



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Coming Activities

April

April 1–Spring Waterfowl Trip
April 15–Bluebirds SUNY Cobleskill
April 18–DOAS Board Mtg
April 21 Program, Marvels of Avian Migration
April 22–Earth Festival, Bird Walk and DOAS Display
April 29–People’s Climate March in Delhi

May

May 6–I Love My Park Day
May 6–Greenway Bird Walk
May 7–Sanctuary Bird Walk
May 13–Mine Kill Bird Festival
May 16–DOAS Board Mtg
May 18 –June 8 – Audubon Photography Awards Traveling Exhibition
May 19–Program, Bears
May 20–Big Day Bird Count
May 24–Wildflower Walk
May 19–West Branch Preserve Trip

June

June 9 –11 – Birding in the Catskill
June 11 – Birding by Ear Workshop

More information on page 7

DOAS programs are free & open to the public

The Marvels of Avian Migration April 21st Program

Jenny Murtaugh, Biologist in the Wildlife Diversity Unit within the Department of Environmental Conservation, will guide us through many aspects of spring migration. She began working for DEC during her senior year of Wildlife Management at SUNY Cobleskill in 2009. She has done research through DEC, the NYS Museum and SUNY ESF related to coyote genetics and ecology, fishers, Karner blue butterflies, frosted elfin butterflies, grassland and marsh birds, MAPS bird banding and winter raptors. She is currently focused on a revision effort of NY’s Species of Greatest Conservation Need list and Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern species for the

State Wildlife Action Plan.

Jenny will speak on the why’s and how’s of migration, impressive feats of migration, techniques used to study migration, and will conclude with a current “migration forecast” for the week of April 22-29 in our area!

This is perfect timing for all of us who are preparing to celebrate spring birding with a count, survey, hike or other outing.



Jenny Murtaugh

Join us at 7:30 at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St. in Oneonta on the 21st of April. Refreshments will be served.



OUR MISSION: Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society is dedicated to the natural environment, with activities focused on protection and maintenance of ecological systems, wise use and conservation of natural resources, and environmental quality improvement.

President's Message

Birding By Ear--Perfect Timing by Co-president Becky Gretton



It's spring already, raptors have been migrating north for a month, and our smaller bird friends are arriving daily. Experienced birders anticipate revisiting favorite habitats, using identification skills that have been honed over time. Many of these birders are happy to reach out with a willingness to teach interested, less experienced birders. Are you one of those birders who has marveled at the magic of birdsong? Please consider joining us for Birding By Ear.

DOAS will once again offer a Birding By Ear (BBE) event at the scenic Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park in the Town of Westford on Sunday, June 11, 2017 at 8:30 AM to unlock the secrets of bird ID through birdsong. We will enjoy an educational session in the Sunset Pavilion, followed by a hike, a "Bruncheon" in the pavilion and an additional hike for more species. A raffle will be available as well. There is a variety of habitats at this park, with a number of species possible.



Birding By Ear, 2016

The cost, pre-paid, for the BBE is \$25.00 for an adult over 18, and \$15.00 for children 12-18 who are accompanied by an adult. This cost is non-refundable, as the food is pre-ordered. The event is limited in size, and registration will be on a first-come basis. Bruncheon includes muffin varieties, cheese-hash brown casserole, sausage-hash brown casserole, tossed salad, chicken/ grape salad with croissants, coffee, tea and water. If the weather makes hiking impossible, we will have our educational session and bruncheon and enjoy each other's company! (Last year the clouds parted just in time: perfect.)

Pre-paid registration will be available on line at doas.us via PayPal or with a check which must be mailed to DOAS. You may contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information. If the event is full, you will be notified and your payment/check will be refunded or returned with our thanks.

Please come to meet new people or reunite with friends from the past, and to learn more about our beautiful spring birds!

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Janet Potter

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

Conservation and Legislation

Endangered Species Act in

the Crosshairs—By now, the magnitude of the assault on the environment from the Trump administration and Congress has become clear. They have rolled back regulations on dumping mining wastes in streams and on protecting smaller waterways from pollution. Word is that the Environmental Protection Agency will end efforts to control climate change and to promote energy efficiency, and fire 25% of the agency's staff just in the first year. There is even legislation in Congress to eliminate the EPA.

Now comes the news that the Endangered Species Act—perhaps the most popular and successful piece of environmental legislation not only in the US, but worldwide—is at risk for elimination. House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop said he “would love to invalidate” the Endangered Species Act. He is backed up by others in Congress and by large corporations, agribusiness, and energy interests. They falsely claim the ESA has created economic hardship and cost jobs.

In fact, the law has worked remarkably well, with a minimum of conflict outside of a handful of well-publicized cases. A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of 88,000 cases involving the ESA between 2008 and 2015 found that the Fish and Wildlife Service determined in only two cases that development would jeopardize a listed species. No projects were ultimately stopped or extensively changed to protect plants and wildlife.

On the plus side, just looking at bird species, the ESA



has largely been responsible for saving and/or bringing back the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, California Condor, Whooping Cranes, and other iconic species. This is not to mention the many lesser-known species of plants and animals that were at the brink of extinction and no doubt would have disappeared without

the law.

What form the attack on the ESA will take this year is yet to be determined. It may be outright repeal, as Rep. Bishop and other right-wing zealots seek, or weakening amendments that will take ESA decisions out of science and into the realm of politics. What can be certain is that the law is at its most vulnerable since its passage in 1973.

What you can do—Repealing or gutting the Endangered Species Act will require Congressional action. With the strong anti-environment sentiment in the House of Representatives, the US Senate will be the place to hold the line on this issue. In particular, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer will be a key player. Senator Schumer needs to know that this law—supported by 90% of Americans—is worthy of a filibuster, and whatever other measures are necessary to protect it. Contact Senator Schumer and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, as well as your US Representative to let them know you feel strongly about the ESA and that it needs to remain in place to protect our endangered and threatened plants and animals.

Contact information for these federal public officials can be found at www.doas.us.

Andy Mason

Nominating Committee Appointed. In preparation for elections at our Annual Membership meeting in May, the Board of Directors has named the following people to this year's Nominating Committee: Dorian Huneke, Janet Potter, Eleanor Moriaty, and Eileen Kline. We urge you to contact any committee member (at info@doas.us) with your suggestions for nominations.

Sunday Morning Radio is For the Birds by DOAS Board Member Kathryn Davino



Any Sunday morning between 9:30 and 10:00, you'd be likely to find me sitting by my computer with my favorite field guides handy, and my smart phone open to my 'Bird Tunes' app, listening to a radio program that's all about birds. Ray Brown's *Talkin' Birds* is a live, interactive radio show about wild birds and the beauty of nature. The show features expert guests who help listeners learn more about birds and environmental concerns that relate to birds, as well as providing tips for attracting birds to your backyard and feeding them. The highlight of the show for me is the mystery bird contest, hence the need for my handy resources.

Ray plays a recording of a typical vocalization for the mystery bird and gives some clues about the bird's appearance and possible places the bird can be found. The first caller to guess the mystery bird wins a Droll Yankee bird feeder. Pretty cool! I am proud to say that I won a very nice thistle seed feeder back in January for guessing the Phainopepla, a bird that is native to

the southwestern United States and Mexico. I won't be eligible to call in for 6 months, but I still like to listen, since I love solving mysteries, and it's a great way to keep my bird ID skills sharp.

Talkin' Birds first hit the airways in 2006, broadcasting from station WATD in Massachusetts. To tune in to the live show here in our area, you'll have to stream it through your computer by visiting the website <http://www.talkinbirds.com/>. On the home page, you'll find a drop down menu entitled 'How to Listen,' and then select 'live stream', which brings you to WATD. I highly recommend this show for families, and it is noteworthy that several of the winners have been kids. Special recognition should go to our own DOAS member Gerianne Carillo, a Talkin' Birds Ambassador, who shared her love for the show with me and now I'm hooked!



Ray Brown

More From Board Member Kathryn Davino, The March for Science

On Earth Day, Saturday April 22, there will be a March for Science taking place in cities throughout the world. The March is intended to be a celebration of science. It is about the very real role that science plays in each of our lives and the need to respect and encourage research that gives us insight into the world. Co-hosted with the Earth Day Network, the rally will be a call for politicians to implement science based policies, as well as a public celebration of science and the enormous public service it provides in our democracy, our economy, and in all our daily lives.



The main march in the USA will take place in Washington, DC starting at 10 AM. The DC rally will feature main stage speakers and several large teach-in tents around the Mall where scientists, educators, and leaders from a wide variety of disciplines will discuss their work, effective science communication strategies, and training in public advocacy.

There are 395 satellite marches taking place throughout the nation and the world on that day, including one in Albany, which **"March" Continued to page 5**

Environmental Education Grants Awarded

Each year, Environmental Education Grants are awarded to classroom teachers in the DOAS area (Delaware, Otsego, eastern Chenango, and western Schoharie Counties) through the DOAS EE Grant Program.

This year's recipients are:

- Lori Wrench, Cooperstown Elementary School - Materials and supplies to build a Bird Sanctuary in an enclosed courtyard area;
- Jennifer Finkle, South Kortright Elementary School - Materials and supplies for Trout Release and



Environmental Field

Day with watershed, water quality, water cycle focus;
 •Sharon Vesely, The Place, Norwich - Materials and supplies for adding bird activity components into their summer program including a Birding Program at Rogers Center.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2017 Awardees!

DOAS accepts donations throughout the year to specifically support the DOAS EE Grant Fund. If you would like to make a contribution, please send check to DOAS, PO Box 541, Oneonta, NY 13820 with EEGrantDonation in the memo of your check. For additional information, please contact Education Chair, Susan O'Handley at 607-643-5680 or at sjohandley@gmail.com.

Save the Date! Our May program is scheduled for May 19, 7:30 p.m. at the Elm Park Methodist Church, Chestnut St., Oneonta. Larry Bifaro, Wildlife Biologist for New York State Department of Environmental Conservation will speak on Black Bears in New York, Natural History, Management and Interactions with People

Larry has been employed by DEC for 26 years and has spent the past 19 years in the Stamford Wildlife Office working with black bears in the western Catskill region. He is a member of DEC's Big Game Management Team and resides in Delaware County.

This presentation is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For further information, call (607) 652-2162.



Black Bear, DEC Photo

"March" Continued from page 4

is probably the closest location for DOAS members. For more information about the March for Science and to investigate bus transportation to DC, visit the website <https://www.marchforscience.com/event->

details/. For information about the Albany event, visit the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/1803568203236451/>. Call Kathryn Davino at 607-746-7396 if you're interested in carpooling to the Albany event.

Bird Friendly Coffee— orders for delivery at our April 21st Program are due by noon on Saturday, April 15. To order, contact Susan at 607-643-5680 or by email at sjohandley@gmail.com.



“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 8

time to watch a juvenile Northern Goshawk swoop through, artfully banking in and out of the trees near her feeders, chasing a small bird. She reported the first Brown-headed Cowbird, and found an unusual yellow variant House Finch among other finches with standard plumage at her feeder. Becky Gretton reported Woodcock displaying in Springfield on the 27th and 28th, at the same lek where they displayed on May 17th last year. That’s a significant difference in timing!

In early March, Becky found 2 Rusty Blackbirds with some Red-winged, along with Wood and Black Ducks at a nearby pond. Randy Lynch scanned the waters of Goodyear Lake to find small rafts of a half dozen each Pintails and Common Goldeneyes. Near Harpersfield, he discovered a Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3 Fox and 1 Song Sparrow at his feeders.

In late February, Gerianne Carillo, commenting on some early migrants, had written “Imagine their surprise and dismay when Sunday’s low 30s come!” Little did any of us know then that we would soon be faced with single-digit temperatures. The cold weather



Raven
Photo by David Kiehm

suppressed bird sighting reports for awhile, though on sunnier days the birds were still singing their spring songs as I walked to work.

On March 10th, Dorian Huneke reported the Treadwell Bald Eagles sitting on eggs, and watched a Merlin fly past her house. Four days later, we were hit with the biggest Nor’easter we’ve seen in some time. Human traffic may have come to a

screeching halt, but birds were busy emptying feeders, as reported by several people. Hoards of hungry Red-winged Blackbirds drained Stacy Grocott’s feeders in Burlington. A Northern Shrike was attracted to Bob Donnelly’s yard by the hundreds of Goldfinches, along with other birds.

During the storm, a brave little Red-breasted Nuthatch didn’t stop pecking at the suet while I cleared snow and refilled other feeders; other birds waited only until I turned away to fly in and take advantage of the bounty. Tired from too much shoveling, I just stood and watched, enjoying the sight.

Sandy Bright

**John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp**

Dates for 2017 Summer Camp:

Children entering 3rd & 4th Grades: July 10-July 13, 2017

Children entering 5th & 6th Grades: July 31-Aug 3, 2017

Registration information coming soon! Watch the DOAS Website for latest information.

Is your Membership Current?

Your mailing label will inform you of your membership expiration date (year and month, e.g. ‘1706’ indicates June 2017). 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/ OR join online at doas.us/store

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

Download the membership brochure at:

<http://doas.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Membership-Tri-Fold-FINAL1.pdf>

Upcoming Activities

April

April 1 – Spring Waterfowl Trip: For more information, contact John Davis at davi7js4@hughes.net or 607-547-9688.

April 15– Bluebird program at SUNY Cobleskill: 10 AM-3 PM. Presentations on bluebirds, natural pollinators, and more. Visit www.nysbs.org/events-calendar/.

April 18 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

April 21 – DOAS Public Program: Jenny Murtaugh, Biologist with the Department of Environmental Conservation, will present “Marvels of Avian Migration” (article on page 1). 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

April 22 – Earth Festival Bird Walk: Led by Bob Donnelly. Carpools leave Milford Central School parking lot at 9 AM.

April 22 – Earth Festival: Milford School, 11 AM -3 PM. Visit the DOAS table! Details about Earth Festival, visit <http://occainfo.org>.

April 29 – Peoples Climate March in Delhi: This is an alternative for those who can't get to the large march planned for Washington, DC. For further information, contact Kathy Mario, (607) 746-6695.

May

May 6 – I Love My Park Day: 7:30 AM Bird Walk at Davis State Park. Meet at Sunset Pavilion parking lot. Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information.

May 6 – Susquehanna Greenway Bird Walk: meet at 8 AM in the parking lot by the soccer fields just past the transfer station for a two-hour walk to view returning migrant birds on the Greenway trail, located on Silas Lane, off Rte. 205 in Oneonta. This will be an easy hike on level ground. Information contact: Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880.

May 7 – DOAS Sanctuary Bird Walk: Meet at 8 AM. This walk will explore the property's varied habitats for returning spring migrants and resident birds. There is some moderate climbing and the walk will last two hours. See www.doas.us for directions to the Sanctuary. Contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net

May 13 – Mine Kill State Park First Annual Bird Festival: North Blenheim, Schoharie County. Featuring live

birds of prey, introduction to birding by DOAS, a birding competition, and local vendors. Free admission. Further information at www.facebook.com/MineKillStatePark.

May 16 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

May 18 –June 8 – Audubon Photography Awards-Traveling Exhibition: DOAS-sponsored exhibition of the winning bird photographs from the 2016 Audubon Photography Awards at the Arkell Museum in Canajoharie.

May 19 – DOAS Public Program: Larry Bifaro will present a program about Bears. See reminder on page 5. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

May 19 –Wintergreen Park Bird Walk: Meet at the ARKell Museum parking lot at 8 AM in Canajoharie, to car pool to Wintergreen Park. Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information.

May 20 – Big Day Bird Count: Counters help find as many species as possible in Otsego or Delaware County. Contact Bob Donnelly at rsdonn@yahoo.com.

May 24– Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake State Park: Meet at the beach area at 10 AM. The walk is approximately a mile around the lake and takes about two hours. Contact Julia Gregory at (607) 563-2924.

May 27– Field Trip to West Branch Preserve: Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright will lead a bird walk at the West Branch Preserve, located Town of Hamden, about 10 miles southeast of Delhi. Meet at 8 AM at the preserve entrance and parking area, on Rt10, about 0.9 mi beyond the junction with County Route 26. Contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or scheimc@hartwick.edu.

June

May 18 –June 8 – Audubon Photography Awards-Traveling Exhibition continues.

June 9 –June 11– Taking Flight-Birding in the Catskills: Taking Flight: Birding in the Catskills. A weekend of bird field trips, workshops and presentations. Information and registration, www.catskillcenter.org/taking-flight-about/.

June 11 – Birding By Ear Workshop: The workshop will be held at the Davis Park, Town of Westford. **See article on page 2.** Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON
SOCIETY, INC.

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February-March Bird Sightings

On February 18th, Charlie and I spotted our first Robin near Kelly Corners. These were not “First of Season,” as a flock had been reported last month. But it was an omen of what was to come; reports poured in about other species arriving earlier than usual. Comparing the reports to March bird-sighting articles since 2012, it seems more birds returned early this year.

Randy Lynch’s report of a lone Red-winged Blackbird near Harpersfield (2/20) was soon followed by eight more reports of the species, including some large flocks. Becky Gretton found a Turkey Vulture in the Mohawk Valley. Dorian Huneke watched about 40 Canada Geese migrating the next day in Treadwell,

followed by at least 1,000 two days later. She also reported Mourning Doves cooing back and forth, appearing to be pairing up, along with a Belted Kingfisher that likely spent the winter here, as she has observed it on a fairly regular basis. Winter residents she observed included several Common Ravens, Red-tailed Hawks, a female American Black Duck, and the Treadwell Bald Eagles, busily building up their nest.

On February 22nd, Gerry Pearlberg flushed an American Kestrel from a fence post near Kortright Center. Pam Peters found a singing Song Sparrow at the covered bridge in Downsville. The following day brought the first Common Grackles to Andy Mason’s feeder in Jefferson. Elliott Adams reported a Turkey Vulture in Sharon Springs, and Steph Restuccia had a pair of Bluebirds checking bird houses in Root.

Kathryn Davino fortuitously glanced out her window in Delhi just in “Bird Sightings” Continued on page 6



Bald Eagle
Photo by David Kiehm

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.