



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

November

November 5—Bird Seed Pickup
November 12 Glimmerglass Film Days, Bird Walk
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

January

January 15—Waterfowl Count
January 17—DOAS Board Mtg
January 20—Program, On Heron Time

More information on page 7

DOAS programs are free & open to the public

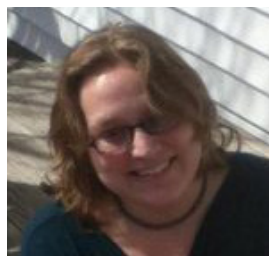
The Return of the American Chestnut Tree

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 groundbreaking 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



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!



restoration.
Dr. Allison Oakes is currently a postdoctoral research associate

Mark your Calendars for our January program, "On Heron Time." Popular and gifted photographer Rick Bunting will present this program featuring photographs and observations gathered from several years of monitoring a small Great Blue Heron rookery in Chenango County. Please join us on January 20 at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St. in Oneonta, NY.

President's Message

by Co-president Andy Mason

The annual DOAS Open House was held at the Sanctuary on October 1. It was a great day with a hawk identification session, a trail walk, a presentation with live raptors, tasty refreshments and pleasant socializing. Many of the visitors spent time at the hawkwatch and got to see a few good birds. A highlight was the release of a rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk by Missy Runyon, after nine weeks of treatment. What a thrill to see this young bird back in the wild! No doubt it made an impression on those who viewed this event, especially the youngsters present.

I didn't take a head count, but there was a good crowd, as is typical. This is probably our most popular event for non-members. There are always visitors at the Sanctuary for the first time, and often the Open House is their first contact with our organization. The board members all contribute to making the day a success, including bringing food and drink, and engaging those who make the trek up Franklin Mt.

For any organization, even one marking its 50th anniversary as we are,



Missy Runyon with Red-tailed Hawk
Photo by Tina Niesluchowski

it is important to continue to involve new people and particularly upcoming generations, to keep the group active and vibrant.

If you have been a member for a while, you know of our work on conservation, education, and research. You can help with recruitment of new members by inviting like-minded family and friends to a DOAS event. Nearly everyone loves birds and you can use that as an opening to bring in others. If your friends are focused online, direct them to our excellent web site, www.doas.us, or to the DOAS Facebook page. A gift membership to DOAS is another way to expose our group to potential members.

The support and help of our members is much appreciated, as

"President's" Continued on page 4

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
Janet Potter
Tom Salo
Vacancy

COMMITTEE CHAIRS* AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Conservation*:	Andy Mason
Education*:	Susan O'Handley
Field Trips*:	Bob Donnelly
Hawk Watch*:	Andrew Mason Tom Salo
Hospitality*:	Julia Gregory
Membership*:	Andy Mason
Programs*:	Becky Gretton
Publicity*:	Susan O'Handley
Sanctuary*:	Andrew Mason
Bird Counts:	Sandy Bright
Charter Dinner:	Julia Gregory
Finance:	Gray Mason
Historian:	Vacant
Sales:	Vacant

ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Delaware Otsego Audubon
Society
P.O. Box 544
Oneonta, NY 13820
Email: info@doas.us

ON THE WEB:

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

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



Congratulations to long-time DOAS Director Tom Salo for earning the Otsego County Conservation Association's "Conservationist of the Year award." The award is given to an individual or group that has made a positive difference in environmental protection, preservation or education in Otsego County. OCCA cited his many leadership roles in DOAS, his service as co-chair of the Franklin Mountain

Hawkwatch, and coordinator of the Appalachian Eagle Project, and his leadership in efforts to reduce accidental lead poisoning in Bald Eagles by promoting the use of non-lead ammunition for deer hunting. The award will be bestowed at OCCA's Annual Dinner on November 15th. Contact OCCA for more information (607 547 4488).

Conservation and Legislation

Prohibitions on trade in endangered species

strengthened—In early October, a major gathering of nations took place in Johannesburg, South Africa to consider changes to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The aim of this treaty is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

The threat to mega-fauna such as elephants, tigers and rhinos from poaching and sale of body parts is well known, but CITES provides varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 species of animals and plants. Trade in plants and animals has risen dramatically in recent years, with over 1 million transactions now recorded annually, worth billions of dollars.

CITES was enacted in 1975, and now there are 183 parties to the treaty, making it one of the broadest conservation agreements worldwide. The parties gather every three years to review species and rules, and the meetings are often contentious.

This year was no different. It took two weeks of marathon negotiations to settle on 51 accepted proposals. Another five were rejected and six withdrawn.

The Johannesburg conference brought about agreement to further safeguard threatened species including the African grey parrot, Barbary Macaque, Blaine's fishhook cactus, elephant, pangolin, saiga antelope, African lion, cheetah, helmeted hornbill, pangolin, rhino and totoaba.



Parties also recognized several conservation success stories, including that of the Cape mountain zebra, several species of crocodiles and the wood bison, which were all by consensus downlisted from Appendix I under CITES to Appendix II in recognition of their improved conservation status.

Despite strong action at the Johannesburg gathering, the threats to wildlife remain. For example, rhino numbers continue to drop due to continuing trade in their horns in China and Vietnam. Similarly, elephant populations are only a fraction of what they were just 20 years ago, despite bans on importation of ivory. Pangolins, a scaly anteater, have been killed by the millions to feed the huge and rising appetite in Asia for its meat and its scales, a supposed medicine, and are now threatened with extinction.

What you can do—Although CITES classifies species and places restrictions and bans on trade, it is up to each country to enact and enforce its own laws to carry out the treaty. In the US, the federal government, via the State Department and Congress, is responsible for ensuring CITES is followed. Contact your representatives in Washington, as well as the President, and ask them to stand strong and support CITES with personnel and dollars to stem the trade in endangered species.

Also, if you travel or shop overseas, be sure you are not purchasing protected animals in souvenirs, furniture, clothing, and other items. The CITES checklist of species can be found at www.checklist.cites.org.

Andy Mason.

IN MEMORIAM

Jonathan "Joe" Richardson, 1935-2016



Former DOAS director and co-president Joe Richardson died October 2, 2016 in Cooperstown. Joe had been an important part of our organization's leadership for a decade, as a wise presence on the board, reflecting his broad experiences as a field researcher and educator. He was always willing to take on the tasks that keep our Chapter going, with a cheerful and positive approach.

Joe and his wife Alice were planning a relocation to Massachusetts, and DOAS board members took them to supper this summer to give our best wishes and express our appreciation for Joe's service.

Our condolences go out to Alice and to Joe's family.

Christmas Bird Count

By DOAS Board Member Charlie Scheim

Within our chapter's first year, the founders of DOAS, recognizing the value of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, decided our chapter ought to contribute to this nation-wide winter bird census.

A few years ago, I wrote about the attractions and rewards of participating in the CBC. Since then, some DOAS members have asked about joining, or even establishing a separate count group; hence, this second article.

In the 1800s, the "Christmas Side Hunt" was popular; parties would compete to shoot the most birds. In 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, member of the newly established National Audubon Society, suggested that rather than killing birds, folks should simply count them. Thus began the first Christmas Bird Counts. The 116th CBC last year included over 2450 count locations, with over 72,000 participants (62,000 in field, 10,000 feeder-watchers) tallying almost 70 million birds.

CBCs are organized in 15-mile diameter "count circles". Only birds found inside the circle can be included in the count. Besides our local count (designated NYOT, organized by Sandy Bright), other nearby CBC circles are centered in Fort Plain (NYFP, organized by Bob Donnelly), Sherburne (NYSH), and Rensselaerville (NYHP). All CBCs must occur between December 14 and January 5, and each circle's count should occur at about the same date each year, on a day chosen by the circle's organizer. For example, the 2016 NYOT CBC will be Saturday Dec. 17, and the NYFP on Saturday Dec. 31. Birds observed a few days before or after the count day can be reported, but are not part of the official data.

Our local NYOT circle was designed 48 years ago by Dr. John New and Johanna Koenig, two of the original DOAS members, with a center in Milford (coordinates 42.55°N, 74.95°W). It extends 7.5 miles north to Rt11C in Cooperstown, south to Rt23 in Davenport, west to just



past Rt205 in Laurens, and east to just past Schenevus. (It includes just a small portion of Oneonta) The NYOT circle is sub-divided into nine regions. Each region has a team of birders who record every bird encountered. The efforts of

the field teams are complemented by "feeder-watchers": folks who stay home and observe and report on birds seen at their feeders. The 2015 NYOT results included 3693 birds from 49 species.

Since no circle exists south of NYOT closer than Binghamton, perhaps a Delaware County circle could be established. Circles can't overlap, of course, and so a new circle center would have to be at least 15 miles from NYOT's center. For example, a circle could be established centered south of Meredith. It would include East Meredith, Treadwell, Bloomville, Delhi and Fraser. Designing a circle, sub-dividing it into regions, organizing teams for each region, and compiling the observation data is quite a lot of work, but I've no doubt there are DOAS folks who could meet that challenge.

You might wonder why can't just anybody do a CBC anywhere? Of course, anyone can go out and enjoy counting birds at Christmastime, but over the years the Audubon CBC has evolved from simply an enjoyable winter outing for avian aficionados to a highly respected source of scientific data. It is widely regarded as the best data pool available for early winter bird populations in North America. To retain their scientific value, data collection methods must be consistent from year to year, so Audubon has chosen to follow the procedures I've described.

If you'd like to join the CBC, contact Sandy or Bob. They are glad to add birders to the various teams; new counters will be placed with more experienced team members. Become a member of the largest and longest-running citizen science project in history!

"President's" Continued from page 2

always. As we move into our second 50 years a new cohort of conservationists and birdwatchers is arriving, and we hope to engage them with DOAS to continue our history of promoting the Audubon Cause.

Andy Mason

A Busy Fall for DOAS

Open House Co-president Andy Mason reported on our Open House at the DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain on October 1st, see page 2. Enjoy a few photos from the day:



Tom Salo
Raptor ID Workshop



Missy Runyon, Wildlife
Rehabilitator, with Barn Owl and
Oneonta Cub Scouts Pack 91



Monica Cej
Scything Demonstration

Visit our web site for additional photos and a video of the release of a rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk by Missy Runyon of Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Center in Hunter, NY (<http://doas.us/open-house-2016-photo-gallery/>).



Lesser
Yellowlegs
photo by
Jennifer Hyypio

Montezuma Field Trip On Sunday, October 16th, Eleanor Moriarty led a DOAS-sponsored fall birding trip to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, located at the north end of Cayuga Lake. A group of seventeen participants carpooled through the numerous pools and grasslands to view migrating geese, ducks, shorebirds, and the usual suspects. The weather was beautiful and allowed for excellent viewing. Highlights of the trip included sightings of American and Eurasian Wigeons, White-rumped and Baird's Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Sandhill Cranes. Complete report and full list of sightings can be read at <http://doas.us/fall-montezuma-trip-recap/>.

Lead-Free Ammo Panel On October 20th, DOAS co-sponsored a panel discussion on lead bullets at SUNY Cobleskill. Panelists included DOAS Director Tom Salo, retired head of the NYSDEC Endangered Species Unit Peter Nye, NYS Department of Health representative Gregg Recer, NYSDEC Wildlife Biologist and Pathologist Kevin Hynes and Schoharie County Conservation Association representative Dave Simkins.



After viewing the DOAS film *Lead Ammunition: A Needless Danger to Eagles and Ourselves*, panelists gave short presentations on the subject from their perspectives, followed by questions and comments from the audience of about 70. It was a successful event well attended by many younger hunters.

Charter Dinner Nearly fifty DOAS members enjoyed our Charter Dinner at the Holiday Inn in Oneonta on October 21st, celebrating the kick off to our 50th year with raffles, door prizes, and a presentation of beautiful photographs and commentary by the talented nature photographer Warren Greene.

“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 7

Owls and also Great-horned, which had been uncommon in their neighborhood in recent years. On an early morning walk, Jo Salo, sporting her headlamp, came face-to-face with a Saw-whet Owl!

In early October, Kathryn Davino was getting her mail when she heard a Raven giving a loud croak as it chased close behind a juvenile Broadwinged Hawk. Flying just over her head, she “could feel the swoosh of wind from their feathers as they skimmed” by her. The hawk landed in a nearby tree, and the Raven continued on.

In mid-October, Gerianne Carillo reported, among Blue Jays, Juncos, Chipping Sparrows, Goldfinches, and others foraging in her yard, at least five Bluebirds examining her nest boxes and



Bluebird--photo by David Kiehm

casually feeding. There was aggressive defending behavior between the bluebirds, as well as from bluebirds directed at other birds (House Sparrows and Starlings), in defense of the nest boxes.

Near the Audubon Sanctuary, Jennifer Hyypio watched a Ruffed Grouse walked across the road, then an adult flew back across the road “displaying the beautiful black-banded rufous tail.” A few days later, she spotted one from her kitchen window, perched in the morning shadows.

As the deadline loomed for this article, summer weather seemed to return. One morning, two Carolina Wrens seemed to vie for territory as they sang back and forth near our house in Oneonta. That evening, a Chipping Sparrow chipped enthusiastically in our yard, until a Cooper’s Hawk flew low.

Sandy Bright

Hawkwatch Update

The fall season is moving along at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch. The change from early migrants such as Broad-winged Hawks and Osprey to Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles is underway. The first golden showed on October 12 and numbers will build to the species peak in mid-November. Other later migrants include Red-shouldered Hawks, Northern Goshawks and continuing Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s Hawks.

The tally through mid-October stood at 3333 total raptors, with our good showing of broad-wings making up 2/3 of this. Red-tailed Hawks could catch up, if we are favored by strong cold fronts and the northwest winds that follow. Triple-digit red-tail days are regular through late October and November under these conditions, so keep your eye on the weather forecast. If you do visit, be sure to dress extra warmly!

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

Is your Membership Current?

Your mailing label will inform you of your membership expiration date (year and month, e.g. ‘1611’ indicates November 2016). DOAS memberships are \$15 per year or \$25 for two years; family memberships are \$20 per year or \$30 for two years. **View membership benefits and download application from our website: doas.us/join-us/**

Upcoming Activities

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 10:30-11:30 AM 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. Participants will meet at the back patio of the Fenimore Art Museum in time for a 10:30 AM start. Free and open to the public.

November 12 – Glimmerglass Film Days Film–

The Messenger In conjunction with Glimmerglass Film Days, DOAS is sponsoring The Messenger. The film will be shown from 1:00-3:00 PM and will include a Q&A session with ornithologist Bill Evans, who conducted some of his research at the DOAS Sanctuary at Franklin Mountain. Tickets are \$6/advance and \$7/at the door. <http://www.glimmerglassfilmdays.org/tickets/>

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 1.**

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 607-264-8156

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

January

January 15 – NYSOA Waterfowl Count: The NY State Ornithological Association's annual statewide waterfowl count is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 15, 2017. 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.

January 17 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

January 20 – DOAS Public Program, On Heron

Time: Photographer Rick Bunting will present a program about Great Blue Herons. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

Glimmerglass
FESTIVAL



Support our
Sponsors!

Thank you to Glimmerglass Festival, for being a sponsor!

PO Box 191; Cooperstown, NY 13326; phone (607) 547-0700;
<http://glimmerglass.org>; Box Office (607) 547-2255

Friday Facts Visit our web site (<http://doas.us/category/1-fridayfacts/>) to read an interesting tidbit about the history of DOAS every Friday in celebration of our 50th year. Here's one: "The very first DOAS newsletter was titled *The Homing Pigeon*, and was dated 1969. Each issue after that had a different title until August 1970, when the publication officially became *The Belted Kingfisher*."





DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON
SOCIETY, INC.

PO BOX 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

www.doas.us

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #422
ONEONTA, NY 13820

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

September October Bird Sightings

In mid-September, Eleanor Moriarty's yard in Davenport was hopping with a nice variety of species, including lots of purple finches, an immature Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Phoebe, Red-bellied Woodpecker, female Black-throated Green Warbler, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Many parents will sympathize with her adult Cardinals, who were going nuts attempting to get their male juvenile to become independent!

Randy Lynch found a diverse, active group around Stamford: Black-throated Green Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, and the resident white (leucistic) Red-tailed Hawk. In his neighborhood were 19 Kestrels, including one being chased by a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a Cooper's Hawk being mobbed by some Crows, half dozen

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.

Red-tails, and 1 adult Bald Eagle across from the DEC office.

Later in the month, Flo Loomis reported Eastern Towhees, some thrushes, and her first ever Black-throated Blue Warbler in New Lisbon. Becky Gretton discovered a nice group of Golden-crowned Kinglets feeding in her hemlocks, a Blue-headed Vireo gently vocalizing, and an Osprey over Hyde Bay in the Town of Springfield. A Great-blue Heron and a couple of Belted Kingfishers were still fishing in Neawha Park in Oneonta. Gerianne Carillo got a late-season Hummingbird in Milford.

Dorian Huneke observed a Cooper's Hawk chasing a few crows through the village of Treadwell. Out in the field, she watched a Red-tailed Hawk hunched over on a fence post, enjoying some tidbit, and found a number of "those confusing fall warblers." Several flocks of geese flew over, heading south. Driving on Case Hill Road, she saw a Merlin burst from his perch and fly across the hay field. There's a species that has expanded its range in recent years! The owls were busy in West Burlington! Tom Salo was hearing Barred "Bird Sightings" Continued on page 6

