



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

September

Sep 16 — DOAS Program

Sep 20 — DOAS Board Meeting

Sep 23-25 — NYSOA Annual Mtg

Sep 24 — Mountain Top Arboretum

October

Oct 8 — Sanctuary Open House

Oct 15 — Montezuma Field Trip

Oct 18 — DOAS Board Meeting

Oct 21 — Charter Dinner

November

Nov 18 — DOAS Program

December

Dec 6 — DOAS Board Meeting

More information on page 7

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

Jamaica Bay Journey

For twenty years, we lived about a 40 minute drive from the Jamaica Bay Bird Sanctuary, last in 1990. It's quite a varied group of habitats: sand beach, beach dunes, salt and fresh water marshes, open waters, mud flats, small forest glades (cottonwood, willows), sandy shrublands with beach plum, bayberry, and inkberry hollies, and here and there tangles of trumpet vine. There are hard sandy walks with many pricklies, like stick-tights, stunted rugosa roses and native prickly pear cactus with their large golden flowers. These latter I secretly began the reintroduction of in the early '80's. The staff got the idea and followed suit, after they stuck a label next to the one I sneaked in. This cactus has been extirpated from all New York City beach fronts because of their small bunches of tiny glass needles (glochids), that serve them in place of thorns to ward off nuisances. You can make out the New York skyline to the west and Kennedy Airport is not far off to the east, but I don't recall any overflights while we were visiting.



So, on to birds. Look for at least two or three species of gulls, two of terns, black skimmers, and shorebirds in season. Most of these go into a mad, noisy feeding frenzy when the horseshoe crabs emerge to mate and lay their eggs in the wet sand at low tide. What a primeval sight! Woodcocks go through in migration. Resident bob-white quails scurry about in the grassier places. In the summer, glossy ibises seem to fly back and forth continually overhead, necks outstretched. Coots and ducks swim in the open waters of the marshes. Possibly ruddy ducks in the water. If lucky, you might see a yellow-crowned night heron skulking about at the edge of a pond, half in the reeds;

(Continued on page 2)

President's Message

Leadership Challenges

The heading of this column is something of a misstatement, as I am not writing as DOAS President, but rather as one member of an ad hoc three person executive committee created by the board of directors this summer in the absence of a President. The other two committee members are Barbara Marsala and Joe Richardson, and we will each take primary responsibility for the President's duties for a 4 month period until a replacement is found.

Although this is far from an ideal situation, the organization remains strong, with a committed board, including two brand new members, Eileen Kline and Eric Knight, and one returning after a hiatus of several years, Julie Smith. The executive committee has leadership experience; both Barbara and I have served as President in the past, and Joe has been on the board for some time including as Vice-President.

Of course, we want to fulfill the requirements of the bylaws, and are actively seeking a candidate for President. We have reorganized the board and committees to share the work of the organization, so the burden of leadership is not excessive. If you have any ideas or thoughts on possibilities, or are interested in helping out DOAS in any other way, please contact me or one of the other executive committee members.

The arrival of new board members is exciting and positive, but it also means we are losing dedicated individuals—in this case, John Davis and Nancy Cannon. John has served DOAS as President and Secretary, and been involved with all aspects of our group including education, Sanctuary, field trips, and most recently as publicity chair. His experience, knowledge and sound judgment have been invaluable, and he leaves a big void in our leadership. John has many other interests and is presently writing a book on the history of M. I. Bassett Hospital where he spent much of his career as a physician. Nancy similarly worked in numerous capacities for our Chapter as director and program chair, and was involved with conservation and education issues. She also gave us a direct connection to the State University at Oneonta and its faculty in her position at the Milne Library.

We extend a sincere thank you to John and Nancy for all their good work for DOAS, and at the same time welcome Eric, Eileen and Julie to the board. *Andy Mason*

(Continued from page 1, Jamaica Bay Journey)

(s)he's looking for blue crabs, I guess (maybe fiddlers?). Look for a nesting platform for ospreys, and you might happen to see a marsh harrier hovering over the reeds. Long eared owls have been seen in the trees, resting during daytime. I can't say I recall any songbirds at all, but there must have been seashores and sharp-tails—anyway some kinds of little sandy gray folks.

We never found the place crowded back then, but I think we tended to go early or late. I recall one late afternoon particularly. We were on a higher ground with the sun at our backs and a broad view of the lower areas. All was quiet except for a distant slowly repeated high-pitched mewling of some (I think) gull. The mellow lowering light, that lazy sound and the otherwise stillness next to the vast sea were transfixing.

— Stanley N. Saltho

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Helen McLean

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents	Barbara Marsala, Andrew Mason, Joe Richardson
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Dave Kiehm

Eric Knight

Julia Gregory

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS* AND

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Conservation*:	Andy Mason
Education*:	Barbara Marsala
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:	<i>vacant</i>
Sales:	Stephen Rice

ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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Oneonta, NY 13820

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To contribute notes or articles for *The Belted Kingfisher* please send to "Kingfisher Editor" at the above address, or email:

editor@doas.us

Conservation and Legislation

Hydrofracking—the battle continues—In July, the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation took a major step in the ongoing process of establishing regulations for horizontal drilling and hydrofracking for natural gas production in the state. The release of the *Preliminary Revised Draft Supplementary Generic Environmental Impact Statement* lays out the state's vision for drilling and related activity and includes its proposed rules for energy companies, as well as anticipated environmental impacts and mitigation measures.

This is a large document—over 900 pages—and not yet fully complete. However, the state is providing only a 60 day public comment period, clearly too short to adequately assess and evaluate the statement. Environmental groups and others are calling on DEC and Governor Cuomo to extend the comment period to 180 days.

The revised draft does include some improvements over the previous version, including positive responses to issues raised by DOAS and others. The revised draft requires mitigation measures to lessen, but not eliminate, the negative impacts to wildlife from habitat fragmentation as a result of drilling operations.

The newer regulations prohibit drilling in the New York City and Syracuse watersheds, as well as on State Forests, State Parks, and State Wildlife Management areas. However, even with these restrictions, the state will permit the activity in 85% of NY's Marcellus Shale region.

A review of those portions of the draft relating to habitat and wildlife impacts, water withdrawals, waste material disposals, and drinking water protections shows that the DEC rules are still lacking:

- They would still allow water withdrawals for hydrofracking in the millions of gallons from the state's lakes, rivers, wetlands and aquifers.
- Flowback wastes and other materials could be stored in open lagoons, although closed systems are recommended. There is no adequate system or capacity for proper disposal of these wastes in NY.
- DEC remains in denial about the threat to groundwater and aquifers from gas drilling and production processes, despite such problems in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.
- There is no assessment or response to the cumulative impacts of drilling the anticipated thousands of wells in NY State.

In addition, DEC does not, and cannot, address one of DOAS' main reasons for opposing hydrofracking: that large quantities of toxic materials will be left underground essentially forever when the wells are closed—an immoral environmental time bomb for the future.

What you can do—The entire *PRDSGEIS* is available at the DEC web site, www.dec.ny.gov, and at public libraries in Oneonta, Walton and Cobleskill. Much of the document is technical, and deals with the drilling activity, geology and the review process itself. An executive summary and the sections on environmental impacts and mitigation, which can be downloaded separately, are the heart of the document. Try to familiarize yourself with at least these sections in advance of yet to be scheduled public hearings, and/or submitting comments.

In addition, contact DEC Commissioner Joe Martens, (*NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233*) and Governor Andrew Cuomo (*Executive Chamber, New York State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224*) and urge them to increase the public comment period on the revised GEIS to 180 days.

A growing number of towns and other municipalities have enacted bans on gas drilling. If your town is considering this, let your support be known. If the issue has not yet been raised in your town, there are good models to follow in the Otsego Co. towns of Middlefield, Otsego and Springfield.

Andy Mason

Edith Wilk, 1912-2011

Edith Kohner Wilk, long time DOAS member and former director, died June 11, 2011 at her home in Oneonta.

Edith and her husband, Dr. Hans Wilk, were strong supporters of the environment and our organization. In 1987, they donated a 7.8 acre parcel of land near our Sanctuary to DOAS. We have kept the land open and undeveloped as the Wilks wished, and it remains a legacy of their dedication to wildlife and the natural world. In addition, Edith directed donations in her memory to DOAS, among other groups.

Edith was active in numerous other community organizations, and was an avid hiker and intrepid traveler. She lived a full life and enriched the existence of those around her. Our condolences to the Wilk family—Edith will be missed by all who knew her.

Important Notice to National Audubon Society Members Please Join Our Local Chapter

- If you are a member of the National Audubon Society, you are receiving this issue of *The Belted Kingfisher*, compliments of our local Chapter, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. Due to printing and postage costs and the loss of the portion of National Audubon Society (NAS) dues that our Chapter receives, we are not able to send the newsletter to NAS-only members.
- NAS-only members receive the September Kingfisher—this issue--each year. However, the other eight issues go only to those who have taken a local membership or are joint local/NAS members.
- **We encourage all NAS-only members to consider a local membership in order to help defray the costs of the newsletter and support our Chapter’s education and conservation activities.** Local memberships are \$15 per year or \$25 for two years—a membership form can be found elsewhere in this issue.
- Your mailing label will inform you of your membership status: an L indicates a local member, with expiration date (year and month, e.g. ‘1011’ indicates November 2010); an N indicates an NAS-only member; both an L and an N indicates a joint local/NAS member. **If you are an NAS-only member, you will need to take a local membership in order to continue receiving *The Belted Kingfisher*.** If you are a local member or a joint local/NAS member, you will continue receiving the newsletter as in the past.

**We appreciate the continued support of all members
for our efforts to protect the natural world.**

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: _____

Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch and Fall 2011 Open House

Thousands of raptors of 15 species are counted moving south each fall as they concentrate along the ridges overlooking Oneonta. The Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch began in 1989 as a survey of hawks and eagles migrating past the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society's wildlife sanctuary in the Town of Davenport. Volunteers count hawks, eagles and vultures passing the site on most days from late August through December. The site is noted for its flights of Golden Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks. In recent years an average of almost 200 Golden Eagles and over 2000 Red-tailed Hawks have been recorded each fall. The best flights generally occur on days with north or northwest winds, usually following cold fronts.

On Saturday, October 8, 2011 from 10 AM to 2 PM, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will host an open house at the sanctuary. At 10:30 AM, there will be a 45 minute beginners workshop on *Identifying Flying Hawks*. A trail walk will leave the barn at 11:30 AM and will cover most of the sanctuary grounds. The hawk watch will be staffed through the day and refreshments will be served at the barn.

The sanctuary can be reached by taking Oneonta's Main Street south across NY Route 28. After passing through the light, turn immediately left at the T onto Southside Drive. Turn right after 8/10 mile on Swart Hollow Road. Go 1 1/2 mile and take a sharp right on Grange Hall Road. After 2/10 mile, take a sharp left into the driveway, or park nearby on Grange Hall Road. The hawk watch is 100 yards up the hill from the barn.

For more information on the hawk watch visit www.doas.us or contact Tom Salo at 607-965-8232 or tomsalo@localnet.com or Andy Mason at 607-652-2162 or andymason@earthling.net.

Kestrel Project of Spring 2011

The first year of our chapter's involvement with the New York State Audubon's Kestrel Project has finished till next Spring with some promising results.

In our last two newsletters, we had reported the following: out of the four individuals who had placed boxes on their properties, two had terrific results. One had four successful kestrels fledged from the nest and that was the nest that lost the male right after the eggs appeared. The female had managed to raise and fledge four kestrels. Picture of the youngster is at right. The other individual had success with three and a possible fourth but could not confirm the fourth.

The Kestrel boxes that were placed in our area schools were not productive this year but other schools in the project throughout the state reported that the second year had Kestrels nesting in a

Hawkwatch News

The Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch on the DOAS Sanctuary began its 23d consecutive year the third week of August and will continue through December.

Our team of dedicated volunteers record thousands of raptors each season. The count for the 2010 season was over 6304 raptors of 16 species. This was the third highest seasonal total for the site.

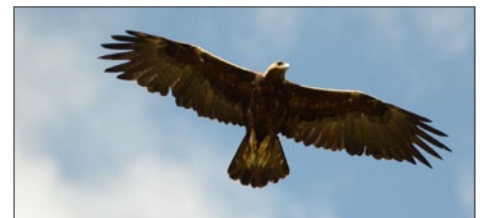
The middle two weeks of September are prime time for Broad-wings, which are often sighted in sizeable flocks or "kettles". Franklin Mt. had a record year for broad-wings in 2010 with 2342 passing the lookout on their way to Central and South America. Other early season species include Osprey, kestrels, and the first wave of Bald Eagles.

Visitors, spotters and counters are always welcome at the hawkwatch. For more information, contact: Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, tomsalo@localnet.com

Forecasts of anticipated good flights at the hawkwatch are sent out by email a day or two in advance. To receive these alerts, visit pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/hawkcast/ to sign up. Daily tallies from Franklin Mt. are also available by email—contact Andy Mason as above.

More information and directions to the hawkwatch at the DOAS Sanctuary can be found at

www.franklinmt.org



Golden Eagle, by Dave Kiehm

number of them. Jillian Liner, who is New York State Audubon's biologist in charge of the project has proposed banding next year as part of their research. DOAS will again be involved and hope to expand the number of individuals and schools involved.

DOAS member, Randy Lynch, is making Kestrel boxes for this project.

Please let me know if you are interested. The Kestrel boxes need to be up by March of each year. Contact Eleanor Moriarty at cell phone: 607-435-2054.



Kestrel fledgling, by Gail DuBois

Favorite Places

**The West Branch Preserve
(Nature Conservancy land in Hamden)**

The parking lot is small, the sign easy to miss, but, once found, you needn't even step away from the car before realizing that this is a hidden gem of a birding spot. Orioles, Catbirds, Chickadees, Juncos, Warbling Vireos, and Yellow Warblers are but a few of the birds you might find singing and flitting between the branches of the trees and bushes surrounding the entrance to the preserve.

As you begin your walk through a lightly wooded area, fields on both sides yield Tree Swallows and Bluebirds guarding nestboxes, while the sounds of Redstarts, Song Sparrows, Eastern Towhees, House Wrens, and an occasional Field Sparrow invite closer inspection. Once, just as we entered the preserve, we happened upon a Yellow-billed Cuckoo sitting quietly in a small tree.

As the trail winds toward the wooded hill, listen for the soft 'bee-buzz' of the Blue-winged Warbler. Here, too, we have found Magnolia and Prairie Warblers, and watched Tree Swallows swoop in, landing on the path to pick at some invisible (to the human eye) tidbits.

The wooded area beyond offers opportunities for various woodpeckers, Red-eyed Vireos, Ovenbirds, Nuthatches, and other

denizens of the darker areas. Deeper in the woods, Eastern Wood Pewees sing, Brown Creepers creep, and Winter Wrens burble their bubbly song. The ethereal, spiraling song of the Veery draws you in as surely as the mythical siren song. Wood and Hermit Thrushes add to the concert, while the rich song of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and the throaty warbling of the Scarlet Tanager invite your gaze skyward; spring is the perfect time to get great views of these brilliantly-hued birds.

The first part of this birding walk is easy, relatively flat, and so rich in avian life that it's worth the trip for this section alone. If you choose to continue into the woods, be prepared for some steeper terrain, whether you choose the 'Blue' (0.7 mile) or the 'Orange' (1.7 miles) trail. The longer trail takes you higher, providing better chances for the higher elevation birds such as Black-throated Blue Warblers.

To get to the preserve: take Route 10 from Hamden. The preserve is located on the right, 0.9 miles beyond the intersection of Rte 10 and Co. Rd. 26.



Sandy Bright

*Blue-winged Warbler,
by Dave Kiehm*

Annual Charter Dinner

DOAS will hold its 43rd Annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 21, 2011 at the Brooks Roost Banquet room. We will gather at 6 PM for a social time before the buffet at 6:30 PM. The program for the evening begins at 7:30 PM and is free and open to the public.

Our speaker will be Mike Burger, Audubon New York Director of Conservation and Science. He will discuss the ecology of land birds migrating through the Great Lakes Basin, why habitat patches are so vital, and the great birding opportunities that result. Mr Burger has been with Audubon New York since 1999 and is based at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York. His is Audubon New York's chief scientist, responsible for providing a science-based foundation for all projects.

It promises to be both a fun filled and informative evening. The buffet cost is \$20 per person, and \$15 for children under twelve. Reservations must be made by October 16th by calling: 607-563-2924 or by mailing a check to: Julia Gregory, PO Box 641, Unadilla, New York 13849-0641

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Coming Activities

September

September 16 — DOAS Program: *Native Plants and Wildlife* by Lisa M. Tessier, adjunct professor at Delhi College in Delhi, NY. Lisa has spent many years studying the native plants, shrubs and perennials that are used in home landscapes. She will speak about the connection between wildlife and native plants, and about invasive plants that should not be used for home landscaping. Since Fall is planting time, we will have information and handouts available about books on native plants and places to visit or purchase them.

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

See September 24 follow up to Lisa Tessier's presentation.

September 20 — DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM at the home of Stephen Rice.

September 23-25 — NYSOA Annual Meeting: See below for details.

September 24 — Mountain Top Arboretum: a trip to the beautiful preserve in Tannersville NY to view native trees, shrubs and wildflowers and possibly birds in migration. Meeting places are: Price Chopper Parking lot at 7:30 AM. Park towards the front of the lot. Car Pooling is advised. We will meet at a second location in route: the Rite-Aid parking lot in Stamford at 8:30 AM. The trip will take about 4 hours. Picnicking is not allowed on the grounds, but we will make arrangements to stop along the way. This preserve has an East Meadow and West Meadow, a 5 minute walk apart. Each Meadow is about a 25 to 30 minute walk, depending on how much time is spent at each site. For further information please contact: Eleanor Moriarty at cell phone: 607-435-2054

October

October 8 — Sanctuary Open House: 10 AM - 2 PM, at the DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain. At 10:30 AM, there will be a 45-minute beginners' workshop on *Identifying Flying Hawks*. A trail walk will leave the barn at 11:30 AM and will cover most of the sanctuary grounds. The hawk watch will be staffed through the day and refreshments will be served at the barn. For more information contact Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232.

October 15 — Montezuma Field Trip: to observe the return migration south. We will leave the Dietz St. parking lot, across from the YMCA in Oneonta, at 7:30 AM. Carpooling is strongly advised and participants can be picked up en route to Cooperstown. Return to Oneonta in the late afternoon. The trip takes a few hours each way and participants need to pack a lunch. We will picnic lunch at the beautiful Audubon Center near Montezuma. For further information please contact Eleanor Moriarty at cell phone: 607-435-2054.

October 18 — DOAS Board Meeting: 7 PM at the home of Tom Salo.

October 21 — Charter Dinner Program: Mike Burger, Director of Conservation and Science, NY State Audubon will discuss the ecology of land birds migrating through the Great Lakes Basin and why habitat patches near the lake are important and can be such great places for birding.

November

November 18 — DOAS Program: Scott VanArsdale, Senior Wildlife Technician of NYSDEC Region 4 and well-known presenter, will share his photos and experience with the Bald and Golden Eagles of the Catskills.

For details, see the Events page of our website: <http://www.doas.us/page0002.html>

Noted Author Scott Weidensaul to Keynote NYSOA Annual Meeting

The 64th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) will be held **September 23-25** at Circle Lodge, a lakeside camp in Hopewell Junction, Dutchess County, NY. The meeting will be hosted by the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club and will feature Scott Weidensaul as the keynote speaker, whose topic will be "Messing Around with Birds (for Fun and Science)". Author and naturalist Scott Weidensaul has written more than two dozen books on natural history, including *Living*

on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds, a Pulitzer Prize finalist; *The Ghost with Trembling Wings*, about the search for species that may or may not be extinct; and *Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding*.

A full range of field trips will be offered from Friday afternoon through Sunday. Workshops are planned for Friday evening and Saturday's activities will include a scientific paper session in the afternoon.

For further information, including a registration form, visit the NYSOA website, www.nybirds.org.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

May-Summer Bird Sightings

The spring burst of reporting migrating bird arrivals came to a close, but there are still some great sightings to share with you.

On 5/15 Gerianne Carillo saw a male Indigo Bunting at her feeder in Milford. It was a strikingly beautiful event. On that same day our newest member to DOAS, Julie Barton, heard a Chestnut-sided Warbler in Schenevus. On 5/17 Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright saw a Pine Warbler in Wilber Park and Kathy Dawson saw an Eastern Screech Owl in Guilford. A Tennessee Warbler was feeding among the apple blossoms off Dave Kiehm's front porch in Milford on 5/21. Flo Loomis watched a mature Bald Eagle feasting on something, apparently a tasty meal, which it had no intention of leaving in Mt. Vision on 5/23. On the 26th Cynthia Campbell captured a good look at a Black-billed Cuckoo in Cherry Valley

and also heard the call of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on 5/26. It was a double pleasure. Tom and Sue Whitney observed a pair of Common Loons calling and feeding on the Pepacton Reservoir on 6/4. At 8:45 pm on the 8th of June, Bob Donnelly saw a Whip-poor-will flying and singing for a half hour as it cruised the fields of Cooperstown. On 6/15 Dave Kiehm heard a singing Hooded Warbler in Arnold Lake State Forest. Julie Barton was treated to a birding "family moment" as a Hairy Woodpecker perched on her house bird feeder, fed its fledgling who was patiently seated on the post of that feeder in Schenevus on 6/25. For the past few years Kathy Lloyd has been finding numerous small twigs in her clothes pin bag that is suspended from her clothesline at her house in Cooperstown. She has repeatedly emptied these twigs each year but decided she would leave them alone this one. After several weeks she peeked into the bag and saw cloistered in a sack-shaped nest at least two small beaks that turned out to be the home of a



Indigo Bunting, by Dave Kiehm

House Wren. It was a delightful surprise.

On 7/29 Cindy Staley saw an apparent juvenile Peregrine Falcon in Springfield. Andy Mason saw a Great Egret around Roseboom on 8/13 and on the 16th of August Gerianne Carillo observed a juvenile Northern Mockingbird in Milford, a rare treat for our area.

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