



THE BELTED KINGFISHER  
Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Inc.

Founded 1968 P.O. Box 544, Oneonta, NY13820

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Editor- Bob Miller

COMING ACTIVITIES of DOAS

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- Apr. 5 Waterfowl Trip around Cooperstown. John Davis leader. See page 4.
- Apr.17 DOAS Program . *Birds of New York State*. Warren Green's bird and nature photography will once again display his incredible photos of our birds. Elm Park Methodist Church. 7 : 3 0 PM. Details below.
- Apr. 18 Milford State Forest Bird Walk. Bob Donnelly leader. Meet 8 am Milford School Parking lot. Page 4.
- Apr. 29 Evening Search for Wetland Birds. Sharon Springs area. Bob Donnelly leader. Page 4.
- May 2 Beginners Field Trip. Bob Donnelly leader. See page 4.
- May 15 DOAS Program. *White Nose Syndrome:Bats—What it is and Why it is Important to You*. Presented by Emily Davis, an experienced team member of the DEC.
- May 16 May Big Day Bird Count. Page 4 for details.
- May 28 Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake. Leader Jean Miller. Details page 4.
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Audubon to Present: Birds and Nature of New York State

Birds and Nature of N Y State will be the topic of the next DOAS Program, Friday, April 17, 2009, 7:30 PM in the Elm Park Methodist Church, Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Warren Green, bird and nature photographer, will present his exquisite photos. Warren has been published in numerous magazines, including *Birds and Bloom*, *Adirondack Life* and *The Conservationist*. He is coauthor of *Birds of the Adirondacks* and *Vireo*. The Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia owns many of his bird photos. In January 2009 Warren was the photographer of the month of the Cape May Bird Observatory. He accomplishes his incredible photos using a Leica film camera.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For further information contact Elcanor Moriarty, Program Director, at 607-435-2054.

### President's Column – Golden Eagle Research in Delaware County

During the second week of March, DOAS volunteers counted migrating raptors at 3 locations in Delaware County. This successful effort was the first of our planned raptor surveys that hope to define where Golden Eagles concentrate during both spring and fall migration. The 3 sites created a transect to cover an area over 5 miles wide between the Cannonsville Reservoir and Hancock.

The most central site at Franskevicz Road, was covered for 56 hours over 9 days. This site had the highest number of raptors - 148 birds of 8 species - and migrating eagles - 33 Bald Eagles and 18 Golden Eagles. Each site's daily counter made detailed notes on each eagle including time, age, and species. These notes along with flight paths marked on a topographic map are being compared to avoid double counting individual birds. A preliminary examination of these data before the Belted Kingfisher deadline shows that 34 individual Golden Eagles were observed along with 75 Bald Eagles that were judged to be migrants. A number of other Bald Eagles were considered "local" - a general term that is used when birds are not believed to be migrating. This included a pair the tumbled in the air while holding talons before mating on a tree near one of the count sites.

We extend our thanks to count volunteers Larry Dake, Fred Fries, Becky Gretton, Andrea Lodovico, Randy Lynch, Ron Milliken, Fred Reckner, Tom Salo, and, Debbie Spano. Thanks also to Bob Donnelly, Tom Hipp, Andy Mason, Sue Whitney, the Franskevicz family, the owner and employees of GSB Racing and Breeding, and all the others who visited the sites and helped spot birds. Complete data for each site can be found at <http://hawkcount.org>. Search for sites in New York and then for those prefaced with "DOAS". Tom Salo

## Changing of the Guard

Today, March 19<sup>th</sup>, the first song sparrow of the year appeared under our feeder. The last tree sparrow of the season was there to greet him. "Hey Dude", he may have said, 'there was snow on the ground this morning. It's good to see you, but aren't you a bit early? You're making me restless!'

"I'm not early at all," the song sparrow may have chirped. "I hear the redwings beat me by two weeks. Isn't it high time you took off for the tundra?" And the song sparrow flew off to the little wetland at corner of our driveway, where the pussy willows are bursting their buds. Something tells him that this may be a good place to set up housekeeping. March is a great month if you like to watch the changing of the guard. Going, going, gone! with the tree sparrow is the rough-legged hawk that recently posed for us at the edge of the meadow. Beginning to arrive is the

wave of local breeding species that have been enjoying a warmer winter "down south" in Pennsylvania - or Panama. We're waiting for the sapsuckers to start hammering on the old chimney pipe that graces my little backyard sugaring hearth! And, just briefly, we will welcome those species that find our winters too fierce but our summers not cool enough. If we don't keep our eyes peeled and our ears alert we may miss them altogether - the fox sparrows and white-throats, for example. Some Kingfisher readers, I know, enjoy the flute tones of the white-throated sparrow all summer long, but you must live at slightly higher elevations than the rest of us. When Alice and I long to hear a white-throat after the middle of April, we head for the Catskills or Adirondacks - or even the Poconos.

Most of our winter feeder birds are year-round residents, but some - like the red-breasted nuthatch, and like the pine siskins that swarmed to our feeders this past winter - usually disappear so completely into the woods in the warm season that we hardly realize they are still around. When they eventually return to our feeders, we know winter is back!

Keeping calendar records of all these changings of the guard is busy work to some but delightful busy work to others, and especially interesting in these years of apparently progressive global warming. Red-winged blackbirds seem always to be the first harbingers of spring in our back yard, but when exactly have they been arriving each year? Is there a trend? Going backwards over eight years, these are the earliest dates of redwings beneath our feeders:

March 1, 2009  
 March 6, 2008  
 March 12, 2007 (so far, so good!)  
 March 9, 2006 (a minor deviation from expectation)  
 March 16, 2005  
 March 4, 2004 (whoops!)  
 March 17, 200  
 February 11,

So, if we expect redwings back earlier each successive year because of global warming, that prediction was followed if we only consider 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009. Five years out of the last eight - perhaps that's as much evidence as one can expect from one set of observations in one back yard. But what happened in 2002 - that's a real outlier year! Almost as puzzling, though is the report in the last issue of The Kingfisher that Tom Salo saw a female redwing on February 12, 2009. But that was Tom's yard, not mine! Anyway, the redwing story obviously is a bit murky. I think I should go back to my old calendars and mine them for the dates of first arrival of tree swallows at the bluebird box that is mounted too high for bluebirds but seems just right for tree swallows. We call it our Morris Capistrano, and we're watching it eagerly for our first tree swallows of 2009.

by Joe Richardson

## Conservation and Legislation

by Andy Mason

The Bigger Better Bottle Bill—this could be the year!—Environmentalists have been pushing for years to expand on the success of NY's Bottle Bill—the law putting a 5 cent deposit on carbonated beverages. The current law has greatly increased NY's recycling rate—returning large quantities of glass, plastic and aluminum for reuse in new containers or other products. In addition to saving energy and raw materials, the Bottle Bill has cut the amount of materials going into landfills and incinerators.

The Bigger Better Bottle Bill (BBBB) will add water, juice, sports drink and other non-carbonated beverages to the list of deposit containers. These now make up one-third of the beverage market. The reduction in litter and disposal costs will improve communities markedly.

Another important provision of the BBBB would direct the unclaimed deposits--when people don't return their bottles and cans--to environmental programs in the state. This amounts to \$200 million annually, and currently is kept as a windfall by the bottling companies. The BBBB has wide support across the state. 700 groups, businesses, and local governments have endorsed it, and over 100 newspaper editorials in support have been published. Over 80% of New Yorkers favor expanding the deposit law.

Gov. Paterson has included the BBBB changes and added revenues to his proposed state budget. It is important that the State Assembly and Senate agree to his proposal in budget negotiations. With the state facing a serious fiscal challenge, the monies for recycling, land preservation, and other environmental programs, are needed more than ever.

What you can do—Contact your state legislators as soon as possible, as the budget deadline is near. Point out that the current Bottle Bill has been a resounding success, with 70% of containers returned. It's estimated that 4.6 billion containers of non-carbonated beverages are sold annually in NY. Without a deposit, fewer than 20% of these bottles and cans get recycled.

Despite its common sense appeal and support, the expanded bottle bill has been stalemated for years by lobbying and campaign contributions from the bottlers and large supermarket chains. It's time for the will of the people and the good of the environment to be heard.

Bad start for the Obama administration— In one of the earliest decisions on the conservation front, the Department of Interior has agreed to continue a decision from the outgoing Bush administration to delist wolves in the northern Rockies from the Endangered Species Act. This will have the effect of turning wolf management over to the states, and immediately putting the lives of 1000 wolves in jeopardy.

The states of Idaho and Montana have already declared their readiness to kill wolves that stray from

Yellowstone National Park. In fact, Idaho Governor Governor C.L. Butch Otter—who in the past has argued to kill up to 80% of the wolves in his state--recently publicly reiterated his desire to be one of the first to kill a wolf. Clearly, these states are not interested in the well-being of wolf populations.

In addition, the decision by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar violates the letter and spirit of the Endangered Species Act by ignoring the need for robust, healthy and connected wolf populations across the Northern Rockies and greatly diminishes the hope that wolves may someday be restored to parts of their historic range in Colorado, Utah, Oregon and Washington.

**What you can do**—This action only a few weeks into President Obama's term sets a bad precedent for the future. The president needs to hear that the public cares about his decisions and those of his appointees when it comes to wildlife, habitat and conservation.

Contact President Obama and urge him to rescind Secretary Salazar's decision. Tell him that it is essential to continue Endangered Species Act protections for wolves, and that the species is not yet recovered from its extirpation from the northern Rockies and elsewhere in the west. Send a copy to Secretary Salazar—the Interior Department must consider the intent of the states in species management before allowing them to take on this important role.

### Addresses

President Barack Obama The White House Washington, DC 20500 [www.whitehouse.gov/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/) contact (202) 456-1111

Secretary Ken Salazar Dept. of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W. Washington DC 20240

State Senate State Sens. James Seward/ John Bonacic

NY State Senate Albany, NY 12247  
Seward—(518) 455-3131 [seward@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:seward@senate.state.ny.us)  
Bonacic—(518) 455-3181 [bonacic@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:bonacic@senate.state.ny.us)

State Assembly  
Assemblymembers William Magee/Clifford Crouch/Peter Lopez

NY State Assembly Albany, NY 12248  
Magee—(518) 455-4807 [mageew@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:mageew@assembly.state.ny.us)  
Crouch—(518) 455-5741 [crouhc@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:crouhc@assembly.state.ny.us)  
Lopez—(518) 455-5363 [lopezpz@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:lopezpz@assembly.state.ny.us)

## Coming Bird Trips

**MILFORD STATE FOREST** — On **April 18** at 8AM we will meet at the Milford Central School parking lot for a short drive to the Milford State Forest. Since a tornado 10 years ago, the habitat has become more diverse. We should see an interesting array of returning birds and migrants. There will be some walking on slightly hilly, sometimes damp terrain.

**WETLANDS TRIP**— On **April 29** at 5 PM we will meet at the Clark Sports Center parking lot (near the tennis courts) on Susquehanna Avenue in Cooperstown for an evening field trip. We will drive around one half hour to find American Bittern, Virginia Rails, Woodcock and Snipe. We should get good views of many of these and other species. There will be minimal walking, but be prepared for wet ground.

**BEGINNER'S FIELD TRIP**— On Saturday, **May 2** at 8 AM we will meet at the ice pond parking lot, across from the main parking lot at Glimmerglass State Park north of Cooperstown. This is an excellent opportunity to learn new birds or to brush up your identification skills. The area has a good variety of common and some uncommon birds. There will be a fair amount of walking across fairly flat terrain, but it may be quite muddy in spots.

For further information on the above 3 trips, call Bob Donnelly. 607-264-8156 [rsdonn@yahoo.com](mailto:rsdonn@yahoo.com)

## Lake Otsego Waterfowl Trip

On Sunday **April 5, 2009** the annual spring waterfowl trip around Lake Otsego and environs will leave from Cooperstown's Lake Front Docks at the foot of Fair Street at 8 AM sharp. Co-leaders will be Matt Albright, Bob Donnelly and John Davis. Sponsored by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society for several years, the trip has always attracted many area birders. Cars will be pooled, and the trip will last until around noon. For more information, contact John Davis at [davi7js4@hughes.net](mailto:davi7js4@hughes.net) or 607-547-9688.

## Wildflower Walk

**May 28** we will have a slow one mile walk around Gilbert Lake. Meet at 10 AM at the north end of the lake's Visitor Center. Hopefully Lady Slippers will be open. Leader is Jean Miller.

## May Big Day Bird Count May 16,

Saturday is this year's Big Day for DOAS, the day on which small groups enjoy trying to see the maximum number of species of birds they can see in any amount of time they choose within 24 hours. Every one 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 Kingfisher.

## February-March Bird Sightings

Spring always ushers in the first of the year bird sightings and this year is no different. The birds of spring always foreshadow the dog days of summer, a time of complete heat around here, which helps us survive the blistering cold and dark of winter. This winter has been no exception.

On 2/15 Becky Gretton reported 2 short-eared owls, a great horned owl and an Eastern screech owl in Springfield, whereas Stacey Grocott saw a small flock of snow buntings in Edmeston. On 2/16 Eleanor Moriarity saw 3 Eastern bluebirds and a red-winged blackbird in Davenport. On

2/20 Tom Salo saw 5 ruffed grouse and a rough-legged hawk in W. Burlington. 10 red-winged blackbirds were seen by Bruce Milavec in Oneonta on 2/21. Fred Johnson saw 4 Eastern bluebirds in Gilbertsville on 2/24. On 2/25 Tom Salo had a golden-crowned kinglet in W. Burlington. George Leifert saw a pileated woodpecker in Richfield Springs on 2/26. On 2/27 Marge Mathis reported seeing 6 common grackles in Morris. Tom Salo saw a Northern shrike in W. Burlington on 2/28.

On 3/1 Becky Gretton saw a bald eagle and a golden eagle on Otsego Lake. Gerianne Carillo saw a red-winged blackbird in Milford and Elma Holway saw a flock of pine siskins, too many to count, in Mount Vision, on 3/2. 2 Turkey vultures were seen by Bob Donnelly in Cooperstown on 3/3. 3/7 was a big birding day. Dorian Huneke saw a killdeer in Treadwell, Eleanor Moriarity saw 4 common grackles and 7 red-winged blackbirds in Davenport, Trina Bassoff saw her first of the season red-winged blackbird in Blenheim and Tom Salo saw Eastern bluebirds in W. Burlington. Marge Mathis reported 12 American robins in Morris on 3/10. On 3/11 Tom Salo saw a large group of common ravens, about 41, in W. Burlington and Trina Bassoff saw Am. woodcock in Jefferson. SandraBright saw song sparrow in Oneonta 3/14.

If you have bird sightings to report, please contact [medbenko@frontiernet.net](mailto:medbenko@frontiernet.net), 6815 Co. Hway. 16, Delhi, NY 13753, 607-829-5218 by April 19, 2009 for the next issue of The Belted Kingfisher.

## Time for Bluebirds

Bluebirds—everybody's favorite—are back in our yards and hedgerows. 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](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

Winter Owl Trip Highlights

On February 21, under clear skies and no win, 20 people joined up to search for winter owls in our area. We found two Snowy Owls, one Barred Owl, and three Screech Owls. One of the Snowys caught a rodent and ate it. The Barred Owl was very close to the road,affording all a long close-up view. The Screech Owls were called in and also approached to within 15 yards of us. Other birds seen included Red-tails, Kestrels and Snow Buntings. Two weeks before, we had seen Bohemian Waxwings near the Snowy Owls, but they were not found on this trip.

... Bob Donnelly

You Can Get Migrating Birds Out of the Cellar

As reported in Wired Magazine on Line (<http://blog.wired.com/wiredscience/2009/03/birddata.html>) six million hand-written notecards documenting avian migration dates back to the 1880s languish in 40 file cabinets in a Va. basement. Sam Droege, U.S. Geological Survey biologist at Patuxent Wildlife Research Ctr, notes "if we lose these data, we don't really have a good idea of how things have changed from migration arrivals in the past." The data need to be put into digital format for comparison to current migration patterns, as climate change, habitat loss and other factors increasingly affect the fate of many migrating species. But there is no money to hire a firm to take the task of transcribing the files. So what to do... ? The answer is "crowdsourcing", wherein volunteers put the data into digitized format. How? It's an example of "citizen science" where anyone, anywhere, with a computer and internet access can sign up for forms containing a photo of a recording card, simply type the data into spaces provided on the form and e-mail back the completed form. This is "The N. Am. Bird Phenology Program", a partnership of USGS and USA National Phenology Network.

So here's what you can do: go to (<https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bpp/BecomeAParticipant.cfm>), sign up, take a 15-minute online training course, and then have access to the millions of cards scanned in the database as image files. We have an obligation to the people who did all this observation and recording work to make it mean something....John Davis

World Series of Birding

The Avian Agents, with DOAS team Sue Gaynor and Andy Mason, will again be scouring the wilds of NJ May 9, for the highest number species, as competitors.

Sponsored by the NJ Audubon Soc.,it draws bird teams from as far as Europe for 24 hours of intense looking and listening in NJ to the tip of Cape May. The purpose of the WSOB is a fund-raiser for NJ Audubon and others 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. In '08 the team saw 144 species—one below our all-time high. The Agents hope to increase their numbers this spring. To help the effort, return the form below by May 5.

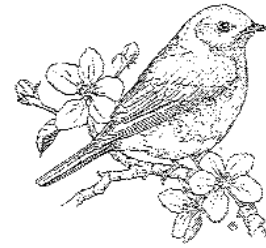
I SUPPORT THE AVIAN AGENTS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pledge \_\_\_\_\_per species; or \_\_\_\_\_fixed amount  
 Return to DOAS,PO Bx 544 Oneonta NY 13820 by 5/5

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee\* is pleased to offer the following candidates for re-election to two year terms as members of the DOAS Board of Directors: John Davis, Bob Donnelly, Eleanor Moriarty, Stephen Rice and Joe Richardson. The election, with the option of offering additional candidates from the floor, will be held at the General Meeting on May 15.

\*John Davis Chair, Doug Jamieson, Fred Johnson, Dave Kiehm.



Bluebird  
-D.Kiehm

Dave Kiehm Art Show at UCCCA

The wildlife art of DOAS Member and Director David Kiehm will be featured at a show sponsored by the Upper Catskill Community Council of the Arts.

Dave creates portraits of wildlife noted both for their unique beauty and startling accuracy. Equally adept in oil, watercolor, pencil, and sculpture, his work presents the viewer with a surprising and unusually intimate view very like the classical portraiture of human history. He works as a fine artist, illustrator, and designer, his work has appeared in such publications as Sports Afield, Field and Stream, and Fur Fish and Game,. He has worked for Ralph Lauren, The New York Times, The New York Zoological Society and in 1996 illustrated the children's book "Beaver Stream," written by Marilyn F. Holmer and published by The Smithsonian Institute

The show will feature more than 30 works of original art and gliche prints. Birds are the featured subjects of most of the paintings. DOAS members are welcome to attend the opening reception on April 24th from 6-8pm. Refreshments will be served. The show runs through June 6<sup>th</sup> at the Wilber Mansion Galleries, (UCCCA's main office) located at 11 Ford Ave., Oneonta.

Return Service Requested

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Ring-billed Duck

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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. Please make your check payable to DOAS and mail it to DOAS Membership Chair, P O Box 544, Oneonta, N. Y. 13820-0544, with your name, address and phone.

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

All DOAS programs are free and open to the public.