

# THE BELTED KINGFISHER



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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

Volume 37, Number 8, November 2005

Editor — Gerianne Carillo

## COMING ACTIVITIES

<u>Daily Until January 1</u>	The Hawkwatch at Franklin Mtn, atop the Audubon Sanctuary. Volunteers staff the watch daily. Come up and check it out - the Golden Eagles are flying! Be sure to dress warmly. (See article on pg. 5)
<u>Friday, Nov. 18</u>	Charter Dinner, Oneonta Country Club (tear out registration, pg. 5) - Please join us for good food, lots of bird talk, door prizes, and an excellent program! (see below)
<u>Thursday, Nov. 24</u>	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
<u>Tuesday, Dec. 6</u>	DOAS Board Meeting, at the home of Cheryl Boise. A reminder: all DOAS members are invited to attend this and all Board Meetings.
<u>Saturday, December 17</u>	Annual Christmas Bird Count
<u>Friday, Jan. 20, 2006</u>	DOAS General Meeting, TBA, at the Elm Park Methodist Church.
<u>Saturday, January 28, '06</u>	Eagle Field Trip with Andy Mason (see below)

### November's Charter Dinner Program: The Canadian Atlantic

Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner will present this year's Charter Dinner Program. From the Gannets of Bonaventure, the tides of Fundy, and the highlands of Cape Breton, across the sea to the fjords, bogs, and icebergs of Newfoundland and Labrador, this great and diverse land is filled with scenery, wildlife, and culture. This slide and music program shows the wonders that draw visitors again and again to these special places.

Please join us for social hour and dinner with board members, other attendees and speakers, followed by this interesting program. See page 5 for your registration form which is due Monday, November 18th. We look forward to seeing you there!

### Eagle Trip Scheduled for January 28, 2006

This winter's DOAS field trip to view Bald Eagles in Delaware County is scheduled for Saturday, January 28, 2006. Further details will appear in the next Belted Kingfisher, but the trip will leave Oneonta in the morning and return mid-afternoon. Participants can also meet up along the way in Hamden or Downsville.

For further information, contact trip leader Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

## Conservation and Legislation

by Andy Mason

**Follow up on Endangered Species Act threats**—Last month we reported on efforts to drastically weaken the Endangered Species Act in Congress. Rep. Richard Pombo had pushed legislation that would cut the heart out of this critical wildlife protection measure. Unfortunately, Pombo's "Extinction Bill" cleared the House Natural Resources Committee which he chairs, and quickly went to the House floor, where it was approved on Sept. 29.

Among the 34 Republicans voting against this dangerous bill was local representative Sherwood Boehlert, who consistently stands up to protect the environment, despite strong pressures from his party and the Bush administration. Also voting against the bill was Maurice Hinchey, who represents lower Delaware County, and Michael McNulty representing Schoharie Co. On the wrong side of the legislation was John Sweeney who represents upper Delaware and eastern Otsego Counties.

The action on revising the ESA now moves to the US Senate. To save the protections that have brought back the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, American Alligator and others, it is necessary that the Senate reject the House legislation.

**What you can do**—Write your representative to let them know you are aware of their vote on the Extinction Bill. In particular, Rep. Boehlert deserves praise for his recognition of the importance of the ESA, and his courageous stance against those who would make it meaningless.

Also contact US Senators Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer and urge them to stand strong against attempts to weaken the ESA.

**NY Voters Guide released**—Environmental Advocates (EA), the leading group watch dogging conservation legislation in Albany, has released its 2005 Voters Guide outlining how NY Senators and Assembly members have acted toward environmental issues in the state legislature over the past year.

This year EA focused on five environmental 'Super Bills':

- **The Community Preservation Act** to empower local communities to establish a small real estate transfer fee with revenues earmarked for the protection of natural areas, farmland and historic landmarks.

- **Wetland protection legislation** to fill a gap-

ing hole in New York's wetlands laws that allows developers to destroy wetlands under 12.4 acres in size.

- **A carbon cap** for NY's power plants that would cut emissions of carbon dioxide—the primary cause of global warming—from the state's fossil fuel power plants.

- **The Bigger Better Bottle Bill** to expand the state's existing bottle deposit law to apply to the vast number of bottled waters, juices and other non-carbonated beverages that are not currently redeemable.

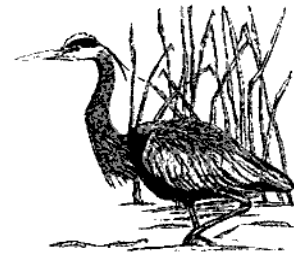
- **A burn barrel ban** to stop the backyard burning of garbage, the largest source of dioxin and other toxic and cancer-causing chemicals in rural parts of the state.



Unfortunately, area state legislators rated fair at best in the EA ratings. Assembly member William Magee voted for 3 of the Super Bills, but voted against the carbon cap and ban on burn barrels. Assembly member Clifford Crouch supported the burn barrel ban and Community Preservation Act, but against the other three.

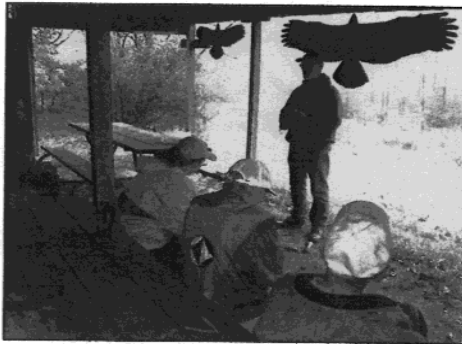
In the State Senate, the picture was even bleaker. All the Super Bills were blocked by Republican leadership in the Senate, but Senators were asked to co-sponsor the bills to improve their chances of passage. Senator John Bonacic did co-sponsor the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, but did not support the others. At the bottom of the barrel was Sen. James Seward, who did not cosponsor any of the Super Bills, and as part of the leadership, helped keep them from even being voted on. In addition, Seward's overall environmental voting rating of 56 was near the bottom for the entire Senate.

**What you can do**—Contact the legislators on the facing page and impress upon them that this common sense legislation is good for NY, its citizens and its environment. It is particularly important that Senators know that their deceptive practice of avoiding a vote on these well-supported bills is recognized by their constituents.



**DOAS Sanctuary Open House Well Attended Despite Weather**

The Saturday of our Sanctuary Open House saw cool temperatures and a steady rain all day. Even so, more than thirty people braved the weather and enjoyed the festivities. At 10:30 AM, folks gathered under the pavilion for the Hawk ID workshop led by Andy Mason. Giving their complete attention and asking some good questions, the participants learned how to distinguish among the various hawks and eagles that



Andy Mason teaches his workshop on hawk identification



Barbara Marsala, left, with visitors in the Sanctuary Barn at the Open House

migrate over Franklin Mountain. Then after some warming refreshments brought by our Board Members, about half set off to walk the sanctuary trails with me, ending up at the Hawk Watch station. Unfortunately, the rain and fog prevented us from seeing any raptors. Just one Northern Harrier had been spotted by the hawk counters earlier that day.

The sanctuary is a lovely place in any weather, any time of year and the fellowship of DOAS members always makes for a successful day.

Barbara Marsala, DOAS President

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mike.mcnulty@mail.house.gov

US Rep. Sherwood Boehlert/  
Maurice Hinchey/  
John Sweeney/Michael  
McNulty

**~ Food For Thought ~**

By Jean Miller

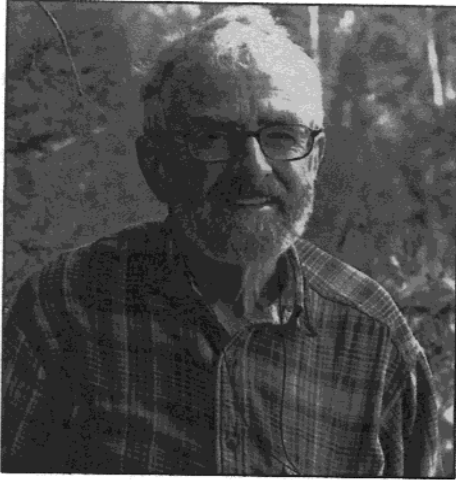
How Long Does it Take to Biodegrade ~  
Plastic soda bottles forever  
Glass bottles 1 M years  
Batteries 100 years  
Aluminum and tin cans 50-100 years  
Plastic bags 10-20 years  
Plastic coated milk cartons 5 years  
Orange peels 6 months  
Paper 2-5 months

Remember - if things are tied into a plastic bag, it must biodegrade before the enclosed items start to biodegrade. And much is buried deep in compacted trash.

If plastic is made of cornstarch polymers, it will biodegrade in 6-12 months.

~ from Discover Magazine

## Meet the DOAS Board



**John Davis**

I am a retired physician whose career spanned over 40 years at Bassett Healthcare. A lifelong birder, in retirement I've continued a main focus on the natural world and in environmental causes and organizations. I have been a member of the DOAS Board of Directors since 1995 and served two terms as President. I also serve on the Board of Directors of Otsego 2000 and am an active member of the Otsego County Conservation Association. My concerns include the need to control development of our immediate region so as to maintain its ecological integrity, along with increasing anger toward so many of our political and business leaders who seem indifferent to the ongoing destruction of the planet's life support systems. My wife Jean and I live six miles northeast of Cooperstown in the Town of Middlefield.

### Consider This...

It is surprising how terrestrial events can affect the planet's spin and shape.

The underseas earthquake that triggered the December '04 tsunami changed the Earth's rotation, shifted the North Pole's location, and slightly changed Earth's shape. Small, but measurable changes.

Human activities also have an impact. Filling China's great Three Gorge Reservoir (10 trillion gallons of water) will shift enough mass to increase day length by 0.06 microseconds and move the North Pole by 2.0 centimeters.

- Chemistry Spring 2005  
I wonder how Katrina has affected our spin and shape?

- Jean T. Miller

## October Bird Sightings

As I was driving to work on Sept. 29th, I noticed a ring-necked pheasant bravely and majestically walking along the side of the road. He didn't seem to have a care in the world even though a prospective hunter could have just been lying in wait in the distance. Apparently pheasants had recently been released in my area.

On 9/17 Tom Salo saw a goldfinch feeding a fledgling in W. Burlington. He also spotted a winter wren there. On 9/20 Ted Buhl reported an immature bald eagle harassed by a sharp-shinned hawk, 20+ broad-winged hawks and a Cooper's hawk in Richfield Springs. Kay Crane had a red-breasted nuthatch at her feeder in Walton on 9/23. Steve Hall spotted a Connecticut warbler at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch 9/29.

Ted Buhl had a great birding day on 10/2 in Richfield Springs. He saw 4-8 ruby-crowned kinglets, 350+ white-throated sparrows, 10+ Nashville warblers, 20+ Lincoln sparrows, 2 blue-headed vireos and 3 Northern harriers. Bruce and Janice Downie had some reluctant migrators lingering at their home in Oneonta. They reported 4 Eastern bluebirds, a flock of cedar waxwings and 4 American robins. On 10/5 they also saw two pileated woodpeckers. On that same day Gerianne Carillo heard a pair of great horned owls calling in Milford, Trina Bassoff heard barred owls calling in Blenheim and Andy Mason had lots of white-throated sparrows in Jefferson. On 10/8 Andy Mason also heard great horned owls calling near his home.

10/9 brought a number of sightings. Bob Donnelly saw 6 blue-winged teals and a ringed-neck duck in Burlington and 40+ double-crested cormorants on Otsego Lake. Bruce and Janice Downie spotted an immature red-tailed hawk in Oneonta on that same day.

If you have bird sightings please reach me, Dianne Benko at (607) 829-5218, at 6815 Co. Hwy. 16, Delhi, NY 13753 or at [caged@wpe.com](mailto:caged@wpe.com) by 11/13/05 for the December *Belted Kingfisher*.



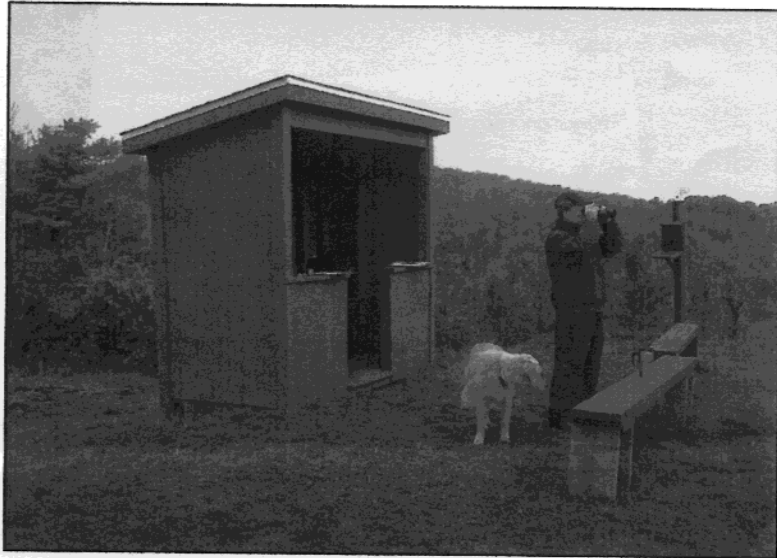
### Hawkwatch News

The fall migration is picking up speed at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, located on the DOAS Sanctuary. Good numbers of Red-tailed Hawks came through after the spell of rainy weather that dominated the second week of October. Steve Hall counted 172 Red-tails on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and Larry Dake had 297 on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Ron Milliken spotted the first Golden Eagle of the season on Oct. 15, along with the first Red-tailed Hawk. Both red-tails and Golden Eagles can be expected to increase in numbers through October and November.

The hawkwatch had a respectable Broad-winged Hawk season, with 867 counted—above the site average of 728. Triple digit broad-wing days came on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>. Good flights of Sharp-shinned Hawks also came through in late September and early October.

In other hawkwatch news, Kevin Magee of Otego has constructed a shelter to protect counters and visitors during bad weather. Kevin carried out this project as his Eagle Scout project, and we are much appreciative of his initiative and hard work!

The best time to visit the hawkwatch is a day or two after a passing cold front, when winds are from the north or northwest. West winds can also be productive. E-mail alerts for anticipated good flights at Franklin Mountain can be accessed at [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/hawkcast](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/hawkcast). Directions and more information are available at [www.FranklinMt.org](http://www.FranklinMt.org), or contact Andy Mason (607) 652-2162, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232.



Charlie Scheim mans the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch in front of our new shelter, built by Eagle Scout Kevin Magee.

◆◆◆◆ **37th Annual Charter Dinner** ◆◆◆◆

Our annual Charter Dinner is on Friday, November 18, 2005 at the Oneonta Country Club. The social hour begins at 5:30 PM, dinner is at 6:30, and the program to which the public is invited starts at 7:30.

The Speakers are Scott Stoner and Denise Hackert-Stoner presenting a program on Atlantic Canada, covering the great diversity of scenery, wildlife and culture in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Stoners are members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and travel extensively.

The dinner is a buffet with choices of Chicken Marsala, London Broil, or Vegetable Lasagna and the cost is \$25.00 per person. Reservations must be made by Monday, November 14th. Send to: Julia Gregory, PO Box 641, Unadilla, NY 13849 or call 607-563-2924.

—Julia Gregory

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Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Menu Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Amt. Enclosed : \_\_\_\_\_

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### Board of Directors

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 Treasurer-Bob Donnelly      Secretary-Tom Salo

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Gerianne Carillo    Nancy Cannon      John Davis  
 Lisa Gorn            Julia Gregory      Andrew Mason  
 Jean Miller          Stephen Rice

### Committee Chairs\* & Other Assignments

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Education *	Debby Clough
Field Trips*	Tom Salo
Hawkwatch*	Andrew Mason, Tom Salo
Charter Dinner	Julia Gregory
Memorial Fund*	Tom Salo
Bird Counts	Bob Miller
Programs*	Gerianne Carillo, Stephen Rice
Membership*	Bruce Milavec
Sanctuary*	Andrew Mason
Sales	Stephen Rice

### Membership Application

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc. includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*. Cost is \$12 for a one year membership and \$20 for two years. Please make check payable to DOAS.

All meetings are free and open to the public. Mail checks 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.)**

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 NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
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 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
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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.