



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

COMING ACTIVITIES

October

October 5 – Fall Open House
October 15 – DOAS Board Mtg
October 18 – DOAS Charter Dinner

November

November 2 – Bird Seed Order Deadline
November 9 – Bird Seed Pickup
November 15 – Program, “Structure and Function in Forested Ecosystems”

December

December 3 – DOAS Board Mtg
December 14 – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count
December 28 – Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count

January

January TBD – Delaware Christmas Bird Count
January 17 – Program, “Australian Adventure”
January 21 – DOAS Board Mtg

More information on page 7

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

Join us for the DOAS Annual Charter Dinner! October 18th, 2019

Make your Reservations now for the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society’s Annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 18, 2018 at the Quality Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn) on State Highway 23 in Oneonta. The evening begins at 5:30 PM with a social hour, Buffet at 6:15 (featuring Roasted Salmon, Eggplant Parmesan 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 and a new silent auction. A list of the raffle items and the full menu are available online at <https://doas.us/event/2019-charter-dinner/>.

Our featured presenter will be well-known local photographer Rick Bunting. His photos of birds, butterflies, foxes, frogs and oth-

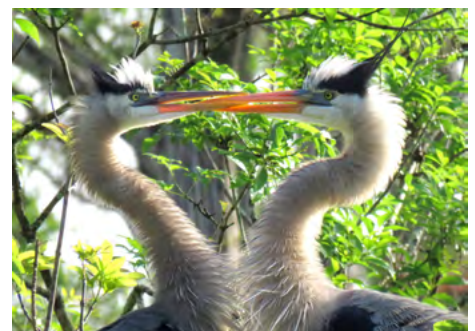
er natural subjects will appear as “Collected Stories of 2019.” Since his retirement from SUNY Potsdam and the Crane School of Music, Rick pursues his passion for photography full time. Also an accomplished and well-known musician, Rick photographs wherever he travels.

The cost for the full evening is \$35 per person (with no charge for those wishing to attend only the program portion of the event, which starts at 7:30 PM).

Reservations MUST be made by October 13, 2019 by calling 607-397-3815 or by mailing payment by check with your name and address to DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820, or register online at www.doas.us.



Rick Bunting with Florida Scrub Jay on Hat



*Juvenile Great Blue Herons
Photo by Rick Bunting*

President's Message

The Demise of the Small and Mid-sized Car

by Co-president Susan O'Handley

I've been car shopping for the last year. It's rather dizzying - looking into makes and models, fuel efficiency, mileage per gallon, safety ratings, standard and upgraded features, & sticker prices.

Just when I thought I found my next car—fuel-efficient, great safety ratings, good tech features, decent space at a pretty reasonable price—I found out it was being discontinued. As I continue my search (and research), I learn that over 20 small and midsize cars from across the spectrum of manufacturers are being discontinued, and mostly replaced with new SUV models.

If you are old enough to remember the gas shortages in the 1970's, you remember the lines at the gas stations, designated odd and even days to fill up your tank based on your last name, and the sudden appearance of fuel-efficient cars that sprung up on the market. I bought my first real car in the early 1980's, a one-year-old Datsun hatchback for \$5,000. It got about 35 miles per gallon around town and 45-50 on the highway.

When gas prices rose to over \$4 per gallon, we again saw an uptick in the availability of fuel-efficient vehicles in the marketplace. Fuel efficiency is less of a priority now that gas prices are lower.

European drivers pay about \$6 per gallon. They choose cars that are much more fuel-efficient. What Americans pay for gas isn't what it would cost were it not subsidized by our government. If we had to pay the real cost, there would be greater demand for fuel-efficient cars.

Currently the only vehicles that

come close to the same kind of mileage as my 1981 Datsun are electric and hybrid cars. Cars that get 25 miles per gallon are being marketed as having 'great mileage'!

I have believed for a long time now that the average consumer will never choose the 'environmentally friendly' option for goods until it costs less than the traditional version. As consumers, we have a certain degree of power to impact the options available to us based on the decisions that we make when purchasing goods.



Electric Car Mikes Photos at Pixabay

We can do things like 'buy local', shop for produce at your area farmers' market, look for items that are sold with less packaging or that are recyclable, and buy cars that make us less dependent on fossil fuels. We can choose investment plans that divest in the traditional and move towards 'green', and support/encourage our local municipalities and organizations to do the same.

For myself (and my future car purchase), I'm not sure that an electric or hybrid vehicle is within my reach, but I sure will be looking at these options. The good news is that although many of the small cars are being discontinued, almost all manufacturers are providing an electric or hybrid option. Vote with your wallet.

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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

The Washington Debacle—It is difficult to know where to start when considering the all-out assault of the Trump administration on the environment. The attacks just keep piling up—one seemingly worse than the last. Just a few examples affecting birds and wildlife:

In July, the administration announced plans to weaken the Endangered Species Act by requiring greater consideration of economic factors in agency decisions on listing species and pulling back on requirements for consultation with wildlife experts. In May, the administration rolled back safety measures for offshore drilling operations that were put in place following the BP Gulf oil spill. Obviously, this exposes shorelines and sea life to future spills—now even more likely with proposed expanded offshore oil leasing.

In April, the President signed two executive orders that will smooth the path for companies to build oil and gas pipelines and limit the tools states have to block them. He directed the Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider that portion of the Clean Water Act that gives states the authority to certify water crossings by pipelines. This is the authority that NY State used to deny the Constitution Pipeline such certification. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has now overridden NY's decision.

In January, the President issued an



Endangered California Condor
Wikimedia—Chuck Szmurlo

executive order dramatically increasing logging on federal lands. He directed the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to harvest more than 4 billion board feet of timber that will be put up for sale. That figure is 31 percent more than what the agencies logged in 2017.

In December 2018, the administration lifted restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions from coal power plants.

In April 2017, the administration announced a position on protecting migratory birds that is a drastic pullback from policies in force for the past 100 years. The Interior Department issued a legal opinion regarding the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that excluded incidental take (death or injury) to birds from prosecution. Such prosecution had only been undertaken in gross cases of bird take or those

where such take should have been anticipated. Now energy companies, industrial polluters, and others can escape responsibility for killing birds.

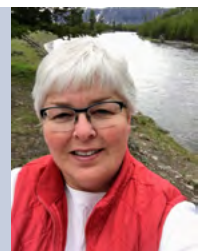
In June 2017, President Trump pulled the US out of the Paris climate agreement, putting the country at odds with the 200 other nations who are parties to this hard-won understanding to cut greenhouse gases.

What you can do—There is much, much more, and it is equally difficult to know how to respond to these damaging and backward moves. One obvious action is to be sure to register to vote, and to get involved in the electoral process. Another is to support organizations that are challenging these actions in court; even legal delay could minimize the impacts until a change comes about in Washington.

Treaty Line State Forest Management Plan—A reminder to submit comments to the NYS DEC on the management plan for the Treaty Line Unit—several state forests totaling nearly 20,000 acres in Chenango, Delaware and Broome Counties. A proposal has been made to open these lands to off-road vehicles. More details are in last month's *Kingfisher*. Deadline for comments is November 1; they can be sent to: Nathan Funk, NYSDEC, 65561 State Route 10, Stamford, NY 12167, or emailed--nathan.funk@dec.ny.gov, with subject "Treaty Line UMP".

DOAS Director Appointed

DOAS is pleased to welcome our newest board member, Landa Palmer. Landa has lived in Delaware County for 35 years. She attended Keuka college and started her nursing career in Oneonta. She currently teaches nursing at SUNY Delhi. Landa is a farmer's wife, mother of 2 grown children, and a grandmother. She loves being outside and teaching her grands the pleasures birds bring. She also has a passion for nature photography (look for her wonderful photos on the DOAS Facebook page!). Welcome, Landa!



John G. New Audubon Summer Camp

Camp 2019 Sessions a Success

This summer DOAS hosted another successful season of the John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp. Two four-day sessions took place at the DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain for kids entering 3rd -6th grades, and a third five-day abbreviated session for children entering 1st and 2nd grade took place at the Oneonta World of Learning Children's Museum in Fortin Park. In total, 35 children participated in the program.

Highlights included finding baby bluebirds in the bird houses, picking wild blueberries, dipping nets to find

aquatic critters in local waters and competing in the Audubon Olympics.

Co-directors Liz Brown and Chris DeCesare were joined by assistant Rob Katz to lead the campers in daily activities. They were joined by guests Andy Mason, who led everyone on a walk through the sanctuary, Gary Graver, who brought his amazing collection of mammal pelts and skulls, and also taught the campers how to use a compass, and Eileen Kline, who taught campers about macroinvertebrates. We thank all involved and are looking forward to another fun-filled summer next year!



Donate to the Camp Scholarship Fund!

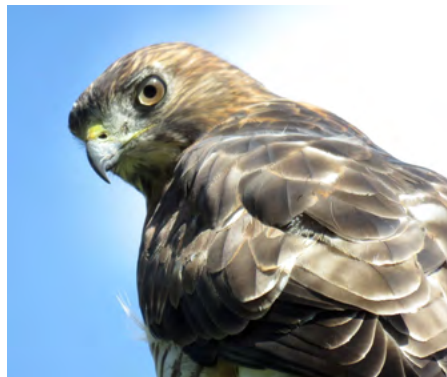
Send checks to DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820 and indicate "CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FUND" in the memo section. For additional information, contact Susan O'Handley at sjohandley@gmail.com.

Record-setting Day at Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch

The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch experienced its biggest single-day count of Broad-winged Hawks on September 15th, when counter Pam Peters tallied 1285 of these flocking raptors on their southbound journey to wintering grounds in Central and South America. The previous high was 1089 in 2016. Pam reported many good spotters present—a big help on such a day.

As of this writing, the season total for Broad-wings stands at 2328, so the present seasonal record of 2342 in 2010 will also certainly fall.

Broad-winged Hawks have a very compressed migration period—usually 2 or 3 good days in mid-September, then a rapid drop-off to near zero by October. The big day on the 15th was followed by another strong flight



Broad-winged Hawk, Photo by Rick Bunting
of 578 on the 16th. They are also the only raptor species we see that travels in groups, or "kettles"—swirling columns of birds that can number in the hundreds. There is a lot of luck in catching a good Broad-wing flight, and good fortune shone down on Franklin Mountain that day!

Looking forward, October will bring increasing numbers of Sharp-

shinned and Cooper's Hawks, as well as Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks. Last October featured a massive movement of Golden Eagles, including a single-day North American record of 128 on October 28th. This may well have been an aberration, as the peak for Golden Eagles is typically in early to mid-November, but who knows what the birds will do.

Visitors and spotters are always welcome at the Hawkwatch. Look for north and northwest winds following a cold front to bring good flights. For more information, consult the DOAS web site at <https://doas.us/research/franklin-mountain-hawk-watch/> or contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, salothomas@gmail.com.

Reminder, order your birdseed today! The DOAS Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser is your opportunity to buy quality bird seed and help support DOAS programs at the same time! Proceeds from this sale support speaker fees for member meetings, field trips, programs and special events throughout the year, summer camp programs and the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch. We encourage you to stock up for the winter months ahead and thank you in advance for your support! Order online at <https://doas.us/2019-bird-seed-sale/> or call 607-643-5680.

ORDER DEADLINE – SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 5PM

PRODUCT PICK UP – SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 9AM-11AM

PICKUP LOCATION! VP Supply Corp, 69 Country Club Road, Oneonta, NY

The Magnificent Elm Tree

by DOAS Director Dorian Huneke

The American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), is one of the most iconic shade trees of eastern North America. It occurs naturally from Nova Scotia west to Alberta and Montana, and south to Florida and central Texas. It can tolerate temperatures as low as -42 degrees F, reach heights greater than 100 feet with trunk diameters of 6 feet or more, and live for several hundred years - in areas where it is unaffected by the Dutch elm disease.

The Dutch elm disease is a fungal disease that caused catastrophic die-offs across the range of the American Elm. It has been estimated that approximately only 1 in 100,000 trees are Dutch Elm disease tolerant, most survivors having simply escaped exposure. Some areas, such as Florida, Alberta, and British Columbia remain disease free, allowing the species to continue to thrive.

A number of factors have helped spare the elm from complete obliteration. The American Elm grows quickly and can produce seed when quite young. It flowers early in spring, before the leaves appear. The seeds are spread largely by wind and do not require a wintering over period before germinating, thus they sprout in the same season they are produced. Often these trees will eventually

succumb to the Dutch elm disease, but scientists hope that these elms will preserve the genetic diversity of their original population, and that they eventually will hybridize with Dutch elm resistant varieties that have been developed or occur naturally. Scientists first developed Dutch elm resistant strains of elms in the late 1990s.



American Elm Tree at Spring Grove Cemetery at Hartford Connecticut, CC BY-SA 3.0

The American Elm's rapid growth, tolerance of urban conditions, and graceful form made it a common street and park tree in the 19th and early 20th century. Its umbrella-like canopy made it easily identified even from afar and sought after to form living archways over streets. But elms do not naturally grow in pure stands –

they grow in conditions of mixed hardwoods. These pure stands that were developed in urban areas contributed to the production of an unhealthy monoculture of elms that had no resistance to disease and pests, a situation that allowed the disease to strengthen and spread rapidly. Elms in forests and other natural habitats have been less effected by Dutch elm disease in part due to fewer stress factors, such as pollution and soil compaction. However, that doesn't mean all of those in natural environments will survive the onslaught of the Dutch elm disease.

When Eric and I bought our farm in 2002 we were so excited to find we had a beautiful young American Elm on the property. The trunk was about a foot in diameter at that time, and we watched it grow and remain healthy for many more years. By 2016 it had become quite large, the trunk now more than 2 feet in diameter, a testament to its speedy growth. In the summer of 2016 we noticed it was shedding leaves quite early. In the spring of 2017 it was dead. Completely dead. It was a such a sad day for us when we cut down that tree! I know if we look closely we will probably find a number of American Elm saplings in the wooded area where this tree once stood. We can only hope they will survive long enough to reproduce and someday a Dutch elm disease resistant variety of the American Elm will flourish.



Bird Friendly Coffee The pre-order deadline for coffee delivery at the Charter Dinner, October 18, is Monday, October 7, 5 PM. If you would like to order coffee, please email your order to bachmanj@hartwick.edu or call 607-431-9509. Payment is due at the time of delivery. Cash, checks and credit cards are accepted. More information at <http://doas.us/bird-friendly-coffee/>

August and September Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

We've all had some heart-stopping moments when watching nature. In late August, Dorian Huneke had the thrill of observing a Red-tailed Hawk swoop down and pounce, unsuccessfully, on something. This occurred, unfortunately, at a busy intersection on Southside, Oneonta. She held her breath as the hawk "struggled to get height above all the traffic," but it finally did and flew off. That was her third RedTail of the day, but I imagine her tensest moment!

An Osprey was seen hunting on the Delaware River near Fitch's Bridge by Pam Peters (8/28) and again by Kathy Mario (9/4). Pam watched four Kingfishers while kayaking at East Sidney Lake in August, and another four near the Hamden Covered Bridge in September. Bald Eagles have been very vocal in Nancy Scorzafava's neighborhood at Goodyear Lake. As she pointed out one of their favorite perch trees to me, an adult called repeatedly. After setting off in our kayaks, we found two Double-crested Cormorants perched on a dead snag in the lake, drying their wings.

Up at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch, the counters occasionally have time to check

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.

the smaller avian visitors. An Olive-sided Flycatcher was observed there on several occasions (Pam Peters, Steve Hall, Fred Fries). Also noted were Raven, Flicker, Hummingbird, Bluebird, Yellowthroat, Towhee, Swallows, Veery, Pewee, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Chimney Swifts, Scarlet Tanager, Waxwings, Great Egret, Cormorant, and more.

Autumn can be an interesting time of year for birdwatching, as some species begin to flock together for their trek southward and others are passing through. In late August through early September, Kathryn Davino had a large flock of Grackles frequenting her lawn and feeders twice daily for a few weeks. In Worcester, Alice Pantaleoni noticed a flock of about 20 Killdeer in a wet pasture where two pair had nested this year. They had left the area after their chicks fledged; she wondered if they were back, gathering with others for migration. On a few evenings, Charlie Scheim and I saw Common Nighthawks hawking the skies over Fortin Park, Oneonta.

In mid-September, Tom Salo's back yard in West Burlington was a busy place, with Thrashers, Catbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and a Robin feasting on silky dogwood berries. One day Barred Owls were talking outside their bedroom window. With several broods of Phoebes having been raised there over the summer, many birds hung out on their favored perch each day. This perch



*Chestnut-sided Warbler
Photo by Rick Bunting*

being the upper strand of the laundry line, there were obvious issues with the laundry hung below.

Kayaking in Portlandville, Gerianne Carillo saw Great Egrets, Green and Great Blue Herons, Kingfisher, and her highlight, a Spotted Sandpiper taking a leisurely bath on the muddy shoreline. Stuck at home on crutches, Landa Palmer was consoled by watching her local Eagles, "oodles of Turkey Vultures", and, best of all, a few Cape May Warblers.

Some bird sightings can be a bit disturbing. Kathryn Davino had a Chipping Sparrow showing signs of advanced Avian Pox at her feeder near Delhi, a sad sight. Driving home one evening in Root, Steph Restuccia's daughter clipped a Woodcock. Luckily, it seemed dazed but not badly injured. Here in Oneonta, we observed several bald birds, including Blue Jays, Cardinals, and Grackles, while Kathryn had a bald Red-winged Blackbird and a crestless Cardinal. Happily, this is a fairly common phenomenon from which birds recover quickly, starting to grow new feathers in about a week. Until those feathers grow in, though, they look much like mini vultures!

Upcoming Activities

October

October 5– Open House: 10 AM-2 PM at DOAS Sanctuary. More information at <http://doas.us/event/2019-open-house-at-hawkwatch-saturday-october-5/>. Bird Mask Workshop with artist Caroline Fay will be held from 11 AM to 12:30 PM. Suitable for ages 4+.

October 15 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

October 18– 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 2019.” 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 on page 1.

October 20– Fall Migration Trip to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge led by environmental educator, Chris DeCesare. Meet at the Dietz Street Parking lot (across from the Oneonta YMCA) at 7 AM. This is an all-day trip with an expected return to Oneonta around 5 PM. Participants should plan on packing a bagged lunch and snacks, water, etc. For additional details, contact Chris DeCesare at 607-244-5496 or chris.decesare444@gmail.com. REGISTER ONLINE (FREE) at <https://doas.us/event/montezuma-national-wildlife-refuge-fall-migration-2019/>

November

November 2 – Bird Seed Order Deadline by 5 PM

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

Club Road, Oneonta.

November 15 – DOAS Public Program: “Structure and Function in Forested Ecosystems.” Jack Tessier from SUNY Delhi will lead us on a pictorial tour of forested ecosystems to see what is in them and how they work. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

December

December 3 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM

December 14– Oneonta Christmas Bird Count

December 28– Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count

January

January TBD– Delaware County Christmas Bird Count

January 17 – DOAS Public Program: “An Australian Adventure: From Reef to Rainforest.” Travel “down under” with DOAS Board member Kathryn Davino as she shares photos and videos of land and sea creatures she encountered in this fascinating and magical country. The program begins at 7:30 PM at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

January 21 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 PM



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

DOAS Membership

Cost is \$25 annually or \$35 for two years; family memberships \$30 annually or \$40 for two years. Please make your check payable to “DOAS” and mail payment with this form 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!

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

Your mailing label will inform you of your membership expiration date (year and month, e.g. ‘1910 indicates October 2019).



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820
www.doas.us



At the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Sanctuary, 52 Grange Hall Rd. Spur, Oneonta, NY - VISIT DOAS.US for EVENT DETAILS

DOAS Sanctuary Open House

On Saturday, October 5 from 10 AM to 2 PM, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society will host an open house at the DOAS Sanctuary and Hawkwatch at 52 Grange Hall Spur Road, Oneonta. The event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be available throughout the day.

Open House Schedule

At 10 AM, one of the Franklin Mountain hawk counters will conduct a workshop on how to identify flying hawks followed at 11 AM with a trail walk through the Sanctuary which will end at the Hawkwatch. From 11AM to 12:30 PM, visitors (ages 4 and up) can participate in a bird mask-making workshop with Artist, Caroline Fay. At 12:30 PM, Wildlife Rehabilitator, Missy Runyan from the Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Center, will feature live raptors.



Photo by Tina M. Nieslucho



Photo by Janet Potter

More information at <https://doas.us/event/2019-open-house-at-hawkwatch-saturday-october-5/>