 (12)
Hooded Merganser	-	6	97 (12)
Osprey	-	2	1 (93, 00)
Golden Eagle	-	3	2 (04)
Bald Eagle	3	10	4 (13)
Northern Harrier	-	9	1 (73, 80, 83, 94, 98, 00, 07, 09, 10)
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	21	2 (81, 90, 98, 05, 08)
Cooper's Hawk	2	20	5 (09)
Northern Goshawk	1	14	2 (87)
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	4	1 (74, 99, 03, 04)
Red-tailed Hawk	23	46	46 (09)
Rough-legged Hawk	-	37	10 (74)
American Kestrel	2	33	10 (73)
Merlin	-	1	1 (00)
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	18	3 (71, 84, 86, 00)
Ruffed Grouse	2	35	24 (82)
American Coot	-	1	1 (09)
Wild Turkey	145	34	1225 (95)
Northern Bobwhite	-	2	5 (75)
Killdeer	-	2	1 (79, 85)
Ring-billed Gull	1	24	206 (01)
Herring Gull	-	4	9 (92)
Rock Pigeon	633	39	1517 (98)
Mourning Dove	375	44	409 (98)
Common Barn-Owl	-	1	1 (71)
Eastern Screech-Owl	3	15	11 (12)
Long-eared Owl	-	1	1 (12)
Great Horned Owl	1	33	5 (04, 07, 12)
Barred Owl	1	13	3 (12)
N. Saw-whet Owl	1	5	2 (04, 07)
Short-eared Owl	-	1	1 (08)
Belted Kingfisher	-	28	5 (99)
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	3	1 (80, 82, 99)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	12	11	12 (14)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	6	3 (93, 97)
Downy Woodpecker	53	46	85 (08)
Hairy Woodpecker	29	46	59 (71)
Northern Flicker	-	12	2 (69, 00, 03, 05, 06, 09)
Pileated Woodpecker	5	29	9 (08)
Horned Lark	-	6	25 (72)
Blue Jay	519	46	519 (14)

Species	2014	# years	high # of birds (year)
American Crow	469	46	1040 (08)
Common Raven	7	11	31 (07)
Black-capped Chickadee	598	46	799 (07)
Boreal Chickadee	-	1	3 (75)
Tufted Titmouse	40	38	93 (09)
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	46	40 (93)
White-breasted Nuthatch	76	46	91 (07)
Brown Creeper	-	35	9 (99)
Winter Wren	-	1	1 (12)
Carolina Wren	3	18	4 (06)
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	28	20 (82)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	-	2	4 (99)
Eastern Bluebird	13	6	35 (07)
Swainson's Thrush	-	1	1 (71)
Hermit Thrush	-	1	1 (07)
Wood Thrush	-	1	1 (71)
Varied Thrush	-	2	1 (71, 83)
American Robin	1	19	16 (07)
Gray Catbird	-	2	1 (72, 07)
Northern Mockingbird	-	8	2 (81)
Cedar Waxwing	9	27	42 (07)
Northern Shrike	1	22	5 (95)
European Starling	1234	45	2741 (00)
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	1	1 (75)
Northern Cardinal	32	45	76 (76)
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	-	1	6 (79)
Eastern Towhee	-	3	2 (80)
American Tree Sparrow	103	46	269 (71)
Chipping Sparrow	4	2	8 (83)
Field Sparrow	-	1	2 (77)
Savannah Sparrow	-	1	1 (71)
Fox Sparrow	-	1	1 (97)
Song Sparrow	1	33	41 (75)
Swamp Sparrow	-	1	6 (75)
White-throated Sparrow	8	28	39 (72)
White-crowned Sparrow	-	6	3 (69)
Dark-eyed Junco	154	46	1051 (71)
Snow Bunting	2	20	500 (76)
Red-winged Blackbird	-	14	150 (11)
Rusty Blackbird	-	1	2 (74)
Common Grackle	-	9	65 (71)
Brown-headed Cowbird	-	23	200 (84)
Bullock's Oriole	-	1	1 (70)
Baltimore Oriole	-	1	1 (11)
Pine Grosbeak	-	15	80 (72)
Purple Finch	14	38	102 (82)
House Finch	72	39	452 (86)
Red Crossbill	-	5	20 (86)
White-winged Crossbill	-	2	3 (85)
Common Redpoll	-	26	101 (99)
Pine Siskin	19	26	149 (08)
American Goldfinch	127	46	418 (08)
Evening Grosbeak	-	32	696 (86)
House Sparrow	122	46	947 (74)

## 46th Christmas Bird Count

Though the day was gray, some roads slick, and the air infused with a light mist, the temperature made for a rather pleasant birding experience this year. A nice variety of birds was found by nine teams and six feeder-watchers, with three species setting records for our territory. The count of twelve Red-bellied Woodpeckers doubled our previous high of six in 2012. Mallards (292) and Blue Jays (519) both topped their previous highs. Bob Donnelly found our first record of a Mallard/ American Black Duck hybrid.



*Female Red-bellied Woodpecker from KenThomas.us*

Late lingerers and northern visitors coexist in the current conditions, as evidenced by the mix of Cedar Waxwing, Song Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Bluebird, and Robin. In addition, a Northern Shrike was spotted by Randy and Carol Lynch, while Marilyn and John Leahy found Chipping Sparrows, the first seen during the CBC in over three decades. Some participants reported finding fewer active feeders. This, combined with mostly frozen ponds, likely affected overall numbers of some species. The complete list of 5,677 birds of 49 species can be found on page 4.

*Sandy Bright*



*Andy Mason*

### DOAS Co-President Andy Mason Receives Award

The New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) recognized Andy Mason with the Gordon M. Meade Distinguished Service Award for "his outstanding leadership and service to NYSOA ... researching issues and advocating well-articulated positions to protect the birds of New York State."

## Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch Update

We are in the tail end of the season at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, located on the DOAS Sanctuary. Numbers for most species have been below the 12 year average since full time counting began. Only Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle and Broad-winged Hawks are above average for the season. Total raptors is also below average, but not by a lot, and will surpass last year's count.

The total for Golden Eagles is at 140 as of mid-December. Average is 174, so we likely will not reach that. Good counts of 14 goldens each came on Nov. 2 and Dec. 1.

The Hawkwatch season is scheduled to wrap up after New Years, and a full report will appear in the next *Belted Kingfisher*.

*Andy Mason*

### **Packing Peanuts—Reuse, Don't Trash**

Wondering what to do with all those leftover packing peanuts from holiday gifts and other deliveries?

The Shipping Room in Oneonta will accept these and reuse them, keeping them out of landfills.

You can drop them off at 291 Chestnut Street during their regular business hours, Monday-Friday, 1:00-5:30 PM.

### **A Good Year for DOAS** (Continued from page 2)

the 17th. DOAS also became a supporter of a project to survey a cocoa plantation in the Dominican Republic for birds in an effort to create a reserve for local birds and migrants, possibly including Bicknell's Thrush.

October brought our popular Open House at the DOAS Sanctuary—well-attended despite rainy weather. Another major event was the annual Charter Dinner, in a new location this year, but also well-attended with a terrific program on the birds of Ecuador with Robert Mumford.

In November, the bird seed sale fundraiser was a good success, with members stocking up on feed for their feathered friends this winter. The Hawkwatch moved into Golden Eagle season with a good count of 14 on the 2nd.

Finally, December brought our Christmas Bird Count, well-compiled by Sandy Bright for the second year. Tom Salo and others continued awareness-raising efforts on lead ammo.

And all year Susan O'Handley maintained our great web site, and Helen McLean provided members with nine informative and pleasing issues of this newsletter.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of DOAS activities over the past year, but it gives a picture of the varied and in-depth efforts our organization carries on in support of our mission to protect our natural world. I commend and thank all of our board members, committee chairs and other volunteers who bring about these accomplishments.

*Andy Mason*

## NYS Young Birders Club at Hawkwatch

The NY State Young Birders Club visited the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch on November 9, a stop on their monthly series of field trips around the state. DOAS is a supporting organization for the club. Seven club members along with parents and helpers made the trip to the mountain, and enjoyed a brief orientation on the site, along with interaction with counters and other visitors. Unfortunately, winds did not provide a good hawk flight, although one Golden Eagle and enough other raptors kept the interest up.

There were also two television crews on site—local Utica channel WKTV reporter Earl Davis following up on a visit to the Hawkwatch earlier that week, and Bonny Scheltema, Associate Producer for NBC Learn, the educational arm of NBC News, who had arranged to film the Young Birders Club visit for production of a classroom program on kids and bird migration.

Needless to say, it was an active day, with cameras and microphones everywhere—an exciting event for both us and the young birders!

More information on the NY State Young Birders Club, a special project of the NY State Ornithological Assoc., can be found at [www.nysyoungbirders.org](http://www.nysyoungbirders.org).

*Andy Mason*



*Golden Eagle at Franklin Mt., by Curt Morgan*



*Young Birders Club at Franklin Mt., by Andy Mason*

## It's All About Spring!

I was given notice last May that a Board Member column was due by the middle of August. My subject matter became obvious as spring approached, and I scribbled notes furiously as the precious days passed, with all of the emotions that THE SEASON generates:

**FEAR** that spring won't come. How can a countryside so abjectly barren possibly host the flora and fauna allegedly due to arrive?

**Frantic DETERMINATION:** I vow not to miss anything when things start to pop.

**REALIZATION:** With constant participation it is possible to keep up with things.

**RELIEF:** The leaves are coming out a little later than in previous years. Birds are still visible!

Blossoms and birdsong bring incredible **JOY:** an annual miracle.

With leaves fully out, one's approach changes to **LISTENING**, then looking. The fever has somewhat abated.

**DENIAL:** Has the activity settled down somewhat?

**ACCEPTANCE:** Inevitably, it has.

**Renewed CRAZINESS:** Gotta practice for the Breeding Bird Survey.

**An unexpected TREAT:** A few new areas are made available for birding by landowners who practice stewardship. More bird jaunts! More searching!

**Post-BBS EXHAUSTION** is accompanied by a strong sense of **ACHIEVEMENT**.



*Juncos nesting in wreath*

Relaxed observation of favorite local nesting spots is as special as ever. Can't wait for the **ADIRONDACK TRIP!**

A fun morning was had in a wonderful forest with a beginning birder who is **HOOKED**. After a rare encounter with nesting Roughed Grouse, complete with sounds, we departed in awe.

**A rainy day:** Wow, my house is a MESS! Too many days spent outdoors with little regard paid to housekeeping.

**A birding by ear morning** on a magical property led to another day of birding with a special friend and his group of "NEWBIES" who are also hooked on being in the woods with ears wide open. (48 degrees but the birds didn't care.)

Oh it's almost Adirondack time. I hear the **BLACK FLIES** are the worst in recent memory...

It was a wonderful trip, the **THAXTONS** are super and the Bicknell's is mine! Exhaustion.

**CHRISTMAS** in July: a Junco pair is nesting in my neighbors' wreath, raising the second brood.

Baby birds: Titmice, Orioles, ETC...

The Red-wings are **FLOCKING** up.

Christmas has extended into August: the **THIRD** brood just fledged.

**NEVER FEAR**, fall migration is near!

The cycles of birding are truly year-round, and the rewards are limitless. How can one resist?

*Becky Gretton*

# Upcoming Activities

## January

### January 16 – The Birding Year in Review, 2014:

Rick Bunting, well known local photographer will be our presenter for the January monthly meeting. His amazing photos will cover the most interesting photos captured this past year. Since his retirement from SUNY Potsdam and The Crane School of Music, Rick pursues his passion for photography full time to the delight of his large fan club.

Program is held at The Elm Park United Methodist Church, Chestnut Street, Oneonta and starts at 7:30 PM. Free and open to the public, refreshments are served. For further information, contact: Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054.

**January 18 – 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](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

### January 20 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM

**January 31 – Eagle Trip:** The annual DOAS field trip to view wintering bald eagles. This popular outing visits rivers and reservoirs in Delaware County where the birds concentrate to feed. Recent trips have turned up 20 to 30 eagles. We also generally see other raptors and a variety of waterfowl.

The trip will depart the Dietz St. parking lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta at 8 AM. Participants can be picked up en route in Delhi and Walton. Carpooling is highly encouraged. We will stop for lunch at a local restaurant for interested participants. Return to Oneonta will be mid to late afternoon.

For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

## February

**February 7 – Golden Eagle Count:** As part of our effort to understand the numbers and range of winter resident Golden Eagles we are conducting a one day raptor count covering much of Delaware County. How much of the county we cover depends in large part on the availability of volunteers. The counts should take about 4 hours. They are conducted during the day when birds might be soaring or perch hunting.

We are creating territories/routes with approximately 50-60 miles of road in each. This should allow enough time for slow travel while regularly stopping and scanning. The routes should be started between 9 and 10 AM when birds have become active.

Since we expect to have more territories than skilled people, we need to maximize our highly skilled birders – those who are able to identify distant eagles by silhouette. These team leaders can bring along others or we will team them with other people as spotters. Golden Eagles are the focus but all raptors will be counted.

Because this is the first year for this count, we will be looking for feedback on the length of the routes and any other constructive comments you might have. We are hoping this is successful enough to expand the area beyond Delaware County next winter.

In case of extreme weather, teams can count the following day.

If you would like to participate in this count, please contact Tom Salo at [salothomas@gmail.com](mailto:salothomas@gmail.com) or 607-965-8232. If you believe you are skilled enough to lead a team, share information about your experience and skill level. If you have a preferred part of the county you want to survey, we will try to accommodate you. Participants will be sent a territory map, data form and count protocol.

**February 13-16:** Great Backyard Bird Count, [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org)

### February 17 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM

**February 20 – Hiking the John Muir Trail,** presenter and hiker, Kathy Mario

## 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.

Make 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: \_\_\_\_\_



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

[www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us)

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #422  
ONEONTA, NY 13820

## November-December Bird Sightings

As I'm writing this article the winter solstice is only two days away. In spite of the shortest daylight hours, bird sightings continue to be varied and numerous.

A few end of October sightings. Bill Carbine and Italo Buroni saw a lone Bonaparte's Gull on their pond in Treadwell, Andy Mason had a handful of Pine Siskins at his Jefferson feeder and from his Hartwick College office window Charlie Scheim kept seeing one Red-tailed Hawk after another totaling a 15 sized kettle.

The first of Nov. ushered in a pair of American Tree Sparrows mixed with 30+ Dark-eyed Juncos in Randy Lynch's Jefferson driveway. Nov. 3rd was a banner bird day: Andy Mason heard an Eastern Screech Owl whinnying in the Jefferson night and had 4 Evening Grosbeaks at his feeder, Randy Lynch watched a small flock of Snow Buntings flash by in Harpersfield, and Scott Fielder saw a family of 6-7 Hooded Mergansers at the Plains in Oneonta

apparently feeding on small goldfish. On Nov. 5 Jason Wanaselja saw the red eyes of a Horned Grebe in Otsego Lake and John Davis watched a Fox Sparrow forage near his Cooperstown feeder. On the 9th Bill Carbine and Italo Buroni saw 2 male Buffleheads in Treadwell and Andy Mason enjoyed the visit of about a dozen Cedar Waxwings in Jefferson. Rod Spangle was surprised to see a Great Black-backed Gull sitting on some rocks in the Susquehanna River near Unadilla on 11/11. Tom Salo got some good looks at a late Common Yellowthroat at the FMHW on 11/13. On the 17th a Great Horned Owl flew towards the woods near Dorian Huneke's Treadwell barn. On 11/26 a Sharp-shinned Hawk swooped across the road in Oneonta in front of Sandy Bright's car. The next day hiking down from Mud Lake she saw several flocks of geese, mostly Canada, with one flock of about 20 Snow Geese. While walking on the rail trail in Hamden on 11/28 Kathy Mario and Pam Peters saw 2 Bald Eagles and an Osprey circling overhead. On Nov. 30th Andy Mason reported

2 dark phase Rough-legged Hawks hunting together in the Jefferson morning.

The first of Dec. brought 40 European Starlings, 4 Red-winged Blackbirds and 15 Brown-headed Cowbirds to Gerianne Carillo's Milford feeder. The next day Sandy Bright watched a fishing Belted Kingfisher in Neawha Park. Two days later a male Red-bellied Woodpecker made an appearance at Tom Salo's W. Burlington feeder. On the 7th Bob Donnelly saw 2 Short-eared Owls right at Ripple Corners and a Cooper's Hawk was sitting by his Cooperstown bird feeder. The next day Jennifer Car observed her resident Eastern Bluebird couple perched on their birdhouse in Middlefield. On the 10th a juvenile Northern Goshawk raided Tom Salo's W. Burlington feeder and on the 13th an American Robin was sitting in an apple tree in Bob Donnelly's Roseboom yard.

If you have bird sightings to report, contact me at [dbenko@frontiernet.net](mailto:dbenko@frontiernet.net), at 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 Tom Tighe*