



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

June

June 4 – West Branch Preserve Field Trip

June 5–Birding By Ear Workshop

June 18– Nichol Nature Preserve Bird/Nature Walk

June 19– Birds and Brunch at Origins Cafe

July

July 25 to July 28–Audubon Summer Day Camp, Grades 3-4

August

August 8 to August 11–Audubon Summer Day Camp, Grades 5-6

September

Septembr 16–Program, Pat Kernan, Bird Illustrations

September 20–DOAS Board Mtg

October

October 1 (tentative)–Open House at the DOAS Sanctuary

October 21– Annual Fall Charter Dinner

More information on page 7

DOAS programs are free & open to the public

State Treasures

by DOAS Board member Charlie Scheim

I'm a practical sort of person, and I always enjoy finding "free treasures" in life, especially when they fit naturally into my favorite things. Some of the really wonderful "free treasures" I've found are the many state forests in our area. I love to bird, I love to hike, and I love to explore; the state forests let me do all three, for free. And besides, who can resist wanting to visit places with names such as Texas Schoolhouse State Forest, Arctic-China State Forest, or Whaupanaucaw State Forest?

As I count them, there are well over 100 state forests in Otsego, Schoharie, Delaware, and Chenango counties. Good sources on the internet for finding state forests are Google Maps, NYS DEC State Lands Interactive Mapper, and CNY Hiking. If you already have a name of a forest you want to check out, simply doing a Google search for the forest often yields maps, reviews, suggested routes, etc.

In terms of amenities, the state forests are often a step or two down from state parks, such as Gilbert Lake or Glimmerglass. There are



no ice cream stands, restrooms, parking lots, etc., which generally equates to far fewer people. This contributes to the serenity of the forest and makes the birding and hiking that much more pleasant. Some state forests, such as Arnold Lake, have some well-marked trails; others, such as Hooker Mountain, have none, though there are almost always old logging roads or other unmarked paths. But really, who needs trails? Just the other day my wife Sandy Bright and I had excellent birding at Calhoun Creek State Forest, a small 730 acre preserve near Morris with no marked trails. We simply strolled along a road through the forest, while a variety of birds were calling among the treetops and flitting and back and forth across

"State Treasures"--cont. on page 4

*President's Message***New York State
Young Birders Club**

As birders—and particularly as aging birders such as myself—we sometimes wring our hands over the future of our pastime, and more importantly over whether the younger generations will stand up for the wonderful birds we enjoy. We worry whether the hard-earned protections brought about by those before us will withstand the inevitable attempts to weaken them after we are gone.

Well, here in New York at least, there is strong evidence that there is a cohort of young people who share our passion for birds, and do recognize the need for their conservation. DOAS has been a Partner Organization of the NY State Young Birders Club since its inception as a special project of the NY State Ornithological Assoc. in 2008. The club, open to young birders aged 10-19, has grown from a starting 11 members to 50 this year. In addition, there are 42 supporting adult members and over 20 Partner Organizations.

The group's main activity is monthly field trips to birding hotspots around the state. The club has twice visited the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch in the fall. They also have participated in the New Jersey World Series of Birding, and done very well in this competition. The club meets annually to elect officers and plan for the coming year. I can say from my contacts



Photo by Joe Hernandez

with these young birders that they are bright, passionate and committed!

The club does its own fundraising, largely through birdathons and supporting members and organizations, and uses this money for scholarships to birding conferences, camps, the NYSOA annual meeting and other bird-related activities. Several of the young birders who have aged out of the club have become involved in bird conservation, and even taken up ornithology as a profession, traveling worldwide on research projects. Although we have not had young birders from our area active in the club, we certainly would be happy to help encourage and guide youngsters toward the group. If you know of any budding birders that may be interested, please let us know.

So perhaps the future of birds and birders is brighter than we fear. As is so often the case, kids will rise to the challenge!

For more information on the NY State Young Birders Club, visit www.nysyoungbirders.org.

Andy Mason

**THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**
FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Janet Potter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents	Becky Gretton Andrew Mason Susan O'Handley
Treasurer	Charlie Scheim
Secretary	Dorian Huneke

Bob Donnelly
Julia Gregory
Janet Potter
Stephen Rice
Tom Salo

Two vacancies

**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*:	Becky Gretton
Publicity*:	Susan O'Handley
Sanctuary*:	Andrew Mason
Bird Counts:	Sandy Bright
Charter Dinner:	Julia Gregory
Finance:	Gray Mason
Historian:	Vacant
Sales:	Stephen Rice

ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Delaware Otsego Audubon
Society

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Oneonta, NY 13820

Email: info@doas.us

ON THE WEB:

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

Conservation and Legislation

Will NY require GMO food labeling?—There is a growing effort to require food producers to label their products if they contain genetically-modified organisms, or GMOs. Consumers presently are unaware if the food they buy contains these plants and animals that have been altered by manipulating the DNA to create qualities such as pesticide resistance, faster growth, salt tolerance, etc. Informing shoppers of the presence of such materials is common sense and a fair proposition.

GMO labeling is a requirement in Maine, Connecticut and later this summer in Vermont. A number of other nations including Japan, Australia and all of the European Union countries either ban or require labeling GMOs.

There is little or no scrutiny of the health and environmental impacts of GMOs. We do know that since these organisms were first introduced, use of toxic herbicides like Roundup has increased 15 times. GMO crops are also responsible for the emergence of “super weeds” and “super bugs” which can only be killed with ever more toxic poisons. The long-term impacts of GMOs are unknown, and once released into the environment these engineered organisms cannot be recalled.

A bill to require GMO labeling in NY State is pending in the legislature. A. 617/S. 485 would add our state to those standing up for the rights of consumers to know what they and their families are eating. The legislation is opposed by chemical companies and factory farming corporations, who use lobbyists and campaign contributions to keep this well-supported bill from a vote.



What you can do—Contact your state senator and assemblymember and urge them to work to bring the GMO labeling legislation to the floor before the end of the current session in June. Make clear that you want this information in making your food decisions.

In a related development, legislation has been introduced in Congress that would ban states from enacting such labeling laws. Dubbed the “Monsanto Dream Bill” after the company that has led the biotech charge with its “Roundup Ready” crops, this is a clear attempt to muzzle states this do see the necessity of

food safety information. US Senators and Representatives should be told to oppose this legislation.

Information on how to contact your representatives can be found on the conservation page of www.doas.us.

Update on Constitution

Pipeline—The latest action on the Constitution Pipeline is the company’s filing of an appeal of the NYS decision to not issue a water quality permit for the project. This was expected, and DOAS will be an intervenor in this action through the Earthjustice law firm.

Also, NY Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has petitioned the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to stop the project and to investigate Constitution for its part in the premature felling of trees by landowners along the pipeline route in NY, including locally in Sidney and Summit. FERC had specifically denied Constitution the right to proceed with this cutting without the water quality permit.

Andy Mason

Save the Date- October 21! Join us for the DOAS Annual Fall Charter Dinner at the Holiday Inn in Oneonta, with bird photographer Warren Greene as our featured speaker.

“State Treasures”--cont. from page 1

the road. Alternatively, one can always bushwhack. Nowadays, there are smartphone apps that make this option more palatable; they use GPS to show your current location and recent pathway through the forest, so backtracking is always an option if you lose your way (though the apps don't protect against briars and swamplands).

Sandy and I recently traveled to Burnt-Rossman Hills State Forest. This is a large preserve (over 10,000 acres) in Schoharie County with many well-marked trails. A few years ago, we found Red Crossbills there in late winter. They were absent this spring, but we found dozens of Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. We followed a trail around Looking Glass Pond which varied from being a wide trail covered with crusher run to being almost undetectable in some places. On the pond we found Wood Ducks, Great Blue

Hérons, and Common Mergansers.

Birds are not the only attractions to be found in state forests. As we hiked along this trail, we found a DEC water hole which had been constructed in the 1930s to help fight forest fires (it is Burnt-Rossman, after all). It was a pool about three feet deep and twenty feet across, ringed with a small wall of large flat stones. The water was so crystal clear that we could watch caddis fly larva crawling along the bottom in the leaf litter, dragging their protective stone/stick/sand cases along with them. Later on, we found an old cemetery, which we wandered through for a while. This short detour was unexpectedly affecting: we found ourselves reflecting on the people who had lived and died on this land two hundred years ago, and rejoicing that we were able to share this land on that day.



*Photos of
Burnt-Rossman
waterhole by
Charlie Scheim*

DOAS Board News

The following DOAS directors were re-elected at the membership meeting on May 20th to two year terms ending in May of 2018: Becky Gretton, Andy Mason, Dorian Huneke, Charlie Scheim, Julia Gregory, and Tom Salo. There are two vacancies for terms expiring in May of 2017 that will be appointed in the future by the DOAS Board.

A committee of the Board of Directors has proposed several changes to the DOAS Bylaws. The Board voted at the April meeting to make those changes available for membership review prior to a vote by the Board in August. The revisions include allowing more than one president, as is the current practice, creation of an Executive Committee to make urgent decisions between board meetings, and requirement that all directors, officers and committee members comply with our new Conflict of Interest Policy. The changes can be viewed at <http://doas.us/2016-proposed-changes-to-does-bylaws/>. All members are urged to send any questions or concerns to info@doas.us or call Andy Mason or any other Board member before August 1.

John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp 2016

DATES

For Children entering 3rd and 4th Grade - July 25-July 28;
For Children entering 5th and 6th Grade - August 8-August 11

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society is now accepting registrations for the John G. New Audubon Day Camp at Franklin Mountain Sanctuary 2016. The program provides fun, hands-on experiences in natural science and environmental education through field investigations, crafts and games.

Campers will explore a variety of habitats and learn about creatures that live there. There is limited space in this program, so registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.



Megan Langan, Camp Director

Camp Director, Megan Langan (nee Gigandet) will be returning for her fourth year with the 2016 program. Welcome back, Megan!

Details and Registration Forms are available at <http://doas.us/2016-doas-summer-camp-registration/>

CONTACT DOAS Education Chair Susan O'Handley at 607-643-5680 if you have any questions. Partial and Full Sponsorship Opportunities may become available – please call to inquire.

Big Day Bird Count

DOAS had its big day bird count on Saturday, May 14th. Fortunately, it was the only nice weather day we had that week. The various teams spread out around our three counties found 122 species, a terrific number for our region.

Highlights included:

- Julia Gregory found a Golden-winged Warbler.
- Charlie Schiem and Sandy Bright discovered a Red-shouldered Hawk nest with young.
- Randy Lynch heard a Northern Parula.
- Pam Peters saw an active Bald Eagle nest and Red-tailed Hawk nest.
- Bob Donnelly and Eleanor Moriarty had a pair of Blue-winged Teal and a singing Olive-sided Flycatcher .

Bob Donnelly



Blue-winged Teal
WikiMedia photo by Dan Pancamo

“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 8

Black-throated Green Warbler and Blue-headed Vireo (Jefferson). Ruby-crowned Kinglets migrated through and were spotted in many locations over a 2-week period, including Delhi (Kathryn Davino), (Randy Lynch), Richfield Springs (Becky Gretton), Laurens, Fultonham, and my own yard in Oneonta!



photo by
David Kiehm

April ended with the first Common Yellowthroat, found by Tom Salo (Burlington). May 2nd brought a Ruby-throated hummingbird, happily slurping away at Gerianne Carillo’s feeder in Milford. Suzanne Gaynor reported the first beautiful Indigo Bunting in East Meredith.

May 4th: Kathryn Davino was cheered by the lovely song of a Wood Thrush (Delhi), and Becky Gretton by a singing Northern Waterthrush and an American Redstart (Springfield). Angelika Rashkow reported an immature Pine Grosbeak (Cooperstown). The next day, Becky reported Warbling Vireo, Nashville Warbler, and a Raven (Springfield).

May 6th: Chimney Swifts arrived in Oneonta. Mitchel Light got excellent views and listened to a Blackburnian Warbler at the Cobleskill Rural Cemetery. Sue Whitney observed 2 Merlins copulating in Wilber Park, Oneonta. Gerry Pearlberg observed an Osprey in flight, and described an amazing display of many hundreds of Barn and Tree Swallows swooping and diving along the water’s surface, a “lovely, almost surreal sight of kinetic elegance” (Bloomville).

May 9th: What do you call a Red-winged Blackbird with no red in its wings? One of these variants was under Steve Hall’s feeder in Ilion. Kathryn Davino found Bobolinks chattering in fields, and also Black-throated Blue Warblers near Delhi.

May 10th - 11th: Pam Peters discovered Yellow, Prairie, Blue-winged and Chestnut-sided warblers, Least Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Catbird, and Scarlet Tanager in Treadwell. Andy Mason found a Northern Parula and Veeries in Jefferson and Oneonta, along with Yellow-throated Vireos. Stan Salthe was excited to find a Red-headed Woodpecker (no, that’s not a typo – really red-headed!) in Deposit. Eleanor Moriarty found Magnolia, Nashville, and Black-throated Green Warblers near Davenport. Becky Gretton listened to a Louisiana Waterthrush in Springfield.

May 12th: Bob Donnelly was very happy to report 2 live, singing Hooded Warblers after recently finding one that survived the long migration only to meet its demise at its summer home in Cherry Valley. Pam Peters heard a Mourning Warbler in Treadwell.

Dorian Huneke found Barn Swallows (5/13) and Eastern Kingbird (5/14) in Treadwell. Betsy O’Brien reported a pair of Orchard Orioles high up in the trees in Milford Center. The next day, Dorian saw a Solitary Sandpiper at a beaver pond.

As this reporting period came to a close, Charlie and I discovered an active Red-shouldered Hawk nest near Oneonta. It was an interesting juxtaposition: tiny, fuzzy heads of helpless chicks next to a powerful and majestic hawk mother.

Sandy Bright

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: _____

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

Upcoming Activities

June

June 4—Field Trip to West Branch Preserve: Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright will lead a bird walk at the West Branch Preserve. The Preserve is located on NY Rt10 in the Town of Hamden, Delaware County, NY, about 10 miles southeast of Delhi. We will meet at 8 AM at the preserve entrance and parking area, on Rt10, about 0.9 mi beyond the junction with County Route 26. The walk, which will last about two hours, includes some moderate up-and-downhill ground. For more information contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or scheimc@hartwick.edu.

June 5—Birding By Ear Workshop: The workshop will be held on Sunday morning, June 5 at the Davis Park in the Town of Westford, NY. Have you been interested in unlocking the secrets of bird ID through song? Educational session, hikes, “Bruncheon” and raffle begins at 8:30 AM. The Betty and Wilbur Davis Park offers a variety of habitats and a perfect pavilion for our event. Pre-paid registration is required and groups are limited in size. More information and digital registration is available on line at doas.us. Registration is first come, first serve! Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information.

June 18—Bird/Nature Walk, Robert W. Nichol Nature Preserve in the Village of Hancock, Delaware County: Join Pamela J. Peters for a bird walk for beginners of all ages at 7AM. Take an easy stroll through the preserve while learning the basics of bird identification. This is a free activity and everyone is welcome. For further information, call 607-434-4853.

June 19— Birds and Brunch at Origins Cafe near Cooperstown: Join us for an easy bird walk followed by a delicious brunch at the Origins Café, located on Beaver Meadow Road, south of Cooperstown. The café

is known for its healthy, locally-sourced food. The walk will start at 8 AM with brunch at 10. Reservations are required—contact Andy Mason at 607-652-2162 or AndyMason@earthling.net.

July

July 25 to July 28 –John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp: For Children entering 3rd and 4th Grade. See article on page 5. Details and Registration Forms are available at <http://doas.us/2016-doas-summer-camp-registration/>

August

August 8 to August 11— John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp: For Children entering 5th and 6th Grade. See article on page 5. Details and Registration Forms are available at <http://doas.us/2016-doas-summer-camp-registration/>

September

September 16— DOAS Public Program: Pat Kernan, Curator of Scientific Illustrations at the New York State Museum, will present a program about the Museum’s illustrations with an emphasis on birds. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

September 20— DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

October

October 1 (tentative)— Open House: DOAS Sanctuary

October 21— DOAS Annual Fall Charter Dinner: Join us at the Holiday Inn in Oneonta, with bird photographer Warren Greene as our featured speaker.

Join the DOAS Bird Friendly Coffee Club, Support the programs of DOAS and protect bird habitats Preorder your coffee monthly and pick it up at member meetings. Contact Susan O’Handley at (607) 643-5680 or email sjohandley@gmail.com for more information and to sign up.



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April-May Bird Sightings



David Kiehm

At this time of year, my exercise routine is constantly disrupted... but who can complain when the distraction is a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker drumming on a street sign, or White-crowned Sparrows foraging

low in bushes? We welcome many returning species, and enjoy the antics of birds as they prepare for their busy season.

April 20th: Rod Spangle heard the “peent” of 2 American Woodcocks (Unadilla). Sapsuckers were found by

If you have bird sightings to report, contact Sandy Bright, brights@hartwick.edu, at 40 Fair St., Oneonta, NY 13820, or at 607 287-4465 for the next issue of The Belted Kingfisher. We regret that not every report can be included due to limited space. Additional information may be requested for sightings of rare or unusual birds.

Gerianne Carillo (Milford), and Eleanor Moriarty, who also enjoyed a Brown Thrasher “singing his heart out” in her yard (Davenport). On the 23rd, Eleanor reported one brilliant male Rose-breasted Grosbeak and about a dozen Chipping Sparrows. At South Hill, she found 2 Hairy Woodpeckers and a White-throated Sparrow before the sharp reports of firearms caused her early departure. Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers were located in Oneonta.

April 24th: Leslie Preston discovered a Northern Mockingbird (Oneonta). Randy Lynch reported 4 Wilson’s Snipes, House and Carolina Wrens, Eastern Towhee, Savannah Sparrows, Cooper’s and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Pine Siskin, and American Tree Sparrow (Harpersfield). Charlie Scheim found a Winter Wren at Burnt-Rossman State park.

April 25th: Kathryn Davino was pleased that Northern Flickers finally showed an interest in her suet feeder. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks appeared in force, reported by Kathryn, Bob Plath (Delhi), and Kathy Dawson (Guilford).

April 27th: Rod Spangle saw 2 Rusty Blackbirds, an unusual sighting for this area! Andy Mason reported

“Bird Sightings” Continued on page 6