



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

COMING ACTIVITIES

October

October 6 – Sanctuary Open House

October 12 – DOAS Annual Charter Dinner, Keynote by Rick Bunting, “Collected Stories from 2018”

October 13 – Native Plant Summit

October 16 – DOAS Board Mtg

October 27 – Bird Seed Order Deadline

November

November 3 – Bird Seed Sale Pickup

November 16 – Program, Tyra Olstad, “Arctic Alaska”

December

December 4 – DOAS Board Mtg

December 15, 29 and TBD – Christmas Bird Counts

January

January 15 – DOAS Board Mtg

January 18 – Program, “European Starlings”

More information on page 7

**DOAS PROGRAMS
ARE FREE & OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC**



At the federal level, science no longer seems to matter. Federal agencies and policies that protect our environment are being underfunded and undermined. Climate policies have been reversed and wildlife protection laws are

VOTE NOVEMBER 6

For our Public Lands!
For the Climate!
For the Birds!

being dismantled. Public lands are being turned over to corporate interests.

If there is one thing you can do for the environment this year it is to VOTE! National Audubon asks bird lovers across the country to “Vote For The Birds” this fall. In addition to Congressional races, there are countless state and local elections happening around the country that will have a big impact on

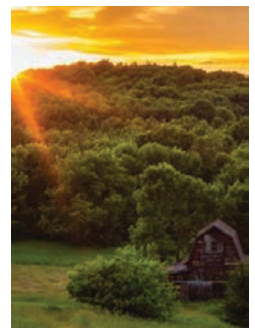
“Vote Birds” Continued to page 4

CHARTER DINNER: IMPORTANT— Please confirm!

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the contact for the Charter Dinner has changed since our last newsletter. If you have made reservations, **PLEASE CONFIRM** by calling Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or email him at scheimc@hartwick.edu. See page 5 for more information about the Charter Dinner. We are sorry for any inconvenience. We’re looking forward to seeing you there!

JOIN US—DOAS Sanctuary Open House

On Saturday, October 6th from 10AM to 2PM at the DOAS Sanctuary on Grange Hall Spur Road, Oneonta, explore the Sanctuary, hone your hawk identification skills, and enjoy seeing and learning about Missy Runyan’s live raptors! Full schedule at <http://doas.us/event/2018-open-house-at-hawkwatch-october-6/>



President's Message—Millennials as a Source of Hope for Our Environment

by Co-president Susan O'Handley

Those who know me are familiar with my personal journey when it comes to environmental concerns. I've written before about the importance of the 'informed constituency' and have hopefully been able to prompt some of our members into

taking a more active role in speaking up on behalf of our environment through letter writing campaigns to elected officials and other influencers.

Over the last six months or so, I have been inspired by some extraordinary young people stepping up, and speaking out with passion and commitment towards making a difference.

•In mid-March, Co-President Becky Gretton and I accompanied Tara Miller, New York State Outreach Coordinator with Defenders of Wildlife and four students from SUNY Oneonta to a meeting with a representative from Congressman Faso's office to discuss the importance of protecting the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act. I watched as these young people spoke passionately about our environment and the animals that make our world a truly special place to live.

•Later that same month, DOAS was part of a 3-hour Climate Advocacy Training that took place at SUNY



17-year-old Tannar Cliffe, who presented to DOAS in May about Monarch Butterflies

Oneonta as part of a collaboration between Audubon NY, SUNY Sustainability Club and DOAS. More than 30 people attended this session, including a good number of students. What struck me most from the evening came from listening to the students.

These young people are concerned about our environment and passionate about learning what they might do to make a positive impact. It was evident that they care deeply and understand the importance of being able to reasonably and respectfully discuss their concerns with others, including their peers.

•In April, one of the young people who accompanied us to Delhi, Kyle Dudgeon, presented a collection of his photographs of shorebirds "Life at Sea Level" at our public meeting in Oneonta. His underlying message of protecting habitats and wildlife came through quite clearly, along with his concern about how climate change can impact our environment in the future. Kyle has been working with the Hawkwatch Program as well for the past few years and has quickly become a dependable part of the team, taking on some of the work with organizing Bluestone Wind Project data as well.

•Then, at our public program in

"Millennials" Continued to page 3

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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Janet Potter

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To contribute notes or articles for

The Belted Kingfisher, email:
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Conservation and Legislation

Please vote—and make it an

informed one Below are synopses of the records of candidates, gleaned from their campaign websites, and from non-partisan rating organizations such as the League of Conservation Voters (www.origin.lcv.org/) and Environmental Advocates (www.eplvotersguide.org).



Governor: Incumbent Andrew Cuomo has a mixed environmental record, but in his second term has made some significant decisions that have put New York ahead of other states in addressing climate change and oil and gas drilling. His ban on the controversial practice of hydrofracking was widely hailed by the environmental movement for responding to the concerns of citizens. Cuomo has also set a high goal for weaning the state off fossil fuels, calling for 50% of our electricity to come from renewables by 2030.

Republican challenger Marc Molinaro received a fair environmental rating during his time as a state legislator. His web site does not address environmental issues.

US Senate: Incumbent Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand has received a 95% rating from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV). Serving on the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee, she has focused on strengthening environmental standards. She is opposed by Republican Wendy Long who supports oil and gas fracking and has criticized EPA regulations on energy producers.

House of Representatives: The congressional race in our area is considered among the most critical in the nation. In the 19th District, Republican incumbent John Faso has an LCV rating of 34%. His record has largely been anti-environment, opposing efforts to reduce greenhouse gases

and protect public lands and waters. In addition, as a lobbyist for the Constitution Pipeline prior to election to Congress, he pushed local governments to support this now-discredited project.

The Democratic candidate in this race, Antonio Delgado, has made the environment a keystone of his campaign, focusing on the threats of climate change and calling for increased use of renewable energy. He opposes increased use of the Hudson River for transport of oil from the polluting Bakken fields in North Dakota.

NY State Senate: In the 51st District, Republican incumbent James Seward has consistently received a low score from Environmental Advocates. For 2018 his rating was the second lowest in the state resulting from votes to take monies from environmental programs to bail out polluting utilities. Seward's Democratic opponent, Joyce St. George, supports sustainable energy, including expanded grants to farmers and businesses, and calls for a state-wide ban on fracking.

NY State Assembly: Clifford Crouch, Republican incumbent in the 122d District, has a 65% environmental rating, voting against legislation to address climate change, ban the dangerous pesticide chlorpyrifos, and reduce acceptable blood levels for lead in humans. Crouch is unopposed for re-election.

Get to the polls on November 6! Check out the environmental rating sites, as well as the candidates' own web sites for further information on their positions. With the tide of gutting environmental protection running strong, a good turnout of conservationists is critical on Election Day!

Andy Mason

“Millennials” Continued from page 2 May, we hosted a person who may have been our youngest presenter yet, Tannar Cliffe, a High School student, who came to discuss his work with Monarch Watch, a project that is attempting to document the fall flight routes of Monarchs from the Northeast US and Southern Canada all the way to their Mexico destinations. Monarch Watch hopes to use the data to identify locations where critical Milkweed habitats need to be created or enhanced.

Millennials care. If we take some time to look a little

deeper, we will find that there are many who are dedicated to taking action to protect our environment. Millennials make up 35% of our population and have the potential to bring a powerful political influence on behalf of our environment. If you know any young people, I hope you will engage them in conversations about the environment and encourage them all to vote! Looking forward to seeing you all at the polls in November - and seeing some significant shifts in policy in 2019.

Fall Surprises

By Board Member Dorian Huneke

The season is changing, and fall is fast approaching. Many of our migrating birds are well on their way to their wintering territories. However, our wonderful songbirds have left behind mementos that we may continue to enjoy until they return in the spring – their nests.

As the leaves fall from trees and shrubs, the sharp observer can now spot that Baltimore Oriole's nest that was so hard to find a few months ago. Orioles build a sac-like nest of fine plant fibers, lined with mosses and hair, and suspend it from a branch high up in a tree.

The Song Sparrow that was flitting back and forth every time you passed that nearby shrubby area has left behind at least one nest – its first hidden in grass or weeds, often under a bush or near water. If this sparrow was able to mate a second time in the season, it may have built its second nest up in a bush, rather than on the ground. This may be to avoid predation by animals that were not out and about during the first nesting period.

House Wrens, though typically cavity nesters, love to nest in containers of all kinds. If you have seen them in your area now is the time to check out that junk pile: look in an old boot, a box, a piece of exposed but unused pipe, or even an old discarded mailbox with the door open. Their nests are made of small twigs, pine needles, and fine grasses, and are lined with feathers.

The American Robin may be the easiest nest to find, as it often nests in bushes alongside homes or on the eaves and other wooden structures of homes and out-buildings. The

Robin's nest is a large open cup of grass and twigs, held together with a thick layer of mud, and lined with fine, dry grass.

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird lives in a variety of wooded habitats, as well as forest edges, meadows, orchards, stream borders and backyards. This hummingbird makes a tight, tiny cup that saddles the nest site – whether tree, shrub, or other horizontal surface. It is made of fine plant material held together by spider silk and lined with even finer material. The outside is covered with moss or lichen.



American Robin's Nest
Wikimedia Photo by László Varga

A woodland walk in the fall just might turn up the nest of a Veery. A Veery's nest is usually built near the ground, rarely higher than five feet up. It is made of dead leaves, grapevine bark, weed stems and wet, decomposed leaves. It is lined with rootlets and other fine fibers.

There are many more unique nests to find, too many to describe here.

But many bird species can build very similar nests, making accurate identification possible only if the adults have been seen. Even so, it can be fun and challenging to spot these nests and try to figure out what species they belong to.

After a storm, look around on the ground in your yard or while on your walks. Many bird nests succumb to the elements at this time of year and can be found on the ground, blown or washed from their moorings. Enjoy making use of this 'off-season' time to continue to grow your knowledge of the bird life that surrounds you.

"Vote Birds" Continued from page 1 our communities and our birds. These decision makers have an important influence on the ways that laws are written and enacted at every level of government. The best way to protect birds and the places they need is to make sure that you vote on November 6. For more information, go to Audubon's "Birds Can't Vote, But You Can" page: <https://goo.gl/RdZw8a>

DOAS cannot endorse candidates. However, the Sierra Club does endorse candidates with good environmental records. Visit www.content.sierraclub.org/voterguide/ endorsements for their guidance. See the Conservation and Legislation page for information on candidates in our area, including web sites that provide ratings of environmental records.



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“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 8

the counters, who are at Franklin Mountain daily for several hours, to keep track of these migrants. Some of the species seen, heard, and reported by these dedicated individuals include Black Vultures, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Chimney Swift, Scarlet Tanager, Brown Thrasher, Warbling, Red-eyed, and Yellow-throated Vireos, Gold- and Purple Finches, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, White- and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Wood Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Cedar Waxwing, Raven, Wild Turkey, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and House Wren. Warblers reported include Chestnut-sided, Pine, Palm, Prairie, Yellow-rumped, and Common Yellowthroats. Most of our common woodpecker species were observed: Flicker, Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, and



Blue Jay
photo by Rick Bunting

Pileated.

A nice thing about the Hawkwatch is the visibility: sitting high on the mountain, some birds can be observed at eye level or lower. From that vantage, Peter Fauth watched a Merlin nab and eat a dragonfly in mid-flight. I watched a migrating Broad-winged Hawk detour from its southerly path for the express

purpose of harassing a Turkey Vulture, diving on it twice. The migration of smaller birds becomes more obvious also. During a lull in hawk activity, Charlie Scheim noted the nearly constant stream of Blue Jays flying from the trees below, over our heads, working their way south.

This is a bittersweet time of year, with many birds leaving our area, but there are still many opportunities to see them as they leave. Plus, our more hardy year-round residents often entertain us if we take the time to watch and appreciate them.

Sandy Bright



Photographer Rick Bunting

Annual Charter Dinner, October 12th Make your reservations now (deadline October 7th) for the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society's Annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 12, 2018 at the Quality Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn) on State Highway 23 in Oneonta. The evening begins at 5:30 with a social hour, buffet at 6:15 (featuring Roasted Salmon and NY Sirloin), and the program at 7:30. A cash bar will be available. There will be door prizes and some fine raffle items.

Our featured presenter will be well known local photographer, Rick Bunting. His photos of birds, butterflies, foxes, frogs and other natural subjects will appear as “Collected Stories of 2018.” Since his retirement from SUNY Potsdam and the Crane School of Music, Rick pursues his passion for photography full time. Also an accomplished and well-known musician, Rick photographs wherever he travels.

The cost for the full evening is \$30 per person (with no charge for those wishing to attend only the program portion of the event). Reservations must be made by October 7th, using the form below or register online at www.doas.us.

Delaware Otsego Audubon Society Annual Charter Dinner – October 12, 2018

Friday, October 12, 2018 at the Quality Inn (formerly Holiday Inn) on State Highway 23 in Oneonta. Social hour- 5:30PM, Buffet - 6:15PM and Program at 7:30PM

Speaker: Photographer Rick Bunting, presenting his “Collected Stories of 2018”

Cost for those attending dinner is \$30 per person. Reservations **MUST** be made by October 7, 2018 by calling 607-434-4880 or by mailing payment by check with this form to Charlie Scheim, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820, or register online at www.doas.us. The program beginning at 7:30 PM is open to the public.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Amount enclosed:** _____

Hawkwatch News

Well, the Broad-winged Hawks came on schedule at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. With triple-digit flights on September 9, 13, 14, 15, and 18, and just missing with 99 on the 16th, it was a good run for these birds—the only eastern species that migrates in flocks and in a concentrated period on their way from the northern forests to South America. With the season total at 1458, the Broad-winged tally is about at the 17-year average since full-time counting began at the site. No doubt a few more stragglers through the month will make it an above-average year.

Also moving have been Osprey, Bald Eagles, American Kestrels and Merlins, all early-season birds. October brings increasing numbers of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks at the lookout, along with Red-tailed Hawks and the first Golden Eagles during the second half of the month.



Broad-winged Hawk
Francesco Veronesi, Wikimedia

Counters are present each day at the Hawkwatch, except during rain. The best flights come on north and northwest winds, especially following a cold front. Visitors, who are always welcome, should dress warmly as the site is often colder than anticipated. For more information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, salothomas@gmail.com.

Directions to the Hawkwatch at the DOAS Sanctuary can be found at www.franklinmt.org.

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 Mountain are also available by email—contact Andy Mason as above.

Mark your Calendar for the November Program. Tyra Olstad, Assistant Professor of Geography and Environmental Sustainability at SUNY Oneonta, will present “Arctic Alaska: Opportunities and Challenges for Conservation,” illustrated with photos, on November 16th, at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. When not teaching or conducting research, Tyra has spent several years working as a park ranger, paleontology technician, artist-in-residence, and “summit steward” for the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Adirondack Mountain Club.



DOAS Board of Directors Welcomes Two New Members

The DOAS Board is happy to welcome Jane Bachman, elected to the Board at the May meeting. Jane has had an interest in birds since childhood, pursuing that interest through Audubon field trips when she lived in Connecticut, Colorado and Wisconsin. Since she moved to Oneonta 22 years ago with her husband Robert Brzozowski and kids Nathan and Elena, she has been an active member of DOAS, especially enjoying programs and DOAS-led field trips. Jane works as Coordinator of Nursing Opportunities at Hartwick College.

We also welcome Pamela Peters to the DOAS Board, appointed to a vacant seat at the August board meeting. Pam's interest in nature began growing up near the Sharon Audubon Center in Connecticut. Her love of birding led her to understand the pressing needs for effective conservation policies and environmental education. Since the 1970's she has helped gather data for various bird censuses, including Christmas Bird Counts (she is prime mover in establishing the new Delaware County Christmas Count Circle) and the Golden Eagle Research and Bluestone Wind Projects, along with being a regular counter at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. Now retired from careers in software design, librarianship and higher education that culminated in serving as director of the Resnick Library at SUNY Delhi for 18 years, Pam is devoting time to her passion for birding.



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

October

October 6 – Open House: 10 AM-2 PM at DOAS Sanctuary. See schedule and get directions at <http://doas.us/event/2018-open-house-at-hawkwatch-october-6/>.

October 12 – DOAS Annual Fall Charter Dinner: Quality Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn), State Highway 23, Oneonta. Rick Bunting, well-known local photographer will present “Collected Stories of 2018” A social hour begins at 5:30 PM, buffet at 6:15 PM and the program at 7:30 PM. Program is open to the public. See article and use form on page 5.

October 13 – Native Plant Summit from 1 to 5 PM at SUNY Oneonta; Hodgdon Instructional Resource Center (IRC)- Lecture Hall #2. More info at doas.us. or contact Susan O’Handley at sjohandley@gmail.com or by phone at 607-643-5680.

October 16 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

October 27 – Bird Seed Order Deadline by 5 PM

November

November 3 – Bird Seed Sale Pickup: 9 AM to 11 AM, New Pickup Location at VP Supply Corp., 41 Country Club Road, Oneonta.

November 6 – Don’t forget to VOTE!

November 16 – DOAS Public Program: Arctic Alaska, Opportunities and Challenges for Conservation. Tyra Olstad, Assistant Professor of Geography and Environmental Sustainability at SUNY Oneonta, experienced Alaska’s North Slope first-hand this summer,

and will address this “remarkably wild and extremely vulnerable region”, and the conservation challenges it represents. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

December

December 4 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

December 15 – 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 29 – 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

Date TBD - Delaware County Christmas Bird Count: All are invited to participate. Contact Pam Peters if you can drive or count: ovenb1rdp@gmail.com or 607-829-6545.

January

January 15 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

January 18 – DOAS Public Program: “European Starlings: love ‘em or hate ‘em, they do amazing things.” Peter Fauth, chairperson of the Biology Department at Hartwick College will describe some of the natural history of European Starlings. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.



Reminder, order your birdseed today! The DOAS Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser is your opportunity to buy quality, locally grown seed and help support DOAS programs like speakers, field trips, summer camp for kids, and other special events at the same time! The seed is harvested from a farm in Richfield Springs. Sales support critical grassland bird habitat as well as local family farms. Order by October 27; Pick up in Oneonta on November 3, 9 AM to 11 AM, VP Supply Corp, 69 Country Club Road (NOTE THE NEW LOCATION!). Order online at <http://doas.us/2018-bird-seed-sale/> or call 607-643-5680.

Is your Membership Current? Your mailing label will inform you of your membership expiration date (year and month, e.g. ‘1810 indicates October 2018. DOAS memberships are \$15 per year or \$25 for two years; family memberships are \$20 per year or \$30 for two years. Please make your check payable to “DOAS” and mail payment to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544. **View membership benefits and download application from our website: doas.us/join-us/ OR join online at doas.us/store.**



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August September 2018 Bird Sightings

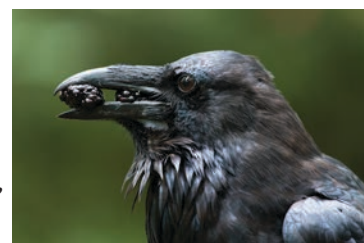
Bullbats stole the spotlight in late August and early September. More commonly called Nighthawks, these birds fly like bats at dawn and dusk, and make a bull-like booming noise during their courtship display. Sightings of these nightjars have greatly increased in this area in the last three years. From 2006 to 2014, no reports came in other than two nighthawks seen by Rod Spangle in 2013. 2015 and 2016 brought several reports, and this year new highs were reached. Groups of up to 20 birds were seen several times hawking the skies over the Oneonta Sports Park driving range (East End, Oneonta), Rod Spangle observed eleven feeding and calling over the Sidney business district, and a few were reported at the Franklin Mountain

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.

Hawkwatch. Hopefully this bodes well for the species, which has declined over 60% since the 1960s (Cornell Lab of Ornithology, AllAboutBirds.com).

In early September, Tom Salo commented on the fact that once-rare ravens have become more common than crows in his area. Angelika Rashkow finally saw her first Flickers of the season. A peaceful meeting of the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway committee, taking place outside at Nina's Restaurant, was interrupted by the raucous, attention-demanding call of a Merlin flying low overhead. On the 8th, Gerianne Carillo's partner heard and mimicked a call so well that Gerianne knew exactly what bird had vocalized: a Saw-whet Owl, a first for their yard in Milford.

Many of our summer birds are on the move now, heading for warmer climates, and the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch is a good area to find not only raptors, but also a wide variety of other species. Circumstances are perfect for



Common Raven
Audubon Photo by Sam Weissman

"Bird Sightings" Continued on page 5