

THE BELTED KINGFISHER



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

FOUNDED 1968 ● P.O. BOX 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

Guest Editor:
Gerianne Carillo

Volume 40, Number 4, April 2008

COMING ACTIVITIES

April 6th:	Waterfowl Trip, <u>Otsego Lake and tributaries</u> ; leaders Matt Albright, Bob Donnelly, and John Davis (see page 7).
April 15th:	Board Meeting at the home of Barbara Marsala
April 18th:	DOAS General Meeting: <i>Important Bird Areas: Global Currency for Bird Conservation</i> , presented by Jillian Liner of Audubon New York
April 19th:	Bird Walk in <u>Milford State Forest</u> led by Bob Donnelly; meet at 8am at Milford Central School.
April 19th:	Earth Festival 2008 at Milford Central School, 11 am-4 pm (see page 7).
April 19th:	Cobleskill Earth Day Event, Veterans Park. 8 am-10 am: cleanup; exhibits and demonstrations from 10 am to 2 pm. Further info: Andy Mason, 607-652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net
April 26th:	Tom Salo leads a Bird Walk at <u>Keith Clark Park</u> , River St., Sidney, 8 am. Info: Tom at 965-8232.
April 26th:	EarthFest in Sidney at <u>MWV</u> (formerly MeadWestvaco), 11am - 4pm.
April 26th:	Wildlife Festival at the <u>SUNY Cobleskill Ski Lodge</u> , 10am-4pm. Info: Andy at 607-652-2162.
May 3rd:	Bird walk at <u>Glimmerglass State Park</u> led by Bob Donnelly, 8 am. Info: Bob at 264-8156.
May 3rd:	Glimmerglass State Park Open House, 10 am - 4 pm.
May 10th:	Bird Identification field trip, <u>Treadwell</u> ; leader Dorian Huneke. Info: Dorian at 607-829-6678.
May 16th:	DOAS General Meeting: <i>Coyote Ecology: Current Research in Status and Foraging of the Population</i> , Dr. Jacqueline Frair, speaker
May 20th:	Board Meeting at the home of Bob Donnelly
May 23 or 24th:	Wild flower walk at <u>Gilbert Lake State Park</u> . Leader: Jean Miller. Details next issue.
May 31st:	Bird walk at the <u>Schoharie Land Trust's Paulson Preserve</u> in Jefferson, 8 am. For directions and further information, contact Andy Mason, 607-652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net , or visit www.schoharielandtrust.org .

On Protecting New York State's Birds

"*Important Bird Areas: Global Currency for Bird Conservation*" will be the topic of our general meeting on Friday, April 18, 2008 at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street in Oneonta. The presenter will be Jillian Liner, Director of Bird Conservation at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology office of Audubon New York. A native New Yorker, Jillian holds a BA in biology from Skidmore College and an MS in Ecological Planning from the University of Vermont. Her talk will outline how our New York bird populations are doing and what we are doing to protect them. Refreshments will be served. For further information, contact Eleanor Moriarty, DOAS Program Director, at 607-278-5896 or eleanor@dmcom.net.

***DOAS field trips are open to the public. Participants should meet at the stated time and location--please be prompt. We encourage carpooling--please help with expenses if you are in someone else's vehicle. Most trips include a moderate amount of easy walking; leaders will note any strenuous hiking. Please expect to provide your own food and drink unless a food stop is indicated. In case of bad weather, check with the leader about cancellation.*

President's Message

Can "Carbon Offsets" make you "Carbon Neutral"?

"Don't worry Dad, I'm buying carbon offsets." That's what Jess said last spring after booking her third flight in a short time. Carbon offsets are projects that intend to mitigate our output of greenhouse gases by investing in efforts to increase renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, or to capture and sequester carbon emissions. Offsets subsidize these projects with your contributions. The hope is, by paying to reduce someone else's production of greenhouse gases, you "neutralize" your own.

You can offset your car travel, heating oil or any other fossil fuel use. Offsets are typically purchased from commercial or not-for-profit carbon-offset providers. Tree planting was initially a mainstay of carbon offsetting. Renewable energy and energy conservation projects are now included, along with methane capture.

I make an effort to keep my fossil fuel use to a minimum. In recent years I've been confronted with a dilemma. My two children have moved far enough away that only air travel makes sense if we're to see each other. What's a father to do? I had considered buying offsets for past trips but did not. I could find little information on their efficacy. I had also heard of some efforts - such as the planting of monocultures of alien trees - that were bad for the environment in other ways. Critics had compared offsets to indulgences sold in the middle ages to purchase forgiveness for sins. Was this just a way for an environmentalist to assuage his guilt?

Since we are traveling to France this summer to visit Kris and Julie, and to see the old house they restored in Bordeaux, an internal conflict has been building. It has led me to do more research to answer my questions. How can we be sure buying offsets reduces carbon emissions? How do we know it isn't just another version of corporate "greenwashing"?

There is a well established certification program in Europe called The Gold Standard. Standards and certification have gotten off to a slower start on this side of the pond. Several U.S. certification programs are now operating, including one that seems to have credibility. Early this year, the Center for Resource Solutions started certifying offsets with its Green-e Climate program. The Natural Resources Defense Council - an organization I respect - has confidence in the Green-e seal of approval.

I've been investigating offsets for the upcoming trip. There are cheap offsets that are not certified, or carry certification of dubious quality. Certified offsets using the European or Green-e standard range from \$100-150 per round trip ticket from Syracuse to Paris. I haven't decided on a vendor yet but will be buying them before we leave. While I don't feel this is in any way a solution to our global warming problem, it may do some good. I hope so.

If you would like to know more about what I learned, contact me at 607-965-8232 or tomsalo@localnet.com.

Tom Salo, President

Avian Agents to Again Head South

The Avian Agents, with DOAS team members Sue Gaynor and Andy Mason, will again be scouring the wilds of NJ on May 10 in search of the highest number of bird species, as competitors in the World Series of Birding.

Sponsored by the NJ Audubon Society, the event draws birding teams from as far as Europe for 24 hours of intense looking and listening from the forests of northwestern NJ to the tip of Cape May. The team with the highest total receives fine optics as a reward, but the true purpose of the WSOB is a fund-raiser for NJ Audubon and other groups, such as DOAS, to assist in their efforts to protect birds.

You are invited to pledge an amount per species for the Avian Agents encouragement, or a fixed amount. Last year the team tallied 145 species - which tied our all-time high. With good weather and a timely migration, the Agents look to increase their numbers this spring. To help the effort, return the form at right by May 5th.

Bluebirds!

A reminder that bluebird house plans and ready-built bluebird houses are available from DOAS. Plans are free and houses are \$15.00 each. Plans and houses can be obtained at DOAS functions or by mail. Contact Andy Mason, 1039 Peck St., Jefferson, NY 12093, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

I SUPPORT THE AVIAN AGENTS!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pledge: _____ per species; or _____ fixed amount.

Return to: DOAS, PO Box 544,
Oneonta, NY 13820 by May 5th.

DOAS Thanks Heron Rookery Volunteers and Contributors

In February, we learned of a Great Blue Heron rookery in Hartwick being destroyed by someone wielding a chainsaw. We are very pleased our plans to construct steel structures with nesting platforms to replace the destroyed nests was successfully completed on March 1st. 30 volunteers turned out that snowy winter morning to help rebuild the rookery. There were DOAS members, local fishermen, members of the Adirondack Mountain Club, a professional wildlife educator, staff and students from Hartwick College, neighbors of the rookery, and people involved in the local tourist industry. People who were outraged by this senseless act came out and pitched in. It was a great turnout by a broad cross section of the community. Its success is now up to the herons.

We are encouraging people to check these structures regularly during the winter. If there is another attempt to destroy this colony, it is most likely to happen then while ice is on the pond. Our best chance of identifying the vandal will be right after the damage occurs. Please do not trespass to check on the nest platforms. The pond is totally private. Before leaf out, the structures can be seen through the trees from Towers Road, just west of Seminary Road in the center of the east end of the pond. The thin pipes make them somewhat difficult to spot. Look for the tripods with the nests on them.

The Board of Directors extends its gratitude to following people who participated in the rebuilding of the rookery:

Eric Bravin	Barbara Preston
Sandy Bright	Larry Preston
Gerianne Carillo	Stephen Rice
John Davis	Joe Richardson
Bill DeVoe	Art Rorick
Fred Johnson	Jo Salo
Joe Hart	John Salo
George W. Hymas	Rita Salo
David Kiehm	Tom Salo
Lucy Lieberman	Charlie Scheim
Nick Mangano	Joanne Sharkey
Barbara Marsala	Dwaine Sharratt
Jack Meeks	Julie Smith
Dan Morse	Mike Stensland
Jeff O'Handley	Sophie Tomkiewicz
Earle Peterson	Tony Uhl

Special thanks go to Barbara and Larry Preston who gave permission for the structures to be built on their property and provided warmth, refreshments and la-

bor; to John Davis and Tom Salo for their research and planning; and to Dave Kiehm, who helped Tom build nest platform parts and directed action on the ice during construction. Thanks also to everyone who contributed funds to help offset the cost of construction.

(Editor's note: See pages 4-5 for a photo documentary of this event.)

Golden Eagle Research Update

by Todd Katzner, Director of Conservation and Field Research, The National Aviary

As was reported in the last newsletter, \$3000 of the money raised for golden eagle research is directly supporting the golden eagle migration study being conducted by the National Aviary in Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Museums of Natural History. The balance of the funds are being used in New York to acquire more data. On behalf of The National Aviary, we thank the supporters of DOAS for this contribution. The money will "sponsor" the tagging of an individual eagle that migrates through New York.

The goal of this study is to evaluate migration pathways of golden eagles throughout the entire Appalachian region, from their extreme southern range in Alabama all the way into Quebec. We will use two types of information in this project - observational data from hawkwatches and telemetry data from tracks of individual eagles. The hawkwatch data - collected largely by volunteers such as those at DOAS - are critical in establishing the broad-scale movement patterns of birds across the region. These will be combined with the individual-specific telemetry data to develop mapping models that describe both generally where and more specifically how eagles likely fly across our region. The maps these models produce will be a crucial tool for managers and politicians to guide safer development of wind power throughout the region and to prevent an at-risk species from becoming endangered.

Although the National Aviary and the Carnegie Museums are based in Pennsylvania, golden eagles are rather ignorant of state boundaries. In fact, the vast majority of this eagle population passes through both New York and Pennsylvania on migration, blithely oblivious to the political lines that separate us. It would therefore be foolish for us to limit our study of these magnificent birds only to Pennsylvania. In fact, our collaborators in this research include biologists from Maine to Alabama and nearly every state in between, and we greatly appreciate the help that organizations such as yours provide to our research.

Rebuilding the Heron Rookery...



1



2



3



4



5

1. The group hauls the equipment out to the rookery site, behind Larry Preston and his snowblower; 2. Dave Kiehm augurs carefully measured holes for placement of the tripod structures; 3. The group (Tom Salo, center) fine-tunes the structure before hoisting (4), which took significant strength, coordination between hoisters, and finesse; 5. Oftentimes, the holes needed to be adjusted, as the poles could not slip cleanly through to the bottom; 6. Once the tripod was in place, crossbars were attached for the lower nests; 7. Volunteers gather sticks for nest building (8); 9. Dave Kiehm secures perches in place; 10. The finished product; 11. The Crew!

...A Labor of Love

(See page 3 for the full story)



Photographs by Gerianne Carillo

Conservation and Legislation

by Andy Mason

Leadership change in NY: What does it mean for the environment?—The stunning turn of events in Albany that has brought the state a new governor has people scrambling to size up David A. Paterson. Environmentalists are no different, asking whether he will continue the Spitzer administration's generally good approach to energy issues, dealing with pollution, and open space protection.

One way to assess Gov. Paterson's record in this regard is to review his ratings as a state legislator, as evaluated by groups such as EPL/Environmental Advocates. In the 12 years prior to being elected Lieutenant Governor, State Senator Paterson had a very good rating average of 85, with 100 being a top score. Although not a leader on environmental issues, Paterson supported the important legislation that reached the State Senate. Unfortunately, the Senate's Republican majority leadership made this house a dead end for many worthwhile bills that had broad support in Albany and across the state.

As a candidate and in office as Lt. Governor, David Paterson demonstrated an awareness and grasp of environmental issues. Of particular interest was his focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Last year he joined with Elliot Spitzer to announce a goal of a 15% reduction in the state's electricity use by 2015. They also committed nearly \$300 million to renewable energy projects.

Under Paterson's leadership, the New York Renewable Energy Task Force was convened to help the state develop a comprehensive energy policy. Its recently released report envisioned major changes in the state's energy picture, with renewables playing a much greater role than at present. The report did receive some criticism for a lack of specifics on how to reach its goals, however.

The new governor's actions on legislation and in dealing with a tough budget year in coming weeks should provide some indication of how important the environment is to him.

What you can do—A letter of congratulations to Gov. Paterson, along with a message that clean air and water, protected open space and wildlife, and green energy, are important to you, would certainly be in order.

(Gov. David A. Paterson, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224)

Restore the Clean Water Act—One of our nation's seminal environmental statutes, the Clean Water Act, passed in 1972, has been responsible for dramatic cleanups of waterways across America. Chemical pollution, raw sewage, draining and filling wetlands were all the order of the day before Congress took the bold step to start to reverse the damage to our waters.

However, since a Supreme Court ruling in 2001, polluters have argued that the law no longer protects numerous wetlands, streams, rivers lakes and other waters historically covered by the Act. Ambiguous federal agency guidance has helped these attacks. And a 2006 Supreme Court split decision added greater confusion to the issue, putting even more waters at risk of pollution and destruction.

It is clear that Congress again needs to act to make the Act the effective statute it has been in the past. To that end, the (HR 2421 and SR 870), has been introduced to clarify that the CWA applies to all the nation's waters, including wetlands.

This legislation would:

- Adopt a statutory definition of "waters of the United States" based on the longstanding EPA and Corps of Engineers regulations.
- Delete the word "navigable" from the Act to clarify that the Clean Water Act is principally intended to protect the nation's waters from pollution, and not just maintain navigability.
- Make findings that provide the basis for Congress's assertion of constitutional authority over the nation's waters, as defined in the Act, including so-called "isolated" waters, headwater streams, small rivers, ponds, lakes and wetlands.

What you can do—Let your federal representatives know that the need for an effective Clean Water Act remains strong, and that protecting our wetlands is critical for natural water purification, flood and drought control, and wildlife habitat. Ask them to co-sponsor the Clean Water Restoration Act and work for its passage.

For further information, visit the Clean Water Network at www.cleanwaternet.org.

Addresses

US Congress

20th Congressional District
(Otsego Co. towns of Cherry Valley, Roseboom, Decatur, Worcester, Maryland, Westford, Milford, and Middlefield. Delaware Co., except towns of Deposit, Hancock and Tompkins.)
Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-5614
www.gillibrand.house.gov

21st Congressional District
(All of Schoharie Co.)
Rep. Michael McNulty
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-5076
fax: (202) 225-5077
www.house.gov/mcnulty

22nd Congressional District
(Delaware Co. Towns of Deposit, Hancock and Tompkins)
Rep. Maurice Hinchey
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6335
fax: (202) 226-0774
www.house.gov/hinchey

24th Congressional District
(Otsego Co. towns of Springfield, Otsego, Hartwick, Laurens, Oneonta (including City of Oneonta) and west. All of Chenango Co.)
Rep. Michael Arcuri
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-3665
fax: (202) 225-1891
www.arcuri.house.gov

Annual Lake Otsego Waterfowl Trip

On Sunday April 6 the annual DOAS 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 DOAS for several years, the trip has always attracted many area birders. Cars will be pooled, and the trip will last until around noon. Please sign up for the trip in advance by contacting John Davis at davi7js4@hughes.net or 607-547-9688.

Earth Festival 2008

The third annual Earth Festival 2008 will be held at Milford Central School on Saturday, April 19th from 11 am to 4 pm. Delaware-Otsego Audubon is proud to be a part of this festival! As in previous years, we will have a display table featuring items for sale, information on recent projects, and a schedule of coming activities we're hosting or involved in throughout the spring and summer months.

The Earth Festival is presented by EENOC (Environmental Education Network of Otsego County) and sponsored by The Wildlife Learning Company, in cooperation with Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) and Otsego 2000. For further information on the Earth Festival, head to www.eenoc.org or call the Wildlife Learning Company at 607-293-6043.

From The Backroad of the Program Director

As your program director, I attempt to spend time researching areas of interest that would appeal to our members along with the local community. When searching for a potential speaker, the questions I keep in mind are their level of knowledge, diversity of subject matter and the quality of their delivery.

DOAS has in the past and will continue to keep those issues as the guidelines when choosing potential speakers. The greatest resources for our speakers have come from recommendations and suggestions from members and non-members as they've traveled and availed themselves of lectures and events.

As many of you come across a speaker or read an article that might become a presentation for DOAS, please feel free to offer any suggestions or information. You may contact me at my e-mail address: eleanor@dmcom.net, cell phone: 607-435-2054, or home phone: 607-278-5896.

~ Eleanor Moriarty

February-March Bird Sightings

The clocks have been moved ahead, days are getting longer, bouts of snowy weather are subsiding and the migrating birds of spring are here. This is all good news for birders who have been reporting first of the year birds.

On 2/20 Terri Wetzel saw 3 Red-winged Blackbirds in Morris. Janet Potter reported 15 American Robins in Oneonta on 2/21. A Barred Owl was seen by Tom Salo on 2/25 in W. Burlington. Dorian Huneke reported a Carolina Wren in Treadwell on 2/26. On 2/29 Warren Ryther saw a Rough-legged Hawk in Garrattsville.

On 3/2 Bob Donnelly reported 2 Saw-whet Owls in Milford. A Bald Eagle was seen by Jessie Ravage in Hartwick on 3/3. The next day was a big spring birding bonanza. Terri Wetzel saw 100-150 Red-winged Blackbirds in Morris, Gerianne Carillo saw Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds in Milford, and Dorian Huneke reported 3-4 American Robins in Treadwell. On 3/9 Gerianne Carillo saw a Turkey Vulture in Oneonta and the next day Tom Whitney saw some in Hancock.

Also on 3/10 Warren Ryther saw a Killdeer in New Lisbon. Lisa Gorn reported an American Woodcock south of Morris on 3/14. A Song Sparrow was seen by Tom Salo in W. Burlington and by Dorian Huneke in Treadwell on 3/15. Andy Mason reported 6 Evening Grosbeaks in Jefferson on 3/16. On St. Patrick's Day Tom Salo saw a Golden Eagle in W. Burlington.

If you have bird sightings to report, please contact me dbenko@frontiernet.net (new address); 6815 Co. Hwy 16 Delhi, NY 13753; 607 829-5218 by 4/10/08 for the next issue of The Belted Kingfisher.

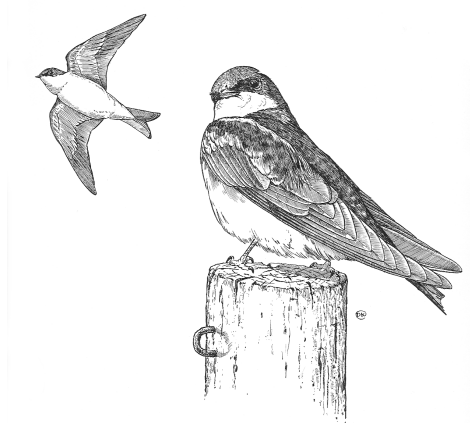
May Big Day Bird Count

May 17th, Saturday is this year's Big Day for DOAS, the day on which small groups enjoy trying to see the maximum number of bird species they can in any amount of time they choose within the 24 hours. Everyone is welcome, novice or experienced. If you are interested and have not participated before, please contact Bob Miller at 607-432-5767 to join a group or start a group. People who have participated before will be contacted by their leaders, and leaders will receive materials prior to the count. The DOAS data obtained is pooled with that of the Delhi Bird Club for a report of results in *The Belted Kingfisher*.

~ Bob Miller

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
PO Box 544
Oneonta, NY 13820
www.doas.us

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Tree Swallow, by David Kiehm

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Eleanor Moriarty	Stephen Rice	Joe Richardson

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Education*	Barbara Marsala
Field Trips*	Bob Donnelly
Finance	Cheryl Boise
Hawkwatch*	Andrew Mason, Tom Salo
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Membership Application

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*. Cost is \$12 annually or \$20 for two years. Please make check payable to DOAS and mail to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544, with name, address and phone.

(Note: Please mail National Audubon renewals to address indicated on renewal notice.)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

To contribute notes or articles for *The Belted Kingfisher*, please send to: *Kingfisher* Editor, DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544.

All meetings are free and open to the public.