



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

March

March 15 – DOAS Program

March 19 – DOAS Board Meeting

March 24 – Montezuma Trip

April

April 6 – Waterfowl Trip

April 19 – DOAS Program

April 20 – Snipe and Woodcock

May

May 5 – Spring Bird Walk

May 11 – Greenway Bird Walk

May 15 – Wildflower Walk

May 17 – DOAS Program

May 18 – May Big Day Bird Count

May 19 – Charlotte Forest

May 25 – South Hill Bird Walk

June

June 2 – Birds, brunch, beer

More information on page 7

**All DOAS programs
are free and open
to the public**

Winter Provisioning

It's obvious that different bird species look different (with exceptions!), but winter provisioning shows that they have different behavioral dispositions too. Seeing them while at breakfast or afternoon tea affords a glimpse into this. We provide a hanging suet cage, a bench for birdseed, a feeder for black oil seeds,

and a table for peanuts. Sometimes I smear peanut butter on the bark of the nearby tree. This variety of goodies brings us these winter customers: chickadees, titmice, White-breasted nuthatches, juncos, cardinals, bluejays, mourning doves, downy, hairy, and red-bellied woodpeckers, purple finches, goldfinches, and a few sparrows -- now and again a carolina wren and a brown creeper. Starlings would like to get at the suet, but I discourage them.

All the woodpeckers are addicted to suet, and the hairy will take nothing else except peanut butter. Downys and red-bellieds also take some birdseed, skipping

awkwardly on the bench. The red-bellied is the most adventurous, the hairy the least. Chickadees and titmice go mostly for oil seeds, but take suet as well. Nuthatches take oil seeds and peanut butter, but rarely suet. They don't fancy eating away from the tree trunk. Chickadees and titmice take oilseeds one at a time to a branch to crack



*Hairy Woodpecker eating suet
by Dave Kiehm*

open by hammering. The creeper will take peanut butter on the trunk if it happens to bump into some, and one learned to come back for it. While not very flexible in their behavior, this one learned to jump down and search below the suet feeder for crumbs, as did the wren and juncos. Creeper up, nuthatch down: haven't collided yet! Juncos are the

intelligentsia, I think.

Some of them will try any of these foods, even though clearly not 'adapted' to anything but hopping and chasing on the ground. They jump and flutter earnestly to get something besides just birdseed, even up to the suet. Strivers! Doves are the least adventurous, mechanically

(continued on page 3)

President's Message

Audubon Adventures and More

Education is a critical aspect of any efforts to protect our natural world. Most Auduboners appreciate birds and other wildlife and the special quality of wilderness for their own sake, and see the bigger picture of how our own well-being is entwined with a healthy planet. But this understanding is not a universal concept, and each new generation needs to learn these lessons—perhaps more than ever before.

Bringing awareness of the ideas of ecology, conservation, climate change, extinction has been important to Audubon at all levels—including our Chapter—for decades, and continues to be an integral part of our mission.

Presently DOAS has an active group among our leadership involved in education efforts. Susan O'Handley serves as Education Committee Chair, and Eleanor Moriarty and Eileen Kline have been a big part of our recent efforts to reach out to children and families.

Our Chapter sponsors Audubon Adventures in several area classrooms. This program from National Audubon provides handouts and a teacher guide on environmental topics to elementary schools and is very well received and popular with the kids. We also provide education grants to area schools that give teachers an opportunity to introduce projects that they may not otherwise be able to fund with tight budgets.

Most exciting right now is an effort to restart our John G. New Day Camp at the DOAS Sanctuary. The camp was founded in the 1980s under the leadership of Barbara Marsala, and named in honor of the SUCO professor who was one of our Chapter's early guiding lights. The camp was in operation until 2009 and provided hundreds of youngsters with a great outdoor environmental learning experience.

That experience paid off this year when former camper Tom Lansing approached DOAS about bringing the camp back to life. Tom was one of our most enthusiastic kids and served as a junior counselor after he was too old for camp. An ad hoc committee of Eileen Kline, Andy Mason, Susan O'Handley, Julie Smith, along with Tom, is working on restarting camp this summer. I always believed the day camp was one of DOAS' best and most effective activities and it will be great to have it back!

I hope you agree that education is important for the future of our world. If you are interested in helping with our ongoing efforts or have ideas of your own, or want to financially contribute to Audubon Adventures or our education grants, feel free to contact me or Susan O'Handley.

Andy Mason



*Campers build bird houses
by John Davis*

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Helen McLean

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Co-Presidents	Andrew Mason Susan O'Handley Joe Richardson
Treasurer	Charlie Scheim
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Bob Donnelly
Julia Gregory
Bob Miller
Eleanor Moriarty
Stephen Rice
Tom Salo
Julie Smith

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OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

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Education*:	Susan O'Handley
Field Trips*:	Bob Donnelly
Hawk Watch*:	Andrew Mason Tom Salo
Hospitality*:	<i>vacant</i>
Membership*:	Andy Mason
Programs*:	Eleanor Moriarty
Publicity*:	Eleanor Moriarty
Sanctuary*:	Andrew Mason
Bird Counts:	Bob Miller
Charter Dinner:	Julia Gregory
Finance:	Gray Mason
Historian:	Julie Smith
Sales:	Stephen Rice

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ON THE WEB:

www.doas.us
[www.facebook.com/
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To contribute notes or articles for
The Belted Kingfisher, email:
editor@doas.us

Conservation and Legislation

Good news on rodent poisons—Readers of the Jan-Feb issue of Audubon magazine saw an article by Ted Williams on the ravages of rodenticides on raptors and other predators who fed on poisoned mice and rats. By feeding on dead or dying rodents, birds, foxes, coyotes, fishers, and even pets pick up lethal doses of the anticoagulants that are the active ingredients in the poisons. Veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators have no way to save these non-target animals.

As Williams points out, it is mostly newer second-generation compounds that affect predators. First-generation rodenticides that use warfarin and other quick-acting poisons are actually less of a problem since the rodents die more quickly, before they accumulate high doses.

There have been efforts by states and by EPA to halt the sale of second-generation poisons to homeowners, as they are most likely to use them indiscriminately and not follow label directions. Many manufacturers voluntarily did so, but d-CON—one of the largest pest control companies—along with pet-care products manufacturer, Spectrum Brands, have refused to do so. Now the EPA has ordered d-CON to stop these sales. However, it is not certain d-CON's parent company the \$37 billion Reckitt Benckiser, maker of products ranging from Woolite and Lysol to French's Mustard, and Spectrum Brands, will comply or will enter into a potentially drawn out appeal that will allow them to continue to poison non-target wildlife.

What you can do—Contact Reckitt Benckiser and Spectrum Brands via the American Bird Conservancy, <http://www.abcbirds.org/action>, and ask them to halt consumer sales of these products immediately. Check rodent poisons you may have and safely discard any that contain brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, or difenacoum.

NY State delays fracking decision—In a victory for the environmental community and the public, the Cuomo administration has decided to wait for completion of a health impact study before finalizing the environmental review of hydrofracking natural gas production. This common sense move had been urged by many citizens and organizations during hearings and comment periods for this review.

The decision means the state will need to restart the review process, as there was a February 27 deadline to issue an impact statement by state regulation. One negative note came out of the state decision, as Dep't. of Environmental Commissioner Joe Martens stated that the agency might issue drilling permits before completion of the new review.

What you can do—Contact Gov. Andrew Cuomo and thank him for waiting for the health study before deciding on hydrofracking. Tell him that this dangerous practice threatens the environment, public health, and the rural character of upstate and that he should just say no to hydrofracking.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224
gov.cuomo@chamber.state.ny.us

~ Andy Mason

(Winter Provisioning, continued from page 1)

eating only birdseed, when not squabbling. Goldfinches are very methodical, finding a port in the oil seed feeder and just staying there processing one after another.

Cardinals and purple finches do their family style of repast, jumping into the feeder and sitting there, popping one oil seed at a time, filling the feeder with husks. I note that Poppa cardinal gets to do this mostly, while Claudia (as we call her) waits below the feeder for crumbs until he leaves. Only a couple of jays stay around in winter. They dive in for peanuts first, and carry them off to hide, then come back for another. They will try them sequentially, clearly weighing them -- 'preadapted' for the business life! In between, a titmouse will sneak in, looking all about guiltily before taking one and skipping out. Cardinals will take peanuts too. This year the jays discovered birdseed; they tip their bill sideways to lick them up. Well, genes may not be 'destiny', but they sure explain the average! ~Stan Salthe



*Evening Grosbeak enjoying black oil sunflower seeds
by Dave Kiehm*

DOAS PRESENTS

BIRDS BRUNCH BEER

*Join Delaware-Otsego Audubon
Society for our first*

Birds, Brunch and Beer

at Brewery Ommegang

Sunday, June 2nd, 2013

11:00am - 4:00pm

- morning bird walk
 - coffee
 - view raffle and silent auction items
 - tasty Ommegang brunch
 - Mike Burger - Director of Conservation and
Science, Audubon, NY - Presentation
 - workshops: Art, Photography, Birding and more
 - details soon
- (Limited to 60 people so sign up early)

NAME: _____ NUMBER OF PEOPLE _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ (FOR BIRDS, BRUNCH AND BEER UPDATES ONLY)

TELEPHONE: () _____ \$30 EACH, AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO DOAS AND MAIL TO DOAS , PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

Waterfowl Count Results

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society's section of the NY State Ornithological Association's waterfowl count was conducted January 19 & 20, 2013.

Area covered includes: W. Branch Delaware R., South Kortright to Deposit, including Cannonsville Res.; Otsego Lake and tributaries and surrounding ponds; Susquehanna R., Portlandville to Unadilla, including Goodyear L.; Ouleout Cr. including East Sidney Lake; Unadilla R., Unadilla Forks to Sidney; Buckhorn Lake and vicinity. Participants put in 50 party hours.

Results:

Common Loon	5
Canada Goose	643
Mallard	570
Gadwall	3
Am. Black Duck	245
Am. Black Duck/Mallard hybrid	1
Ring-necked Duck	18
Lesser Scaup	1
Common Goldeneye	40
Hooded Merganser	25
Common Merganser	200
Am. Coot	61
Total	1823

Other sightings of interest included Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, Wild Turkeys, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gulls, Belted Kingfishers, Common Ravens, Carolina Wren, Common Redpolls, beavers.

Thanks to participants Matt Albright, Cynthia Cobbe, Kay Crane, John Davis, Bob Donnelly, Lisa Gorn, Kathy Griswold, Eric Knight, Carol Lynch, Randy Lynch, Andy Mason, Marge Mathis, Bob Miller, Katie Ray.

It's Time to Clean Bird Houses

It's March, time to maintain and clean bird houses. Bluebird houses should be cleaned by mid-March in our area. Kestrel and duck boxes should be cleaned in early March. Starling nests, old wasp nests, even squirrels can make the larger boxes unattractive to target birds. Smaller boxes will have old and foul nests, and sometimes mice will be in residence.

The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota says:

Every spring you should check the box inside and out. Clean out any old nesting material and replace the few inches of sawdust with new, check the attachment to the tree or post, the door, and all the wood for rot. Replace any rotted wood. You can do most of this maintenance in the fall after the kestrels are finished using it, but you will still want to do a

quick check in the spring.

The Wood Duck Society website says:

It's time to clean out your wood duck nest boxes if you have not already done so. It is also a great time to 'remove' those nest boxes from trees and install them on poles of wood or metal with a "cone guard" to protect the hen from predators. Nesting season in the northern states starts in late March and runs through early June.

I put coarse sawdust in my duck boxes too. Fine sawdust is too dusty.

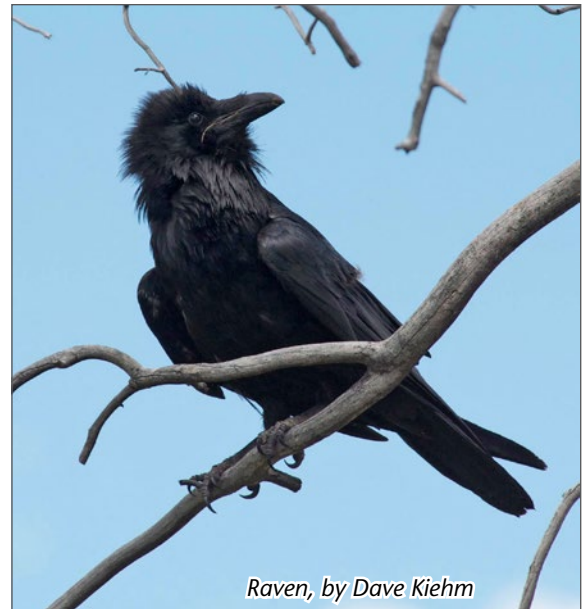
DOAS will have bluebird boxes for sale in April.

Tom Salo

Watch out for Ravens

I had a large number of Common Ravens around this past winter. These large groups consist mostly of young ravens. Adults tend to remain in pairs and protect their territories from interlopers. Young males in these juvenile groups tend to engage in a lot of activities that seems intended to attract attention. I understand this is part of their courting behavior. They do a lot of acrobatic flying.

Once I watched one hang from a branch by its beak in a gale force wind, its potential mate watching from a nearby perch.



Raven, by Dave Kiehm

The road to my house travels south up a cleft in a steep hill. The east side of this hill provides great lift for raptors and other soaring birds when the wind is from the west. Driving up the hill recently, some of the local ravens were soaring on the uplift. One was doing barrel rolls over and over. It was directly over the road. Then, between rolls, it dropped something. I watched a rock - about 1 1/2" in diameter land in the road right in front of my car. It bounced. A second or two later and it would have hit my car, maybe my windshield. Imagining explaining that to your insurance agent.

Tom Salo

What's Been Eating at our Golden Eagle Feeders?

Each winter since 2010 DOAS has participated in the Appalachian Eagles Project to document the presence of winter resident Golden Eagles. Road-killed deer are used as bait to attract the eagles and other scavengers. They are then photographed using motion sensitive wildlife cameras. The project monitors our winter eagle population and provides information on Golden Eagle range and population size. We just finished an exceptional winter season. Scores of Bald Eagles and at least 14 individual Golden Eagles provided a wealth of photos from our local sites.

Tom Salo, DOAS Director and the NYS Coordinator for the Appalachian Eagle Project, will present a program showing some of the best local photographs from the past 4 seasons. Of 14 sites that have operated in New York, 9 are in local counties – Chenango, Delaware and Otsego.

A fascinating benefit from this research is the variety of other scavenging species which also visit the sites. Ravens, crows, hawks, coyotes, bobcats and some unexpected surprises were recorded. Part of the presentation will be devoted to interactions between individuals at these sometimes crowded food sources.

In 2012, a large congregation of eagles were present on a local ridge that has been investigated for wind power. To try to get an accurate count of the number of eagles at the site, DOAS Intern and Hartwick College student Abby Nelson spent many hours counting Bald Eagles in 21,000 photos. Following Tom Salo's program, Abby Nelson will make a short presentation explaining her methods for counting Bald Eagles.

The program will be at the Elm Park United Methodist Church on March 15 at 7:30 PM. All are welcome.

More information can be found at www.doas.us. Sample photos can be seen at www.appalachianeagles.org.



Recorded on an automated camera: Bald and Golden Eagles, Coyote chasing Ravens



Juvenile Golden Eagle recorded on automated camera

Used Binoculars Needed

Do you have any binoculars you no longer use? If they are functional and could be used by novices on field trips or at the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch, please consider donating them to DOAS. The binoculars from the hawk watch kiosk are badly in need of replacement. Your donation is tax deductible for the current value of the used optics. You can bring them to any DOAS event. Be sure to request a receipt if you intend to claim a tax deduction.



Upcoming Activities

March

March 15 – DOAS Program: *What's Been Eating at Our Golden Eagle Feeders?* by Tom Salo, DOAS director and NYS Coordinator for the Appalachian Eagle Project. See details on page 6.

The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

March 19 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, Oneonta.

March 24 – Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge Trip: Please meet at the Dietz Street parking lot, across from the YMCA in Oneonta at 7:30 AM. This is an all day trip. Please bring lunch. We should be seeing the migration of numerous ducks, snow geese, hawks and other species. For further information contact: Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

April

April 6 – Lake Otsego Waterfowl Trip: 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 radio connected, and the trip will last until around noon. For more information, contact John Davis at davi7js4@hughes.net or (607) 547-9688.

April 19 – DOAS Program: *Adventures in Alaska Through the Eyes of a Lens* by Gail and Nelson DuBois.

The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

April 20 – Snipe and Woodcock: For more information, contact Bob Donnelly at (607) 264-8156.

May

May 5 – Spring Bird Walk: DOAS Sanctuary, 8 AM. Leader: Andy Mason, 607-652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

May 11 – Greenway Bird Walk: For more information, contact Charlie Scheim at (607) 434-4880.

May 15 – Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk: Meet at the beach, Gilbert Lake State Park, 10 AM. Leaders will be Julia Gregory, Barbara Marsala and Joe Richardson.

May 17 – DOAS Program: *Birds of Ecuador* by Rudy Gelis, biologist.

May 18 – May Big Day Bird Count

May 19 – Charlotte Forest: For more information, contact Bob Donnelly at (607) 264-8156.

May 25 – South Hill Bird Walk: For more information, contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

June

June 2 – Save the Date: *Birds, Brunch and Beer* at the Ommegang Brewery. See details and registration form on page 4.

Contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.



www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety

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. Please make your 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: _____

Support DOAS education and conservation programs with an additional donation: \$ _____



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

www.doas.us

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January–February Bird Sightings

In the heart of winter and dare I say darkness, bird enthusiasts have been seeing birds that never got around to leaving town and those that are arriving early to find themselves out in the cold. Nature always brings great surprises.

On 1/16 Becky Gretton noticed a Pine Warbler at her feeder in Springfield. What a treat! Joe Hart spotted 3 Eastern Bluebirds at the Ouleout west of the Otego Street bridge in Franklin on 1/17. Around 1/22 Sandy Bright had an unexpected visitor in Oneonta. Hearing a noise near her basement door, she tentatively opened it as a dark shape dropped from above her head and swooped down the stairs. Closing the door quickly she opened other areas of the house to allow an exit for the creature. Cautiously opening the door again, a European Starling whooshed overhead and peered at her from the blade of her ceiling fan. The bird quickly found its way out. On 2/7 Gerianne Carillo still had a Red-bellied Woodpecker at her house in

Milford. Apparently it had never left in the fall. The next day Marge Mathis saw 15 American Goldfinches and 18 Common Redpolls at her feeders in Morris. Betsy O'Brien saw an Eastern Bluebird at Riddell State Park on 2/10. She wondered if that was a bit unusual. I guess you can never tell. On the 13th 3 female Red-winged Blackbirds visited Elliott Adams in Sharon Springs. It seemed as if spring was arriving early. The next day Dorian Huneke saw a Bald Eagle in downtown Treadwell. Around the 14th an Eastern Screech Owl landed on Debbie Mack's birdfeeder in Burlington Flats. She says it's the first in 30 years and it spent about a half hour watching for the many mice she's been trying to keep out of the house. She wouldn't have noticed the owl if it were not for her parrot who was sitting on the back of a kitchen chair and freaked out when it landed. On 2/17 Kathy Dawson saw a colorful display of White-breasted Nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, a Downy Woodpecker and a Common Redpoll at the Black Horse Yoga Studio's birdfeeder on the crest of Gospel Hill Road in Guilford. On Feb. 18th Dennis Fowler

watched a streaming line of approaching Wild Turkeys from his study facing Mill Creek in Otego. He counted nearly four dozen as they ate their way around the house and yard. On that same day Peter Clark saw the resident Pierstown Road, Cooperstown Red-tailed Hawk perched on a dead tree across from his house. After drawing a bead on it with his binoculars, the hawk swooped down and successfully snatched a small rodent from the grasses. The next day Dave Kiehm watched as a Golden Eagle coming off a deer carcass 10 ft. off the road flew directly in front of his car in the town of Westville. Over a few days in mid-February Jeff Murray had been seeing a small flock of blackbirds that turned out to be almost all Rusty Blackbirds in non-breeding plumage. The contrast of winter birds and new spring arrivals has been spectacular.

If you have bird sightings to report, contact me at dbenko@frontiernet.net, or 6815 Co. Hwy 16, Delhi, NY 13753, or at 607-829-5218 for the next issue of *The Belted Kingfisher*. *Dianne Benko*



*Common Redpoll
by Dave Kiehm*