



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

COMING ACTIVITIES

May

May 6—I Love My Park
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—Wintergreen Park Bird Walk
May 19—Program, Bears
May 20—Big Day Bird Count
May 21—Schoharie Land Trust Birds and Breakfast
May 24—Wildflower Walk
May 27—West Branch Preserve Field 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**

Black Bears in New York Natural History, Management and Interactions with People May 19th Program

Please join us for our May public program, scheduled for May 19th, 7:30 PM at the Elm Park Methodist Church, Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Larry Bifaro, Wildlife Biologist for the 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.



Larry Bifaro

The program will describe basic bear biology and behavior with a strong focus on impacts to people and communities.

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



Big Day Bird Count - Saturday, May 20th is this year's Big Day - the day on which small groups enjoy trying to locate the maximum number of bird species wherever they choose in any amount of time they choose within that 24 hours. Everyone is welcome, novice or experienced. If you are interested and have not participated before, please contact Bob Donnelly at 607-264-8156 to join or start a group. People who have participated before will be contacted by their leaders. Wish for favorable weather and southerly winds the night before!



President's Message

The Importance of Taking Action by Co-president Susan O'Handley

Dear Member and Friends,

As stated in previous messages this year, we are very concerned about recent changes to environmental policies as well as proposed federal budget cuts. Now, more than ever, it is important to let our government officials know that their constituents value a clean, healthy environment, and are watching their votes.

I write this as we head into the 47th anniversary of Earth Day and can't help but feel disheartened that our government is dismantling protections that have served to monitor and protect our environmental health and our quality of life for nearly fifty years. Turning back the clock is not acceptable. Just in the last few months, there are significant impacts. Coal waste can be legally dumped into our rivers and streams, setting a dangerous precedent for other industries. Our federal lands are in danger of being sold and privatized. The Endangered Species Act is at risk as well as a host of other protections under Clean Air, Clean Water and Clean Power initiatives.

The changes are overwhelming - not only in regards to environmental issues, but across an entire spectrum of topics. As an environmental organization, DOAS is monitoring proposed legislation that are environmentally significant and we are watching how our representatives are voting on these issues. We are committed

to providing guidance for our

membership to the best of our abilities so that we can help our region's residents make their voices heard through continued and constant communication about our thoughts on the issues with our elected officials.

To this end, we have prepared a system to provide template letters (you can modify these to create your own versions of them if you like) on a number of topics that are currently pertinent. We will be adding new letter options as the need arises. Action Letters submitted through the online forms will be faxed to the representatives selected and will also be mailed first-class by DOAS within 1 business day of receipt.

We currently have letters on four topics to send through the new campaigns. They are:

- Climate Change - to address climate protections, clean energy and the importance of continuing to gather climate data.
 - Public Lands - to support continued preservation and protection of public lands.
 - Environmental Concerns - to generally address a number of concerns about changes to the Environmental Protection Agency and more.
 - EPA and NASA Budget Cuts - to address concerns for
- "Action" Continued to page 3**



THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Janet Potter

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Programs*:	Becky Gretton
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Sanctuary*:	Andrew Mason
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Charter Dinner:	Julia Gregory
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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

Conservation and Legislation

Environmental issues in Albany—

Recent focus has been on the devastating attacks on the environment from the Trump administration—rollback of regulations to protect water and air, threatened cuts to the EPA and NASA and other important agencies, and abandonment of efforts to reduce greenhouse gases. However, the NY State Legislature also has important work in front of it—with only a few weeks left in the session.

One important piece of legislation that has languished for a few years is A.6282/ S.1749, a bill that would expand Department. of Environmental Conservation jurisdiction over freshwater wetlands as small as 1 acre—down from the current 12.4 acres. This became necessary when federal protection for these smaller wetlands was ended. The Obama administration enacted rules to again protect small wetlands, but Trump has now signed an executive order rolling this back.

Wetlands of all sizes are important ecosystems. They remove pollutants, mitigate floods and droughts and provide wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities. Wetlands continue to disappear in the US at the rate of 158 acres a day. It is critical that the state have the ability to protect these as the federal government abdicates responsibility.

Another high priority bill is A.1773/S.1515, known as the Cover your Crude legislation. This common-sense proposal would require companies operating facilities that handle crude oil in the state to show that they



DOAS Sanctuary, Photo by Andy Mason

possess adequate financial security to cover all cleanup and decontamination costs associated with any spill or accident. Railroads would likewise have to demonstrate ability to pay for the cleanup of spills including those associated with “worst case” scenarios.

In recent years, there have been any number of major accidents involving transport and handling of crude oil,

all resulting in property damage and environmental pollution, and in some cases, death. Companies lacking sufficient funds or insurance have walked away, leaving taxpayers and local residents to deal with the aftermath.

In New York, there is a significant influx of crude oil moving on the rail lines of the state and along the Hudson River, and oil companies want to expand rail facilities and barge traffic. It is really only a matter of time before we suffer an oil spill, and the legislature should make sure the responsible parties have the financial ability for cleanup.

What you can do—As is so often the case, the roadblock for these bills is the State Senate. Local Senators James Seward and John Bonacic can play a major role in moving these bills forward. Contact them and ask that they co-sponsor the wetlands bill and the Cover your Crude legislation. New York needs to stand up for itself more than ever with the anti-environment atmosphere in Washington.

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

Andy Mason

“Action” Continued from page 2 repercussions of harsh budget cuts, and the importance of continued research and data collection for climate issues.

I encourage you to submit your letters to selected representatives through DOAS using the forms that are available through our website at <http://doas.us/action>. (A verified email address is required for processing online forms). You can also take part in the letter campaigns in person at a number of our Spring programs and activities.

NOTE: We have developed the process for these campaigns in a manner that can be easily replicated for use by others in their legislative action efforts. Any organization interested in a similar program can contact me at sjohandley@gmail.com for more information. Thank you in advance to all for your support in this effort!



Bear at a feeder in Marathon, ON, by Michael Butler

Visit from a Black Bear **by DOAS Board Member Julia Gregory**

In May DOAS will be having a program on black bears, which is very timely. After three years of being bear free, one has put my yard on his list of places to visit. No cubs have been seen, therefore "he."

This is a hard time of year to have to stop feeding birds, but I've collected and washed the surviving feeders. Until Fall nothing except a daily scattering of seeds for the ground feeders. One high point of the bear visit is that by not having bird feeders out those pesky raccoons will also go away.

Report from the Spring Waterfowl Trip

Unsettled weather on April 1st didn't deter 14 enthusiastic birders from joining the annual waterfowl adventure around Lake Otsego and its tributaries, led by Bob Donnelly, Matt Albright and John Davis.

The waterfowl seen included Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Canada Geese, Wood Ducks, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Gadwall,



American Widgeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, and Common Merganser. Some of the non-waterfowl species noted were Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Bluebird, and American Robin. And several otters were seen cavorting and swimming on Weaver Lake!

John Davis

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
John G. New
Summer Day Camp 2017

at the DOAS
Franklin Mountain Sanctuary
Oneonta, NY




Session 1: July 10, 11, 12, 13:
For children entering grades 3 and 4.

Session 2: July 31, August 1, 2, 3:
For children entering grades 5 and 6.

REGISTER ONLINE at WWW.DOAS.US

Bird Friendly Coffee orders for delivery at our May Program are due by noon on Saturday, May 13. To order, contact Susan at 607-643-5680 or by email at sjohandley@gmail.com.



YOU can:

- encourage sustainability
- help migratory birds
- support the IBA Program

**Just by buying
some great coffee!**

Birds and Birders Abound!

In these early days of spring, birdwatchers are easy to find due to the trees being in pre-stage leaf-out. You can find them in all habitats – marshy river riparian zones, pond and lake shores, fields and forests, and even in backyards. They can be easily identified by their habit of constantly looking up (they might also have some scrapes and bruises since they didn't see that rock or root as their attention is focused only on the movements of our now returning, avian friends), and by their binoculars, field guides, electronic birding apps and maybe a camera or a spotting scope. You can also find them driving slowly or stopped along the roadside shoulder (when one exists), looking to identify those little grey specks out in a field or a pond.



Want to learn about what these folks are doing? Come along on a field walk this Spring – we promise you a great day in the field with experienced and knowledgeable leaders with a love of birding and sharing their passion with others!

This spring, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will be leading a number of birdwatching field trips and a workshop to learn bird calls in the coming months. Birders of all levels are welcome to attend. A complete list of upcoming events is located on page 7, but here are a few examples to whet your appetite:

Birding by Ear Workshop

A Birding By Ear workshop will be held on Sunday morning, June 11 at the Davis Park in the Town of Westford, NY. An educational session including slides, recordings and handouts at 8:30 AM will be followed by a bird hike



with DOAS experts, “Bruncheon” buffet, raffles, and another hike for more species. Prepaid reservations are required, and group size will be limited. Cost is \$25 per adult 18 and over, and \$15 for youths age 12-17. Event Pre-Registration is required at <http://doas.us/event/birding-ear-2017/> or contact Becky Gretton at

607-547-5648.

Wintergreen Park Join us for a special bird walk in conjunction with the DOAS sponsored exhibition of the winning bird photographs from the 2016 Audubon Photography Awards. The exhibit, which can be viewed at the Arkell Museum in Canajoharie from May 18 to June 8, features 12 large-scale photographic prints, each 24”x36”, nine of which are the award-winning and runner-up photos and an additional three selected from the gallery of top 100 photos. The bird walk at nearby Wintergreen Park will be led by DOAS Co-President, Becky Gretton on May 19th. Participants will meet at 8am at the Arkell Museum and then will carpool to Wintergreen Park. For more information, contact *Becky Gretton* at 607-547-5648.

DOAS Sanctuary Bird Walk

A bird walk to view returning spring migrants and resident nesting birds is scheduled for 8 AM, Sunday, May 7 at the DOAS Sanctuary on Grange Hall Road near Oneonta. The walk will explore the property's varied habitats and will last about two hours. There is some moderate climbing, and participants should be prepared for possible muddy spots. Directions to the Sanctuary can be found at www.doas.us. For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

Nominating Committee Report The DOAS nominating committee presents five candidates for election at the May 19th meeting. The slate consists of Rod Sutton, running for the first time, and the follow-

ing incumbents: Bob Donnelly, Susan O'Handley, Kathryn Davino, and Janet Potter. Terms for all candidates are two years ending in May of 2019. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the meeting.

“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 8

Root found a Winter Wren in a ravine near Portlandville. Angelika Rashkow witnessed an aerial interaction between two hawks, one a small Red-tailed, the other probably a Northern Harrier. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers returned, with the first reports coming from Andy Mason (Jefferson) and Leslie Preston (Oneonta). Andy also discovered a pair of Belted Kingfishers checking out a gravel bank for nest sites. Leslie found a migrating Palm Warbler. Kathryn Davino watched a pair of Golden Eagles soaring in Delhi, and spotted the first Brown-headed Cowbird. Near Treadwell, Pam Peters observed a Sharp-shinned Hawk diving at a Red-tailed, and heard a Hermit Thrush calling in the woods. Steph Restuccia discovered a Pine Warbler (Flat Creek). John Davis was listening to a displaying Woodcock when a Northern Saw-whet Owl began its “inimitable tooting”. In Oneonta, Charlie Scheim found Yellow-rumped Warblers, while crows dive-bombing a Bald Eagle entertained a group of my 5th graders. Chipping Sparrows, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a Northern Flicker fed at Kathryn Davino’s in Delhi. At Wilber Lake, Leslie Preston chanced upon a Common Loon. Becky Gretton enjoyed



Winter Wren
Photo by David Kiehm

the song of a Louisiana Waterthrush, and found a light morph Rough-legged Hawk in Springfield.

Mid-April: Merlins are making their presence known in increasing numbers, with pairs discovered in Oneonta near SUCO (Donna Vogler), at the Country Club and at Wilber Lake (Charlie Scheim), and in

Milford (Gerianne Carillo). Other arrivals were Blue-headed Vireo (Pam Peters, Treadwell), Eastern Towhee (Tom Salo, W. Burlington), White-throated Sparrows (John Davis, Cooperstown) Broad-winged Hawks, Brown Thrasher, Savannah Sparrows (Suzanne Gaynor, East Meredith), Swamp Sparrows and Hooded Mergansers (Leslie Preston, DOAS sanctuary), Field Sparrows, and House Wren (Pam Peters). Becky Gretton found a Raven’s nest with four fast-growing youngsters in Springfield.

My forays into the woods have become more musical with Brown Creepers now singing their spring song. Soon, many more songbirds will arrive, adding to the chorus in forest, yard, and field: a busy, exciting time for birdwatchers!

Sandy Bright

October 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Save the Date! We are planning a very special charter dinner on October 20th. The dinner will culminate a year of celebrating our 50th anniversary. The speaker will be the renowned Joan Collins, president of the New York State Ornithological Association.

Save the Weekend!

Taking Flight: Birding in the Catskills is scheduled for June 9 - 11, 2017 at Frost Valley YMCA in the heart of the Catskill high peaks. Sponsored by the Catskill Center, the weekend will feature field trips, workshops and presentations by speakers such as

Richard Crossley, internationally acclaimed birder, photographer and award winning author of “The Crossley ID Guide” series.

This promises to be an outstanding event. For more information, visit www.catskillcenter.org/taking-flight-about/.

**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**

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

May

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

May 6 – 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 8:00AM. 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.

May 7 – DOAS Sanctuary Bird Walk (Grange Hall Road): 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. For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net

May 13 – Mine Kill State Park First Annual Bird Festival: Gilboa, Schoharie County. Featuring live birds of prey, introduction to birding by DOAS, a birding competition, and local vendors. Free admission. For further information, visit 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 – Wintergreen Park Bird Walk: Meet at the Arkell Museum parking lot at 8 AM in Canajoharie to car pool to the Wintergreen Park. Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information .

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

May 20 – Big Day Bird Count: Counters help find as many species as possible in whatever area they choose in Otsego or Delaware County. For further information, contact Bob Donnelly at rsdonn@yahoo.com.

May 21 – The Schoharie Land Trust – Birds and Breakfast: Meet at the Land Trust's Paulson Preserve in Jefferson, Schoharie County at 8 AM. Interested participants will have breakfast at Buck Hill Farm following the walk. For further information, visit www.schoharielandtrust.org.

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. Bring water, insect repellent, binoculars if on hand, and your curiosity. For more information please 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. The Preserve is located in the 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. For more information 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. For further information and registration, www.catskillcenter.org/taking-flight-about/.

June 11 – Birding By Ear Workshop: The workshop will be held at the Davis Park in the Town of Westford, NY. Register at doas.us/event/birding-ear-2017/ . Contact Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648 for more information.

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.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON
SOCIETY, INC.

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March-April Bird Sightings

The relaxed reporting of winter, with fewer sightings, allows me to include some of the stories behind the bird sightings. That has come to an end. The rush of spring migrants has begun, and the reports have been pouring in!

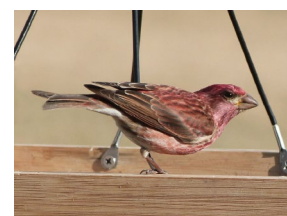
Mid-March: flocks of Snow Buntings were encountered in Cooperstown (Bob Donnelly) and on Route 7 near Oneonta (Jennifer Hyypio). Bob also had a Northern Shrike visit 3 times in a week. In Unadilla, a Fox Sparrow visited Prudence Danforth's feeder. Gerry Pearlberg (Kortright Center) watched a Great Blue Heron fly overhead. Pam Peters saw her first Bluebirds in Treadwell. With Kathy Mario in Downsville, she came across Ring-necked and Wood Ducks, Common Mergansers, Killdeer and a Barred Owl. Activity at Bald Eagle nests was confirmed near

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.

Davenport Center, North Harpersfield, and Oneonta (Andy Mason) and Seward-Dorloo (Chris Kjolhede), indicating they had survived the recent blizzard. The Treadwell Eagles lost much of their nest in that storm, but relocated upstream, according to Dorian Huneke, who also observed an Eastern Meadowlark foraging.

End of March: Leslie Preston had 15 hungry species frequenting her feeders, including Carolina Wren and Red-bellied Woodpecker. The first Eastern Phoebe was spotted by Ken Sider at Valleyview School (Oneonta). Pam Peters found pairs of American Kestrels and Ruby-crowned Kinglets near Treadwell. Kathy Mario located Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets near Shandaken, and flushed a Ruffed Grouse in Delhi.

Early April: Tom Salo reported many geese migrating, and the first Tree Swallows arriving. A Northern Goshawk tried for one of the 124 Juncos feeding in Jennifer Hyypio's yard. Later, she snapped a great photo of a Purple Finch awash in color at her feeder. Sarah



**Purple Finch, photo
by Jennifer Hyypio**

"Bird Sightings" Continued on page 6