



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

April Program: What Montana Taught Me Speaker Kyle Dudgeon

COMING ACTIVITIES

April

April 13 – Earth Festival and Bird Walk

April 16– DOAS Board Mtg

April 17– Woodcock Walk

April 19– Program, “What Montana Taught Me”

May

May 4 – Greenway Bird Walk

May 12 – Sanctuary Bird Walk

May 17 – Program, “Let’s Go to Costa Rica”

May 18 – Big Day Bird Count

May 21 – DOAS Board Mtg

May 23 – Wild Flower Walk

May 25 – West Branch Field Trip

June

June 2 – Birding By Ear with Brunch

July-August

DOAS Summer Day Camp

October

October 2 – Fall Open House

More information on page 7

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

SUNY Oneonta Senior Kyle Dudgeon spent last summer in remote areas of Montana surveying birds and photographing wildlife. According to Kyle, “You can learn a lot about an area in two months, especially when you are forced to see it from your car: miles upon miles of exploring, hiking, birding and living; as simple as can be. These are the experiences I take with me from a summer of work in Big Sky Country, where the birds, the landscapes and the opportunities for adventure draw



Mountain Bluebird
Photo-Kyle Dudgeon

you back time and time again.”

Kyle’s passion for photography and the natural environment will draw us to the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY on Friday, April 19, 2019 at 7:30 PM. Please join us!

Kyle is a senior at SUNY Oneonta majoring in Environmental Sciences with a minor in Geography. He shared his knowledge and

photographs of Shorebirds last April to a large and enthusiastic audience.

Mark Your Calendars for May 17, “Let’s Go to Costa Rica!”

Let’s go to Costa Rica—through Gail and Nelson DuBois’ photographs of their recent visit, of course.

Join us for an interesting and informational program as we



enjoy the uniqueness of Costa Rica at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY on

Friday, May 17 th at 7:30 PM. Please join us!

President's Column

by Co-president Andy Mason

Protecting Golden Eagles

As most DOAS members know, our Chapter has been heavily involved in researching and protecting Golden Eagles for a number of years, including counting the large fall migration past the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, documenting the presence of wintering birds using motion cameras, fitting Golden Eagles with satellite transmitters to track their movements, and numerous other efforts. This work has been well-supported by our membership and others and that assistance is much appreciated.

In addition, we have reported previously on our involvement in the Bluestone Wind project—thirty-three 670-foot tall turbines proposed for the Broome County towns of Sanford and Windsor. Our concern is that this area is within the known corridor for Golden Eagle migration, both spring and fall. DOAS is an official party or intervenor in this project, meaning we have standing during New York State's review of its effects. To date we have expressed our concerns to the project sponsor, and to the other parties in the review. We also applied for and received intervenor funding available to parties and used these funds to conduct raptor migration surveys in the project area in fall 2017 and late winter and spring of 2018. We are also surveying this March, using funds



Golden Eagles over Sanford, NY
Photo by Kyle Dudgeon

raised from DOAS contributors.

These surveys showed a significant presence of both Golden and Bald Eagles. Bluestone Wind conducted its own studies and has concluded a low risk to these birds. In response, we applied and received additional intervenor funds to pay for an expert opinion on this risk and other matters related to eagles. This review is pending and will help guide our official stance on the project. The state's review process encourages settlement among the parties regarding conditions to be applied to the project, and mitigation for impacts, including those to birds. We are participating in these discussions, but it is quite possible that we and others may not reach consensus on eagle impacts and other matters. If this is the case, the process moves to a litigation stage where the project sponsor and the parties provide testimony and evidence before an administrative law judge. If we do get to that point, we will need legal representation for these quasi-judicial hearings. We again hope to access intervenor funding for these costs and for expert testimony if needed.

This is obviously a long and convoluted process, but the DOAS board of directors considers it

"Bluestone" Continued on 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:
editor@doas.us

Conservation and Legislation

Wetland Protection in Play in Albany—In recent years, the federal government has rolled back its efforts to protect wetlands and other waterways under the Clean Water Act. In particular, smaller wetlands have been defined out of their status as federally-protected, leaving millions of acres of these environmentally critical areas at risk of draining or filling.

In New York State, wetlands over 12.4 acres in size fall under the Freshwater Wetlands Law and require a permit for alteration. However, these smaller wetlands are fair game for developers, municipalities and big agriculture to destroy if they are in the way.

Now legislation introduced in Albany would put wetlands over one acre in size under state regulation, a long-overdue response to Washington's abandonment of these ecologically important areas.



Hooded Merganser
Photo-Rick Bunting

This protection will help birds and other wildlife, mitigate drought and flooding, provide natural filtration of surface waters and increase recreational opportunities for wildlife viewing.

What you can do—The legislation (A.3658) has been introduced in the state Assembly but lacks a sponsor in the Senate at this point, so it is particularly important to let your Senator know you support protection of small

wetlands and the benefits they provide.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Reauthorized—

In a momentous success for conservation and the environment, the most important program for protecting open space, wildlife refuges, parks, trails and much more has been passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump. Notably, the fund also received permanent status meaning periodic reauthorization will no longer be required.



According to the Land Trust Alliance, the Land and Water Conservation Fund supports 41,000 state and local park projects, provides 9.4 million sustainable domestic jobs, protects millions of acres of land and contributes \$1.06 trillion annually to the national economy. All at zero cost to taxpayers as it is funded by a small charge on oil and gas drilling revenues.

What you can do—Contact your member of Congress and US Senators and commend them for this bipartisan act that help provide all Americans opportunities for experiencing the great outdoors.

(Contact information for elected officials is available on the conservation page of the DOAS web site, www.doas.us.)

Andy Mason



Bird-Friendly Coffee: Coffee pre-orders for pickup at our April meeting are due by 5 PM, April 5. Email your order to sjohandley@gmail.com or call 607-643-5680. Coffee pre-orders (last one until September) for pickup at our May meeting are due by 5 PM, May 5. More information at our web site: <http://doas.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CoffeeInformation2018b-final.pdf>.

“Bluestone” Continued from page 2 important and is committed to seeing it through. It is possible that decisions that come out of this case may be precedent-setting, including our proposal that lead abatement studies and efforts be used to mitigate eagle mortality, should the project proceed.

Again, we thank all the supporters of the various aspects of our Golden Eagle Project. We will keep you informed as things proceed.

Bid on this beautiful, one-of-a-kind, original watercolor painting of Magnolia Warblers on a Spruce Tree, by award-winning Cooperstown-area artist, Dave Kiehm.

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society is hosting an online auction as a fundraiser to help support maintenance work at the DOAS Sanctuary and Hawkwatch on Franklin Mountain. We will be working on much-needed visitor welcome signage at the site this Spring.

The dimensions are roughly 17.5" x 11" and it has a double layer of white matting, with a cherry wood frame. Dimensions with the frame are 25 3/8" x 19 1/2". The watercolor painting depicts a pair of Magnolia Warblers on a branch of a spruce tree.

The artwork has been generously donated by member and long-time Board Director, Dr. Bob Donnelly.

Find out more about the rules and place your bid online at <http://doas.us/doas-2019-online-auction/> or call (607) 397-3815 or email info@doas.us. If you would rather not bid online, proxy bidding is permitted.

Please note that if our reserve price (not listed) is not met by the conclusion of the online auction (noon on Sunday, June 2, 2019), we will close the sale without a winner until a



Detail

later date.

About the Author: Dave Kiehm's realistic painting style comes from a lifetime of observing nature first hand. His love of all things wild translates into evocative images meticulously rendered to capture the intricacies of the animals and their world. Dave has been honored with awards nationally and internationally including the prestigious award: "BBC Wildlife Artist of the Year." Dave has traveled extensively throughout North America and Europe to observe wildlife and wild places for subjects for his paintings. These paintings have been shown at Marwell International Wildlife Society, UK, Roger Tory Peterson Institute Museum, The Houston Museum of Natural

History, The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum, and The Nature in Art Gallery and Museum, UK, to name a few. Dave lives and works in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains of New York with his family, including his golden retriever, Maggie. Find more of his work at his website at <http://www.deadriftstudio.com/>



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"Bird Sightings" Cont. from page 8

Tufted Titmouse
Photo by Andrew Baker

fields and the drumming of Ruffed Grouse. She also observed a Red-tailed Hawk dive-bombing a Golden Eagle, and husband Eric found a Great Horned Owl flying low

in the valley. Barb Palmer spotted a Brown Creeper, some Common Grackles, and three Tufted Titmice at her feeder (Jefferson). Becky Gretton got some nice pictures of an Eastern Screech-owl that had struck her window in Richfield Springs and rested on her deck until recovering and flying off.

A Ruffed Grouse "exploded out of the snow" in front of Jessie Ravage as she got in some late-season skiing in Middlefield. Gerianne Carillo and her daughter, Carly, identified a Barred Owl on a utility wire in Milford. Chris DeCesare also saw a Barred Owl, coincidentally also on a wire, in East Meredith. She also began hearing Woodcocks in her backyard near Franklin.

Many flocks of geese were reported on and around the 14th, numbering in the thousands. Though mostly Canada Geese, Pam Peters estimated about 1,000 Snow Geese near Deposit. At this time also, Blackbirds, Grackles, and Robins returned in force, with too many reports to cite. Elliott Adams observed five Black Vultures circling in Cobleskill.

John Roosenberg reported the presence of Black Vultures consistently in that area for three years. Chris Kjolhede reported that a Merlin had returned to Cooperstown near Bassett Hospital, where they have nested in the past. A few days later, Dorian Huneke spotted a Merlin in Treadwell.

Fox Sparrows are trekking north, passing through in greater numbers than usual. A pair visited Barb Palmer's yard in Jefferson; a half dozen stopped in Deposit (Stan Salthe), and one in Burlington (Tom Salo). Angelika Rashkow watched Cedar Waxwings foraging in a crabapple tree in Cooperstown and spotted several ducks in Oaks Creek, at least two of which were Wood Ducks. A few Evening Grosbeaks lingered in Pam Peters' yard in Franklin. Kyle Dudgeon discovered two Eastern Meadowlarks at Davis Park.

Thanks to birds becoming more vocal at this time of year, I was alerted to the presence of a Fish Crow in Neawha Park, Oneonta. Soon more song will fill the air as migrants continue to make their way back north.

Sandy Bright



Is your Membership Current?

Your mailing label will inform you of your membership expiration date (year and month, e.g. '1904' indicates April 2019). DOAS memberships are \$15 per year or \$25 for two years; family memberships are \$20 per year or \$30 for two years. Mail your name, address and email, along with your check payable to "DOAS" to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544. Memberships can also be purchased online at <http://doas.us/join-us/>

Help our membership grow! Encourage your family and friends to join DOAS.

Celery Fields By Board Member Janet Potter

Like most of you, I have a place that makes me happy just to think about being there. Naturally, there are birds involved! For me, Celery Fields in Sarasota, Florida is my happy place. Since the mid-nineties, it has become one of Florida's premier birding sites, one of the most popular stops on the Great Florida Birding Trail. Let me tell you a little about this wonderful place.

Celery Fields is a 444-acre complex of wetlands, open water and upland habitats at the head of the Phillippi Creek basin. The county purchased the land in 1994 after record rainfall caused serious flooding to hundreds of homes along the Phillippi Creek. The plan was to resurrect some of the historic drainage patterns that existed before the land was drained for agriculture. Once locally known as "Big Camp Sawgrass," this land had been drained in the late 1880s and converted from sawgrass marsh to intensive agriculture by the early 1920s. A company called Fancee Farms raised celery until the early 1990s, eventually depleting the soil. The County's plan was to create a system to provide stormwater retention, flood protection, and an environmental filtration system that would deliver cleaner water to Phillippi Creek and ultimately to Sarasota Bay.

Along the way, the Sarasota Audubon Society got involved, offering advice and expertise. As a result, the county restored 100 acres of traditional wetlands, built two boardwalks, and planted more than 200,000 trees and aquatic plants. This partnership is a great success, serving the flood control and water quality mission better than anyone expected, and creating a center for eco-tourism that brings in thousands of visitors each year.

The Sarasota Audubon Nature Center, a LEED Gold Certified building, was opened in 2016 on land leased from the county. The Society raised over \$1.3 million to construct this eco-friendly building, complete with a bird and butterfly native plant garden. The County maintains the parking lot, restrooms, and the boardwalks. The Center is now integral to achieving the Society's mission

to "provide environmental education, protect imperiled species, and promote a love of nature."

This building is also the starting point for many guided bird walks offered by both the Sarasota and the Venice Audubon societies. The Center has exhibits, including one displaying fossils and other artifacts found during the creation of the project, and a nice area for kids to interact with nature. Programming and lectures on a variety of

nature topics for children and adults are held there, along with Tai Chi, Yoga, and art classes.

A key part of the Society's educational program is providing volunteer naturalists to share their expertise at each of the

boardwalks every morning from November 1 to May 1. Each brings a spotting scope, and there are binoculars and bird guides to borrow.

In addition to opportunities for wildlife viewing, there are walking and biking trails throughout Celery Fields, as well as places for fishing and kayaking. Soil from the excavations was used to create a 75-foot man-made mountain, now enjoyed by mountain bikers, hikers and fitness fanatics who run straight up the steep sides.

And the birds! The Celery Fields checklist includes more than 220 species. It is always a pleasure to see what shows

up when you go: beautiful Roseate Spoonbills and Purple Gallinules, this year a rare Cinnamon Teal, lots of different kinds of herons and egrets, and up to 20 duck species. Bald Eagles and other raptors soar overhead. It is always fun to watch birds like Green Herons and bitterns catch and eat their food. One memorable day, I watched a huge flock of American White Pelicans circle-feeding as they "corralled" the fish. Celery Fields is a wonderful place for an amateur photographer to practice her skills trying to capture so many avian subjects.

If you are ever near Sarasota, don't miss a visit to Celery Fields. More information at <http://www.sarasotaudubon.org/>



American Bittern



Green Heron



American White Pelicans

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

April

April 13 – DOAS Earth Festival Bird Walk: Carpools leave Milford Central School parking lot at 8 AM. For more information, contact trip leader Bob Donnelly: rsdonn@yahoo.com or 607-264-8156.

April 13 – Earth Festival: Milford School, 11 AM -3 PM. Visit the DOAS table! Exhibit volunteers needed (no experience necessary); contact Susan at 607-643-5680 or at sjohandley@gmail.com. For full details about Earth Festival, visit <http://occainfo.org>.

April 16 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

April 17 – Woodcock Walk at Parslow Road, in collaboration with Otsego Land Trust: Meet at the Parslow Road Conservation Area parking lot at 7 PM. Led by Chris DeCesare and Becky Talbot. Register online at <http://doas.us/event/woodcock-walk-at-parslow-road-april-17/> Waterproof footwear and headlamp or flashlight are recommended. For additional details, contact Chris DeCesare at 607-244-5496 or chris.decesare444@gmail.com.

April 19 – DOAS Public Program: “What Montana Taught Me.” SUNY Oneonta senior Kyle Dudgeon will share last summer’s experiences in remote areas of Montana through photographs and stories. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

May

May 4 – 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. Contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or scheimc@hartwick.edu.

May 12 – DOAS Sanctuary Spring Bird Walk (Please note change of date): Meet at 8 AM. The walk should turn up a variety of returning migrants, including warblers, orioles, thrushes, tanagers and others. Waterfowl and raptors are also possibilities. The walk will last about two hours and include some moderate climbs. See www.doas.us.

us for directions to the Sanctuary. Contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

May 17 – DOAS Public Program: “Costa Rica.” Nelson and Gail DuBois will show photographs taken on their recent trip to Costa Rica. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

May 18 – Big Day Bird Count: Counters help find as many species as possible in Otsego or Delaware County. Contact DOAS at info@doas.us (607) 397-3815 for more information.

May 23– Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake State Park: Meet at the beach area at 10 AM. The walk is approximately 2 hours in the Park. Led by plant expert Connie Tedesco. Bring water, insect repellent, binoculars if on hand, and your curiosity! Contact Connie at ctedesco1026@gmail.com for additional information.

May 25– Field Trip to West Branch Preserve: Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright will lead a bird walk at the West Branch Preserve, 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. Contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or scheimc@hartwick.edu.

June 2 – Birding By Ear with Brunch: Save the date, more information in the May newsletter.

July

July 15-August 23 – DOAS Summer DAY Camp: Register online at doas.us/2019-audubon-day-camp. For more information, contact Susan O’Handley, Education Chair, at 607-643-5680 or at sjohandley@gmail.com.

October

October 5 – DOAS Fall Open House: Save the date, more information to follow.

**Support our Sponsor,
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DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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February - March 2019 Bird Sightings

We like to think of Robins as being harbingers of spring, but since some stick around all winter, Turkey Vultures make better indicators. On February 21st, Tom Salo reported a vulture in the town of Sanford, and Tom's dad found one in Oneonta.

Nothing says spring like the sound of birds singing. In Oneonta during the last week of February, a "cacophony of sound" greeted Leslie Preston while she filled her feeders. She discovered 15 species, including Cardinal, Chickadee, Titmouse, Robin, Carolina Wren, and three species of woodpecker. Marilyn Bailey alerted me to a flock of about 25 Cedar Waxwings, which headed down North Belmont Circle in Oneonta after pausing to drink from road puddles.

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.

A dozen Evening Grosbeaks returned to Gerianne Carillo's feeder in Milford after a hiatus. Jennifer Hyypio snapped this photo of a Red-shouldered Hawk that she had observed hunting in Huntington Park, Oneonta, in January and February.



Red-shouldered Hawk
Photo by Jennifer Hyypio

In the town of Springfield, Becky Gretton saw Snow Buntings and Horned Larks. Gerry Pearlburg spotted a Red-winged Blackbird in East Meredith. Elliott Addams watched about 80 Redpolls working the weeds in Sharon Springs. Pam Peters saw about 25 Cedar Waxwings feed on ornamental crabapples in Franklin. In early March, she discovered Hooded and Common Mergansers. On the 9th, Bluebirds arrived in Rockdale (Dorian Huneke) and Davis State Park (Becky Gretton).

In mid-March, Dorian Huneke discovered the Treadwell Bald Eagles sitting on eggs (3/12), and enjoyed Ravens flying over her

"Bird Sightings" Continued on page 5