



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

October

October 16—Charter Dinner

October 20—DOAS Board Mtg

October 31—Bird Seed Orders Due

November

November 7 – Bird seed pickup

November 20 – DOAS Program

December

December 1 DOAS Board Mtg

December 12 - Short-eared owl trip

December 19 Oneonta Christmas Bird Count

January

January 2—Fort Plain Bird Count

January 9-Eagle Trip

January 12-Waterfowl Count

More information on page 7

**DOAS programs are
free & open to the
public**

Nearby Gem--Wolf Mountain Nature Center!

On Friday, November 20th, 2015, Will Pryor founder, head animal curator and ecologist for The Wolf Mountain Nature Center. located in Smyrna, New York will be the guest speaker, presenting the wonderful and amazing wolves, coyotes and arctic foxes who are the residents at the nature center.



Will's love of animals, especially wolves, began as a young boy. He earned his Bachelors degree in Environmental Science and a Masters degree in Environmental Policy. He has studied animal behaviors for many years, attended seminars at Wolf Park on captive wolf management and has literally thousands of hours of hands on experience working with wolves,



coyotes, and foxes. Will is a designer/builder of exceptional natural animal enclosures, creates/implements enrichment activities and educational programs and has done much of the landscaping and fence building around the center.

The program will be held at The Elm Park Methodist Church, Oneonta, NY, and begins at 7:30PM. It is free and open to the public and refreshments are served. For further information contact Dorian Heunke.

And don't miss their annual fall festival, *Honoring the Spirit of the Wolf* (continued on page 6)

*President's Message***Fall - Open House
and Upcoming
Charter Dinner**

It was truly wonderful to see so many faces at our Open House this September. Thanks goes out to all those on the DOAS Board who helped out with the day, from set-up and break-down, to presentations and trail walks, welcoming visitors, providing refreshments, taking pictures and helping with the Hawkwatch. I am constantly impressed by the commitment of our Board to undertake various tasks throughout each year, keeping our organization active and vibrant. Our total attendance for the day was estimated at over 100 people and



included two cub scout troops, Pack 88 from Sidney and Pack 91 from Oneonta. Thanks also to DOAS Hawkwatch volunteers who were available during the day to answer questions and help to explain what they do, and to Monica Cej who spent the day scything and talking with visitors about the process of haying. I can't think of a better way to have spent a beautiful Fall day.

Our next big event will be the annual Charter Dinner on October 16 at The Depot Restaurant. We hope you will come out for this special evening. We will be recognizing Helen McLean, who has done an amazing job as Kingfisher editor for the past four and a half years.

*Helen McLean, DOAS Kingfisher Editor
from 2009 to 2015. Photo by Helen McLean*

We hope you will join us in the evening to help us say Thank You! Details and registration for the dinner can be found on page 7, along with information for our guest speaker for the evening, Matthew Perry, Conservation Director for Spring Farm CARES in Utica.



Susan O'Handley

**THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO
AUDUBON SOCIETY**
FOUNDED 1968

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

Conservation and Legislation

Marine mammals need protection—There is an immense amount of environmental damage that occurs on the high seas—most beyond the view and regulation of governments. Bycatch—killing and discarding unwanted fish during fishing operations—is widespread, as is the death of hundreds of thousands of seabirds drowned on baited hooks or entangled in nets. Bottom trawlers essentially destroy habitat on the sea floor. This results in a needless and enormous depletion of marine life and is impacting global biodiversity.



Added to this carnage is the estimated over 650,000 marine mammals that are killed by commercial fishing gear each year. Porpoises,

whales and seals all fall prey to these practices, and many species are already in decline, and even facing extinction in some cases.

Nearly 90% of the 5 billion pounds of seafood consumed in the US each year is imported, and nearly half is wild-caught. There is no doubt that Americans are eating fish that is caught using methods which contribute to the loss of these marine mammals.

The federal government has now proposed rules that would require foreign nations to enact marine mammal protection standards equal to those of the US for fish and fish products imported into this country. The rules would also apply to intermediary nations. This would go a long way toward reducing the bycatch of these animals and lessening the heavy toll from foreign fisheries.

What you can do—The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is taking comments on the proposed rules until Nov. 9, 2015. Let this agency know that you support the Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, to ensure that fish caught under lower protective standards do not enter our country. Comments can be submitted by mail

to: Director, Office of International Affairs, Attn: MMPA Fish Import Provisions, NMFS, F/IA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or submitted online at <http://www.regulations.gov/#%21docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2010-0098>.

Good news for eagles—We have written here before regarding plans by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to provide wind energy companies and other industries with 30 year “take permits” that would allow for incidental killing of Bald and Golden Eagles at their facilities. This was a 25 year increase over the current permit timeframe. The companies had argued that 5 year permits hampered their ability to finance long term projects.

However, in August, US District Judge Lucy H. Koh, ruled that the FWS violated federal laws when OKing the 30 year permits. The American Bird Conservancy filed a lawsuit in June 2014, alleging that the new rule was a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

The court decision affirms that inappropriate shortcuts were taken in developing the 30 year rule and that laws meant to protect these eagles were not properly followed, putting Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles at risk. The court decision invalidates the 30 year rule.

Andy Mason

Bird Seed Sale Continues

Thank you to all who have submitted Bird Seed and Coffee Orders so far for our annual fundraiser! We will continue to take orders both by mail and through the doas.us website through October 30. Product pickup will take place at the Walmart Parking lot on Saturday, November 7th. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Susan O'Handley at 607-643-5680 or by email at sjohandley@gmail.com. We appreciate your support!



Annual Charter Dinner – October 16, 2015

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will be holding their annual Charter Dinner on Friday, October 16, 2015 at the Depot restaurant at 4 1/2 Railroad Ave. in Oneonta. A social hour begins at 5:30, buffet at 6:30, and the program at 7:30pm. The program portion of the evening is free and open to the public.

This year's speaker is Matt Perry, the Conservation Director and Resident Naturalist for Spring Farm CARES in Clinton, NY where he oversees habitat restoration projects at the 260 acre nature preserve. Matt writes a monthly nature article for the Mohawk Valley Living Magazine and is the Region 5 editor for the Kingbird, which is the quarterly journal of the NY State Ornithological Association.

Matt is the Project coordinator for the Utica Peregrine Falcon Project, and his program, "The Peregrine Falcon Experience" will feature pictures and video of the first ever successful nest of Peregrine Falcons in Utica and Oneida County. Perry will shed light on the fascinating lives of these urban dwelling raptors. He'll explain how the species bounced back from the brink of extinction to become a fixture in urban "canyons" across the State. The Peregrine is famous for being the fastest bird in the world, but there is much more to know about their complex lives. It promises to be an excellent program!



The cost for the evening is \$25 per person. Reservations MUST be made by Oct. 10, 2015 by calling 607-563-2924 or by mailing payment by check with the form below to Julia Gregory, PO Box 641, Unadilla, NY 13849.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

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Order form is on the website at doas.us/store.

For more information contact Susan O'Handley at (607) 643-5680.



www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety

Bald Eagle Injuries

By Dorian Huneke

I had no idea it would be so difficult to find information on eagle injuries in the state of New York. The last Bald Eagle report prepared by Pete Nye of the DEC was in 2010. This report and others like it lack (and rightly so) the details of specific birds, including how they fared after the injuries. These are the details that would create a story to tell. However, nationwide it appears bald eagle injuries do get much attention in the news.

In 2005 an adult bald eagle was shot in the face by a poacher. This bird was tube fed, and hand fed by forceps before a group of engineers designed a prosthetic for her upper mandible. Since then she has received a new beak using a 3-D modeling program and 3-D printer to fabricate it. She can now eat, drink, and preen herself on her own, but the beak is not secure enough for her to return to the wild.

In June of 2013 a nestling bald eagle blew out of its nest when it was about 6 weeks old. The young eagle spent nearly a year rehabilitating, with careful attention to making sure this eagle did not imprint to humans. In April of 2014 the eagle, named Winfield, was released by the American Eagle Foundation at Douglas Lake in Tennessee.

Another eagle in the news was an adult bird in Houston, TX, severely injured by electrocution, necessitating euthanasia. Another was found dazed near train tracks in Fort Myers, FL, and was transported to a rehabilitation center for evaluation. Another victim of a shooting in 2014 was likely to be released into the wild following many more weeks of care.

In January of 2015 a Jacksonville, FL bird rescue group received three injured bald eagles within 28 hours of each other. All appeared to be injuries not

directly caused by humans. Starvation appeared to be a major problem for all of the eagles and it wasn't clear that all three would survive.

In April of 2015 an injured bald eagle was found in New Lisbon, NY. The bird was transported to the New York State Wildlife Rescue Center, in the care of Wes Laraway. It appeared the eagle had been shot, and Wes made arrangements to transport the bird to Cornell University for surgery. Because this was a shooting no further information can be obtained without going through legal channels.

On August 7, 2015 a juvenile bald eagle was found on Delaware Co. route 16 with a badly broken wing. This was a compound fracture and was more than a day old. The bird was transported to a wildlife center in Hunter, NY, and had surgery that night. It died approximately 12 hours later.

It is important to note that this is just the tip of the iceberg. There is no comprehensive documentation of bald eagles that go to rehabilitators and are subsequently released. Those that are dead or die later are kept track of by the DEC, but those that do survive, unless also in the hands of the DEC, include many whose stories go untold, both those remaining in captivity and those returned to the wild. And then there are those that are injured or killed but never found by humans.

Of those eagles the DEC has tracked (called recoveries) the reported number from 2003 to 2008 was 21, 25, 23, 21, 22, 21 respectively. In 2009 the DEC reported 45 bald eagles and one golden eagle recovered, double the usual number of annual recoveries. Seven of these eagles were recovered alive, one

of which was successfully rehabilitated and released. Thirty eight bald eagles and one golden eagle were recovered dead during that year, from a variety of causes. In 2010 35 bald eagles were recovered.

The DEC categorizes the causes of the recoveries, and those with the highest counts were train strikes, vehicle strikes, and unknown causes. Tracking lead poisoning as a high contributing cause of recoveries is becoming very important. Gordon Batcheller, chief



Cannonsville Lead-killed Bald Eagle

wildlife biologist for the DEC in New York, says in 2012, "Bald eagles have recovered in New York and their population continues to grow. However, since 2010, DEC examined 14 eagles that died of lead poisoning after eating lead ammo fragments."

Todd Katzner, Ph.D., of USGS, states, "Each year hundreds or thousands of bald eagles nationwide become ill from lead poisoning." And he's just referring to bald eagles.

As bald and golden eagles increase in population they are now in greater competition for habitat and food, and more birds are exposed to risks. I hope as bird lovers we can all do our part to help minimize injury and death to our majestic eagles through education and our actions.

(continued from page 1) *Wolf Mountain Nature Center* Sunday October 11, 2015, from noon to 4pm. Admission is free for children 5 and under; \$5 per person ages 6 and up.

Highlights of the day include the following:

- Wolf and Artic Fox Programs
- Tipi Program; Native American Dancing and Drumming
- Pumpkin carving demo
- Log carving demo
- Vendors, face painting, storytelling, and more

For directions and more information, go to www.thewolfmountainnaturecenter.org/visitor-information.html or call 607-627-6784 or www.thewolfmountainnaturecenter.org/visitor-information.html or call 607-627-6784.



photos from Wolf Mountain Nature Center



Golden Eagle Update

By Tom Salo

I am looking forward to winter with optimism. Murphy's Law was the rule last winter: everything that could go wrong did. Our transmitters arrived 40 days into a 60 day trapping season. When they finally arrived on February 10th, we were in the middle of one the coldest months ever. While we had a successful camera trapping season, we did not fit a single eagle with a GPS transmitter. This may be the nature of field work but it is frustrating.

We should be ready to go at the beginning of winter this year, with 4 transmitters in hand. Our email news list and the DOAS website will have updates as the season progresses. Stay tuned.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO
AUDUBON SOCIETY

Please Join Our Local Chapter

Your local membership helps defray the costs of the newsletter and supports our Chapter's education and conservation activities. Individual memberships are \$15 per year or \$25 for two years; family memberships are \$20 per year or \$30 for two years—a membership form is on the facing page.

Your mailing label will inform you of your membership status: an L indicates a local member, with expiration date (year and month, e.g. '1511' indicates November 2015); 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.**

Upcoming Activities

October

October 16 – DOAS Annual Charter Dinner – 5:30-9 PM at the Depot Restaurant. See details on page 4.

October 20– DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

October 31–Bird Seed Orders Due– Be sure to get your bird seed order in by October 31st. See order form on website doas.us/store.

November

November 7 –Bird Seed Pickup; Walmart parking lot, Oneonta, 9-11AM (I look for red truck and DOAS Banner).

November 20– DOAS Public Program: Will Pryor founder, head animal curator and ecologist for The Wolf Mountain Nature Center will present on wolves, coyotes and arctic foxes who are the residents at the nature center. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. See page 1 for more information or contact Susan O’Handley at (607) 643-5680 or email sjohandley@gmail.com.

December

December 1– DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

December 12 – DOAS Short-eared Owl Trip– meet at 3:00 at the cooperative extension building on Lake Street in Cooperstown. For information contact Bob Donnelly: rsdonn@yahoo.com or 607-264-8156

December 19 – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count –

Everyone is welcome to count as part of a group or at your own feeder, contact Sandy Bright at sbright@hartwick.edu or phone 607-287-4465 for more information..

January

January 2 – Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count – 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 or 607-264-8156

January 9– DOAS Eagle Trip – field trip to view wintering bald eagles in Delaware County. Depart from the Dietz St. parking lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta at 8:30 AM. Participants can be picked up en route in Delhi and Walton. For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

January 15– DOAS Public Program: Rick Bunting, well known local photographer will present his amazing photos. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Susan O’Handley at (607) 643-5680 or email sjohandley@gmail.com.

January 17– Waterfowl Count – NYS Ornithological Association’s annual waterfowl count, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net

January 19– DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

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.

Memberships can also be purchased online at <http://doas.us>.

Note: Please mail National Audubon renewals to address on renewal notice.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

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Support DOAS education and conservation programs with an additional donation: \$ _____



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August-September Bird Sightings

Just when I thought all the summer bird excitement had died down since many bird species had already migrated south, a ruby-throated hummingbird shot past my head while I was picking parsley in my herb garden. It apparently was in search of the feeder I had put away the week before.

On 8/18 Angelika Rashkow happily watched and listened to a male Scarlet Tanager outside her Hartwick home and concluded he was quite a stunning little creature indeed. She also enjoyed watching many Ruby-throated



Cedar Waxwings on Nest
Photo by Harry Barnes

Humming-birds zooming around her garden stopping at the bee balm and the phlox. Also in August Harry Barnes was able to get great photos of a Cedar Waxwing late brood tucked away in their cozy nest in his lilac bush in Treadwell.

While swimming in Guilford Lake on a hot early September day, Kathy Dawson watched for many minutes a Belted Kingfisher perched atop a high dead tree as a Great Blue Heron made a wide circle overhead to keep her company as well. On 9/5 my neighbors, Bill Carbine and Italo Buroni saw three Common Nighthawks around dusk flying over their pond catching insects. This was a life bird for them. Gerianne Carillo saw a group of ten Canada Geese fly overhead in a v-formation while taking a walk in Milford in 90 degree weather on September 8th. She wondered if this was an early precursor of the impending winter. Eleanor Moriarity assured her it wasn't quite winter yet since a Common Yellowthroat was actively weaving and

darting through bushes in Davenport Center. On 9/14 Andy Mason heard a Great Horned Owl calling persistently at his Jefferson house. His neighbor has been reporting disappearing chickens. Uh oh!!! On 9/16 Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright heard a rather high-pitched sound of a Common Raven while biking along River Street in Oneonta. On that same day Gerianne Carillo also heard Common Ravens call as three of them seemed to be carrying on an important bird talk as they circled the Milford sky. On the 17th while sitting on their backyard Oneonta deck, Sandy Bright and Charlie Scheim had a quick view of a Common Nighthawk winging by overhead. The seasonal and bird transition from summer to fall has begun.

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