



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## Coming Activities

### April

April 2–Waterfowl Trip

April 9– Earth Festival and Bird Walk

April 15– Program, Dr. Jeffrey Heilveil: Insects Stranger than Fiction

April 19– DOAS Board Mtg

### May

May 1– Bashakill Wetlands

May 7– Oneonta Greenway Bird Walk

May 7–Bird Walk at Glimmerglass State Park

May 15– DOAS Sanctuary Bird Walk

May 17– DOAS Board Mtg

May 20– Program, Barry Stevens: Focus on Optics

May 22– Stamford Spring Bird Walk

June 4th West Branch Preserve Field Trip

June 5–Birding By Ear Workshop

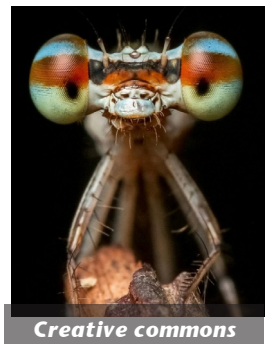
**More information on page 7**

## Insects: Stranger Than Fiction

Our April program will be presented by Dr. Jeffrey Heilveil, Associate Professor and Chair of the Biology Department at the State University at Oneonta. He will speak on *Insects: Stranger than Fiction*. Jeffrey Helveil's Master's and Doctorate are in Entomology from the University of Illinois, where he specialized in the life history, dispersal patterns, and pathologies of insects from trout streams. Jeff and his students at SUNY Oneonta research an array of topics from how urbanization and reservoir construction impact aquatic insects, to gene flow in carpenter bees, and even how to predict where aquatic insects

live based on environmental variables. Jeff teaches courses in entomology, stream ecology, and population genetics.

Please join us for this event, scheduled for Friday, April 15, 7:30PM at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St. Oneonta. The program is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Andy Mason, 607-652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).



## Birding By Ear Workshop

A Birding By Ear workshop is being planned for Sunday morning, June 5 at the Davis Park in the Town of Westford, NY. An educational session including slides, recordings and handouts at 8:30AM will be followed by a bird hike with DOAS experts, "Bruncheon" buffet, raffles, and another hike for more species. Prepaid reservations will be



required, and group size will be limited. Children 12 and older are welcome and must be accompanied by an adult.

Cost is \$25 per adult over age 18 and \$15 for youths age 12-18.

Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 or visit [doas.us](http://doas.us) to reserve your spot. A full article will appear in the May newsletter. Happy spring birding to all!!

*President's Message***DOAS Springtime**

Spring is always a busy time for DOAS, and this year is no exception. Field trips are probably the main activity as we all yearn to get out and see the returning migrants that remind us of why we love birds, and reaffirm the renewal and continuation of life in our natural world.



We have seven field trips scheduled so far for April through June, plus an exciting Birding by Ear event organized by Becky Gretton—details elsewhere in this issue. Locales include familiar spots such as the DOAS Sanctuary and the Greenway trail in Oneonta, as well as more distant destinations as the Bashakill wetland in Sullivan County. Our trips are always well attended by members and the general public alike, and provide an opportunity for beginners and more experienced birders to socialize and explore together.

We thank our trip leaders for sharing their time and knowledge for these events, which are also important for bringing our organization into the community.

DOAS also continues public presentations through May, with programs on insects and optics for birding upcoming. We will also be preparing for this summer's John G. New day camp—a growing and successful effort under the guidance of Susan O'Handley.

All in all, a very active and fun season for DOAS. We invite you to join us for any of these events, and to bring a friend. We also welcome your further involvement in the organization—consider leading a trip to your favorite location, or helping with the organizational and outreach efforts that keep DOAS a dynamic and effective group.

On a less happy note, we bid farewell to Joe Richardson as a long-time director and co-President of DOAS. Joe is stepping down in anticipation of relocating from the area. He has been a steady and knowledgeable influence in our Chapter's leadership, and we have benefited from his experience in the education and environmental arenas. He has been a good friend and a willing worker, and we will miss him greatly. Our appreciation and gratitude go out to Joe, and we wish him and Alice a healthy and fulfilling future.

*Andy Mason*

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

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Janet Potter

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**ON THE WEB:**

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

## Conservation and Legislation

**Update on Constitution Pipeline**—Legal activity continues in the battle over the Constitution Pipeline that would cut through our region, fragmenting important bird habitat and impacting wetlands and waterways.

Constitution most recently applied for permission to fell trees along the pipeline right-of-way, even though they lack final approval for pipeline construction. Due to efforts by Earthjustice, the law firm representing DOAS, plus NY Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, and others, this permission was denied in our state. However, such tree cutting was OKed in Pennsylvania, and has proceeded, including landowners being forced by federal marshals to let the company on their land.

However, the NY delay has forced the company to admit that its schedule to have the pipeline in operation later this year is no longer valid. Since the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approvals have an in-service date of December 2, 2016, and the company now says the pipeline will not be operational until late 2017, Constitution must gain an extension—a request that will be challenged by Earthjustice and many pipeline opponents.

**What you can do**--A critical permit for the project remains: air and water quality permits from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. DEC



must make a decision on this by the end of April. So there is still time to weigh in with DEC, and particularly Governor Cuomo, to urge that these permits be denied. The point should be made that the pipeline will bring about

unavoidable and permanent damage to wetlands and waterways—impacts that cannot be mitigated. A copy of your communication should also go to Acting DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos.

*Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Executive Chambers, Albany, NY 12224; 518-474-8390; [www.governor.ny.gov/contact](http://www.governor.ny.gov/contact).*

*Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos, NYS DEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233; 518-402-8545; [www.dec.ny.gov/about/407](http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/407).*

**Offshore drilling—the good and the bad**—The Obama Administration recently released a new version

of its offshore drilling plan, and it contains some good news: the President has pulled back on plans to open Atlantic coastal waters to new oil and gas drilling.



This is a continuation of Barack Obama's late term embrace of the need to take a strong stand regarding global climate change. He ensured that the US supported positive requirements at the recent Paris climate summit, and halted the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada.

This latest action goes a long way to protecting Eastern Seaboard states from threats such as the BP Gulf of Mexico disaster and the frequent but less-publicized pollution of our coastal waters from offshore drilling. We all remember the pictures of oiled birds from the Gulf, from coastal California and elsewhere.

The ban is also a step on the sensible and inevitable move toward alternative energy in the US and elsewhere. In addition to climate threats, exploring and drilling for oil in increasingly dangerous places is not prudent energy policy. The risks are too high and the returns too questionable to depend on.

However, off-shore drilling continues elsewhere in the US, and perhaps most risky of all, is still not off limits in the Arctic. Conservationists and scientists agree that a spill in the Arctic would be nearly impossible to prevent and clean up, and that the dangers are increased due to extreme weather and water conditions.

These are publicly owned and controlled resources, and oil companies can only access them through government-issued leases. The President should extend this Atlantic ban to include the Arctic and to halt any expanded drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. He has an opportunity leave a strong forward-looking legacy in our nation's approach to fossil fuels.

**What you can do**—Tell President Obama that we

**"Conservation and Legislation"--cont. on page 4**



**"Conservation and Legislation"--cont. from page 3**

expect a plan that halts all new offshore drilling for oil and gas. No new drilling in the Arctic, the Atlantic, or the Gulf. If we're going to meet our climate targets, we need to end new fossil fuel extraction. He can be recognized as the leader who turned the country toward a new energy future with these strong steps.

*President Barack Obama, The White House, Washington, DC 20500; 202-456-1111; [www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact).*

*Andy Mason*

## Camp Scholarship Donations Now Being Accepted

Scholarship donations are now being accepted towards a dedicated fund to assist families in offsetting the costs of camp participation for a child or children. In 2015, we had a total of 24 attendees in the camp program (3X our attendance in 2014) with about \$500 of scholarship funds that were distributed to 8 families for partial or full registration fee support. We would like to have the ability to continue to provide the opportunity for interested children to participate through access to camp scholarship funds, but our resource has been depleted.



### DOAS CAMP DATES FOR SUMMER 2016

For Children entering 3rd and 4th Grade - July 25-July 28;

For Children entering 5th and 6th Grade - August  
8-August 11

REGISTRATION DETAILS COMING SOON to the  
website at [doas.us](http://doas.us)  
or email [sjohandley@gmail.com](mailto:sjohandley@gmail.com) to have information  
sent directly when available.

### Support Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society.

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com),  
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AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile (<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7014319>), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers.

## Smartphone and Tablet Apps for Birding

by DOAS Board member Janet Potter

Identifying birds and their calls has gotten easier and more convenient in the past decade. The days of using only a field guide stuck into your backpack are over. If you carry a cell phone or tablet,

you can have a wide variety of birding tools at your fingertips. I have not used all, or even most, of these apps, but I enjoy learning about technology and how we can use it to our benefit.

Many of the birding apps are analogous to print field guides, used for identifying birds in the field. These are often created based on text, illustrations and range maps from their print counterparts, including Sibleys, Peterson's, Audubon, and National Geographic. Lots of birders find the digital version more convenient and useful because of they are easy to carry, include recordings of bird calls, and often contain additional photographs and embedded links to further research. My own favorite is iBird Pro which has no print counterpart.

Recordings included in field guide apps are sometimes used to lure birds close for identification or photography. Research has shown that such activity can cause serious harm to birds and most apps encourage responsible use of the recordings according to the American Birding Association's Code of Ethics.

"Field Guide" apps can make it easy to search by factors such as bird shape, size, habitat, and color, and may allow you to limit the search by your location, listing only the birds likely to be found where you are. A useful feature is listing or linking similar birds for comparison. Cornell's Merlin is a tool that specializes in identifying



an unknown bird through a series of questions. Since only about 400 birds are covered in this app, it works best if you are identifying a common species.

Apps are also used for contributing your sightings to the birding community, pointing the way to birding hotspots.

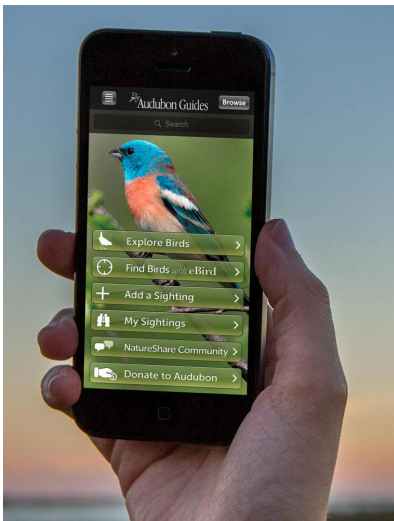
Through eBird, for example, one can learn that two Black Vultures were reported at Lake Front Park in Cooperstown on March 12th this year. Observations also become part of a databank for scientific study. Cornell Lab of Ornithology has led the way in this effort, most particularly with their eBird app. To see an example of this citizen-science process, view their full map animation of the migration of 118 species based on submitted observations of birders at <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/lasortemap/>.

Another function of birding apps is to manage lists for birders. EBird and several other apps use software to track and log observations, resulting in daily, yearly, and life birding lists. Today tens of thousands of participants create personal birding lists that they can be view through eBird's interactive maps, graphs, and bar charts.

It has long been a dream that a birder would be able to use a cell phone to record a bird song, where an app would spit out the complete identification of the bird, similar to what Shazam can do with music. There are a number of apps that are developing that idea, but most users feel they are not yet "ready for prime time." Stay tuned!

This brief description of smartphone and tablet apps is intended to provide a taste of what is getting to be a crowded field of excellent resources for birders. A Google search of "birding apps" will turn up many others for both Apple and Android systems. Costs vary widely, from free to \$40 or more. Recently some apps have initiated a monthly fee rather than a flat purchase price, which may be a consideration in the decision to acquire.

A good review of the top birding apps can be found at: <http://blog.nature.org/science/2013/05/27/boucher-bird-blog-apps-smart-birder/>



## Mark Your Calendar: Focus on Optics

Mark your calendar for our May 20th program. Barry Stevens from Wild Birds Unlimited in Johnson City will "Focus on Optics." In our digital age, it can be difficult to experience optics in a hands-on manner. Barry will bring a variety of optics, explain how they work, compare brands and answer questions that you may have. We may have our eyes opened to some interesting products available from his bird-centered business. The program is scheduled for Friday, May

20th, at 7:30PM at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St. Oneonta. The program is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Andy Mason, 607-652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).



### "Bird Sightings" Continued from page 8

moving north too, with several flocks reported by Kathy Mario, Delhi, and Dorian Huneke, Treadwell. Dorian also had a Red-bellied Woodpecker visiting. Gerry Pearlberg found 3 Green-winged Teals on a beaver pond in Kortright Center. Killdeer were first spotted by Pam



photo by  
David Kiehm

Peters near Treadwell (3/6). The first Gray Catbirds were found by Mitch Light at the Mine Kill State Park (3/8), along with Bluebirds, Barred Owl and Golden-crowned Kinglet. The 10th was busy, with Brown Creepers singing their spring song in Oneonta, a Kestrel found by Pam Peters and Chipping Sparrows by Dorian, both near Treadwell, and FOS

Woodcock heard by Gerry Pearlberg. A few days later, a handsome pair of Wood Ducks brightened Gerry's day.

Bald Eagles continue to be reported on a regular basis. There were 7 sightings, the final report coming from Elsie Myers, who enjoyed watching an eagle overlooking Charlotte Creek on March 7th.

As the days lengthen, both year-round and seasonal feathered friends become more vocal. My walk to work becomes more pleasant as I listen to sounds not heard in some time. Debbie Mack reported the spring song of Chickadees in Exeter, while Suzanne Gaynor heard a Junco singing. Kathryn and Al Davino heard the inspired "Peter Peter Peter" of a Tufted Titmouse in Meredith, and saw a large flock of Snow Geese departing.

*Sandy Bright*

## Invite a Friend to join the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society!

Download the membership brochure at:

<http://doas.us/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/DOAS-Membership.pdf>

Membership in DOAS includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*.

### 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.

Make 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: \_\_\_\_\_



## Upcoming Activities

### April

**April 2–Waterfowl Trip:** The annual spring waterfowl trip around Lake Otsego and environs will leave from Cooperstown's Lake Front Docks at the foot of Fair St. at 8AM sharp. Co-leaders will be Matt Albright, Bob Donnelly and John Davis. Cars will be pooled and radio connected, and the trip will last until around noon. For more information, contact John Davis at davi7js4@hughes.net or 607-547-9688.

**April 9–Earth Festival and Morning Bird Walk:**

Bird Walk, meet in the Milford Central School parking lot to car pool, at 9AM. See [occainfo.org](http://occainfo.org) for more information. Earth Festival, at the school, 11AM-3 PM - Visit the DOAS table!

**April 15– DOAS Public Program: Dr. Jeffrey Heilveil,**

Associate Professor and Chair of the Biology Department at SUNY Oneonta, will speak on **Insects: Stranger than Fiction**. See article on page 1. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

**April 19– DOAS Board Meeting:** 6:30 PM.

### May

**May 1– Field trip to Bashakill Wetlands, Sullivan**

**County:** This expansive wetland—the largest between Jamaica Bay and Montezuma in NY State—is a mecca for birds and birders alike. Early May is prime time for the best mix of waterfowl, wading birds, songbirds, and raptors—all found here. We will explore by canoe and kayak; there are also trails and a viewing tower along trails paralleling the water. The trip will leave the Ford Avenue parking lot across from the YMCA in Oneonta at 7AM and can also meet participants en route. Bring a lunch and drink. Return to Oneonta will be late afternoon. For further information, contact Andy Mason, 607- 652-2162, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

**May 7–Bird Walk at Glimmerglass State Park's "I Love My Park Day,"** 8AM with Becky Gretton. Meet at the Nature Center.

**May 7–Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway Bird Walk:** A walk at the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway trail, located on Silas Lane, off Rte. 205 in Oneonta's west end, to view

returning migrant birds. This will be an easy hike on level ground for about 2 hours, starting at 8AM. Participants should meet at the parking lot by the soccer fields just past the transfer station. For more information, contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or [scheimc@hartwick.edu](mailto:scheimc@hartwick.edu).

**May 15–DOAS Sanctuary Bird Walk:** This walk will explore the Audubon Sanctuary's varied habitats. There is some moderate climbing on the property. The walk will begin at 8AM and last about two hours, followed by a visit to the nearby Emmons Pond bog for interested participants. For directions, visit [www.doas.us/conservation-and-environment/franklin-mountain-sanctuary/](http://www.doas.us/conservation-and-environment/franklin-mountain-sanctuary/). For further information, contact Andy Mason, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net), or 607-652-2162.

**May 17– DOAS Board Meeting:** 6:30 PM

**May 20– DOAS Public Program:** Barry Stevens from Wild Birds Unlimited in Johnson City will present "Focus on Optics." See article on page 6. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

**May 22–Stamford Spring Bird Walk:** Meet at the parking lot, corner of Beaver Street and Main Street, at 8AM. This is an easy, level walk that will last about two hours. For information, contact Andy Mason, [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net), or 607-652-2162.

### June

**June 4–Field Trip to West Branch Preserve:** Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright 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 8AM 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 contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or [scheimc@hartwick.edu](mailto:scheimc@hartwick.edu).

**June 5–Birding By Ear Workshop:** The workshop will be held on Sunday morning, June 5 at the Davis Park in the Town of Westford, NY. See article on page 1. Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON  
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## February-March Bird Sightings

The last half of February brought more reports of winter birds, along with sightings of early spring arrivals. With such a mild winter, it's hard to tell whether some birds are harbingers of spring or have been hanging around all winter!



David Klehm

The first, and likely last, report of a Snowy Owl this season came from Jennifer Hyypio in late February. She observed the owl on several occasions, and was able to get a nice, though distant, video as it perched and flew near Stamford. Another large white bird in that area was reported by

Randy and Carol Lynch: a leucistic Red-tailed Hawk, apparently a long-term resident. They also reported a Great Horned Owl, Rough-legged Hawk,

***If you have bird sightings to report, contact Sandy Bright, [brights@hartwick.edu](mailto:brights@hartwick.edu), at 40 Fair St., Oneonta, NY 13820, or at 607 287-4465 for the next issue of The Belted Kingfisher.***

Belted Kingfisher, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Gerianne Carillo enjoyed listening to a pair of Great Horned Owls hooting back and forth as she worked at her computer one evening in February. A few days later, she reported a large flock of turkeys that visit daily.

Bob Plath found Robins in Hamden on the 18th. On the 26th, Becky Gretton reported the first-of-season Grackles in Springfield, and Leslie Preston found some Golden-crowned Kinglets among the Chickadees at Davis State Park. She has also enjoyed finding Purple Finches joining her usual gang of Cardinals and Chickadees at her feeders in Oneonta. As the month drew to a close, Red-winged Blackbirds showed up at Tom Salo's feeders in Burlington, a Great Blue Heron flew over Davis State Park (Becky Gretton), a Carolina Wren was singing in Treadwell (Dorian Huneke) and a lone Turkey Vulture circled near Belmont Circle in Oneonta. A few days later, that vulture was joined by several others, as reported by Andy Cooper.

March began with a report of the first Bluebird, seen by Kay Crane in Walton (3/1), who also saw a number of Red-winged Blackbirds and Grackles. Geese began

**"Bird Sightings" Continued on page 6**