



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

May Program: Monarchs and Milkweed

COMING ACTIVITIES

May

- May 5—Greenway Bird Walk
- May 5—Global Big Day Bird Count
- May 12—West Branch Preserve Trip
- May 12—Bird Walk, Stamford
- May 13—Sanctuary Bird Walk
- May 15—DOAS Board Mtg.
- May 18—DOAS Program, "Monarchs and Milkweed"
- May 23—Gilbert Lake Wildflower Walk
- May 20—Mine Kill Bird Festival
- May 25-May 27—Taking Flight-Birding in the Catskills
- May 27—Birds and Breakfast

June

- June 3—Birding by Ear

More information on page 7

DOAS PROGRAMS
ARE FREE & OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC

Join us for "Monarchs and Milkweed" with speaker Tannar Cliffe on May 18, 2018, 7:30 PM at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St. in Oneonta.

Tannar raised and released 177 Monarch butterflies in 2017 through Monarch Watch, a program managed by the University of Kansas in an attempt to document the fall flight routes of Monarchs born in the Northeast US and Southern Canada. Tagged Monarchs recovered during their five-month resting period in Mexico reveal information about migration. This citizen effort will



hopefully reveal where critical milkweed populations need to be conserved or enhanced. The small tag on the hind wing contains contact information and in no way inhibits the flight of the butterfly. Interested attendees will receive milkweed seeds to take home for planting.



Monarch with Tag



Chrysalis Container

Tannar's grandfather, Rick Bunting, a popular DOAS speaker, expressed his excitement when the butterfly on the left emerged: "Yesterday the first of Tannar's monarchs emerged! This was especially significant because this was the first one he had raised from an egg. So, let the tagging begin!" On the right is what they call Tannar's "Chrysalis Cathedral". There are over 75 chrysalises in this container alone.

Co-President's Column

by Susan O'Handley

DOAS has a strong history of speaking up on issues that impact our environment locally, regionally and nationally. One of our first letter writing campaigns took place in 1995 for an outdoor Earth Day event. When the Earth Festival in Milford began in 2006, we began conducting an annual campaign to focus on current environmental issues and help make it easy for others to voice their concerns to those who are representing them in our government.

In 2017 the overwhelming number of attacks on our national environmental protections prompted us to take our campaigns to the digital realm as well, so that we could potentially reach more people. Now, in 2018 those threats still exist along with other new ones. For our 2018 Action Campaign, we have selected to focus on threats to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Each of these offer critical protections and funding for birds, wildlife and conservation of their habitats.

If you didn't get a chance to send a letter at our booth at Earth Festival last month, please take a few moments to send your letter today. Your representatives need to hear from you in order to understand your views and hopefully represent you when it comes time for voting. The value of a letter can't be underestimated.

You can send your letter today

using our website form, accessed at <http://doas.us/action/>.

On another note, we are in full swing for our spring season bird walks - culminating with the popular Birding by Ear event in early June - and will soon be heading into the summer months. Our activities will shift from our Friday Programs into our Camp season as well as work to prepare for our 2018/19 activities. Before we move onward, we are honored to recognize outgoing Board Director, Julia Gregory, for her dedication and service to our Chapter (since 1990). We are happy to say that Julia will continue to be involved in helping to coordinate our annual Charter Dinner event (Save the Date - October 12th, at the Holiday Inn, Oneonta!

As Andy Mason had mentioned last month in this newsletter, the DOAS Board is working on strategic planning this year. We had a great first session in early April and received some valuable input from our directors as well as a few members (thank you!). Please continue to send your thoughts on ways we can grow while we are involved in this process over the coming months. We also thank the Clark Sports Center for providing us a room for the day at their beautiful facility!



Great Blue Heron
Audubon Award Photo
by Ethan Slattery

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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To contribute notes or articles for
The Belted Kingfisher, email:
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Conservation and Legislation

Bird protections weakened by Trump administration—Earlier this year, DOAS signed on to a letter with other conservation organizations protesting the Interior Department’s reinterpretation of the intent of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). This statute is the nation’s most important bird protection law, brought about by conservationists, including the Audubon Society, over 100 years ago.



Great Egret
Audubon Award Photo
by Keith Burroughs

The Act prohibits the “killing” of over 1000 species of birds, including most of the songbirds, raptors, shorebirds, wading birds, and many others that we seek out and enjoy. Over the past several decades, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized killing to include “intended take” (e.g. shooting and capture) and “incidental take” (unintended killing) as prohibited behaviors under the MBTA.

“Incidental take” includes such actions as death of birds through collision with wind turbines, communication towers, and high buildings. Other examples include birds dying as “bycatch” in commercial fishing nets or longlines; and electrocution of birds by power lines. This provision has only been enforced in cases where significant and continuing bird mortality results from human activity.

In most cases, “incidental take” violators make changes to minimize the risk to birds, and avoid prosecution under the law. These changes are typically minor, common sense alterations in practices, but likely would not come about without the presence of the MBTA as a

deterrent to continuing to kill birds.

However, in December the Interior Department announced that it would no longer consider incidental take as a violation of the Act. The Center for Conservation Biology says this action, “will have far-reaching impacts on bird conservation throughout the United States and represents the culmination of a decades-long fight by lobbyists to undermine the Act.” Oil and gas companies, commercial loggers, mining companies and others who routinely kill large numbers of birds are pleased to no longer have to meet the provisions of the MBTA, essentially having carte blanche to avoid responsibility.

In addition to this threat from the Trump administration, there is an effort in Congress to remove any legal prohibitions on killing birds at industrial developments.

What you can do—Contact your federal Representatives and Senators urging them to oppose any effort that undermines the ability to address the incidental take of birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It may take another change in administration to reverse the action of the Interior Department. Meanwhile we need to keep the pressure on to protect the MBTA against further attack.

(Contact information for elected officials is available on the conservation page of the DOAS web site, www.doas.us.)

by Andy Mason

Invasive Species Control Volunteers Needed For Our Wetland

We are seeking volunteers to spend 4 or 5 hours on June 23 removing invasive buckthorn from our Burlington wetland, starting at 8 AM that morning. This involves hand pulling and some minor digging. Buckthorn has shallow roots. The wetland contains some wonderful wildlife habitat. We seldom bring members there because it is difficult to access. The work will be done on dry land but volunteers must traverse some very wet areas. It is about a half mile walk from the road. A short part of the path is difficult and requires good balance.

The Burlington Wetland is a 12-acre property, 70% of which is protected wetland in the flood plain of the Wharton Creek. It is wet forest habitat with a mix of hardwoods and hemlocks. If you can find time to help, please contact Tom Salo at salothomas@gmail.com or 607-965-8232.



Nine Years of Golden Eagle Camera Trapping by Tom Salo

DOAS volunteers just completed a ninth winter of camera trapping. This is part of the Appalachian Eagle Project, an effort established in 2008 to gain knowledge of the demographics and distribution of eastern Golden Eagles during the winter. A camera trap involves putting a road-killed deer in front of a motion activated wildlife camera according to a standardized protocol.

Golden Eagle numbers were higher than usual this season. Nineteen individuals were photographed, with almost half at one site in Southeastern Delaware County. This the highest number we've seen. Bald Eagle numbers have grown over the years and are now common at some sites. One Otsego County site had up to 20 individuals a day. Common Ravens also congregate in large numbers at some sites. Ravens, famous for their intelligence and brain size, may be returning to places where they have found food in the past. The eagles also likely remember sites. This past season, Sisu – a Golden Eagle we GPS-tagged in 2017 – returned to where she had previously been trapped twice. She traveled there in a straight line from the Adirondacks and remained all winter. We have also had banded eagles make visits during multiple years.

DOAS became involved in this project in 2010. Since that time the larger project has grown considerably in size and scope. What was started as an eagle survey has become a method for monitoring and learning about all kinds of scavengers throughout eastern North America. Camera traps are now operating from Ontario and Maine to as far south as Florida and Alabama. Winter resident Golden Eagles – the original target species – have been found in most areas, with the highest concentrations in the central Appalachian Mountains.



A young Bald Eagle (left) and an adult Golden Eagle at DOAS site. The two species average the same size. This shows a larger, probably female Bald Eagle with smaller, probably male, Golden Eagle.

Cameras are set to pause for one minute before a photo can be triggered. Even at this relatively low rate, active sites can generate 500 or more photos a day. The millions of photos generated by hundreds of sites are each viewed for data processing. As you can imagine, this takes a huge amount of time. There is a significant backlog. Efforts have been made to adapt facial recognition software to identify species. However, that may still be a few years away.

The presence of Golden Eagles in winter in our region is now well established. As you can see in the chart below, we have had them every winter. In 2013, when we first operated in southeastern Delaware County, we found there is a significant concentration in that area. Of the 8 Golden Eagles DOAS trapped (with the help of NYSDEC), and tagged with GPS tracking technology, 7 were caught in that part of Delaware County.

The most recent year for which all New York data has been analyzed is 2012. 25 species were recorded. The 10 most common were American Crow, Red-tailed Hawk, Common Raven, red fox, domestic dog, Bald Eagle, eastern coyote, raccoon, gray fox and Golden Eagle, in that order. 2012 was a year before we first set up a site in southeastern Delaware County. When those data are eventually examined, we expect Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle and eastern coyote to move up in their rankings.

This chart below shows the number of sites DOAS operated in each county and the number of Golden Eagles photographed each season that are believed to be distinct individuals. It is possible that some individuals were photographed at more than one site.

Year	Otsego County	Delaware	Golden Eagles	Migrants
2010	3 sites	1 site	3	0
2011	5 sites	0 sites	1	0
2012	5 sites	0 sites	4	5
2013	7 sites	1 site	13	4
2014	9 sites	1 site	17	~3
2015	8 sites	3 sites	13	~4
2016	5 sites	4 sites	16	0-No bait
2017	6 sites	3 sites	14	2
2018	5 sites	2 sites	19	Few



**Golden Eagle
Photo by Becky Gretton**

Birding by Ear: Always Perfect Timing!

It's spring already, raptors have been migrating north for a month, and our smaller bird friends are arriving daily. Are you a birder who has marveled at the magic of birdsong? Experienced birders anticipate revisiting favorite habitats, using identification skills that have been honed over time. Many of these birders are happy to reach out with a willingness to teach interested, less experienced birders. Please consider joining us for Birding By Ear!

DOAS will once again offer a Birding By Ear (BBE) event at the scenic Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park in the Town of Westford on Sunday, June 3, 2018 at 8:30 AM till Noon to unlock the secrets of bird ID through birdsong. We will enjoy an educational session in the Sunset Pavilion, followed by a hike, a delicious "Bruncheon" in the pavilion and an additional hike for those who can stay longer. A raffle will be available as well. There is a variety of habitats at this park, with a number of species possible. PLEASE NOTE: For returning participants who wish to go birding upon arrival, we will have that option available to you when you register!



The cost, pre-paid, for the BBE is \$25.00 for adults 18 and over, and \$15.00 for children 12-17 who are accompanied by an adult. This cost is non-refundable, as the food is pre-ordered. The event is limited in size, and registration will be on a first-come basis. Bruncheon includes muffin varieties, cheese-hash brown casserole, sausage-hash brown casserole, tossed salad, chicken/grape salad with croissants, coffee, tea and water. If the weather makes hiking impossible, we will have expanded educational sessions and bruncheon, and enjoy each other's company! (We haven't been rained out yet.)

Pre-paid registration is available on line at doas.us via PayPal or with a check which must be mailed to DOAS. You may contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information. If the event is full, you will be notified, and your payment/check will be refunded or returned with our thanks.

Please come to meet new people or reunite with friends from the past, and to learn more about our beautiful spring birds! We look forward to seeing you.

Becky Gretton



DELAWARE-OTSEGO
AUDUBON SOCIETY



REGISTER TODAY
FOR SUMMER
CAMP

[HTTP://DOAS.US/EDUCATION/
SUMMER-DAY-CAMP/](http://doas.us/education/summer-day-camp/)

Session 1 - entering grades 3&4
July 16-19 at DOAS Sanctuary

Session 2 - entering grades 5&6
July 30-Aug 2 at DOAS Sanctuary

NEW THIS YEAR
Session 3 - entering grades 1&2
Aug 20-23 at OWL, Fortin Park

“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 8

During the next week, Kathryn Davino discovered a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (4/8) tapping a maple tree in her yard near Delhi. Stanley Salthe watched a Brown Creeper patrolling the tree bark in Deposit. Phoebes returned to other areas, including Sharon Springs (Elliott Adams) and Jefferson (Andy Mason). The Merlins in center-city Oneonta continued to “kek-kek-kek” as they zipped over our house most days. On the 11th, more pairs of these falcons returned to the Country Club (Charlie Scheim) and Milford (Gerianne Carillo). Gerianne also reported a wonderful dawn chorus that includes Bluebirds, Chickadees, and Turkey. Angelika Rashkow discovered 6 Great Blue Herons at their roosting pond near Cooperstown. Leslie Preston found a Loon (4/12) at Council Rock in Cooperstown. Ruby-crowned Kinglets (4/13) were seen in Jefferson (Barb Palmer) and Cooperstown (Becky Gretton). Becky also found a nice variety of waterfowl on Otsego Lake, including American Wigeon, Common Goldeneye, Common Loons, Ring-necks, Cormorant, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, Wood Ducks, and Mallards.

April 14th was a big “FOS” day. Tree Swallows finally arrived in our area (Kathryn Davino, Delhi), though Pam Peters had seen one in Broome County weeks earlier. Kathryn also spotted a Pine Warbler. Charlie Scheim discovered Chipping Sparrows at his feeder (Oneonta).

Eastern Towhees showed up in Oneonta (Marilyn Bailey) and Jefferson (Barb Palmer). A bright male Palm Warbler pumped his tail outside Dave Kiehm’s studio (Milford). A reddish bird under Leslie Preston’s feeder turned out to be a Brown Thrasher (Oneonta). Not “FOS” but worth noting: I watched Red-breasted Nuthatches forage in the leaf litter on the ground, and heard a Ruffed Grouse drumming (Oneonta).

On the 15th, a Yellow-rumped Warbler arrived in Sarah Root’s yard in Maryland, along with lots of Hermit Thrushes in the woods nearby (both were FOS). Marilyn Bailey reported a Thrasher and White-throated Sparrows in Oneonta. Bill Ralston found a male Ring-necked Duck on his pond.

I ended last month’s report marveling at the hoard of finches (mostly Gold-, a few House and Siskin) that had been entertaining us each day. Little did I know then that, a month later, I’d still be watching them, through swirling snow. Those noisy, active little birds sure have made this weather a bit more tolerable.

Sandy Bright



Yellow-rumped Warbler
Photo by Mike Thompson

Global Big Day 2018

Global Big Day is an event sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology that invites everyone from around the world to look for birds on the same day and submit their observations to eBird. On this year’s Global Big Day, Saturday, May 5th, will you join more than 20,000 others and become a part of the count? You don’t have to commit to all 24 hours—just an hour or even 10 minutes



counts as participating. Visit your favorite spot or search out someplace new; enjoy a solo walk or get some friends to join in the fun. For more information, visit the Global

Big Day web site at <https://ebird.org/globalbigday>. You can enter your sightings via the eBird website or—even easier—download the free eBird Mobile app. You will need an eBird account to participate (it’s free).



Bird-Friendly Coffee: Coffee pre-orders for pick up at our May 18th meeting are due by May 8. More information at our web site: <http://doas.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CoffeeInformation2018b-final.pdf>

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

May

May 5– Susquehanna Greenway Bird Walk: meet at 8 AM in the parking lot by the soccer fields just past the transfer station for a two-hour walk to view returning migrant birds on the Greenway trail, located on Silas Lane, off Rte. 205 in Oneonta. This will be an easy hike on level ground. Information contact: Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880.

May 5 – Global Big Day Bird Count: Counters help find as many species as possible in Otsego or Delaware County. Contact Bob Donnelly at rsdonn@yahoo.com. See article on page 6.

May 12– Field Trip to West Branch Preserve: Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright will lead a bird walk at the West Branch Preserve, located in the Town of Hamden, about 10 miles southeast of Delhi. Meet at 8 AM at the preserve entrance and parking area, on Rt10, about 0.9 mi beyond the junction with County Route 26. Contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or scheimc@hartwick.edu.

May 12– Bird Walk, Stamford: 8 AM, sponsored by Michael Kudish Natural History Preserve, www.mknhp.org.

May 13 – DOAS Sanctuary Spring Bird Walk: Meet at 8 AM. The walk should turn up a variety of returning migrants, including warblers, orioles, thrushes, tanagers and others. Waterfowl and raptors are also possibilities. The walk will last about two hours and include some moderate climbs. See www.doas.us for directions to the Sanctuary. Contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

May 15 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM.

May 18 – DOAS Public Program, “Monarchs and Milkweed”: Tannar Cliffe, grandson of Rick Bunting, will talk about Monarch Butterflies and raising milkweed to support them. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the

Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. See article on page 1.

May 20 – Mine Kill State Park Bird Festival: North Blenheim, Schoharie County. Featuring live birds of prey, introduction to birding by DOAS, a birding competition, and local vendors. Free admission. Further information at www.parks.ny.gov/parks/165/details.

May 23– Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake State Park: Meet at the beach area at 10 AM. The walk is approximately a mile around the lake and takes about two hours. Contact Julia Gregory at (607) 563-2924.

May 25 –May 27– Taking Flight-Birding in the Catskills: A weekend of bird field trips, workshops and presentations at Mt. Tremper, NY. Information and registration, <http://catskillcenter.org/takingflight2018-details/>. See April *Belted Kingfisher*, page 5, for more information.

May 27– Birds and Breakfast: 8 AM, at Paulson Preserve, Jefferson, NY, sponsored by Schoharie Land Trust. Further information at schoharielandtrust.org.

June

June 3 – Birding by Ear: This event will be held the Betty and Wilbur Davis Park in the Town of Westford. An educational session including slides, recordings and handouts at 8:30 AM will be followed by a bird hike with DOAS experts, “Bruncheon” buffet, raffle, and another hike for more species. Prepaid reservations will be required, and group size will be limited. Children 12 and older are welcome and must be accompanied by an adult. Cost is \$25 per adult over age 18 and \$15 for youths age 12-18. Please contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 or visit doas.us to reserve your spot. See article on page 5.

Is your Membership Current?

Your mailing label will inform you of your membership expiration date (year and month, e.g. ‘1810 indicates October 2018). DOAS memberships are \$15 per year or \$25 for two years; family memberships are \$20 per year or \$30 for two years. **View membership benefits and download application from our website: doas.us/join-us/ OR join online at doas.us/store.**



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March-April Bird Sightings

Most of this reporting period was cold, with snow flurries nearly every day. Stores were kept busy restocking birdseed for feeder birds. Two long-awaited but short-lived “spring-teaser” days finally brought a brief rush of migrants and many reports. Specific dates are noted for “first of season” (FOS) migrants.

In Oneonta, the last week in March, four species of woodpeckers appeared one afternoon in Charlie Scheim’s yard: Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, and Pileated, as well as a female Purple Finch. Kathy Lloyd discovered that the woodpecker that has been banging on her house near Cooperstown was a Pileated. Randy Lynch found an

Eastern Meadowlark in Harpersfield (3/28). Pam Peters reported a singing Purple Finch and Juncos.

April Fool’s Day brought a Phoebe hunting in Wilber Park, Oneonta, amidst the snow flurries. Tom Salo found a Fox Sparrow in West Burlington. In the following week, Stanley Salthe spotted a Golden-

crowned Kinglet in Deposit (4/2). Near Cooperstown, Angelika Rashkow’s Kingfisher returned (4/3), and she observed displaying Wild Turkeys and an Eastern Bluebird. Elliott Adams found a Phoebe, Kestrel, a half dozen Fox Sparrows, and noted the ground under the feeders “covered with Song Sparrows” in Sharon Springs. Barb Palmer reported the first Yellow-shafted Flicker (4/7), along with Killdeer and White-throated Sparrows (Jefferson).



Eastern Meadowlark
Audubon Photo
by Sheri Douse

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.

Bird Sightings” Continued on page 6