



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## Coming Activities

### November

**November 1** – Signs of Winter

**November 8** – Bird seed pickup

**November 21** – DOAS Program

### December

**December 2** – DOAS Board Mtg

**December 14** – Oneonta CBC

**December 27** – Fort Plain CBC

### January

**January 18** – Waterfowl Count

**January 31** – Eagle Trip

### February

**February 7** – Golden Eagle Count

*More information on page 7*



*Female Cardinal by Rod Spangle*

## Bird Carver Extraordinaire

I've been writing the bird sightings article for *The Belted Kingfisher* since the late 1990's. About a couple of years ago I started getting sightings from Rod Spangle who lives in Unadilla. In one of those emails he sent me a photo of a Black-capped Chickadee that he had carved from wood. I was absolutely taken with the likeness and the beauty of this bird sculpture.

Rod has been bird watching since he was 10 years old and got his start on his grandmother's farm in Canton, New York. He has always been interested in birding and a few years later he began his collection of song bird wood carvings. In 1978 while living in Manhattan he began carving his own work and supplying other song bird collectors and soon his beautiful bird artwork was being purchased by others. In 1986 Rod moved to Unadilla and established his antique wall and shelf clock repair business which is on going, but he always makes sure to set aside time for bird carving and bird watching, his first loves.

Rod is inspired to carve by two motivations.

He is either taken with the beauty of a particular bird he has seen while birding and then tries to find a base that perfectly blends to that bird's habitat or he takes a lot of care finding unique bases of various materials. While out birding he might come across an ideal base and then decide what bird suits it. The base for one of his Downy Woodpeckers came from the Wells Bridge fishing access where crews had been cutting back overgrown trees along that road. The base, an angular piece of rough bark, makes the Downy Woodpecker appear to be climbing up the side of a tree creating a perfect artistic match. The base for his 2013 White-crowned Sparrow is a brick and mortar fragment that had been rolled around by the waves of Cayuga Lake for many years, rounding and smoothing the edges and making a pristine base for the sparrow.

Before Rod actually begins the carving process, a pattern is outlined on a bass wood block and sawn with a band saw. The cut out block is then carved by hand, painted and mounted on a base. He makes all his own patterns and it's a critical first step as



*Downy Woodpecker by Rod Spangle*

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Climate Change

In September, National Audubon Society released their report on Climate Change to major media where it received significant attention across the US and Canada. The report is a comprehensive, predictive study on how climate change could affect the ranges of 588 North American bird species. The following is an overview of the report based on information provided by National Audubon Society.

Audubon scientists used four decades of citizen science observations from the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and the North American Breeding Bird Survey to define the climatic suitability or range of temperatures, precipitation and seasonal changes needed to survive, for each bird species. Using an internationally recognized climate change model from IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), Audubon mapped where each bird's climatic range may be found in the future as the climate changes. These maps serve as a guide to how each bird's current range could expand, contract, or shift across three time periods (2020, 2050 and 2080).

The world's scientists have confirmed that the planet is heating up. While there are varying opinions about the causes, the temperature shift is well documented. Climate models, are based on mathematical representations of interactions within and among the sun, atmosphere, oceans, land surface, ice and even vegetation. The models might

*Audubon's climate model projects an 82 percent loss of current summer range for the Wood Thrush by 2080. New range could become available across much of what is today the boreal forest.*

*Photo by Kelly Colgan Azar  
Flickr Creative Commons*



not be perfect, but they may be the best source to learn what climate change will bring. The Audubon model indicates that 314 species (almost half of approximately 800 bird species found in North America) will lose more than 50 percent of their current climatic range by 2080, with the possibility of extinction for some.

Climate change and continued changes in weather patterns will have an effect on resource availability by changing the characteristics of established habitats from plant communities to insect biodiversity. The expected changes to both summer and winter ranges for each bird in the study are summarized using Venn diagrams as in the example below reflecting the Wood Thrush range change from the year 2000 to 2080.

Species Range Change from 2000 to 2080



18% of summer 2000 range is stable  
30% decrease in summer 2080 from 2000 range



55% of winter 2000 range is stable  
2218% increase in winter 2080 from 2000 range

Each of the 588 species in the study face different levels of impact - some dire, others less so. In addition to presenting impacts, the Audubon study has identified "strongholds" or geographic areas that will provide

(Continued on page 4)

### THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

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FOUNDED 1968

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Helen McLean

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To contribute notes or articles for  
*The Belted Kingfisher*, email:  
[editor@doas.us](mailto:editor@doas.us)

## Conservation and Legislation

### Constitution Pipeline Final Environmental Impact Statement Released

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Constitution Pipeline was released on October 24 by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The document was prepared by FERC staff, and followed extensive public input on the scope of the environmental study and on draft versions of the statement. DOAS had submitted substantive comments on impacts to wildlife, particularly birds, during this process, and is a formal intervenor in the project proceedings along with several other conservation groups, represented by Earthjustice, an environmental law firm.

The FEIS concluded that the project "... would result in adverse environmental impacts", but that with the recommendations and mitigation measures found in the FEIS, that "... these impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels". This finding essentially provides a green light for the full commission to approve the project sometime later this year.

It is difficult to understand what the FERC staff considers "significant". Regarding bird impacts alone, the project would cross 36 miles of interior forest habitat, and bisect 129 interior forest blocks over 35 acres in size. Fifty-five of these 129 interior blocks and over 2600 acres will now be non-interior, a loss of 43% of prime critical breeding habitat for forest-interior birds.

In our comments on the proposed mitigation plan by Constitution, we stressed that "... the ridgetop areas targeted for the pipeline contain much of the last remaining large unfragmented forest in the region," and that "... this project stands as the largest single act of forest disturbance in decades." We also pointed out that the forest types that will be lost to the Constitution project conservatively serve as habitat for nearly 60 species of birds, 26 of which are showing multi-decade population declines in New York. The FEIS focuses on a smaller group of species, classified as "conservation concern" and above. This significantly underestimates the negative impacts of the project on birds.

We are not the only organization making these points. In its comments on the impact statement, the US Fish & Wildlife Service raised many of the same issues, even more strongly in some instances. The FEIS has no significant changes in response to the FWS either.

The mitigation measures called for by the FEIS, including a reduction of the width of the cleared pipeline right-of-way by 10 ft. in forested areas, and establishment of a fund for conservation of interior forest habitat, amount to virtually no mitigation at all. The 10 ft. reduction will have no impact on the adjacent interior forest areas that now become degraded breeding habitat, and no fund can compensate for this cleared

and contiguous mature forest. It would take lifetimes to recreate these woodlands that are critical to birds at risk today.

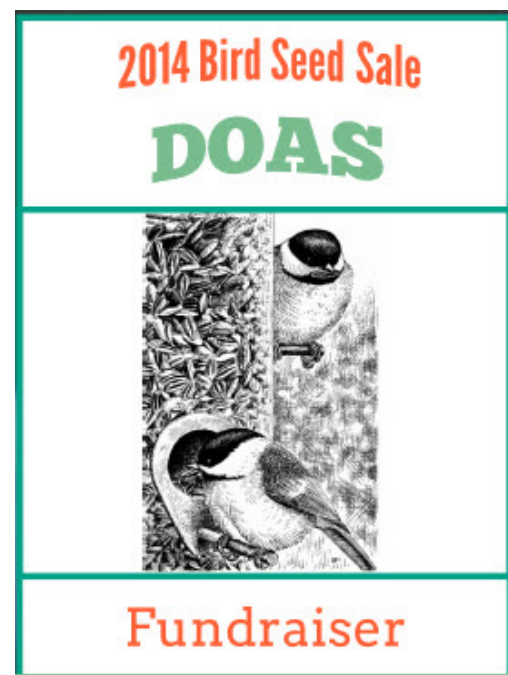
To term these major losses of habitat for already at-risk species as "... less than significant ..." defies sensibility. It appears that the FERC staff is bending over backwards to provide Constitution and the commission itself a way to rationalize this project environmentally.

There are numerous other aspects of the FEIS that are lacking, including its rejection of alternative routes, such as along I-88. The arguments of FERC staff for this decision are specious and contrived, and certainly do not give adequate weight to the reductions in environmental impacts that co-locating the project along existing rights-of-way would bring.

**What you can do**—Let FERC know that the Constitution Pipeline FEIS has understated the impacts of the project, and that its conclusions are flawed. Emphasize that alternatives exist, and that birds and other wildlife will be significantly affected by the pipeline construction and operation. Letters can be sent to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, FERC, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, D.C. 20426. To reach FERC online, visit Stop the Pipeline's web site, [www.stopthepipeline.org](http://www.stopthepipeline.org), and follow instructions there.

There will be opportunities for appeal of the FEIS findings, and of FERC's final decision. We will keep you informed of these actions.

*Andy Mason*



### Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser 2014

Order Pickup Saturday, November 8th at Walmart Lot



**Bird Carver Extraordinaire** (Continued from page 1)

a good pattern will capture the spirit of the bird with pose and attitude. Starting with a good pattern makes a good carving possible. It takes Rod fifteen plus hours to complete, for example, a Black-capped Chickadee.

Rod's work falls into the bird representation field not the bird replication one. Bird representation draws its inspiration from the old hunting decoys which although simple were very effective as they captured the spirit of the ducks they were meant to lure while bird replication focuses on high detail such as feather carving, cast pewter feet, and slick walnut bases. Most carvers today work in that latter motif. However he prefers the simplicity of bird representation and his inspiration comes from the carvings of the well known folk artist Clem Wilding from Berger, Missouri and Hazel Tyrrell from Canton, New York. He has examples of both those carvers in his collection.

Carvings are all life-size, carved from bass wood and painted in artist oil colors. According to Rod, "Dollar wise, there's no money in bird carving even when I sell one! So I don't take commissions." That frees him up to work on the birds he is currently interested in without regard to salability and keeps it fun for him. One can see the love, talent and beauty that have gone into the creating of between 300-350 bird wood sculptures.

I visited Rod in the middle of September to see his beautiful bird wood carvings. They are indeed spectacular and exhibit all the love and care that went into their creation. I'm envious of the two winners of his Bobolink and Black-capped Chickadee carvings that he donated to a DOAS fundraiser. If you weren't one of those lucky people, his carvings are available for sale and may be found at *The Green Giraffe Antiques & Consignment*, 54 St. Hwy 357, Unadilla, NY 13849 (607) 369-3234.

Dianne Benko

**Climate Change** (Continued from page 2)

shelter against the decades-long wave of climate change. These strongholds will be the key to success for many birds in North America. Our best chance for helping is to protect the places that birds live - through work with IBAs (Important Bird Areas), habitat restoration efforts, advocacy in our communities, and continuing to create bird-friendly landscapes.

The 2014 State of the Birds Report ([www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org)) was also released in September by a coalition of bird conservation groups, including National Audubon. This report annually tracks the health of bird species across the US. The report shows birds currently in decline from a number of factors, and although some of these are not yet identified at threatened, the report is an indicator of possible future trends.

The Audubon Report on Climate Change offers actionable suggestions for those who want to help. These include:

- Taking the pledge to help build a brighter future for at risk bird species.
- Creating a bird-friendly yard (provide feeders/fresh water, leave flower heads to seed, provide cover, keep cats indoors).
- Get involved with local IBAs through restoration, cleanup, citizen science and field trips.
- Share what you are doing on behalf of birds - through letters to your local newspaper, speaking at a community event or visiting a local school.
- Share the science with local leaders and decision makers for better management of local natural resources.
- Promote and support policies that support lowering greenhouse gas emissions and clean energy.

For detailed information on each of the 588 species in the study (including New York State birds), visit [climate.audubon.org](http://climate.audubon.org).

Susan O'Handley



*White-Crowned Sparrow by Rod Spangle*



*Black Capped Chickadee by Rod Spangle*

## Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch Update

Raptor migration is in full swing as of the third week of October. From the 16th to the 24th of the month, counters at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch recorded 1031 birds, culminated by a flight of 408 on the 24th, including 335 Red-tailed Hawks, and the year's first good flight of Golden Eagles—9. The seasonal total stood at 3782 as of that date.

The good flight on the 24th was on northwest winds—the best migration conditions at the lookout. November will bring continued movement of red-tails and Golden Eagles, as well as accipiters, Bald Eagles, and possibly Rough-legged Hawks from the arctic. If you visit, be sure to dress warmly, especially with northerly winds.

Visitors, spotters and counters are always welcome at the hawkwatch. For more information, contact:

Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net), or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, [salothomas@gmail.com](mailto:salothomas@gmail.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 [www.pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/hawkcast/](http://www.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](http://www.franklinmt.org).



*Rough-legged Hawk, By Pete at Flickr via Wikimedia Commons*

## One Day Golden Eagle Count Saturday, February 7

As part of our effort to understand the numbers and range of winter resident Golden Eagles, we will be conducting a one day raptor count covering most of Delaware County on Saturday, February 7. The county will be divided into territories similar to a Christmas Bird Count. Each territory will have a team with at least one highly skilled birder - someone who can identify eagles by silhouette.

Golden Eagles are the focus but all raptors will be counted. The count protocol is similar to a protocol developed in the bluff lands of the upper Mississippi River. More information will be available in the January newsletter.

If the count is successful, we will consider making it an annual event, and possibly expanding it into other areas we know harbor wintering Golden Eagles.

In the event of extreme weather, the count will be held the following day.

If you would like to participate in this count, please contact Tom Salo at [salothomas@gmail.com](mailto:salothomas@gmail.com) or 607-965-8232.

## Lead-Free Ammunition Update

DOAS has been working to promote the use of lead-free ammunition for hunting for several years. The high toxicity of lead combined with the bullets' tendency to fragment into many pieces creates a risk of consumption by both people and wildlife. Eagles and young children are especially vulnerable. Michael DiBenedetto has taken the lead on this issue by creating presentation materials. He has been tabling at gun shows and wildlife events.

I recently spoke to the Otsego County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. They are supportive. We are discussing some collaborative education efforts with them.

We now have interns at Hartwick College working on an educational marketing campaign. A student in a class on Marketing Research will interview a focus group of hunters to help guide this effort. The interns will take what is learned from the focus group and create a series of ads to run in a statewide outdoors publication. We hope to create a separate series of ads on human health risks. We will be approaching bird clubs across the state to help fund these ads in 2015.

Our presence at gun shows requires a lot of printed material. If you would like to support our effort to remove lead from the food chain, a small donation for printing would be very helpful. It can be mailed to the post office box. Please note it is for lead-free initiatives so it goes into a dedicated fund for that effort.

*Tom Salo*



## The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response – *How to make things better without making things worse*

Kimberley Corwin worked on the coast of Louisiana during the emergency oil spill response following the Deepwater Horizon explosion. On November 21st, she will share her experiences working as a biologist alongside the cleanup crews where it was her responsibility ensure that further damage wasn't done to the sensitive coastal ecosystems by the cleanup effort.

Since 1991, Kimberley has worked on various projects for the NYSDEC and Cornell University including the *Amphibian and Reptile Atlas*, the *Breeding Bird Atlas*, and the *State Wildlife Action Plan*. This past summer she was involved with bat acoustic surveys in the southern tier of New York.



Marsh Buggy



Kimberley Corwin with Scope

## Charter Dinner 2014

The annual Charter Dinner seemed to be a great success this year. My thanks go to all those who donated raffle prizes and door prizes, to Andy Mason our emcee, to Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright as greeters, to Julie Smith and Robert Ciganek for selling raffle tickets and especially to Eleanor Moriarty for finding such an excellent speaker. Robert Mumford's pictures were beautiful and his short explanations kept it all together. *Julia Gregory*





# Upcoming Activities

## November

**November 1 – Saturday program at DOAS Sanctuary : Signs of Winter** - Pre-Registration required.

To pre-register for a program, or to learn about business sponsorship opportunities, please contact Education Chair, Susan O'Handley at 607-643-5680 or by email at [sjohandley@gmail.com](mailto:sjohandley@gmail.com).

**November 8 – Bird Seed Pick Up Day:** Walmart parking lot, Oneonta, 9-11 AM. See order form on website [doas.us/store](http://doas.us/store).

**November 21 – DOAS Program Monthly Meeting:** Kim Corwin, will speak about her experiences in the clean up efforts of the Deepwater Horizon Spill. Details on page 6.

The program begins at 7:00 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 or email [eleanormrrt955@gmail.com](mailto:eleanormrrt955@gmail.com).



*Spill results on sand at Deepwater Horizon*

## December

**December 2 – DOAS Board Meeting:** 7 PM

**December 14 – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count (CBC)**

This will be our 46th year of participating in the national count. Everyone, novice or experienced, is welcome to join us on this fun

day. Small groups in one or two cars count all the birds they find in their assigned area, within our designated 15-mile radius circle centered around Milford, for whatever hours they choose. Each group has a leader who will have received appropriate materials beforehand. Alternatively, instead of joining a group, you can count birds at your own feeder off and on throughout the day if you are within our circle. If you are a new counter for either the group counts or the feeder watch, please contact Sandy Bright at [sbright@hartwick.edu](mailto:sbright@hartwick.edu) or phone 607-287-4465. People who have participated before will be contacted.

**December 27 – Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count (CBC)**

All are welcome to participate regardless of birding experience. There will be a potluck after the count. For information contact Bob Donnelly: [rsdonn@yahoo.com](mailto:rsdonn@yahoo.com) or 607-264-8156

## January

**January 18 – Waterfowl Count:** The NY State Ornithological Association's annual statewide waterfowl count. DOAS covers Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River above Unadilla, the Unadilla River, and Cannonsville Reservoir and the W. Branch of the Delaware River. This effort involves surveying waterways where they can be seen, and identifying and counting ducks and geese. The totals are used by the Department of Environmental Conservation in managing these species over the upcoming year.

Anyone interested in helping with the census, please contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

**January 31 – Eagle Trip:** Mark your calendars for this winter's eagle field trip. The outing visits rivers and reservoirs in Delaware County where the birds concentrate to feed. Details in next issue.

## February

**February 7 – Golden Eagle Count:** If you would like to participate in this count, please contact Tom Salo at [salothomas@gmail.com](mailto:salothomas@gmail.com) or 607-965-8232. Details on page 5.

## 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; family memberships \$20 annually or \$30 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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## October Bird Sightings

For nearly the past twenty years my husband and I have been going birding during the fall migration in the Atlantic City and Cape May areas. We weren't able to go this year. However from the middle of September to early October the birds here in Treadwell reminded me so much of one of those New Jersey trips. We saw 8 Northern Flickers clustered on a neighbor's lawn, my husband saw a dozen American Robins on his way to work and a lone Ruby-throated Hummingbird was carefully checking out our still in bloom Rose of Sharon. It seemed like a mini birdwatching trip south.

While Sandy Bright and Charlie Scheim were enjoying the summer-like weather on their deck in Oneonta on Oct. 1, their peaceful evening meal was suddenly disturbed by 2 Merlins terrorizing the neighborhood with their raucous cries. Some Blue Jays scolded and other smaller birds disappeared as the Merlins swooped here and there claiming the territory as their own. On that same day Angelika Rashkow heard first and then saw a Belted Kingfisher at Oaks Creek in Hartwick. She noted that it is always a joy to find him

around! On Oct. 2 she also saw 4 Blackpoll Warblers in their fall plumage feasting on tall evening primrose stalks full of seed. As Becky Gretton was going here and there around the Town of Springfield on Oct. 3, she was pleasantly surprised to see Eastern Bluebirds everywhere. One male was feeding on wild grapes. What a beautiful sight! Around this time in W. Burlington Tom Salo heard some single hoots in the woods and noticed some very upset Blue Jays. He looked up to see a Barred Owl very close by on a branch. They stared at each other briefly, then the bird flew off. He also had a male and a female Eastern Towhee enjoying some black oil seed feed he had put out a week earlier. For the first week of October Bob Donnelly had been seeing a Cooper's Hawk out and about in Cooperstown constantly being scolded by Blue Jays. In the morning of Oct. 8 one of the Jays left the woods accompanied by some others. The Jay flew across the field and attempted to make a successful crossing. No such luck. Immediately the Cooper's Hawk was after him and within a few seconds it was all over. As my husband always says "Nature is cruel" a comment attributed to Robert Frost.

On Oct. 12 Leslie Preston spotted a Pied-billed Grebe as she was leaving the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. He ducked down in the water and she had to wait for him to resurface to get a positive ID. On Oct. 18, Sandy Bright watched an Eastern Bluebird singing atop a tree in West Oneonta and a couple of days later in the evening she saw a Northern Harrier hunting a field on Potato Farm Road near Morris.

If you have bird sightings to report, contact me at [dbenko@frontiernet.net](mailto: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



*Belted Kingfisher*  
by Teddy Llovet via Wikimedia Commons