



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

October

October 16–Montezuma Trip
October 18–DOAS Board Mtg
October 2– Alternatives to Lead Ammo Panel
October 21– Annual Fall Charter Dinner
October 29– Bird Seed Orders Due

November

November 5–Bird Seed Pickup
November 18–Program, Return of the American Chestnut

December

December 6–DOAS Board Mtg
December 10–Short-eared Owl Trip
December 17–Oneonta Christmas Bird Count
December 31–Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count

More information on page 7

DOAS programs are free & open to the public

Join Us for the Charter Dinner

Keynote speaker Warren Greene, Photographer

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will host our Annual Charter Dinner, on Friday, October 21, 2016 at the Holiday Inn, 5206 NY-23, Oneonta. A social hour will begin at 5:30 PM with dinner scheduled for 6:30 PM and the evening's special program featuring photographer, Warren Greene at 7:30 PM. The cost for the full evening is \$28 per person with no charge for those wishing to attend only the program portion of the event. A cash bar will be available.

Warren Greene, of Gloversville, New York, started photographing as a hobby in 1976, within a year from his college graduation. He worked for the Probation Department, retiring at the end of 2009, and shortly thereafter started working part time at the Family Counseling Center, easing into retirement from there presently.

Warren has been published widely, including *Birds and Blooms*, *Adirondack Life*, and the *Conservationist* magazines. He coauthored *Birds of the Adirondacks*. The Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia owns many of his bird photos, and he was photographer of the month at the Cape May Bird



Blackburnian Warbler
photo by Warren Greene

Observatory in 2009.

He used his film camera of choice, Leica, until three years ago when he went digital with a Nikon D10 camera, using two short Zeiss lenses and two longer Nikons. He does very little in the way of editing, limited mostly to cropping and sharpening using Lightroom software.

Warren continues to give slide shows, but this will be his initial showing of his digital photographs. All of the images will be new to everyone, and will include birds and nature of the Adirondacks with a few other treats as well!

Please join us by making a reservation using the form on page 7 or online at <http://doas.us/event/2016-charter-dinner-october-21/>.

President's Message

50 Years of DOAS

The 2016/17 year will mark the 50th year of operations for the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, established in 1968. This is a significant milestone for any organization and one which should be celebrated. There are many people, organizations, municipalities, businesses and institutions who have helped to shape the organization over our 50-year history – and countless hours of volunteer effort from Board members and families, DOAS members and friends, program participants and community members. Our 50th year will officially kick off at our annual Charter Dinner on Friday, October 21 at the Holiday Inn in Oneonta and will end at our 2017 Charter Dinner next October.

A quick review of some of our archived documentation – newsletters that go back to our very first printed publication (dated February 1969) and board meeting minutes – reveal names of many of those who were involved with the organization during its founding, as well as some who got involved later and others who have remained involved for many years.

In our effort to commemorate the organization this year, we would like to ask for help from our communities to please share your knowledge with us! We want to know about your experiences over the years, about the people who engaged you with the organization



and the impact they have had on your lives.

Is there a special experience that you remember significantly? Maybe a birding trip or a time you spent at the DOAS Sanctuary or at the Hawkwatch? Or maybe a program that sparked an interest in other environmentally related pursuits? Perhaps there has been a person that was involved with DOAS that you feel deserves some special recognition. Please help by sharing your experience using the form available at the website at doas.us/50-years-of-doas.. If you have any images to go along with your narrative, you can upload those as well. If you know of someone that has been involved but has moved out of the area – forward them the link to this page and ask them to share. We thank you in advance for your help.

On a similar note, if you would like to help us on our special 50th Year Committee (One year commitment), please contact Susan O'Handley at sjohandley@gmail.com.

Susan OHandley
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THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Janet Potter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents	Becky Gretton Andrew Mason Susan O'Handley
Treasurer	Charlie Scheim
Secretary	Dorian Huneke

Kathryn Davino
Bob Donnelly
Julia Gregory
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Tom Salo
2 Vacancies

COMMITTEE CHAIRS* AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

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Education*:	Susan O'Handley
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Hawk Watch*:	Andrew Mason Tom Salo
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Membership*:	Andy Mason
Programs*:	Becky Gretton
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Bird Counts:	Sandy Bright
Charter Dinner:	Julia Gregory
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Sales:	Vacant

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ON THE WEB:

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To contribute notes or articles for
The Belted Kingfisher, email:
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Conservation and Legislation

Elections 2016!—This is as big as it gets. The 2016 election will decide our president, US Senator, US Representatives, and state Senators and Assemblypersons. Generally the environment receives short shrift in campaigns, but this year there actually is some consideration of topics such as climate change and energy policy. Here is an overview of the records and ratings of candidates on these and other issues:



President: Republican candidate Donald Trump proposes rolling back EPA regulations on clean air and water and has stated, “Global warming is an expensive hoax!” As he has never held public office, there is no past record of actions, but as a private businessman, he has faced strong environmental opposition in siting and building golf courses in the US and overseas. His web site (donaldjtrump.com) has no stated environmental positions.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton sponsored positive environmental legislation as a US Senator representing New York. This included bills to combat climate change by reducing carbon pollution, investing in clean energy, and reducing carbon and other pollutants from power plants. A Clinton quote: “Climate change is real—no matter what climate deniers say.” As Secretary of State, she elevated U.S. efforts to combat poaching and wildlife trafficking and promote conservation. The non-partisan League of Conservation Voters (LCV.org) says, “Clinton has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to protecting our environment and addressing the climate crisis.” Hillary Clinton’s web site (hillaryclinton.com) includes positions on climate change, protecting animals and wildlife, and rural communities.

US Senator: Incumbent Democrat Charles Schumer has a 91% positive lifetime rating from the LCV including recent correct votes on climate change, the XL pipeline, clean energy tax credits, and clean water protection. His web site (chuckschumer.com) has little information on environmental positions, but does note his support for increasing efficiency requirements for SUVs and minivans. Schumer’s opponent, Republican Wendy Long, is an attorney who has not held public office. Her web site

(wendylong.com) does not address environmental issues, but does include a press release which calls for reducing EPA regulations.

US House of Representatives:

Our region is largely included in the 19th Congressional District where Republican John Faso faces Democrat Zephyr Teachout. John Faso served in the NY State Legislature where he

received low environmental ratings on his voting record from EPL/Environmental Advocates (eplvotersguide.org). Most recently he represented the Constitution Pipeline, advocating for this project that would carry hydrofracked natural gas across NY State. His web site (johnfaso.com) calls for weakening environmental review of projects.

Zephyr Teachout (zephyrteachoutforcongress.com) strongly opposed fracking in NY, and played an instrumental role in bringing about a ban on this activity. She advocates for renewable energy sources—solar, wind, and hydro—in her campaign.

NY State Senate: Long-time Republican incumbents James Seward (jimseward.com) and John Bonacic (no campaign web site) are running for re-election. Both have perennially received low environmental ratings from EPL, including the 2015 session.

Bonacic has a write-in opponent, Pramilla Malick, who has spoken out strongly against pipelines, and whose web site (pramillamalickforstatesenate.com) calls for transitioning our state to 100 percent renewable energy.

Seward’s opponent, Democrat Jermaine Bagnall-Graham (jermaine.today), calls for making preservation of our environment a top priority.

NY State Assembly: Our area is largely split among three Assembly districts. In the 121st District, incumbent Democrat William Magee faces Republican John Salka. Magee (no campaign web site) has a modest EPL environmental rating. Salka’s web site (salkaforassembly.com) does not mention environmental issues.

In the 122nd District, Republican incumbent Clifford Crouch (no campaign web site) is unopposed. He has a low lifetime

“Elections” Continued on page 5

Hawks Attacking People?

By DOAS Board Member Dorian Huneke

Yes, it's true, sometimes hawks do attack people. As the human population increases and encroaches on the natural habitat of hawks, many of them learn to adapt to the more "crowded" environment, finding food and ideal nesting sites in both cities and urban locales. Red Tails in Love, by

Marie Winn, is a wonderful story about Red-tailed Hawks finding New York City's Central Park the ideal place to be. There is an abundance of squirrels and rats, and a variety of nesting sites to choose from. In this story, however, I don't recall Ms. Winn pointing out that the hawks ever attacked anyone. The nest site was quite high up on a building, far from any potential threat by humans.

Yet, as you will learn, numerous attacks do take place when nests are closer to the ground than atop a skyscraper, and nearer to a flow of human foot traffic.

In early June of 2016 two people were struck and injured, in two separate instances, by an adult Red-tailed Hawk protecting its fledged young. This occurred on the St. John's University campus in Queens, NY. According to Bobby Horvath, who runs Wildlife in Need of Rescue and Rehabilitation (WINORR), the Red-tails are common at the University. He believes they may have moved their nest to a new location this year – from a remote football field to a wooded area next to a campus hall.

In May of 2012 a pair of hawks nested on St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Mishawaka, Indiana. Once the hawks became protective of their nest they began attacking people they perceived as a threat. One woman was struck on the top of her head and needed stitches; another woman

was struck on the side of her face. Attempts to have the birds removed failed because the hawks are protected species.

In April of 2009 a unique safety issue took place at the University of Miami, Florida. Nesting hawks were attacking college students as they walked across a field on campus. One girl received a



concussion from being struck. One solution campus police came up with was to provide an escort across the field and the cover of a large umbrella. The Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, in Maitland, said umbrellas appear less threatening to the hawks and dissuade them from attacking. According to

the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management in Arlington, Virginia, it is much more common to have people harassed by mockingbirds than hawks. However, during the nesting season hawks are very territorial and will fiercely defend their nests and young.

In 2008 three FEMA employees in Lake Mary, Florida, were attacked by hawks, causing all three to seek medical attention. Temporarily closing a portion of the parking lot nearest to where the nest was appeared to solve the problem.

Red-tailed Hawks are very adaptable and thus most likely to be ones involved in a hawk/human conflict. However, the Snowy Owl is another raptor that fiercely defends its nest site. It doesn't take being in a city or urban environment to accidentally disturb a nesting bird of prey. Nesting on the ground in the tundra near the Arctic Circle, what may appear to be a patch of snow can quickly attack the hiking human who gets too close. When the attack is from the ground it's critical to protect one's face and make a hasty retreat.

Another fierce protector is the Northern Goshawk. I know from personal experience that it's wise to stay clear of the nest area. It was a scary moment when my friend and I encountered the Goshawk flying straight at us, screaming loudly. We were on horseback and were really glad we were wearing our riding helmets – it was that close!

When hiking or otherwise traveling "off road" pay attention to your environment. I think most often a hawk is going to warn you with vocalizations before attacking you. Protect your head and retreat if you do encounter an upset raptor. In cities, on campuses, and in other urban areas... well, again, pay attention to the warning signs. But maybe carrying that umbrella is a good idea and will save you from harm!



“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 8

Hawk on a utility pole. It politely turned this way and that, allowing her to positively identify it as a juvenile. At the same time, four Killdeer scampered across her pasture. They would “hold quite still for a while until one of the horses moved. Then all four would move in a wave.”

In Oneonta, I watched a large group of uncharacteristically silent crows politely escort an immature Bald Eagle away from Wilber Park. When have you ever seen crows that had nothing to say to a raptor?

As I sit on the deck writing this article, enjoying the last days of summer, a brilliantly-colored Cardinal feeds a begging juvenile, which is looking rather scruffy as it molts

from drab brown to patchy red. A Carolina Wren sings its emphatic “teakettle teakettle teakettle!” while a number of Blue Jays raise a ruckus in the trees. Downy and a Hairy Woodpeckers alternately “pik” and “PEEK” as they take turns at the suet. All too soon, the yard will fall silent.



**Carolina Wren--
photo by David Kiehm**

Sandy Bright

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**DOAS to Sponsor Panel Discussion on
Alternatives to Lead Ammo**

On October 20 at 7 PM the SUNY Cobleskill Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society will host a panel discussion on lead bullets, their potential impacts on humans and wildlife and non-toxic alternatives. The event will primarily focus on bullets used for deer hunting.

Lead is a well known neurotoxin. Bullets made from lead lose mass on impact, sometimes sending fragments long distances from the wound channel. These fragments can contaminate the internal organs of the target animal, and possibly meat consumed by hunters and their families. Internal organs are typically left in the field and scavenged by wildlife, including Eagles.

Discussion will follow a screening of the short video

Lead Ammunition: A Needless Danger to Eagles and Ourselves, produced by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. Following presentations by each panelist, the discussion will be opened to questions from the audience.

Confirmed panelists at press time include Peter Nye, former head of DEC's Endangered Species Unit and one of the individuals most responsible for the recovery of bald eagles, Tom Salo, a hunter and Co-Chair of the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch and Dave Simkins, Town of Broome Supervisor, member of the Schoharie County Conservation Association and an active sportsman.

The event will be held at SUNY Cobleskill in Room 101 of the Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources. The public is invited. Other event sponsors include the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society and the Schoharie County Conservation Association.

“Elections” Continued from page 3 environmental
voting rating of 56 from EPL.



In the 101st District, newcomers Republican Brian Miller (no campaign web site) and Democrat Arlene Feldmeier (no campaign web site) face off. Both Miller and Feldmeier's

environmental positions are largely unknown.

What you can do—Make sure you are registered, and get out to vote! Check candidate web sites for their stances on issues, and also EPL and LCV for ratings of incumbents. Try to talk to candidates when they visit your community, and cast an informed vote.

Hawkwatch Update

The Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch is off to a great start, with Broad-winged Hawks making a good September showing. Triple-digit broad-wing days came on the 12th and 15th, but the real show was on September 20th when Becky Gretton recorded 1089 of these long-distance migrants, a new record for our site, breaking the 916 total Becky had also tallied on 9/17/2013. The day's total raptor count of 1132 also topped the previous high of 975 set in 1990. The big day brought the 2016 broad-wing total to 1915, with the previous high of 2342 in 2010 not too distant.

Other species showing through the first three weeks of September included Osprey, Bald Eagle, and American Kestrel. Coming days will bring increases in Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks and possibly the season's first Golden Eagle.

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

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.
Andy Mason



Broad-winged Hawk—photo by Steve Shimer at Franklin Mt.

Mark Your Calendars--November 18th: "The Return of the American Chestnut"

As a keystone species and mast-producing canopy tree, the loss of the American chestnut from the Eastern US was an ecological and economic disaster for the region



more than a hundred years ago. This native species, once classified as functionally extinct, is now poised to make a comeback thanks to modern technology and ground-breaking research. The American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project will

share their inspiring success story, and elaborate on how genetic engineering can benefit the fields of conservation

and restoration.

Dr. Allison Oakes is currently a postdoctoral research associate and maintains the production of micropropagated American chestnut shoots of over one hundred transgenic event lines, eight wild-type lines, and six hybrid lines. She is currently investigating the effect of different growth regulator concentrations on shoot development, and is continuing her dissertation research focus on improving rooting and acclimatization of American chestnut shoots. Dr. Oakes will share her experiences working with the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project to bring this beautiful canopy tree back to the Eastern United States. The program will be held on November 18th at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street. The meeting is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. We look forward to seeing you!

Reminder—Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser: Order by October 28; Pick up in Oneonta on November 5, 9 to 11 AM. Order online at www.doas.us or call 607-643-5680.



Upcoming Activities

October

October 16 – Field trip to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge to view migrating waterfowl and shorebirds on their annual journey to wintering habitats. Meet at 7:30 AM, at the Dietz Street parking lot, across from the Oneonta YMCA. Contact Eleanor Moriarty, at 607-435-2054, or eleanormrmt955@gmail.com, for inquiries. This is an all-day trip, pack a picnic lunch. Carpooling is available. Expected return to Oneonta is approximately 5:00 PM.

October 20 – Alternatives to Lead Ammo–Panel Discussion: 7 PM at SUNY Cobleskill, Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Room 101. **See article on page 5.**

October 21– DOAS Annual Fall Charter Dinner: Holiday Inn, Oneonta. Our speaker is bird photographer Warren Greene. A social hour begins at 5:30 PM, buffet at 6:30 PM and the program at 7:30 PM. Program is open to the public. Use form below. **See article on page 1.**

October 29 – Bird Seed Orders Due

November

November 5 – Bird Seed Pickup: 9 AM to 11 AM, Walmart Parking Lot, Oneonta.

November 12 – Glimmerglass Film Days Bird Walk: In conjunction with Glimmerglass Film Days,

DOAS Directors Becky Gretton and Charles Scheim will lead a bird walk from 1:30-2:30 on the grounds of the Fenimore Art Museum. The walk is appropriate for birders of all levels and will focus on species found in shoreline and forested habitats during fall migration.

November 18 – DOAS Public Program, The Return of the American Chestnut: Allison Oakes will share her experiences working with the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. **See article on page 6.**

December

December 6 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

December 10 – Short-eared Owl Trip: Meet at 3 PM at Cooperstown village docks at the end of Fair Street. For information contact Bob Donnelly: rsdonn@yahoo.com or 607-264-81566

December 17– 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.

December 31 – Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count: All are welcome to participate regardless of birding experience. For information contact Bob Donnelly: rsdonn@yahoo.com or 607-264-8156.

Annual Charter Dinner – October 21, 2017

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will have their annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 21, 2016 at the Holiday Inn on State Highway 23 in Oneonta. A social hour begins at 5:30 PM, buffet at 6:30 PM and the program at 7:30 PM. The program is open to the public.

This year's speaker is bird photographer Warren Greene who will present bird and nature photographs

*The buffet cost is \$28 per person
Reservations must be made by October 15th by calling 607-563-2924
or mailing a check to: Julia Gregory, PO Box 641, Unadilla, New York 13849*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Amount enclosed: _____



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August September Bird Sightings

At this time of year, our summer birds are quieter, many having already moved on. It also brings us different species as they migrate through. At the end of August, a cormorant landing in a tree near a busy intersection in Oneonta was an unexpected sight!

Randy Lynch reported Green Herons still in his neighborhood in Jefferson. He found two great Egrets on Goodyear Lake, and two Bald Eagles – one adult, one immature – in Davenport, along with another immature near his home. He discovered a Black-and-white Warbler under a Spruce tree, and an Olive-sided Flycatcher in a dead snag, with an Eastern Phoebe close by, providing a nice comparison.

It seems to have been an especially good year for

If you have bird sightings to report, contact 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. We regret that not every report can be included due to limited space. Additional information may be requested for sightings of rare or unusual birds.

Nighthawks, which were seen in several places around Labor Day. Tom Salo and Leslie Preston watched nine at the Franklin Mountain hawk watch. Juliana Fauth saw about a dozen at the Unadilla Drive-in, a larger group than I've ever seen! Charlie and I saw a couple in Neawha Park and three hawking the skies over our house in Oneonta.

On September 9th, Becky Gretton discovered a tail-bobbing Palm Warbler feeding in her neighborhood. Each day, she was being treated to a "Kestrel family ballet." It's always a treat to see even one Kestrel, let alone whole families!

In mid-September, Randy Lynch listened to the "three-eight" of a Yellow-throated Vireo in Cherry Valley. He found a Warbling Vireo in Jefferson, and listened to the "Who cooks for you?" of Barred Owls in the wee hours of the mornings.

In Treadwell, Dorian Huneke observed a Red-tailed



Common Nighthawk
MassAudubon.org

"Bird Sightings" Continued on page 5