



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## BLUESTONE WIND PROJECT

### Help Needed With Legal Expenses

### COMING ACTIVITIES

#### June

June 2 – Birding By Ear with Brunch

June 8 – Invasive Species Removal

at DOAS Burlington Wetland  
June 15 – Burroughs’ Birds of Spring

June 16 – Father’s Day Hike at Emmons Pond

June 18– DOAS Board Mtg

#### July-August

DOAS Summer Day Camp

#### August

August 20 – DOAS Board Mtg

#### September

September 17 – DOAS Board Mtg

September 20 – Program, “Dragonflies and Damselflies”

#### October

October 5 – Fall Open House

October 18 – DOAS Charter Dinner

**More information on page 7**

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

DOAS has documented record numbers of winter resident Golden Eagles inside the proposed Bluestone Wind Project in Sanford. We also found high numbers of Bald Eagles. Many of these birds were observed flying and hunting around proposed turbine sites.



*Golden Eagle in Delaware County  
Photo by Walter Putrycz*

The estimates of eagles to be killed by the project are a closely guarded secret. Some DOAS Directors signed a Protective Order so we could view them. While we agreed to not make them public, we disagree with the developer’s public assertions that potential impacts to eagles are “low.” Considering the small size of the eastern population of Golden Eagles, and the limited number of winter residents in New York, these impacts seem quite large.

State and Federal Law require predicted eagle “take” (fatalities) to be compensated through mitigation. Mitigation – in theory – provides measurable benefits to a species, resulting in an increase in the population beyond what is “taken” at a wind project. However, there

is currently no legal, quantifiable way to mitigate for impacts to Golden Eagle in the east. We discussed a possible lead abatement mitigation with the developer, but those talks stalled.

The astounding number of eagles we found, combined with problems finding a legal mitigation method, should cause everyone to pause. We have entered the litigation phase of the Article 10 review process. Without a strong case for eagle conservation, the siting board may rule in favor of the project and issue a license. DOAS received limited intervenor funding for legal expenses. We have hired counsel but the funds available will not be enough.

We urge our members to donate generously to this effort. The need is great. Time is short. Funds should be directed to the Eagle Conservation Fund. In the unlikely event that there are excess donations, funds will be dedicated to benefit eagles. *DOAS reports on eagles in the Bluestone Project can be found at <http://doas.us/protecting-golden-eagles/>*

## President's Column

by Co-president Becky Gretton

My involvement with the *New York State Breeding Bird Atlas* has been very rewarding. Instead of my usual column, I wanted you to read what Julie Hart, Project Coordinator for the third edition, wrote about "atlasing" and learn more about how you can get involved. What follows is an abbreviated version of an article that first appeared in *New York Birders*, the newsletter of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA). Read the whole article at: [New York Breeding Bird Atlas III Update - April 2019- pdf](#)

You may have heard people say how atlasing is a different way of birding and an extremely rewarding one at that. But what does this mean?



Julie explains that atlasing is like regular birding but you slow down and observe the behaviors of individual birds. She was an experienced birder, but when she started atlasing in her home state of Vermont for that state's Breeding Bird Atlas, she saw and learned so much more. She "was finally able to really enjoy the figure-eight courtship display of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird; was chased off a road by an angry Ruffed Grouse mother with chicks scurrying in every direction at her barking and growling and feigned injury display; observed Yellow-

bellied Sapsuckers wriggling in and out of birch trees; and encountered countless thrushes with overstuffed bills full of worms and insects."

She says, "And it was all because I changed the way I birded. I slowed down and watched what the birds did. Sometimes I would sit and wait and not see any signs of breeding, but other times I had the most intimate glimpses into their daily lives. It was a continuously rewarding experience."

Her experience is not unique. Many people express similar sentiments after they start atlasing; just ask your fellow bird club members who participated in the last atlas.

From Julie's article: The atlas doesn't start until 2020, but you don't have to wait to start enjoying this type of birding. You can practice your atlasing skills right now. Some birds are already nesting, while others are courting and setting up territories. Start small by watching the birds in your backyard or favorite park. If you see a behavior and you don't know what it means, look it up. The Cornell Lab's "[All About Birds](#)" site is a good place to start. If it turns out to be a breeding behavior, note the behavior on your checklist. *NYBBA III* will be using *eBird* for data entry, so start getting comfortable with *eBird* now. Check "**BBA III**" Continued on page 3

### THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO

#### AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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Janet Potter

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[www.doas.us](http://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](mailto:editor@doas.us)

## Conservation and Legislation

### Climate and Community Protection

**Act Pending in State Legislature**—The New York State Legislature is scheduled to end its 2019 session on June 19. Although environmentally this has been one of the most productive sessions in many years, including legislation banning dangerous pesticides, eliminating single-use plastic bags, and first passage of a ‘Green Amendment’ to the State Constitution, there is still work to be done.

One of the most important bills before the legislature is the Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA). This bill would move our state off fossil fuels while strengthening its economy, creating good paying green jobs, and protecting the state’s low-income communities and communities of color.

The Act has broad support, but opponents are trying to weaken the bill. The CCPA has been called the most progressive climate equity policy in the nation, but we need to make sure the following provisions stay in the bill:

- Move ALL of NY’s economy off fossil fuels, not just electricity;
- Set an enforceable deadline for this transition into law;
- Invest 40% of state climate funds into communities on the frontlines of climate change and pollution; and
- Make sure green jobs are good jobs by setting prevailing wage standards for jobs related to the fossil-free transition.

With President Trump and the federal government turning their backs on climate change, it has fallen to the states to



*Smoke Stacks, Queens, NY  
EPA Photo*

pick up the ball to address this existential threat to our world. With passage of the CCPA, NY can join California in the forefront of this effort and serve as an example to others of a responsible society.

**What you can do**—Contact your state legislators and urge them to support A.3876/S.2992, the Climate and Community Protection Act, without

weakening amendments.

### DOAS Continues Scrutiny of Bluestone Wind

**Project**—Our Chapter has been involved in the proposed Bluestone Wind Project in Broome County for over two years now. We have found serious shortcomings in the application for the project which is located near a major Bald Eagle concentration area, and is in the corridor for Golden Eagle migration, including birds that pass by the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch in the fall.

We are submitting testimony in the upcoming litigation phase of the review process for the project and are encouraging other Audubon Chapters to contact their legislators and the governor to let them know of the threats this project poses to eagles. We have engaged an attorney to assist with this process and will need funding for this and other expenses.

**What you can do**—See the article on page one for information on contributing to our Eagle Conservation Fund, which will be used for this purpose, as well as other eagle conservation work.

*(Contact information for elected officials is available on the conservation page of the DOAS web site, [www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us).)*

Andy Mason

### **“BBA III” Continued from page 2**

out the free [“eBird Essentials”](#) course offered by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, teach yourself by following the eBird tutorials for web and mobile, or ask a fellow birder to show you how to get started. Once you are familiar with eBird, start adding breeding observations to your checklists. Go to the detailed section for each species on your checklist and select the appropriate breeding

code. Whether you use mobile or web, it’s just *a few extra clicks*.

Birders like you, who provide Atlas data in 2020, will have the satisfaction of knowing that your efforts have led to a deeper understanding of bird populations. Thanks in advance from the birds and their loyal supporters.



## DOAS Big Day Bird Count Report

Success can be measured by many criteria. Our DOAS Big Day on May 18th was a great success by several measures. Below is a summary report; more details can be found at our website [www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us).

For some folks, the key measure of success is the number of species seen, which was one of our primary goals. We had excellent success by this measure: altogether, our DOAS Big Day participants found 126 different species. This included six woodpecker-type species (downy, hairy, pileated, red-bellied, flicker, and sapsucker), seven flycatchers (alder, willow, least, great-crested, wood-pewee, phoebe, kingbird), five swallows (barn, tree, cliff, bank, rough-winged), five thrushes (hermit, wood, veery, robin, catbird), and twenty-six species of warblers (a long list...).

Another goal of the DOAS Big Day is to connect our members with nature, and so another way success can be measured is by how many people participated. There were reports from sixteen teams. Several teams were just a single person, others had as many as four people working together; in total, 25 people participated in our Big Day. Some teams found lots of species, some found fewer. Some teams ranged over extensive areas by car, foot, or bike;



some folks simply observed their backyard birds. There were a number of species that were found by just one team (a few examples: Hooded Merganser, Carolina Wren [a backyard bird!], Woodcock, Black-billed Cuckoo, Cerulean Warbler, and others), which shows just how important it was to our effort to have so many teams scouting our area. Birding is to some degree a matter of being in the right place at the right time. The more teams, the more likely it is that someone will be around when seldom seen species show up!

One last goal of our Big Day is to have fun. Many people mentioned, in one way or another, that they found the day very enjoyable. One participant wrote that “I don’t realize how many types of birds I see and hear unless I list them like this - it’s a great way to feel positive about our bird life in the area!”, and another said “This was really fun. It made me think about birds all day long!”

## May Field Trip Highlights



At the Oneonta Greenway

**Saturday May 5—Greenway Walk** Charlie Schiem and Sandy Bright led over a dozen participants on a bird walk at the Susquehanna Greenway in Oneonta. Before even getting to the trail participants

were captivated by the upward trill of a Northern Parula high in the canopy, but only a lucky few got a glimpse. Other highlights included good views of White-throated Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Catbirds, plus a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. A Great Blue Heron and a couple of Wood Ducks did flyovers, and a male Common Merganser flew along the river. Spotted Sandpipers were seen both flying and foraging on the ground. A very cooperative Brown Thrasher serenaded for a long time and a Prairie Warbler was briefly seen. 42 species of birds were recorded.

**Sunday May 13**—Bad weather interfered with the bird walk at the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society’s wildlife

sanctuary.

**Thursday May 23—Jean Miller Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake State Park** Connie Tedesco led about 15 participants on the walk around the lake. Over 50 plants were discovered and discussed.

**Saturday May 25—Field Trip to West Branch Preserve** About a dozen participants met at the West Branch Preserve in Hamden for the bird walk at the Conservancy land, led by Charlie Schiem and Sandy Bright. Birds were plentiful, the weather was pleasant, the lighting excellent. Many birds were elusive, hiding in the lush foliage or high in treetops. However, one Ash tree, just starting to leaf out, seemed a magnet for birds, showing off singing Blue-winged Warbler, Eastern Towhee, and Baltimore Oriole in all their magnificent spring colors. In all, 41 species of birds were found.



Connie Tedesco shows a wildflower in her guidebook

**“Bird Sightings” Continued from page 8** wings with black border”. Unfortunately for us, but probably fortunately for these southern birds, they didn’t stick around.

May 3rd brought many firsts, with Catbirds showing up in Jefferson (Barb Palmer), Delhi (Kathryn Davino), and Oneonta. Continuing her efforts at Glimmerglass, Becky Gretton found 51 species, including a Black-throated Green Warbler in the clutches of a Merlin, and a Peregrine Falcon perching briefly in a tree then flying off. In Cherry Valley, Bob Donnelly spotted Least Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, and Black-throated Blue and Yellow Warblers. Gerry Pearlburg also saw an Oriole in Kortright, along with a Solitary Sandpiper. Andy Mason had a Red-eyed Vireo in Stamford. Leslie Preston located Chimney Swifts in Oneonta. Becky Gretton hit the jackpot at Glimmerglass, finding Eastern Kingbird, Barn Swallow, Magnolia Warbler, American Redstart, Cedar Waxwing, Hooded Merganser, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Herring Gull, Bufflehead, Black Duck, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Caspian Tern, and more. In Oneonta, after finding little of note at the Greenway trail that morning and getting wet for our efforts to boot, Charlie Scheim and I were astounded at the colorful birds arriving in our yard in Oneonta that afternoon, including



*Indigo Bunting*  
Photo by Rick Bunting

two gorgeous male Indigo Buntings, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Grosbeaks, Oriole, and, foraging around our compost heap, a Black-throated Blue Warbler. Hummingbirds also showed up in Milford (Gerianne Carillo) and Downsville (Bonnie Seegmiller). The next day brought drier weather and better luck at the Greenway, with Northern Parula and Common Yellowthroat among 42 species found.

Kristin Roti-Jones discovered a Scarlet Tanager in Wilber Park, Oneonta (5/5). On May 7th, Barb Palmer observed a Chestnut-sided Warbler (Jefferson), and Bobolinks arrived in both Worcester (Alice Pantaleoni) and Kortright (Gerry Pearlburg). On the 11th, Tom Salo located a Wood Thrush in Burlington, and Blackburnian Warblers showed up in Wilber Park, Oneonta. Andy Mason discovered a Green Heron at his pond in Jefferson. On May 16th, I spotted the first goslings of the season waddling across Airport Road (Oneonta).

As summer birds arrive, some winter birds linger, including Evening Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls (Peter Fauth, 4/20); Pine Grosbeaks (Steve Hall, 5/11); Pine Siskins and White-crowned Sparrows (Oneonta; 5/17).

Thanks to all who contributed reports. Due to limited space, not all could be included.

Sandy Bright

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## Art & Community for the Birds

“Art & Community for the Birds” is a year-long art project focused on raising awareness about the conservation of threatened birds and their habitats, in and around Delaware County.

DEC grant recipient, Caroline Fay, will be hosting numerous bird-related art workshops for all ages and abilities over the coming months. Among these will be an art workshop at the DOAS Open House in October. In addition, Caroline is donating one of her bird inspired artworks for raffle at the DOAS Annual dinner in October.

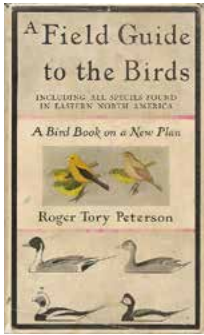
For more information on upcoming workshops visit: [www.carolinefayart.com](http://www.carolinefayart.com) and Facebook: Big Little Art Studio.

### Board of Directors Election Report

The DOAS nominating committee presented six candidates for election at the May 17 meeting. The slate consisted of Barb Palmer, running for the first time, and the following incumbents: Rod Sutton, Pam Peters, Susan O’Handley, Kathryn Davino, and Janet Potter. The slate was elected unanimously. Terms for all candidates are two years ending in May of 2021. DOAS welcomes Barb Palmer as a new member of the Board! We thank the nominating committee (Jane Bachman, chair, Kathryn Davino, Jeff O’Handley and Janice Downie).

## Big Effort

By Board Member Charlie Scheim

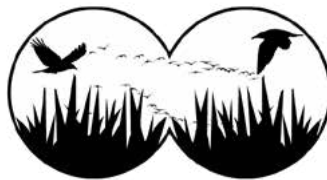


Roger Tory Peterson's writings have had a profound effect on our perceptions of nature. His 1934 A Field Guide to the Birds revolutionized birding identification. In 1953, Peterson and James Fisher took a 30,000-mile road trip visiting the wild places of North America. Peterson then wrote Wild America and produced a documentary film of the same name, both of which changed the way Americans saw the natural world around them. In a footnote in the book, Peterson mentioned that "My year's list [of birds] at the end of 1953 was 572 species."

This casual note is widely regarded as a primary impetus for "Big Years" (despite there being a few other documented such efforts before 1953). Birders embraced the challenge of finding, by sight or sound, as many birds as they could within a year's span. The current Big Year record according to the American Birding Association is 836, recorded by John Weigel in 2016, covering the official "ABA Area" of the fifty U.S. states, Canada, adjacent waters to 200 miles, and a few islands. There are records for other regions: towns, counties, states, the lower 48 states, other countries, the entire world (in his 2016 World Big Year,

Arjan Dwarshuis of the Netherlands found 6833 species, about 64% of the world's recognized species). The New York Big Year ABA record is 361, set in 2012 by Anthony Collerton, a particularly interesting record since he actually saw every one of these species. Other time periods are also used: months, weeks, days. The New York Big Day record, set on May 18, 2013, is 158 by the team of Drew Weber, Andrew VanNordstrom, and Joseph Brin. On October 8, 2015 a team of six birders set a world one-day record of 431 species in the Nayarit region of Ecuador, traveling 239 miles by car, 5 miles on foot, and 233 miles by air.

### BIG DAY OF BIRDING



In response to criticism these Big Efforts have drawn due to extensive air or automobile travel, some folks have done Green Big Years. In 2014, Dorian Anderson bicycled 17,830 miles around the United States, accumulating 618 species.

Another green approach is a Big Sit, where intrepid birders count all the species they encounter while restricting themselves to a very small area, perhaps their backyard or a spot in their favorite meadow or forest (though presumably not for a year... 😊).

Big Efforts, green or not, competitive or not, are fun; I encourage you to invent your own. As the old TV ad used to say: "Try it... you'll like it!"

### 2019 Summer Day Camp—Register Today!

Session 1: July 15, 16, 17, 18 – 9:30am-3pm at DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain, Oneonta (for children entering grades 3 and 4) - 5 SPOTS LEFT

Session 2: July 29, 30, 31, August 1 – 9:30-3pm at DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain, Oneonta (for children entering grades 5 and 6) - 3 SPOTS LEFT

Session 3: August 19, 20, 21, 22 & 23 – 9am – noon at Oneonta World of Learning, Fortin Park (for children entering grades 1 and 2) - 8 REMAINING

More information at <http://doas.us/education/summer-day-camp/>



**2019--2020 Programs** We are looking forward to seeing you in the fall for a new "program year" which will include a variety of topics as always. Please save the third Friday of September, October and November in 2019 for a 7:30 PM program and refreshments at the Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Programs will resume in January and run through May of 2020. Have a wonderful summer!

Becky Gretton, Program Chair



# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

## June

**June 2 – Birding By Ear with Brunch:** The workshop will be held at the Davis Park in the Town of Westford, NY. The workshop is at capacity, thanks for your support. Becky Gretton at 607-547-5648.

**June 8– Invasive Species Removal at Burlington Wetlands.** Volunteers will pull small buckthorn.

The half-mile hike in through a swamp (rubber boots recommended!) requires a moderate level of physical fitness, as does the work. We will meet at 8 AM and work until early afternoon. Bring water, lunch and gloves. If you are interested in helping, please contact Tom Salo at salothomas@gmail.com or 607-965-8232.

**June 15– Burroughs’ Birds of Spring:** 9 AM. Celebrate NY’s Path Through History weekend with a free bird walk at John Burroughs Memorial Field. Join DOAS co-President Andy Mason, along with Park Naturalists for an outdoor foray in search of the birds of spring. Bird sightings found at the Memorial Field will be embellished with pertinent quotes from Burroughs’ vibrant essays. John Burroughs Memorial Field is located at 1067 Burroughs Memorial Road, just off Hardscrabble Road, in Roxbury, NY. For more information contact: MineKillSP@parks.ny.gov or (518) 827-8690.

**June 16 – Father’s Day Hike at Emmons Pond**

**Bog:** DOAS Member and local Environmental Educator, Chris DeCesare will lead a 1.4 mile walk from 9 AM to 11 AM. to observe the plants and animals of Emmons Pond

Bog Preserve. Binoculars and sturdy walking shoes are recommended. Meet at the Preserve entrance on White Hill Road at 9 AM. Pre-registration required at <http://doas.us/event/fathers-day-hike-at-emmons-pond-bog/> or contact Chris DeCesare at 607-244-5496 or [chris.decesare444@gmail.com](mailto:chris.decesare444@gmail.com).

**June 18 – DOAS Board Meeting:** 5 PM

## July and August

**July 15 - August 23 – DOAS Summer DAY Camp:**

Register online at [doas.us/2019-audubon-day-camp](http://doas.us/2019-audubon-day-camp). For more information, contact Susan O’Handley, Education Chair, at 607-643-5680 or at [sjohandley@gmail.com](mailto:sjohandley@gmail.com).

## August

**August 20 – DOAS Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM

## September

**September 17 – DOAS Board Meeting:** 6:30 PM

**September 20 – DOAS Public Program:** Dr. Peter Fauth will present about dragonflies and damselflies. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

**October:** Save the dates, more information to follow

**October 5 – DOAS Fall Open House**

**October 18 – DOAS Charter Dinner**



**Support our Sponsors! Thank you to Rod Spangle Antiques in Unadilla for being a sponsor!**

## DOAS Membership Application

Membership in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society includes 9 issues of our newsletter, *The Belted Kingfisher*.

Cost is \$15 annually or \$25 for two years; family memberships \$20 annually 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>.

Support DOAS education and conservation programs with an additional donation.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.  
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## April - May 2019 Bird Sightings

Southern birds are returning, migrants are moving through, and they're all hungry, needing energy for a busy breeding season. On April 17th, "FOS" sightings (First of Season) began in earnest. Participants in Chris DeCesare's Woodcock walk got the bonus of hearing Wilson's Snipe displaying. Pam Peters and Kathy Mario found a Yellow-rumped Warbler foraging along the Rail Trail in Andes. Leslie Preston discovered Swamp Sparrows and Wood Thrush singing at the DOAS sanctuary, a Common Loon at Wilber Lake, then, on the 21st, Black-and-white Warblers at Riddell Park. Rough-winged Swallows and a Spotted Sandpiper arrived at the Rexmere Lake in Stamford (Andy Mason, 4/21). Pam Peters located Blue-headed Vireo (4/20)

***If you have bird sightings to report, contact Sandy Bright, [brights@hartwick.edu](mailto: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.***

Savannah Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks (4/22), Cliff Swallows (4/29) and Ovenbird near Treadwell. On the 25th, Becky Gretton was rewarded for her efforts with Louisiana Waterthrush and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Glimmerglass State Park, and Northern Waterthrush near Summit Lake. Charlie Scheim listened to a Warbling Vireo near Morris. April 26th brought the first Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Kathryn Davino, Delhi).



*Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Audubon Photo by Sandra Rothenberg*

In mid-April, seven occupied Heron nests in Hartwick dwindled to three after a Bald Eagle arrived on the scene (Angelika Rashkow). Hudi Pololsky spotted a Northern Harrier in Hartwick. Lisa Gorn found Ruby-crowned Kinglets in Morris. April 28th brought an exciting rare bird sighting: a pair of Wood Storks flying over a marshy area near Hartwick. Laurie Keans described the unmistakable sight of "large wingspan, bald head, magnificent white" **"Bird Sightings" Continued on page 5**