



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

COMING ACTIVITIES

Please check for changes at
<https://doas.us/events/>

Fall

Sanctuary Open House is cancelled for 2020

September

September 15 – DOAS Board Mtg

September 18 – Virtual Program, “Conservation Through Education”

October

October 16 – Online Charter Celebration with presentation on Loons

October 20 – DOAS Board Mtg

October 25 – Bird Seed Order Deadline

November

November 7 – Bird Seed Pickup

November 20 – Virtual Program, “Costa Rica’s Biodiversity”

December

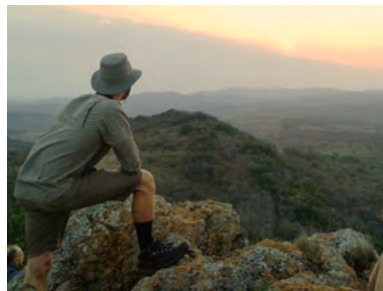
December 1 – DOAS Board Mtg

December 19 – Oneonta

Christmas Bird Count

More information on page 11

CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION: GARRETT CAMASI



Join us on September 18 for a virtual program presented by Garrett Camasi, sharing his views on “Conservation through Education.” Garrett is a biology student with a passion for wildlife education. He describes himself as a 26-year-old veterinary technician, zookeeper, safari guide, and wildlife photographer who has worked with tigers and penguins from the illegal animal trade, has rehabilitated local species and exotic species in other countries, and photographed the human-wildlife conflict in Asia.

He says, “Conservation is defined as utilization of natural resources in order to prevent depletion, and in our modern world, entire ecosystems are being depleted of their biodiversity. Human encroachment and habitat

loss, overhunting, overfishing, and overharvesting, pollution, invasive species, loss in genetic diversity, and the human-wildlife conflict all contribute to species becoming critically endangered. From birds to bees, elephants to whales, gorillas to sea turtles, and leopards to fireflies, species in all taxonomic classes are in trouble.”

Garrett invites us to participate in his program: “I’ve learned from traveling, working, studying, and speaking with wildlife conservationists and veterinarians from around the world, and am excited to pass on stories to you.” Register for this program at <https://doas.us/member-only/> to receive the instructions for participating.

Photos contributed by Garrett Camasi

53RD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PLEASE JOIN US ONLINE FOR a 53rd CHARTER CELEBRATION (in lieu of annual dinner) ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Register AND/OR Purchase Raffle Tickets at <https://doas.us/2020-charter-celebration/>. See article on page 4.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

COVID, CONTINUED

by Co-president Andy Mason

The effects of the Covid-19 virus continue on our organization, as with the rest of society. DOAS has been shut down physically since March—no public programs, no face-to-face board meetings, no field trips, no summer Day Camp, no planned workshops.

The fall looks to be much of the same. The board has decided that the popular open house at the DOAS Sanctuary in October will not happen this year. Also that month, the annual Charter Dinner has been cancelled, although we do plan to still have the evening's program available online. The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch will be in operation, but with limited and controlled public participation—see Tom Salo's article elsewhere in the newsletter. Our monthly public presentations will take place, but online as were the spring programs.

Even with all these setbacks, DOAS has remained active and connected. Our online presence has grown—not only continuing most of our planned events, but even expanding into birding webinars, a photography session, and most recently, informal “bird chats”. We have ideas for more along these lines, and welcome suggestions from members for



topics and ways we can connect virtually.

The board did hold a socially-distanced meeting at the Sanctuary in August—a rare opportunity to actually see one another. But we will continue Zoom board meetings through the fall and likely winter, and until the Covid situation changes.

I have noted previously how fortunate DOAS is to have co-president Susan O'Handley taking the lead in bringing about these virtual happenings. She has been present and has overseen each program, meeting, and webinar, and all have been successes. I again have to commend Susan for her effort and skills in keeping us active and vibrant online and in many other ways.

Please join us this fall as we continue to safely stay connected and enjoy and learn as we wait to get back to 'normal'.

Follow and Like us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1968

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Charter Dinner: Kathryn Davino
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www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety

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

CONSERVATION AND LEGISLATION

by Andy Mason

A Few Bright Spots—Bad news on the environment has been a runaway train over the past three and a half years, but this summer brought some relief from the Trump administration's assault on our air, land, water and wildlife:

•**Pipeline shutdowns**—Following the announcement in February that the Constitution Gas Pipeline would be cancelled, other controversial fossil fuel pipelines have run into roadblocks. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which would zig-zag about 600 miles through West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina, was abandoned in July. Also, in July, a federal court ordered the shutdown of the Dakota Access Pipeline project, citing an inadequate environmental review. Several factors are involved in these actions, including strong public opposition to fossil fuel projects, and falling prices for renewable energy alternatives.

•**Win for the birds**—In early August, in a lawsuit brought by Audubon and other environmental groups, US District Court Judge Valerie Caproni ruled that the legal opinion which served as the basis for the Trump administration rollback of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act does not align with the intent and language of the 100-year-old law. The importance of this law and this



Northern Pintail
Wikimedia Photo by K. Koshy

decision to bird protection cannot be overstated. The administration was attempting to change the long-standing interpretation of the law as protecting birds from intentional or incidental harm, to an interpretation that only applied to intentional harm. This would have allowed energy companies, agricultural entities, developers, and others to avoid responsibility for bird injury and deaths from their activities.

•**State Legislature passes environmental bills**—At the end of its session in July, the New York State Legislature passed several good environmental bills that among other things would: ban the use of glyphosate—commonly marketed as Roundup—on state property; continue protection of delisted federally-endangered species in New York State until a review of the status of the species is carried out; require supermarkets to donate excess food and make good faith efforts to enter into agree-

ments with qualifying entities such as food pantries, food banks, or similar organizations to make edible, excess food available for collection; add lower classification waterways in the state to the list of protected streams in DEC's regulatory system; and close a loophole that allows hydrofracking waste to escape the definition of hazardous, leading to it being disposed of improperly—even though fracking itself is banned in the state. Governor Cuomo has signed this last bill into law, but the others are still on his desk.

Next month—A review of the environmental positions of state and federal candidates in November's election.

Legislative contacts can be found in the Advocacy section of our website, www.doas.us

Donations are still needed for our legal battle against the Bluestone Wind Project in Broome County, located in the major eagle migration route and home to wintering Bald and Golden Eagles. We are seeking to overturn the state's decision to approve this large wind farm and protect the birds. Checks can be sent to DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820, marked "Bluestone"; or donations can be made at www.doas.us.

DOAS Officers Elected

The Board met in August and elected officers for the 2020-2021 term. All incumbent officers were re-elected. They are co-presidents Becky Gretton, Andy Mason, Susan O'Handley; secretary Dorian Huneke; and treasurer Charlie Scheim. We thank them for their willingness to serve.

53RD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Mark Your Calendars for the 53rd Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, taking place on Friday, October 16, 2020 starting at 6:30 p.m. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it will not be possible to host our usual Charter Dinner in person this year. Instead, the celebration will take place completely online. The familiar Bucket Raffle is currently underway and has gone virtual. It features many fine items generously donated by local artisans and patrons. Photos of all raffle items and information for how to obtain raffle tickets are available online at <https://doas.us/2020-charter-celebration/>. For patrons who do not use



the Internet, we will gladly mail you the raffle information. Contact us by phone at 607-397-3815 or by mail at PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820.

Our featured presenter will be Dr. Nina Schoch who will address “Conservation Through the Lives of Common Loons.” This program will provide an overview of loon natural history and behavior, threats affecting loon populations, and the work of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation. (ACLC)

The ACLC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring passion for the conservation of Common Loons. Dr. Schoch is the Executive Director and has studied loons in the Adirondack Park since 1998. She has a vast array of credentials and awards which appear on www.doas.us.

A donation of \$25 is suggested (but not required) in lieu of dinner fees. You must register in advance for the celebration/webinar at <https://doas.us/2020-charter-celebration/> by October 15. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. You will receive a reminder email the day before the event.

LONG-TIME FRANKLIN MOUNTAIN HAWKWATCH COUNTER STEVE HALL RECEIVES AWARD

Long-time Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch counter Steve Hall recently received Oneida County’s Kirkland Bird Club’s **James and Virginia Francis Conservation Award**. President Karen Evert said they had planned to present the award at the club’s March meeting, but it was cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead President Evert and several club members who had nominated Steve got together for a less formal presentation on June 17th. In addition to a plaque, they presented Steve with a check for \$150 for gas money for travel to and from Franklin Mountain.

Steve Hall has been a counter on Franklin Mountain since 2001. He spends two or three day a week



Daily Star Photo

from early fall through the end of December at the Hawkwatch counting 16 species of raptors as they migrate through the Susquehanna Valley.

The James and Virginia Francis Conservation Award is bestowed annually by the Kirkland Bird



Club. Congratulations to Steve Hall on this well-earned recognition. DOAS adds our thanks for his service.

2020 Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser Order Form



First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Email Address _____
 Phone number _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

ORDER DEADLINE - SUNDAY, OCT. 25, 5pm • PRODUCT PICK UP - SATURDAY, NOV. 7, 9am-11am

PICK UP LOCATION: VP Supply Corp, 41 Country Club Road, Oneonta, NY.

LOCALLY GROWN BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED Support our local farms with your purchase of this product.

Black Oil Sunflower Seed 40 lb bag @ \$30 per bag # _____ x \$30.00 ea = \$ _____

The soft seed hulls of Black Oil Sunflower allow the food value of the nutmeat to be easily accessed by all of the seed-eating birds. This makes it the best single ingredient choice for attracting the most colorful songbirds.

MORE BIRD SEED PRODUCTS

Featuring products from Aspen Song - All Natural Wild Bird Food. Aspen Song mixes are designed to provide the best possible nutrition with the broadest possible appeal to your backyard visitors.

Black Oil Sunflower Seed 20 lb bag @ \$20 per bag # _____ x \$20.00 ea = \$ _____

This is a premium option for well-cleaned sunflower seed. Works great in tray or platform feeders; best single ingredient choice for attracting the most colorful songbirds.

Ultimate Blend 20 lb bag @ \$27 per bag # _____ x \$27.00 ea = \$ _____

Ultimate Blend 40 lb bag @ \$50 per bag # _____ x \$50.00 ea = \$ _____

A corn-free mix that includes Black Oil Sunflower, White Proso Millet, Black Stripe Sunflower, Peanuts, Sunflower Kernels, Safflower, Tree Nuts and Shelled Pumpkin Seeds.

Premium Blend 20 lb bag @ \$26 per bag # _____ x \$26.00 ea = \$ _____

Premium Blend 40 lb bag @ \$49 per bag # _____ x \$49.00 ea = \$ _____

Includes Black Oil Sunflower, White Proso Millet, Cracked Corn, Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Safflower, Canola, Small Yellow Millet, Canary Seed, Nyjer Seed and Dehydrated Cherries.

Choice Blend 20 lb bag @ \$21.50 per bag # _____ x \$21.50 ea = \$ _____

Choice Blend 40 lb bag @ \$39.50 per bag # _____ x \$39.50 ea = \$ _____

Over 30% Sunflowers & Peanuts and includes White Proso Millet, Black Oil Sunflower, Cracked Corn, Peanuts, Safflower and Black Stripe Sunflower.

Select Blend 17 lb bag @ \$18.50 per bag # _____ x \$18.50 ea = \$ _____

Select Blend 35 lb bag @ \$34.50 per bag # _____ x \$34.50 ea = \$ _____

A mix of Black Oil Sunflower, Cracked Corn, White Proso Millet, Pistachios, Safflower, and Steam-crimped Corn.

Value Blend 30 lb bag @ \$16.00 per bag # _____ x \$16.00 ea = \$ _____

This is a low-cost mix containing Red Milo, Cracked Corn, White Proso Millet and Black Oil Sunflower that is best for ground feeding birds (juncos, doves, sparrows).

Just Desserts 20 lb bag @ \$42.50 per bag # _____ x \$42.50 ea = \$ _____

A shell-less mix for those who don't want shells, waste, germination or mess. It contains Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Sunflower Kernels, Hulled White Millet, and Shelled Pumpkin Seeds.

Nut and Fruit Woodpecker Blend 20 lb bag @ \$46.50 per bag # _____ x \$46.50 ea = \$ _____

Shell-less mix designed for woodpeckers and wire mesh tube feeders, this mix includes Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Sunflower Kernels, Steam-crimped Corn, Shelled Pumpkin Seeds, Raisins, Dehydrated Cherries, Dried Cranberries and Dried Blueberries.

Nyjer Seed 25 lb bag @ \$53.50 per bag # _____ x \$53.50 ea = \$ _____

To primarily attract finches, siskin & redpoll, this is used in feeders with tiny seed ports.

Nyjer Seed 4 lb bag @ \$9 per bag # _____ x \$ 9.00 ea = \$ _____

The 4 lb. option is custom bagged by DOAS for those who prefer smaller quantities.

Nut and Fruit Suet 11 oz Cakes (SINGLES) \$2.50 each # _____ x \$ 2.50 ea = \$ _____

Nut and Fruit Suet 11 oz Cakes (CASE of 12) \$23.50 each # _____ x \$23.50 ea = \$ _____

Made from rendered beef kidney fat with peanut butter, sunflower seed, white millet, cracked corn, peanuts & cashews. Refined to maintain a high melting point for year-round feeding.

Hi-Energy Suet 12 oz Cakes (SINGLES) \$2 each # _____ x \$ 2.00 ea = \$ _____

Hi Energy Suet 12 oz Cakes (CASE of 12) \$22 each # _____ x \$22.00 ea = \$ _____

BIRD FRIENDLY COFFEE Featuring products from Birds and Beans - Triple Certified -
Shade grown Smithsonian certified 'Bird Friendly' coffee, which is also USDA Organic and Fair-Trade certified.

Wood Thrush - Breakfast Roast Coffee

12 oz bag (\$12.50) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$12.50 ea = \$ _____
2 lb bag (\$26) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$26.00 ea = \$ _____

This blend has a mild, bright, flavor, with mango citrus notes, a light body and fragrant aroma - a delightful coffee for a pleasant start to your day.

American Redstart - Light Roast Coffee

12 oz bag (\$12.50) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$12.50 ea = \$ _____
2 lb bag (\$26) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$26.00 ea = \$ _____

From farmers Asociación Civil Guaya'b in the Huehuetenango region of Guatemala, smooth and full-bodied with heavy notes of cocoa and walnuts. The acidity is mellow and flavor reminiscent of red apples.

Chestnut-sided Warbler - Medium Roast Coffee

12 oz bag (\$12.50) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$12.50 ea = \$ _____
2 lb bag (\$26) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$26.00 ea = \$ _____

From farmers co-op UCA San Juan del Río Coco in the Northern Nicaraguan Highlands, shows black cherry, raisin, cranberry, brown sugar and roasted chestnut in the cup.

Scarlet Tanager - French/Dark Roast Coffee

12 oz bag (\$12.50) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$12.50 ea = \$ _____
2 lb bag (\$26) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$26.00 ea = \$ _____

From farmers co-op La Florida, high in the Andes in Peru, this is a smooth and creamy blend with savory sweetness of chocolate, caramel and almond.

Kingbird - Espresso Roast Coffee

12 oz bag (\$13.50) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$13.50 ea = \$ _____
2 lb bag (\$28) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$28.00 ea = \$ _____

This roast is a wonderful blend of coffees - balanced, sweet, somewhat bright with good body, has dominant Mandarin orange on the aroma, with nutty sweet toffee, clean and smooth in the cup.

DECAF - Baltimore Oriole - French Roast Coffee

12 oz bag (\$13.50) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$13.50 ea = \$ _____
2 lb bag (\$28) Circle one: GROUND WHOLE BEAN _____ x \$28.00 ea = \$ _____

A delicious, high quality decaf blend produced with water process caffeine extraction.

DOAS PRODUCTS

DOAS 15oz Kingfisher Mug \$10 each _____ x \$10.00 ea = \$ _____

Premium mug, matte black with white logo, bright green inside; Bring your mug to events like Earth Festival and enjoy a coffee on us. Not recommended for microwave use.

DOAS Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch Hat (One Size - Adjustable) \$20 each _____ x \$20.00 ea = \$ _____

DOAS Membership (check one as required)

____ Individual - 1 year (\$25) _____ Individual - 2 years (\$35) Enter amount from left \$ _____

____ Family - 1 year (\$30) _____ Family 2 years (\$40)

Your membership contribution helps to support our mission to protect our natural environment and connect people with nature to benefit birds and other wildlife through conservation, education, research and advocacy.

If your membership is current, we will extend for the selected timeframe. National Audubon membership is separate from local Chapter membership. Please support your local chapter.

DOAS Additional Donation Amount \$ _____

Please calculate your order total and enter the amount in the box to the right.

ORDER TOTAL

Mail payment to DOAS/2020 Bird Seed Sale - Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820 -must be received no later than 10/25/20.

Phone orders are accepted - call 607-397-3815 or Order Online at www.doas.us/2020-bird-seed-sale.

PLEASE JOIN US ONLINE FOR 53rd CHARTER CELEBRATION (in lieu of annual dinner) ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 6:30-8:30pm. Register AND/OR Purchase Raffle Tickets at <https://doas.us/event/2020-charter-celebration>.

Would You Like to Receive DOAS Update Emails?

(DOAS Update Emails are sent monthly (and additionally as needed) and include notification of upcoming DOAS activities, news and events.)

____ Yes, Please Add Me to DOAS News Email List _____ I already receive update emails _____ No, Thank You

Since 1989 the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch has provided a valuable educational resource and data-gathering effort. We will be counting hawks and eagles this fall with guidelines in place to minimize risks to counters and visitors alike. There should be a counter present every dry day from September to December.

For safety, we want to avoid having crowds on the mound. We will not be sending out regular publicity. The Hawkcast migration alerts are being suspended temporarily to avoid drawing crowds on big days. The email list will be maintained for the future, but you will need to watch the weather yourself to catch a big flight. Occasionally this season, messages of a general nature will go out to that list. We'll announce the start of the season and the safety measures in place. As the season progresses, we will provide information on the species expected and preferred weather.

A section of the mound will be cordoned off for "Counters Only". No visitor should enter the counter

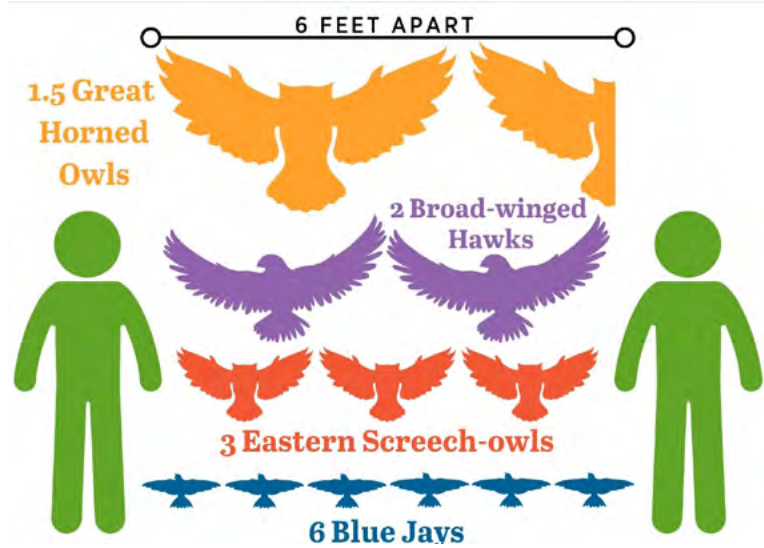


Image from Pennsylvania Audubon

area without an invitation. This will limit the amount of room available. Visitors need to maintain a 6-foot distance from anyone not in their party. If this is not possible, masks should be worn. At times, this need for distance may make it necessary to observe from off-the-mound.

DOAS optics and ID materials will not be made available to visitors this season. Visitors should avoid sharing their optics with others.

Counters always appreciate help spotting birds. With visitors at a greater distance, and sometimes wearing masks, be sure the counter hears you. Feel free to speak up even if you lack confidence on your identification skills. The greatest benefit to the counter is help finding birds in the sky. Identification is the counter's responsibility. Don't feel bad if the counter has already tallied a bird you spotted. Better to make sure it is seen than to have it missed.



Bird Friendly Coffee

Even in these days of virtual DOAS meetings, it is still possible to get your coffee fix! You may order our delicious bird-friendly coffee as part of the annual seed sale, for pick up on November 7 (see order form on page 5 and 6). If you can't wait until November, you may contact Jane Bachman (bachmanj@hartwick.edu) to submit an order; pick up may be arranged from Jane's front porch at 43 Church Street in Oneonta. You may leave a check (made out to DOAS) in her mailbox, or mail the check to her. Shipment of coffee is also possible, in which case you will be responsible for covering the cost of shipping.



Indigo Bunting
Photo by Barb Palmer

It's always a pleasure to find birds in unexpected places. In mid-May, Stanley Salthe had just such a treat when he discovered Swamp Sparrows taking up residence in an old swimming pool that had gone "back to nature", providing acceptable habitat for the wetland birds. An Orchard Oriole visited Nancy and Betty New's nectar feeders in Oneonta, and White-crowned Sparrows visited their yard.

Becky Gretton and Cindy Staley observed a flock of 100 Brant flying in loose formation. Angelika Rashkow enjoyed the beauty of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in Cooperstown, while two male Indigo Buntings tried to "out-handsome" the Baltimore Orioles in Barb Palmer's yard in Jefferson. The May 16 Big Day turned up some late spring arrivals: Bank Swallows, Blue-winged Warbler, Willow Flycatcher, Blackburnian Warbler, Northern Parula (Randy and Carol Lynch), Green Heron (Kathleen Peters), Rough-winged Swallow, Red-eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing (Andy Mason, Barb Palmer), Hooded Merganser with chicks

(David Diaz), Cliff Swallow, Prairie Warbler, and Eastern Wood-Pewee. Black-billed Cuckoos appeared near Franklin on the 18th (Pam Peters). Andy Mason discovered fledgling Common Ravens in the Oneonta Rail Yard (5/20) and Mourning Warbler in Jefferson (5/28).

By the end of May, many birds were busy with the business of breeding. Tom and Jo Salo found Veery, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Scarlet Tanager carrying nesting material (West Burlington). In Jefferson, Oriole and Kingbird nests were being built, and Hairy Woodpeckers labored to feed their noisy brood (Barb Palmer).

June brought Killdeer with four tiny fledglings, and Barn Swallows dropping empty eggshells out of nests in Treadwell (Dorian Huneke). Gerianne Carillo discovered a Carolina Wren nest in Milford. Near Cooperstown David Diaz confirmed breeding for Blackburnian Warblers, not an easy task for those top-of-the-canopy species!

Osprey have successfully nested on a utility pole near Riddell State Park for several years, persistently rebuilding each year despite the removal of their nests. Charlie and I discovered a new breeding pair about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away. Tom Salo reported a third Otsego County nest in Hartwick, and Steve Hall reported nests near Frankfort and Herkimer. This species is definitely on the rise in the area!

As June was drawing to a close, Rod Spangle watched a Kestrel pair supervising three fledglings along

Covered Bridge Road in Unadilla, and Barb Palmer snapped pictures of a Yellow Warbler family near Jefferson. Suzanne Gaynor discovered the reason for a male Scarlet Tanager's agitation when she spotted a fledgling on a branch below. Jessie Ravage found a Loon on Otsego Lake. Matt Young discovered a singing Yellow-breasted Chat at Parslow Road Conservation Area, a very unusual species for our area!

In early July, Dorian Huneke heard the familiar calls of Red-tailed Hawk fledglings (Treadwell). Over in Maryland, Red-bellied Woodpeckers brought their young to Linda Pearce's feeders. A Yellow-throated Vireo visited Kathryn Davino's birches in Delhi. Later in the month, John Davis noted hearing quite a few Alder Flycatchers, comparing their emphatic song with that of the more complacent song of the Eastern Phoebe. Charlie Scheim was astounded to find Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos at opposite ends of a field, both pairs acting as though there were nests nearby (Oneonta). In West Oneonta we watched a rodeo performance as an Eastern Kingbird alighted on and furiously pecked the back of a juvenile Bald Eagle in an effort to drive the intruder away. It worked.

August brought a Black Vulture to Cobleskill (Elliott Adams). Investigating the source of a loud thump on the window, I discovered a Merlin atop the neighbor's roof eyeing a stunned pigeon hiding behind our grill. Merlin left hungry; pigeon left relieved.

NEW YORK STATE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS UPDATE

by Charlie Scheim

The third New York State Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) is wrapping up its first of five scheduled seasons this September. The BBA's purpose is to document not merely what birds can be found in NYS, but what species of birds are actually breeding here. This is our third BBA; each one lasts for five years and they occur every twenty years. The previous two were 1980-84 and 2000-04; this current BBA will last 2020-24. The data collected in this long-term effort is key to our understanding what birds inhabit our state and how their populations are changing over the years.

The state is divided into 5,710 blocks that are about 3 miles by 3 miles. As folks are out birding, they record what species are seen and what breeding behaviors are observed. In the past this was done with paper and pencil, but now birders enter their observations into eBird, updating the atlas in almost real time using the servers at Cornell's Lab of Ornithology. Behaviors are classified as Possible, Probable, or Confirmed breeding. For example, a robin observed on your lawn or heard singing would be coded as a Possible breeder; a robin observed defending its territory or pairing up with another robin would be coded as a Probable breeder; and a robin seen carrying food or found in a nest is coded as a Confirmed breeder. Included in the data submitted to eBird is the location



Pileated Woodpecker young
Photo by Charlie Scheim

of the observations, and eBird automatically credits the information to the appropriate block. The general goal for each block is to locate 55-95 species with 50% coded as confirmed breeders.

Birders in the state have responded enthusiastically to the challenge. As of this writing, 1447 atlasers have coded 273 species and confirmed 214 of these in New York state overall. More locally, in Otsego County's 109 blocks, 60 atlasers have found 143 species, and 102 of these have been confirmed. In the 166 blocks in Delaware County, there have been 73 confirmations among the 136 species observed by 52 atlasers.

Of course, these first-year summary numbers don't tell the full tale, since the BBA is interested in the data block by block. There is still a lot of work to be done. 90 blocks in Otsego and Delaware Counties have no coded species at all, and 213 blocks have 30 or fewer coded species.

Birders of all levels can help further the BBA cause. It is a wonderful way to engage in citizen science, enjoy the outdoors, and learn a lot more about our local birds and their behaviors. If you are interested in finding out more about the BBA or about using eBird, please contact me at scheimc@hartwick.edu and I'll be glad to help you start atlasing!

Bald Eagle *Schoharie's* Recovery and Release By Tom Salo

Wildlife rehabilitators are a dedicated bunch. They spend their time and money helping wildlife recover from sickness and injuries in the hope they can return to the wild. Missy Runyan - at the Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Center in Hunter (FFFWC) - puts massive amounts of time and money into treating eagles, including those poisoned by lead.

The main source of toxic lead in eagles is bullet fragments. Eagles regularly scavenge what hunters leave behind. DOAS and FFFWC have worked for years to minimize these avoidable tragedies through hunter education. Still, many hunters use lead and the poisonings continue.

Little is known about the survival rates of these birds once they are released. We know some birds are not successful. Missy has changed

how she treats lead poisoned birds in the hope of improving outcomes. Our organizations are seeking more information about the lead poisoned eagles the center rehabilitates. We recently raised funds to GPS-track recovered Bald Eagles. The technology is the same as what we used on winter resident Golden Eagles. This effort will provide much needed information.

The first thing we need to learn is whether they survive. Can they fend for themselves? Secondly, will they return to a normal life and possibly reproduce?

The first eagle to be treated, released and tracked flew into the sky on July 19 near Howe's Cave where it was found. The bird - named Schoharie - made tracks north. By July 27 he was near Saranac Lake. By July 28 he was west of Montreal. On August 1 he headed into the wilds of northern Quebec.

At that point Schoharie went out of cell reception range.

The path Schoharie took looks a lot like a spring migratory path. It seems counter-intuitive to be migrating north in early August. However, this eagle was found incapacitated on March 8, the peak of the spring migration. He may be resuming an interrupted migration to northern breeding grounds. That is our hope anyway. It may be awhile before we learn its fate. If he survives and returns south, it could be December before he checks in.

DOAS thanks Missy for her dedication and hard work. We also thank everyone who donated to this project. At \$1400 per bird, we currently have enough funding for tracking a second eagle when a good candidate is ready.

Photos by Schoharie County Photos



Missy Runyan with Schoharie



Schoharie released



Upcoming Activities

Please Note: All DOAS group events have been canceled or converted to digital format to avoid opportunities to spread COVID-19. **To stay up-to-date about events, visit the DOAS website** (<https://doas.us/events/>) or Facebook Page and sign up for our ENews at <https://doas.us/sign-up-for-doas-news/>. ENews is a monthly email notification and is different from the *Belted Kingfisher* newsletter.

Members can register first at <https://doas.us/member-only/>

Some online events have limits on the number of attendees, so the following events are currently available for registration by DOAS Members:

September 18: Conservation through Education with Garrett Camasi

October 16: Charter Celebration and Keynote: Loons of the Adirondacks with Dr. Nina Schoch

November 20: Costa Rica's Biodiversity: What Can You Really Expect to see? with Dr. Peter Fauth

January 15, 2021: Florida Photos with Rick Bunting

Feb. 19: Great Gray Owls with Kyle Dudgeon

March 19: Highlights from "Down Under" with Dr. Pam Lea

April 16: Members and Friends PhotoShare with DOAS Board

To register for any of these today, before they are more widely publicized, go to <https://doas.us/member-only/>

September

September 1 – DOAS Bird Seed Sale Begins

September 15 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

September 18– DOAS Public Program: Conservation Through Education. a virtual program presented by Garrett Camasi, sharing his views on Conservation, and showing some wonderful photographs. See article on page 1

October

October 16 – 53rd Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society: Our virtual celebration will feature Dr. Nina Schoch who will address "Conservation Through the Lives of Common Loons." This program will provide an overview of loon natural history and behavior, threats affecting loon populations, and the work of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation. (ACLC). See article on page 4

October 20 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

October 25 – Bird Seed Order Deadline by 5 p.m.

November

November 7– Bird Seed Sale Pickup: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Pickup Location at VP Supply Corp., 41 Country Club Road, Oneonta.

November 20 – DOAS Public Program: "Costa Rica's Biodiversity: What Can You Really Expect to See?" During our online program, Dr. Peter Fauth will describe some of the fascinating natural history of Costa Rica and share with you some of the biodiversity he has observed during several visits to Costa Rica.

December

December 1 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

December 19– Oneonta Christmas Bird Count

DOAS Membership

Cost is \$25 annually or \$35 for two years; family memberships \$30 annually or \$40 for two years. Memberships can also be purchased online at <http://doas.us> or make your check payable to "DOAS" and mail payment to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544.

Support DOAS education and conservation programs with an additional donation!



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

“The Peace of Wild Things”

Wendell Berry

Listen

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.



American Robin
Photo by Landa Palmer