



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

November

November 7– Bird seed pickup
November 7– Bird Walk and Audubon Film
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
January 19– DOAS Board Mtg

February

February 6+/- – Golden Eagle Count
February 16– DOAS Board Mtg

More information on page 7

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

Syzygy

Syzygy- the alignment of three or more celestial bodies in a straight line

Last month's full moon was particularly wonderful because of the total lunar eclipse. As the sky darkened, the Milky Way and the Pleiades grew brighter. Even a shooting star appeared. Imagine if Earth had little or no atmosphere, like Mars, a lunar eclipse would cause the moon to completely go dark. On Earth, light from the sun during the eclipse is refracted by the atmosphere giving a red glow



to the moon. Enjoy lunar eclipses while you can. The moon moves further away from Earth each year and our sun is growing, making it

less likely to get syzygy. The last lunar eclipse ever will occur in less than 700 million years from now.

In addition to the Earth coming between the sun and our moon at the full moon, the other type of syzygy we see is during the new moon, when the moon comes between the sun and the earth: this is the solar eclipse. On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse will pass over the US. Best viewing will be in southern Illinois and Kentucky. Totality will last just under three minutes there. Around Oneonta the sun will not get beyond 67% occluded by the moon.

Bob Donnelly

Help with Bird Counts

December 19 – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count (CBC):

This will be our 47th 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 **Continued on page 6**

President's Message

Birds: A Wonderful Common Denominator

It just happened again. (Don't think Britny Spears...) While chatting with a new neighbor, sharing thoughts about our beautiful area, she declared her interest in learning more about birds. When asked if I would help her to do so, I of course agreed instantly! We talked turkeys and eagles and geese, the DOAS website, membership, and hawk migration, and now we share a common interest.

A friend from Richfield Springs Central School with a strong interest in birds declared his dedication to learning bird song this spring: off we went to local places I haven't seen in years and some that I found totally new. My interest in identifying some tree varieties was rewarded through his total knowledge of plant species. Birds were the foundation of a very active spring.

I love the Richfield Springs Farmer's Market, not only for the wonderful produce, but also for the networking that happens there. "Aren't you the bird lady?" asks a vendor, and more information is shared. He drives to places I rarely go, and now I know that there were great egrets in a few wetlands along his route. A number of weeks ago a group of visitors from New York City spoke with another vendor, I was summoned and marvelous information about Central Park birding was exchanged.

A nice gentleman from the UK contacted DOAS about birding while he worked in our area, and we spent an extremely productive June morning birding together. His interest in leading hiking groups in Europe, focusing on birds in the environment, has enlarged his outdoors experience. Good news: he'll be back in town during fall migration and Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch is on the calendar.



Saw-whet owl
by Richard Crossley,
Wikimedia Commons

Generations of bird lovers live in my neighborhood. I remember phoning two houses down the road, telling Don to look out his window and hearing him gasp at the sight of a bald eagle just across from his house. Another neighbor with sharp eyes pulled into the driveway one winter night, having seen something small on a fence nearby. Off we went to find a saw-whet owl! When we're terribly tired of winter, a gang of us head out on a local owl jaunt, cookies and coffee and laughs included. This has

been going on for many years and friendships have been cemented through our love of birds. Texting is relatively new and oh so useful.

Franklin Mountain can feel like a reunion of sorts as hawkwatchers with a different set of required skills converge to work as **Continued on page 3**

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY FOUNDED 1968

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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

More help needed for the seas—Last month we wrote of pending regulations that would reduce the toll on marine creatures from bycatch death at the hands of foreign fisheries. There is another opportunity to help fish, this time by letting delivery company FedEx know they need to halt their shipments of shark fins.

Shark finning is a brutal practice that results in the death of an estimated 73 million animals each year. The captured fish have the fins hacked off, and then are tossed back in the water. Unable to swim, they die a slow death.

Twenty-five percent of shark species are currently listed as endangered, threatened, or near threatened by extinction, so this is a serious conservation issue.

Shark fin is considered a delicacy in the Orient and elsewhere and is shipped worldwide by international companies such as FedEx. Two other large shippers, UPS and DHL have halted the transport of shark fin, but FedEx has not followed suit. The company claims to integrate environmental responsibilities into its operations and decisions, but has fallen short in this regard.

What you can do—Contact FedEx CEO Fred Smith and urge him to halt the company's shipping of shark fin. Point out that his competitors have acted to protect wildlife, and that FedEx stands out by its inaction. Fred Smith can be contacted at: FedEx Corporation, 942 South Shady Grove Rd., Memphis, TN 38120; fax—(901) 818-7570; email--FWSmith@fedex.com. Also, the company has a Twitter account, www.twitter.com/FedEx, and a Facebook account, www.facebook.com/FedEx, where postings can be made.

New DEC Commissioner named—NY Governor

Andrew Cuomo has named Basil Seggos to succeed Joe Martens as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Seggos had served as the Governor's deputy secretary for the environment, and reportedly had a large hand in the decision to ban hydrofracking in the state. The appointment is subject to approval by the State Senate.

Basil Seggos has also worked for Riverkeeper, the Natural Resources Defense Council, as well as a private equity firm.

The general response to the appointment from the environmental community has been positive, but it



remains to be seen how the new commissioner will approach the department's many challenges, including low staff and budget levels, relicensing of nuclear plants, addressing climate change, to

name a few.

One early decision will be whether to provide necessary water and air quality permits to allow construction of the Constitution Pipeline to move ahead. This will affect our region and environment significantly.

What you can do—Contact Commissioner Seggos and congratulate him on his appointment. Ask him to require a full, cumulative study of all anticipated energy pipelines in the state before approving any permits. With the growing number of proposals, this approach is necessary to view the full picture of these projects' impacts.

Basil Seggos, NY State Dep't. of Environmental Conservation, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233; Basil.Seggos@exec.ny.gov.

Andy Mason

“Message” Continued from page 2 “Team Raptor” each season. Interested eyes are always so appreciated!

Birding breeds humility, a sense of humor is helpful, and feelings of accomplishment usually result, as this challenging and rewarding activity is like no other. You've got to be there to see 'em!

Please join us for local Audubon activities and enjoy the sense of commonality with your fellow participants no matter what level of experience you have achieved. Sharing the understanding that birds are top priority encourages teamwork and so much more. You might feel like a kid again.

Becky Gretton

November 20 DOAS Featured Program Will Pryor from Wolf Mountain Nature Center

On Friday, November 20th, 2015, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will host a program with Will Pryor, Founder and Head Animal Curator and Ecologist for The Wolf Mountain Nature Center. Mr. Pryor will be the guest speaker, presenting an informative slideshow on the wonderful and amazing wolves, coyotes and arctic foxes who are the residents at the nature center in Smyrna, NY.

Will's love of animals and 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; he creates/implements enrichment



photo from Wolf Mountain Nature Center

activities and educational programs; and has done much of the landscaping and fence building around the center in Smyrna.

The program will take place at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY at 7:30PM. DOAS Programs are free and open to the public.



Honey Raffle at the November Program!

A sweet half gallon of Washington state honey has been donated to the DOAS, and will be raffled off on November 20. If you (or maybe your honey) are interested, bring a few extra dollars to take a chance on this lovely natural product.

Mark Your Calendars for the January Program

Rick Bunting, well known local photographer will be our presenter for the January monthly meeting. His amazing photos will cover the most interesting photos captured this past year. Since his retirement from SUNY Potsdam and The Crane School of Music, Rick pursues his passion for photography full time to the delight of his large fan club. The program will take place on Friday, January 15th at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY at 7:30PM.

Join the DOAS Bird Friendly Coffee Club, Support the programs of DOAS and protect bird habitats

Preorder your coffee monthly and pick it up at member meetings. Contact Susan O'Handley at (607) 643-5680 or email sjohandley@gmail.com for more information and to sign up.



www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety

Hawkwatch News

Golden Eagles have made their first appearance of the season at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch. Fred Fries tallied #1 on Oct. 16, and as of the third week of the month, the count was up to fifteen. Goldens will build toward their peak in mid-November, and continue to be seen into December, particularly on north and northwest winds following passage of a cold front.

Red-tailed Hawk numbers are also on the increase. Franklin Mt. typically counts up to 2000 of these large buteos, which travel in similar conditions to Golden Eagles.

The total count for the season is currently 2725 raptors of 14 different species.

Visitors and spotters are always welcome at the hawkwatch. We are particularly seeking individuals looking to become counters, to enable us to continue full coverage at the lookout. For more information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, salothomas@gmail.com.

If you do visit, particularly this late in the season, be sure to dress warmly with extra layers. Good days come with cold winds, so be prepared.

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.franklinmt.org 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.



*Red-tailed Hawk
National Audubon Society photo*



November 7 DOAS Bird Walk and Audubon Film

In conjunction with Glimmerglass Film Days, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will lead a bird walk at noon, Saturday, November 7. The walk, led by DOAS Directors Becky Gretton, Bob Donnelly and Charles Scheim with assistance from member Sandy Bright, is appropriate for birders of all levels and will focus on species found in shoreline and forested habitats during fall

migration. Meet on the back patio of the Fenimore Art Museum. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. The walk is open to all and free of charge.

Glimmerglass Film Days will be held November 5-9 in Cooperstown. The third annual festival features films that explore "Sacred Spaces." On Saturday, November 7 at 3:15PM, the film *Rara Avis: John James Audubon and the Birds of America* will be shown in the Jones Center of The Farmers' Museum. The film *Rara Avis* is an ambitious and beautifully-crafted documentation of John James Audubon's life and career as both an artist and naturalist. The cost of the film is \$6 in advance www.glimmerglassfilmdays.org, or \$7 at the door. The Farmers' Museum is located on State Route 80 just north of the Village of Cooperstown.

For more information on Glimmerglass Film Days, please visit www.glimmerglassfilmdays.org or call 607-547-8881. filmmaker talks, walks, a companion art exhibit, and more in Cooperstown. For more information on Glimmerglass Film Days, please visit www.glimmerglassfilmdays.org or call 607-547-8881.

“Help” Continued from page 1

area, within our designated 15-mile radius circle centered around Milford. 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 or phone 607-287-4465. People who have participated before will be contacted.

Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count, January 2: 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

Waterfowl Count, January 17: The NY State Ornithological Association’s annual statewide waterfowl count is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 17, 2016. 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.

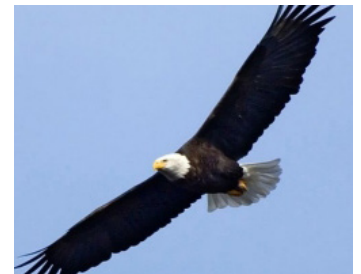
One-Day Delaware County Raptor Count Targeting Golden Eagles, February 6, weather permitting: The target day will be Saturday February 6, 2016 with a four day window to work around possible bad weather - Friday 2/5 to Monday 2/8. Teams can decide what day to cover if Saturday does not work. Tom will keep the territories as contiguous as possible and focused on those parts of the county with good visibility from the roads and a recent history of winter golden eagle presence. If you would like to participate, contact Tom Salo at salothomas@gmail.com or 607-965-8232

Field Trips: Eagles and Owls

This winter’s eagle field trip is scheduled for Saturday, January 9, 2016. The outing visits rivers and reservoirs in Delaware County where the birds concentrate to feed. Recent trips have turned up 20+ eagles. Other raptors and waterfowl are usually sighted also. We will stop at a local restaurant for lunch for interested participants.

The trip will leave the Dietz St. parking lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta at 8AM. Carpooling is strongly encouraged and participants can be picked up en route in Delhi and Walton. Return to Oneonta will be mid to late afternoon. For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

Bob Donnelly will be leading a Short-eared Owl Trip on December 12th. Meet at the Cooperative Extension Building on Lake Street in Coopersown at 3PM. For more information, call Bob at 607-264-8156..



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.

Upcoming Activities

November

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

November 7 –Bird Walk and Audubon Film: Walk begins at noon -- back patio of the Fenimore House, Film is at the Farmer's Museum, 3:15 pm. See page 5 for more information.

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. See page 4 for more information.

December

December 1–DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

December 12–DOAS Short-eared Owl Trip: Meet at 3PM 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.

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 8:30AM. 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

February

February 6 (weather permitting) – Delaware County Raptor Count : For more information see page 6 and contact Tom Salo at salothomas@gmail.com or 607-965-8232

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: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

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



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON
SOCIETY, INC.

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www.doas.us

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September-October Bird Sightings

In mid-October my husband and I took a walk, perhaps one of our last near our Treadwell home. We are moving to San Diego in December. Our bird neighbors didn't disappoint us on this stroll. We saw three lovely American robins, a special treat.

Migration is in full swing. Andy Mason counted 32 southbound Blue Jays in a half hour at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch on 9/27. A couple of days later Charlie Scheim saw a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at the Oneonta Country Club and Gerianne Carillo saw one at her Milford feeder. These will probably be the last hummingbirds seen in our area for this year.

The first of October was a banner bird day for Leslie Preston. At the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch Leslie watched Turkey Vultures sail through the sky and chatty Common Ravens in great abundance float in the air. She saw many smaller birds lower to the ground including a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Black-throated Green Warbler, a Brown Thrasher, some Eastern Phoebe and Common Yellowthroats, a Rufous-sided Towhee, and flocks of Yellow-rumped Warblers. She also spotted a good variety of raptors: Bald Eagles, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels and Merlins. On Oct. 4th Eleanor Moriarity had White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows passing through back shrubs in the Davenport Center fields. On the 8th Ted Buhl watched Canvasbacks on Allen's Lake. Sandy Bright spotted three dark birds in the sky on Oct. 10th:

an American Crow, a Common Raven, and a bird that made the raven look small and the crow look tiny. To her delight it turned out to be a juvenile Golden Eagle. Around that same time Tom Salo reported seeing a large group of mixed blackbirds at least several hundred in number. Rusty Blackbirds were definitely in the mix. In addition several American Kestrels had been hanging around the W. Burlington fields. The next day Tom observed a flock of about 30 Brant fly over. After many weeks of not seeing a Bald Eagle in or around Treadwell, Dorian Huneke saw one perched in a tree along the creek on 10/18. The next day Dave Kheim spotted a juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker on a platform feeder outside his studio window near Milford. It's the first one he has seen in New York in more than 25 years. On Oct. 20th Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet singing its sweet, soft song, hopping amongst the bushes by the stream in Catella Park.

I have been writing this bird sightings article since March of 1997. I have thoroughly enjoyed sharing your love of bird watching. I would like to thank each and every one of you who contacted me with wonderful and exciting bird sightings. I will miss bird watching in this area, but I look forward to all my new bird visitors in San Diego.

If you have bird sightings to report, contact our new "Sightings" editor, Sandy Bright, brights@hartwick.edu, at 40 Fair St., Oneonta, NY 13820, or at 607 287-4465 for the next issue of The Belted Kingfisher.

Dianne Benko