



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

May

May 6 – Field Trip

May 12 – Field Trip

May 13 – Field Trip

May 15 – DOAS Board Meeting

May 17 – Field Trip

May 18 – DOAS Program

May 19 – May Big Day Bird Count

May 20 – Field Trip

May 23 – Field Trip

May 26 – Field Trip

June

June 10 – Field Trip

More information on page 7

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

Joe Pye Weed

In late summer, I love to take a cup of coffee out to my patio bench where I watch the show going on before me. Monarchs, swallow-tails, mourning cloaks and many smaller butterflies, as well as bees by the dozen, visit the flowers of Joe Pye Weed. Thought of as a weed by some, many of us know it as a native wildflower we enjoy seeing at the edges of woods and along roadsides where drainage provides the light moisture the plant likes. Joe Pye should be included in any native wildflower garden and in your butterfly/pollinator garden. It is a good nectar source for Monarchs, which are reported in decline in the northeast, and an important source of honey.

Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium*) is in the

Composite family. It is related to boneset and snakeroot that have a white flower. Joe Pye Weed is a tall plant, three to five feet tall, that has pale, pinkish purple flowers in a fuzzy, massive, somewhat dome-shaped cluster. A few flowers open at a time, with their stamens extending far beyond the petals, giving the flower head that fuzzy appearance and extending the bloom period over many weeks. The leaves grow in whorls, with each whorl rotated slightly from the whorl below allowing sunlight to reach down to the lowest leaves. It is said the flower got its name from an Indian herbalist who lived in Massachusetts and used the plant as a cure for fevers.

Barbara Marsala



Joe Pye Weed with Monarch Butterfly, by Barbara Marsala

President's Message

Speak Up

We were taught that changes in nature happened slowly. Think about what we learned about evolution taking place over hundreds/thousands/millions of years. However, I suspect we have all seen examples of changes occurring very quickly. Forests are clear-cut for farmland or residential developments. Industrial development changes the geography, the habitat, of an area overnight.

As people concerned about the environmental health of our land and our communities, we must be vigilant. And we should feel confident that we can speak out for or against what we see happening. Each month, in this newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*, Andy Mason writes the *Conservation and Legislation* column. Here you will find up-to-date information about matters that concern our home environment. Here, also, you will find ideas about "What you can do." You can write a letter, send an email or make a phone call. You can add your voice to others by signing on to a letter or a petition. These steps may seem small but they do matter.

Barbara Marsala

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead



White-throated
Sparrow
by Dave Kiehm

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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Helen McLean

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To contribute notes or articles for

The Belted Kingfisher, email:
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Conservation and Legislation

Fracking with propane?—hard to believe!—As if the practice of injecting large quantities of chemical-laced water underground to fracture rock formations for natural gas production was not dangerous enough, gas drillers are now proposing to use liquid propane—a highly explosive material—for this purpose. A Canadian gas company has signed up landowners in Tioga County to use this technique, with the intention of bypassing New York State’s environmental reviews.

This relatively new process is fraught with dangers. The chemical threats and geologic alterations below our feet would remain, with the added risk of large quantities of propane passing through communities, being stored nearby and being forced thousands of feet from the well under high pressure. Last year, two explosions and fires at propane-fracked sites injured 15 people, and its use is still relatively small-scale.

Our region has already experienced two propane explosions—one fatal. There have been leaks and evacuations at other sites. Clearly this is a material that needs to be handled with extreme care, not pumped into underground wells across the landscape.

It is unclear whether fracking with propane is permitted in New York State. The company appears to think they can avoid the de facto moratorium on fracking this way. However, others believe that an environmental review separate from the state’s ongoing development of hydrofracking regulations would be necessary before any such activity could take place. Common sense says that the latter is true, and that thorough consideration of the added dangers of propane fracking is needed to protect public health and safety.

In the larger view, the very fact that gas drillers would even consider this technique shows how little concern they have for the environment and the well-being of those affected by their operations. They are not to be trusted with any fracking method.

What you can do—Express your outrage to Governor Andrew Cuomo and DEC Commissioner Joe Martens, as well as your state legislators. Point out how this attempt by gas drillers underscores their lust to exploit New York for profits at the expense of our land, air, water and people. Our leaders need to stand strong on the fracking issue.

Congress continues environmental assault—Just as fracking with propane seems too far-fetched a scheme to even consider possible, so the US House of Representatives continues to put forth shocking proposals to threaten our natural resources. Most recent is HR 4089, legislation that lumps together several anti-wildlife efforts. This bill would:

- allow hunters to bring polar bear “trophies” into the country if taken prior to the species’ Endangered Species Act listing. The US Fish & Wildlife Service and a Federal court have rejected similar attempts to import such trophies. Congress should not be giving special treatment to a small group of wealthy trophy hunters.
- open virtually all federal lands to sport hunting—even National Parks. There are millions of acres of federal lands already open to recreational hunters. If HR 4089 passes, federal agencies would be required to disregard existing land use and wildlife management policies and open these lands to hunting. Further, it would prevent National Environmental Policy Act review of these decisions.
- allow recreational off-road vehicles to invade federally designated wilderness areas—something that has never been allowed before. It would also open the door to new logging, mining and extraction of fossil fuels in these special places.
- prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from addressing toxic poisoning caused by lead ammunition. As many as 20 million birds and other animals—including Bald and Golden Eagles—die each year from lead poisoning. Lead-free ammunitions are readily and economically available.

What you can do—Congressional action on HR 4089 will likely have taken place when you read this. However, you should check to see how your Representative voted (www.clerk.house.gov), and let them know your sentiments. Hopefully, if passed in the House, the bill can be stopped in the US Senate. Contact Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and ask them to oppose these provisions if the legislation gets that far.

Andy Mason

**Check our website for contact information for your state and local representatives:
Go to www.doas.us and click on the “Conservation and Legislation” link.**



Above: Becky Gretton counts migrating raptors at Davis State Park this spring with park employee Joe Ritton. Mr. Ritton built the windbreak to protect the hawk counters at this very windy location. Photo by Diane Graf.



*Red-shouldered Hawk at the Everglades National Park
by Randy Lynch*

Get Involved with the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society

Volunteer to help wherever needed – our Finance, Conservation, Hospitality and Membership Committees could use help	Andy Mason	AndyMason@earthling.net	(607) 652-2162
Provide rides to programs	Andy Mason	AndyMason@earthling.net	(607) 652-2162
Provide refreshments at programs	Andy Mason	AndyMason@earthling.net	(607) 652-2162
Help maintain trails at the sanctuary	Andy Mason	AndyMason@earthling.net	(607) 652-2162
Plant Black Maple seeds from the trees in our Burlington wetland	Tom Salo	salothomas@gmail.com	(607) 965-8232
Survey plants in our Burlington wetland	Joe Richardson	arichardson@stny.rr.com	(607) 263-5645
Help control some invasive plants at the sanctuary	Tom Salo	salothomas@gmail.com	(607) 965-8232
Write an article for <i>The Belted Kingfisher</i>	Helen McLean	editor@doas.us	(607) 829-5596
Lead a field trip	Bob Donnelly	rsdonn@yahoo.com	(607) 264-8156
Present a program for DOAS	Eleanor Moriarty	eleanormrmt955@gmail.com	(607) 435-2054
Volunteer to present information on a subject of your choice – we often get requests from schools and nursing homes	Andy Mason	AndyMason@earthling.net	(607) 652-2162
Count birds during the regional May Big Day Bird Count	Bob Miller	millerj3@hartwick.edu	(607) 432-5767
Count birds during the Oneonta Christmas Bird Count	Bob Miller	millerj3@hartwick.edu	(607) 432-5767
Count birds during the Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count	Bob Donnelly Tom Salo	rsdonn@yahoo.com salothomas@gmail.com	(607) 264-8156 (607) 965-8232
Count waterfowl during the statewide waterfowl count in January	Andy Mason	AndyMason@earthling.net	(607) 652-2162
Participate in raptor counts at the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch	Andy Mason Tom Salo	AndyMason@earthling.net salothomas@gmail.com	(607) 652-2162 (607) 965-8232
Help us lobby decision makers	Andy Mason	AndyMason@earthling.net	(607) 652-2162
Get involved in Citizen Science Projects like The Great Back Yard Bird Count and Birds in Forested Landscapes	Cornell Lab of Ornithology	www.birds.cornell.edu	



Wood Ducks, by Dave Kiehm

May Program

Nature and Songbirds of the Adirondacks

On Friday, May 18th, Warren Greene will present his incredible photographs once again for the DOAS monthly meeting. Recently retired as Director of New York State Probation Department, Warren spends his time working part time for The Family Counseling Center in Gloversville, NY. The rest of his time he devotes to his childhood passion: photography.

Warren's photographs have been published in various magazines, calendars and books, including a book he co-authored, *Birds of the Adirondacks*. Although he is best known for his bird photography, he also does fine scenic and macro photography. Warren defines himself as a bit of a dinosaur since he still shoots with slide film with his Leica SLR camera. Warren's work will be on exhibit at Green Toad Bookstore in Oneonta starting on or about May 5th.

Program starts at 7:30 PM, free and open to the public and refreshments are served. For further information; Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054.

At right: *Dragonfly Eyes*

You can see more of Warren Greene's photos at the Cape May Bird Observatory website:

<http://www.birdcapemay.org/gallery/main.php/Archive/Warren+Greene/>



Reminder—Bluebird Houses Available

Help New York's official state bird—the Eastern Bluebird! Bluebird house plans and ready-built bluebird houses are available from DOAS. Plans are free and houses are \$13.00 each. Plans and houses can be obtained at DOAS functions or by mail. All proceeds benefit DOAS conservation and education programs. Contact Andy Mason, 1039 Peck St., Jefferson, NY 12093, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.



May Big Day Bird Count

Saturday, May 19, is this year's Big Day for DOAS, the day on which small groups enjoy trying to locate the maximum number of bird species they can in any amount of time they choose within that 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 or start a group. People who have participated before will be contacted by their leaders; leaders will receive materials prior to the count. The DOAS data obtained are pooled with that of the Delhi Bird Club for a report of results in *The Belted Kingfisher*. Wish for favorable weather and southerly winds the night before.

Bob Miller

Upcoming Activities

May

May 6 – Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway Field Trip.

Bird walk for returning birds along the Greenway starting at 8 AM led by Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright. An easy hike on level ground, lasting about two hours. For directions: OneontaGreenway.org or contact Charlie at (607) 434-4880 for more information.

May 12 – Onderdunk Road Field Trip: Meet at the Stewarts store in Sharon Springs at 5 PM. On this trip to a wetland we will look for bitterns, rails and snipe. There may be some easy walking over wet ground. For more information contact Bob Donnelly at rsdonn@yahoo.com.

May 13 – South Hill State Forest Field Trip: Meet at the Pine Lake parking lot in Davenport at 8 AM. For more information contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

May 15 – DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM at the home of Bob Donnelly, (607) 264-8156.

May 17 – Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake State Park: 10 AM - noon. Meet at the beach area for an easy walk. We will look for spring woodland wildflowers along the trail around the lake. For more information, contact Barbara Marsala at (607) 988-7805.

May 18 – DOAS Program: *Nature and Songbirds of the Adirondacks* by Warren Greene (see details on page 6). The program will begin at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Program Chairman Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

May 19 – May Big Day Bird Count: See details on page 6.

May 20 – Schoharie Land Trust Bird Walk and Brunch:

8 AM, Paulson Preserve, Jefferson. For details contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162 or AndyMason@earthling.net.

May 23 – Delhi Bird Club Bird Walk at West Branch Preserve, Hamden:

Meet at 7:30 AM at the Delhi Price Chopper. RSVP to leader Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162 or AndyMason@earthling.net.

May 26 – Weaver Lake Field Trip: A canoe/kayak field trip to Weaver Lake, Rt 20 about halfway between Richfield Springs and Springfield Center. Meet at the lake at 7 AM. Rails, soras, bitterns, moorhens, grebes and unusual ducks can be found at this unusual wetland. Bring a boat and a life jacket. For more information contact Bob Donnelly at rsdonn@yahoo.com.

June

June 10 – Mountaintop Arboretum (Tannersville) Field Trip:

Meet in Stamford at the Rite-Aid parking lot at 7:30 AM. This will be an all day trip. A stop for lunch is planned. For more information contact Eleanor Moriarty at (607) 435-2054.

Nominations for Expiring DOAS Board Positions

At the **May 18 DOAS program-meeting** the nominations committee will present their nominations for expiring board member terms for the group present to vote on. Nominations of others may be made from the floor. Terms of service are two years. Our recommended slate is: present board members Julia Gregory, Eric Knight, Andy Mason, Bob Miller, Tom Salo, plus a new member Charlie Scheim, who would be replacing Barbara Marsala who will be moving away.

Bob Miller, Committee Chair



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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: _____



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March–April Bird Sightings

As I sit down to write this article I notice my one lonely song sparrow scratching up seed below my birdfeeder. It appears every day anxiously waiting for a mate I think. Breeding is in the air.

On the evening of 3/15 Angelika Rashkow discovered a Great Blue Heron's nest while walking her dog along Burke Hill Rd. in Hartwick. Two herons in the nest obviously did not wish to be disturbed. John Davis observed an Eastern Phoebe in Cooperstown on 3/18. The next day Germaine Connolly saw a Belted Kingfisher going up and down Hayden Creek in Springfield Center calling all the while. On 3/20 six American Woodcocks were displaying and calling in Delhi as Tom and Sue Whitney eagerly watched. Sue also noticed a Tree Swallow chattering away around the covered bridge in Hamden on 3/21. It seemed a bit lonely. She and her husband also saw a pair of Wood Ducks take off from their pond in Delhi. The next day Tom Salo saw his FOS Common Snipe displaying in W. Burlington and Sandy Bright heard the

familiar call of a Merlin near Wilbur Park. On March 26th Barbara Brabetz heard the unmistakable song, its name, of a Rufous-sided Towhee at SUNY Cobleskill and Tom Salo observed a female American Kestrel in need of a boyfriend in W. Burlington. On 3/28 Andrew Cooper saw six Northern Flickers on Cemetery Hill in Oneonta. On the 30th Sandy Bright heard the tinkling trills of a Winter Wren singing in Wilbur Park.

April showered in additional sightings. On the 1st Tom Salo saw a Northern Harrier coursing low over fields in W. Burlington. On her way to school on 4/2 Eileen Kline saw an adult Bald Eagle perched in a tree along the Delaware between Delhi and Bloomville. On her way to work in Oneonta Sandy Bright listened to the repeated refrain of a White-throated Sparrow. On Mar. 5th Pam Peters had her first Hermit Thrush in Treadwell and a Carolina Wren was on Dorian Huneke's back porch pecking at the wooden handle of a wire brush and her FOS Chipping Sparrow was at her feeder in Treadwell. Scattered among several Tree Swallows Tom Salo caught sight of a lone Barn



Displaying Woodcock, by Dave Kiehm

Swallow in W. Burlington on 4/8. On 4/12 he also saw a Blue-headed Vireo after hearing its song and on the 15th he saw a singing Field Sparrow. The next day Eleanor Moriarity welcomed home her Brown Thrasher to Davenport who has been returning for the past four years. Spring is alive!

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