



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

May

May 2 – Bird Walk, Glimmerglass

May 2 – Family: Plant and Tree ID

May 9 – Field Trip: Oneonta
Susquehanna Greenway

May 10 – Bird Walk, Stamford

May 15 – Program: A Photo Journey
to the Galapagos

May 16 – Big Day Bird Count

May 17 – Bird Walk, DOAS
Sanctuary

May 19 – Board Meeting

May 20 – Gilbert Lake Wildflowers

May 23 – Oaks Creek Bird Walk

May 24 – West Branch Preserve

June

June 6 – Family: Wild Edibles

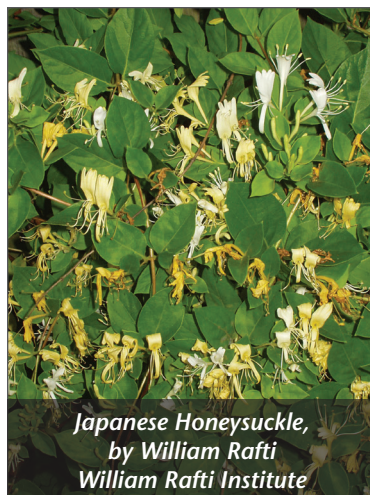
June 7 – Birds, Brunch, Beer

June 13 – Wolf Mountain & Rogers
Environmental Education Center

More information on page 7

Native or Non-native Plants Which are Better?

Driving around Otsego County, and especially on my own property, I am often checking the flora to see what is growing well and if some plants are tending to dominate others. Very often, when one plant seems to be taking over, it is not a native plant. Norway maples, Japanese honeysuckles, garlic mustard, parsnip and others are so much more aggressive than many natives. I cut down a Crimson King variety of the Norway maple tree when I first moved to Roseboom; I still find Norway maple seedlings of it each fall. (They are easy to find after the other maples have lost their leaves.) Take a drive along the west side of Otsego Lake. The dominant tree near the highway is becoming Norway maple.



*Japanese Honeysuckle,
by William Rafti
William Rafti Institute*

To me the important issue is not whether a plant is native or alien, but whether it is invasive. So many alien plants just out-compete natives. For every dame's rocket which grows but doesn't take over here, there is a Japanese rose which chokes everything else out. I am not even sure what a good definition of a native plant should be. Are Colorado or even white spruces native? I have planted willow oaks and shingle oaks, though they are from the southern states. I also have Japanese maples and Korean dogwoods, along with dawn redwoods, Algerian firs and Oriental spruces, and many other "exotics". The reason I keep them, besides their beauty, is they are either at the edge of their range or produce

no seeds. Unless global warming really heats up soon, they will never become a problem. And if that does happen, our native trees are probably dying anyway. Even some natives spread too quickly for my tastes. American bittersweet is thought to grow more slowly than the European variety, but it can still cover ground in a hurry.

What I really want to say is that it is up to all of us, when putting in plants, to do a little research about anything we would like to put in the ground. Do not rely on nursery salespeople; their only interest is in selling their stock.

Bob Donnelly

Help Us Get the Word Out

One of our Chapter's challenges is letting the general public know of our presence and activities, in order to pass on the conservation and education information that carries our message of the importance and fragility of the natural world.

We do this through publicity in newspapers and other media, and increasingly online through various email lists, our web site and other means. One rather old-fashioned, but effective method of spreading the word is tabling at public events. One or two of the group will be present with the full-color DOAS display, along with newsletters, membership brochures, and other materials for hand out. We also have an eye-catching banner, and sometimes utilize audio-visual equipment.

The big plus to this activity is the opportunity to engage people directly—to get to know them and their interests—everybody has a bird story—and to inform them first-hand what we are about. A good example of this was our table at the recent Earth Festival at Milford Central School. Several hundred people attended the event and a good proportion of them stopped at the DOAS station and visited or reviewed and left with

Eleanor Moriarty and Joe Richardson at the DOAS Earth Festival table, photo by John Davis



our materials. Tom Salo had set up a computer monitor and speakers that played ear-catching raven sounds, and eye-catching photos of our Golden Eagle project. There was hardly a minute that at least one or two people were engaged by this, and often a half-dozen or more crowded around the table.

We have tabled at student events at SUCO and SUNY Cobleskill, at educational events, at other Audubon and nature organization gatherings, wildlife festivals and other venues. We are regularly invited to these gatherings and are only limited by personnel to staff the table to get DOAS on the scene. Our board does a good job of sharing the tabling, but there are times we can't do it, which are lost opportunities.

If you are interested in an easy, fun way to help our organization, tabling is a good way to do it. There is no commitment beyond the few hours it takes, and we have the setup and materials ready to go. All that is required is a willingness to talk and listen and smile!

Please give me a call or send an email if you can spend a day or half-day in this fashion sometime and we will keep you in mind when the time comes.

Andy Mason

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Helen McLean

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

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OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Conservation*: | Andy Mason |
| Education*: | Susan O'Handley |
| Field Trips*: | Bob Donnelly |
| Hawk Watch*: | Andrew Mason Tom Salo |
| Hospitality*: | Julia Gregory |
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| Programs*: | Eleanor Moriarty |
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| Sanctuary*: | Andrew Mason |
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| Finance: | Gray Mason |
| Historian: | Julie Smith |
| Sales: | Stephen Rice |

ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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Oneonta, NY 13820

Email: info@doas.us

ON THE WEB:

www.doas.us

[www.facebook.com/
DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety](http://www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety)

To contribute notes or articles for
The Belted Kingfisher, email:
editor@doas.us

Conservation and Legislation

Genetically modified food labeling law in NY Legislature—A measure that would require the disclosure of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) on food labels is pending in the NY State Legislature. This bill (A.617/S485) would give consumers the information they need to make decisions on food production methods that can affect their health and the environment. It does not ban GMOs, but rather makes transparent the ingredients in our food.

Similar labeling laws are already in place in Alaska, Connecticut, Maine, as well as 64 other countries including all of the European Union. A 2012 poll showed that over 90% of all Americans support GMO labeling.

Genetic modification, or genetic engineering, is a technique used to create new organisms by combining and manipulating DNA, typically from different organisms. Perhaps the best known use is the Monsanto Corporation's genetic development of corn, soybean and other crops resistant to their herbicide Roundup. This has led to a large increase in use of this product, and GMO corn and soy are now omnipresent in our food supply.

The big food companies claim that GMOs are safe, but there is substantial evidence otherwise. In addition, the widespread use of Roundup and other pesticides has resulted in the emergence of herbicide resistant weeds which require the use of stronger, more toxic herbicides, thereby impacting water quality and the surrounding ecosystem. This brings on a cycle in which farmers and the environment are forever impacted.

The growing organic food movement is impacted by GMOs, as they have been found in organically-grown crops, threatening farm certifications. And we are well aware of the role of Roundup and similar chemicals in the rapid decline of Monarch butterflies,

as milkweed and other beneficial plants are wiped out by the herbicides. Other wildlife, including birds, may well be affected too.

Last month, the World Health Organization's research arm declared glyphosate—the active ingredient in Roundup, and the world most widely used herbicide—a probable carcinogen.

Shouldn't we—at a minimum—know what foods contain GMOs, which have brought about this pesticide boom with all its negative consequences?

The NY law has good support in the Assembly, but is bottled up by Republican leadership—including our representatives James Seward and John Bonacic—in the Senate. Needless to say, the legislation is opposed by agri-business and major food processors who have put millions into lobbying against this and similar laws.

What you can do—Contact Sens. Seward and Bonacic and tell them that NYers deserve to know what is in their food. This right-to-know law is common sense and well-supported by the public and should not be kept from a vote by big money special interests. Remind these politicians that you are constituents, and they should respect your views and concerns—not those of their campaign donors.

Senator James Seward:

Mail: NY State Senate, Albany, NY 12247

Phone: (518) 455-3131

Email: seward@senate.state.ny.us

Senator John Bonacic:

Mail: NY State Senate, Albany, NY 12247

Phone: (518) 455-3181

Email: bonacic@senate.state.ny.us

~ by Andy Mason

Nominations for DOAS Directors

Term 2015-2017

Elections will take place at our
Member Meeting/Program
Friday, May 15, 7:30pm

Elm Park United
Methodist Church
401 Chestnut Street
Oneonta, NY 13820

Nominees are:

- Bob Donnelly (*renewal*)
- Kevin Hodne (*new*)
- Susan O'Handley (*renewal*)
- Janet Potter (*new*)
- Stephen Rice (*renewal*)
- Joe Richardson (*renewal*)

**Nominations can also be
made from the floor.**

Catskill Center Seeking Mounted Birds

The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, a decades-long leading environmental presence in the Catskills, will soon be opening the new Catskills Interpretive Center in Mount Tremper on Rt. 28 in conjunction with NYS DEC and other partners. We are actively seeking donations of mounted bird specimens of the region for use in an educational display. Please contact Peg DiBenedetto at 845-254-6508, or at pegdib@gmail.com.

DOAS Spring Waterfowl Count

Spring passed for winter on April 4, when the Delaware Otsego Audubon Society sponsored the annual waterfowl count. A hearty group gathered at the Cooperstown Village docks and continued up the lake in a clockwise manner, thankful for dock bubblers and some naturally open water, with Clarke Pond the final Otsego Lake destination. An unusual duck species, the Eurasian wigeon, was keeping company with an American wigeon: a unique opportunity to study both! Other waterfowl species included ring-necked, wood and black ducks, bufflehead, hooded, common and red-breasted mergansers, greater scaup, American coot, mallard, northern shoveler, and Canada goose. An immature bald eagle flew from a carcass on the ice, a few great blue herons persevered, and a Cooper's hawk with kill flew over us at the Biological Field Station.

Summit Lake provided us with green-and blue-winged teal mingling with Canada geese.

A Wilson's snipe was spotted on the way to the Chyle, where snow geese rested in a field with Canada geese. As we arrived, an American pipit landed in the road, bobbed its tail repeatedly, and flew off. A mixed flock of red-winged and rusty blackbirds



Clarke Pond, photo by John Davis

sounded off close to the road.

Weaver Lake held two new waterfowl species: common goldeneye and lesser scaup.

Our expert leaders freely shared their knowledge with a diverse group. Please consider joining us next year!!

Becky Gretton



An Eagle Scout Project

Providing nest sites for declining species

Matt Leichty of Boy Scouts of America Troop 1 in Unadilla recently completed his Eagle Scout project by placing bird boxes at the DOAS Sanctuary. Matt installed a wood duck box and a kestrel box, both to provide nest sites for declining species.

He had assistance from fellow troop members Evan VanAlstyne and Jacob Ostrander, and received support and materials from Quality Hardwoods of Sidney, Home Depot in Oneonta, Jess F. Howes of Sidney Center, and Village Variety in Unadilla.

DOAS thanks Matt for his efforts and congratulates him on his Eagle Scout achievement.

Matt Leichty (l.) and Evan VanAlstyne of Boy Scouts of America Troop 1 in Unadilla complete installation of a kestrel box on the DOAS wildlife sanctuary.

A Photo Journey to the Galapagos

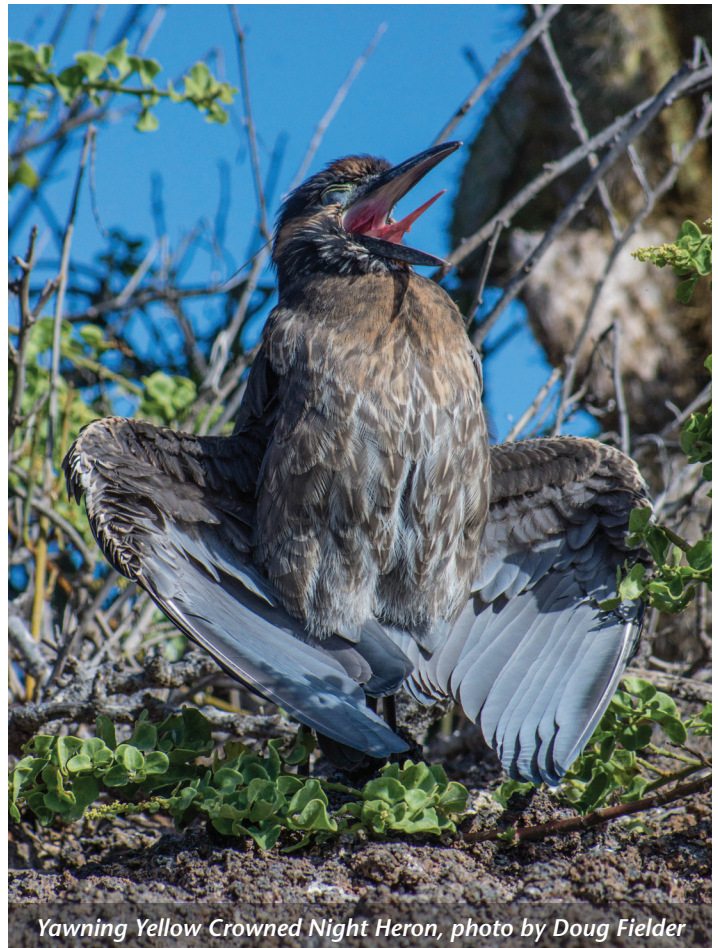
Doug and Scott Fielder will be presenting a program on their trip to the Galapagos in August 2013. This was a Road Scholar (Elderhostel) program and they were based on a 20-passenger boat as they travelled to several islands. There were two landings a day, some wet landings and some dry. They photographed beautiful, and sometimes stark, scenery on the islands but most of the photographs you will see are of the birds and reptiles.

Both Doug and Scott took the photos. There will be photos of Boobies (Blue-footed, Red-footed and Nazca), Frigatebirds, Pelicans, and Waved Albatrosses, to name a few. Reptiles are represented by the huge Galapagos tortoises and iguanas, both land and marine. Come and see this unique area with its fascinating wildlife.



Waved Albatross, photo by Scott Fielder

Program will be May 15 at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, Chestnut Street. Oneonta and begins at 7:30pm. Free and open to the public, refreshments are served. For further information: contact, Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054



Yawning Yellow Crowned Night Heron, photo by Doug Fielder



Chestnut-sided Warbler, photo by Dave Kiehm

Big Day Bird Count

Saturday May 16 is this year's Big Day for DOAS, the day on which small groups enjoy trying to locate the maximum number of bird species 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 Donnelly at 607-264-8156** to join or start a group. People who have participated before will be contacted by their leaders. Leaders will receive materials before the count. The DOAS data obtained are pooled with that of the Delhi Bird Club for a report of the results in *The Belted Kingfisher*. Wish for favorable weather and southerly winds the night before.



Delaware Otsego Audubon Society presents:

Birds Brunch & Beer

Join us for our third Birds Brunch & Beer at the Ommegang Brewery!

June 7, 2015 from 11:00am – 4:00pm – \$30 per person

- morning walk
- Coffee
- view raffle and silent auction items
- tasty Ommegang brunch

9:00am - 11:00am Birding by Ear Workshop

12:30pm - 1:00pm Raffle of Art Items

1:15pm - 3:15pm Photography, Painting, Warbler ID Workshops

Limited to 75 people, so be sure to sign up early!

For registration information call Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054

OR view online at doas.us

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SPRING FUNDRAISING EVENT

JUNE 7, 2015

BIRDS, BRUNCH & BEER

Our chapter's educational goal is to expand and enhance outreach programs for the families of our community through grants, projects and events. Please indicate workshop choice in order of preference (i.e., 1, 2 or 3):

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| WORKSHOP A ____ | BIRDING BY EAR (NO LIMIT RESTRICTION) 9:00AM-11:00AM – ANDY MASON & BECKY GRETTON |
| WORKSHOP B ____ 1 2 3 | IDENTIFYING WARBLERS (LIMITED TO 20) 1:15PM-3:15PM – SANDY BRIGHT |
| WORKSHOP C ____ 1 2 3 | PHOTOGRAPHING BIRDS – LIVE RAPTOR (LIMITED TO 15) 1:15PM-3:15PM – DAVE KIEHM & WARREN GREENE |
| WORKSHOP D ____ 1 2 3 | BIRD PAINTING IN WATERCOLOR (LIMITED TO 15, SUPPLIES INCLUDED) 1:15PM-3:15PM – DOUG JAMIESON |

NAME: _____ NUMBER OF PEOPLE _____

ADDRESS: _____

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

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

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

Upcoming Activities

May

May 2 – Bird Walk at Glimmerglas for I Love My Park Day:

Led by Becky Gretton, meet at 8 AM at the Nature Center, Glimmerglas Park.

May 2 – Plant and Tree ID at DOAS Sanctuary: Guided activities with Educator and DOAS Summer Program Director, Meghan Gigandet. Pre-registration is required by email to Susan O’Handley, Education Chair at sjohandley@gmail.com. \$4 per child fee/adults are free. 10 AM-12 noon.

May 9 – Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway: A walk at the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway (OSG) trail to view returning migrant birds. This will be an easy hike on level ground for about 2 hours, starting at 8:00AM. Participants should meet at the OSG parking lot on Silas Lane, off Rte. 205 in Oneonta’s west end. For more information, contact: Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880.

May 10 – Bird walk in Stamford – Spring bird walk, Stamford; meet at parking lot corner of Beaver and Main Sts. This is an easy, level walk that will last about two hours. Birds expected to be seen include a variety of warblers, orioles, sparrows, and wetland species. For information, contact Andy Mason, AndyMason@earthling.net, (607) 652-2162.

May 15 – A Photo Journey to the Galapagos: Doug and Scott Fielder will be presenting a program on their trip to the Galapagos in August 2013. *See details on page 5.*

Program will be at The Elm Park United Methodist Church, Chestnut Street. Oneonta and begins at 7:30pm. Free and open to the public, refreshments are served. For further information: contact, Eleanor Moriarty at 607-435-2054

May 16 – Big Day Bird Count: Count birds wherever you choose! For information on how to participate, contact Director Bob Donnelly at 607-264-8156. *See page 5 for details.*

May 17 – Bird Walk at DOAS Sanctuary: Bird Walk, DOAS Sanctuary, near Oneonta. This walk will explore the Audubon Sanctuary’s varied habitats. There is some moderate climbing on the property. The walk will last about two hours, followed by a visit to the nearby Emmons Pond bog for interested participants. Species expected include a variety of warblers, vireos, waterfowl, orioles, tanagers and others. For directions: doas.us/conservation-and-environment/franklin-mountain-sanctuary/

For information, contact Andy Mason:
AndyMason@earthling.net, (607) 652-2162.

May 19 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

May 20 – Gilbert Lake Wildflower Walk: Julia Gregory and Joe Richardson lead this enjoyable walk at Gilbert Lake. Meet at the bathing beach building at the north end of lake. For more information contact Joe Richardson at (607) 263-5645

May 23 – Oaks Creek Bird Walk: In conjunction with the Otsego Land Trust, a DOAS trip to their newly acquired property on Parslow Road just off route 80 about one mile past Oakville. Meet at 9:00AM. It is a diverse property with wetland and woods. People should bring waterproof footwear. The land trust will be serving refreshments there afterward. For more information contact Bob Donnelly at 607-264-8156.

May 24 – Bird Walk at West Branch Preserve: Charlie Scheim will lead a bird walk at the West Branch Preserve. The Preserve is located on NY Rt10 in the Town of Hamden, Delaware County, NY, about 10 miles southeast of Delhi. We will meet at 8 AM at the preserve entrance and parking area, on Rt10, about 0.9 mi beyond the junction with County Route 26. The walk, which will last about two hours, includes some moderate up-and-downhill ground. For more information: Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or scheimc@hartwick.edu

June

June 6 – Wild Edibles: Guided activities with Educator and DOAS Summer Program Director, Meghan Gigandet. **Pre-registration is required** by email to Susan O’Handley, Education Chair at sjohandley@gmail.com. \$4 per child fee/adults are free.

June 7 – 3rd Annual Birds, Brunch, Beer: *See page 6 for details!*

June 13 – Wolf Mountain Nature Preserve and the Rogers Environmental Education Center: This full day trip will include bird watching, wildlife viewing, and spectacular looks at wolves, arctic foxes, and our northeastern coyotes. A guide will be available at the Wolf Mountain Nature Preserve.

The trip will be approximately an hour drive from Oneonta to our first stop in the morning, Wolf Mountain Nature Preserve. Hiking will be easy to moderate and boots or waterproof footwear is required as we will be going through bogs and wetlands. An admission fee of \$5 is charged. Participants need to pack a picnic lunch.

In the afternoon the group will continue to Rogers Environmental Educational Center for birdwatching and wildlife viewing. Carpooling will be available.

This trip is limited to 15 participants. For reservations and information contact: Eleanor Moriarty at 607 435 2054.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

www.doas.us

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March–April Bird Sightings

Without further ado, let's get to those first of the season bird sightings. Spring still might have some cold snowy days in store for us.

On 3/21 Stacy Grocott spied a bunch of Ring-necked Ducks along the shore of Otsego Lake. On the 23rd Leslie Preston saw a pair of Wood Ducks on the river in Colliersville. Two days later while doing her Treadwell barn chores Dorian Huneke heard the uneven clattering rattle of a Belted Kingfisher, a Pileated Woodpecker flew across the road during Dennis Fowler's Otsego walk and Kathy Mario spotted her FOS Eastern Bluebirds on Waterman's "mountain" on the Meredith/Delhi border. The next day Killdeer were back on Dorian Huneke's Treadwell farm. On 3/27 Andy Mason saw his FOS Song Sparrow in Jefferson. The last day of the month when Sandy Bright was leaving her house she heard a series of high *sreee* notes in irregular rhythm bringing to mind the sound of Cedar Waxwings, seven in all.

On 4/2 Gerianne Carillo had her FOS Eastern Phoebe in Milford. A big burst of birds arrived on Apr. 3. Bill Carbine saw a flock of Snow Geese fly over his Treadwell pond, Jessie Ravage watched a flying pair of Great Blue Herons in Cooperstown, Andy Mason listened to a singing Fox Sparrow in Jefferson, Sandy Bright heard



Cedar Waxwing by Dave Kiehm

the insistent klee-klee-klee of a Merlin in Wilbur Park and Pam Peters enjoyed hearing the singing of a Brown Creeper in the foggy Treadwell woods as he entertained some Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

On 4/6 while exploring the Greenway Trail, Leslie Preston heard the constant stream of high-pitched squeaky noises and

found herself surrounded by at least 15 Golden-crowned Kinglets. The next day Gerianne Carillo spotted 4 Buffleheads, 3M/1F, in the Portlandville put-in. On the 10th Tom Salo heard his FOS singing Purple Finch in Burlington and Bob Donnelly heard his in Roseboom. On 4/12 Pam Peters heard a FOS Hermit Thrush singing sweetly in the Treadwell woods and Andy Mason had his FOS Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Jefferson. The next day Bob Donnelly noted the appearance of two FOS sparrows in Roseboom: the Field and the Savannah. While eating breakfast Tom Salo noticed a Brown Thrasher in his W. Burlington yard on 4/14. The next day Carolina Wrens were back at Leslie Preston's Oneonta feeders, a Rufous-sided Towhee appeared in W. Burlington for Tom Salo and Charlie Scheim watched an Osprey hunting along the Millrace in Neahwa Park.

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