



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

COMING ACTIVITIES

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

October

October 7 – Non-lead Ammunition Zoom Panel Discussion
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

January

January TBA – Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count
January 3 – Delaware County Christmas Bird Count
January 15 – Virtual Program, “Florida Photos”
January 17 – Waterfowl Count
January 19 – DOAS Board Mtg
January 23 – Eagle Trip

More information on page 7

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

DOAS CELEBRATES OUR 53RD ANNIVERSARY—JOIN US!

Make your reservations now 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, our usual Charter Dinner will not be possible this year. Instead, the celebration will take place completely online. The familiar Bucket Raffle is currently underway on our website. 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.

The evening will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a welcome and the DOAS Annual Report. All raffle ticket sales will end at 7:30 p.m. when our Keynote Presentation begins. 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 that appear on www.doas.us. The celebration will conclude at 8:30 p.m. with the announcement of the raffle winners.

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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE WELCOME TO THE DOAS SANCTUARY, HOME OF THE FRANKLIN MOUNTAIN HAWKWATCH!

by Co-president Susan O'Handley

In the Spring of 2019, we began a project for some much-needed improvements at the DOAS Sanctuary and are happy to report that our work is now completed, thanks to the efforts of key individuals from the DOAS Board and volunteers. Our site entryways (street-side at Grange Hall Road and the driveway at Grange Hall Road Spur) have both been re-configured and landscaped, with new visitor signs installed. The new signage, in addition to other improvements at the site, enhance the visitor experience.

The signs are two-sided and are designed for use at both entry to and exit from the site using QR Codes that are scanned with a smartphone camera or app to access applicable content on a dedicated visitor website. Logging into the site upon arrival helps us to learn information about the number of visitors at the site each year, where people travel from to visit and what brings them there. It also

allows for communication about a 'message of the day' or other important notifications that might be pertinent for visitors (for example a reported bear sighting on one of the trails over the summer so that hikers can be extra cautious, or lost keys to be on the lookout for). Visitors can view the site map and trail guide, learn about the Hawkwatch, download a bird checklist and more!

When exiting the Sanctuary, users are encouraged to log out, using a different QR code that is located on the back panel of the signs. At this time, a visitor can report bird sightings, send us a message or photo, find other birding locations nearby, places to eat, things to do and learn other suggestions for local activities.

In addition to our beautiful new entryways and signs, we have refreshed some of our trail markers and added mesh to walkway areas

"Sanctuary" Continued on page 8



THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY FOUNDED 1968

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

CONSERVATION AND LEGISLATION

by Andy Mason

Election 2020—It seems as if every four years the presidential contest is dubbed, “the most important election of our lives.” After living through a dozen such races, I tend to take it with a grain of salt. But for environmentalists, this year the expression may be true.

President Donald Trump has carried out a full-scale assault on the environment in his first term. He has made clear his intention to continue and expand his pullbacks on air, water and land protections, to increase use of fossil fuels with no regard for climate change, and to weaken wildlife laws such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Much of this has been documented here over the past few years, but a great deal more has gone on that has had the effect of rolling back decades of environmental protection. If anything positive can be said, it is that the Trump agenda is clear and unambiguous—more of the same.

The president’s opponent, former VP Joe Biden, has had a positive environmental record over his public career, although he could not be called a champion. According to the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), Biden cast pro-environment votes 83 percent of the time over the course of his 36



years in the Senate. His stance on fossil fuels and climate change has been mixed—at one time standing against strengthening fuel efficiency standards for vehicles. As Vice-President, he was a leading force in the Obama administration’s push for \$90 billion in funding for clean energy projects.

Congressional Races—All House of Representatives seats are up for election on November 2, with two contested races in our Chapter area. In the 19th Congressional District, incumbent Democrat Antonio Delgado faces Republican Kyle Van De Water. Delgado has spoken strongly of the importance of protecting waters of the Catskills and Hudson Valley, and using tax policy to accelerate the shift from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources. He has received a 97% positive rating from the LCV for his first term. Van De Water does not mention the environment on his web site, but his campaign platform has been described as directly in line with that of President Trump.

In the 22nd District, incumbent Democrat Anthony Brindisi faces Republican Claudia Tenney. Brindisi has a 97% positive LCV rating for his first term and supports clean energy jobs and America restoring its place as a leader in addressing global warming. Tenney has no information on her environmental positions on her web site. During her previous term in Congress, her LCV positive rating was 6%.

State Legislative Races—All NY State Assembly and Senate seats

are up for election this year. In the central part of the DOAS area, newcomers Pete Oberacker and Jim Barber are vying for the open 51st Senate District seat. A Schenectady businessman, Republican Oberacker presently serves on the Otsego County Board of Representatives. His campaign provides no information on environmental positions on its website. Barber, a Schoharie County farmer, lists protecting natural resources and addressing the climate crisis among his top three priorities. He has been active in opposing hydrofracking in NY.

The 122nd Assembly District is also an open seat, with Republican Joe Angelino facing Democrat Richard Shaw. Not a lot is available regarding the candidates’ environmental stances. Former Norwich police chief Angelino helps with maintenance of the Finger Lakes Trail. Shaw, of Downsville in Delaware County and retired from DMCO BOCES, describes himself as an “avid outdoorsman.”

In the 121st Assembly District, Republican John Salka is opposed by Democrat Dan Buttermann. Incumbent Salka does not include the environment among issues on his web site. His positive rating on the EPL/Environmental Advocates scorecard for his first term was 72%—opposing bans on the dangerous pesticide chlorpyrifos and on fracking waste in NY but supporting environmental justice legislation. Buttermann, of Oneonta, calls for increased energy efficiency programs coupled with a transition from coal and gas plants to solar and wind.

To learn which districts you are in, visit the Advocacy section of our website, www.doas.us



Common Raven
Photo by Mick Thompson

What's that bird I see soaring overhead? Is that a hawk? Can't be a hawk, now it's flapping like a crow. But it's too big for a crow, can't be a crow. It's soaring again, definitely not a crow. Oh, listen, it sort of sounds like a crow, but not really. Ah, is that a raven?

Yes, that is a raven. It's only been in the last 10 years or so that I have seen ravens regularly in my area of Delaware County, NY. According to the life history of the Common Raven, on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds, Common Ravens are slowly moving back into the forests of the northeastern US and Canada as those forests regenerate. For the last 30-40 years farming in Delaware County has been in serious decline. Our woods are maturing into forests and new wooded areas are developing. I suspect this is contributing to the increase in the numbers of ravens in our area.

As often as I have seen them, it has always been adults and always in flight. I've never seen them perched or feeding, and certainly never had any idea where they may have been nesting, if they even nested in this area. But on July third of this year as I headed out on an early morning trail ride, I was treated to a rare encounter with ravens.

On the way up the mountain I started hearing some very strange calls in the woods. They were loud, but still distant, and almost hard to determine if bird or mammal. After listening for a few minutes, I began to suspect ravens. My change of direction took me away from the sound, which may have also quieted somewhat, and I forgot all about it until about a half hour later. The calls resumed much further up the mountain, louder and louder with many voices chiming in. Even my dog

was finding these sounds a little disturbing. She wasn't sure what she was approaching, stopped jogging, and walked tentatively ahead of me on the trail. My suspicion of ravens was confirmed when I rounded a bend and flushed four ravens from the trees, still vocalizing loudly. The calls seemed to me to be the raven version of young birds begging. Loud, varied, garbled, sometimes like something being injured. I don't know for sure if all four birds were juveniles, but all this begging was telling me that maybe there was an adult nearby, and that they may have recently fledged and were not too far from the nest.

It's fairly remote up on the mountain trails that I ride, over 500 acres of hunting land with most of it heavily wooded, and in all my years of trail riding here I've never come upon adult ravens in the woods, no less juveniles. This was such a gift, getting to hear and see juvenile ravens, and to know that adults are nesting in this area.

I have since learned that ravens leave home as juveniles (I suspect a little older than those I came across), wander quite a bit, and after much exploring settle down. Their area of residence becomes their 'home', and they remain true to it for most or all of the rest of their lives. I wonder if that mountain is 'home' to the adults that fledged that group, and if I might come across them again next year.

Big Broad-winged Hawk Year at Franklin Mountain

At press time the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch was 30 birds short of an annual Broad-winged Hawk record. Counts had been modest until September 11 when 912 broadwings were counted. The next 4 days brought the season total to 2392 on September 15.

Early October is a good time to visit the Hawkwatch. The weather is not yet very cold. It is known as the time of greatest species diversity. Good flights most often occur when the wind blows from the northwest, especially following periods of rain and the passing of a cold front.

Please follow the posted COVID rules. Do not enter the counters' area unless you are invited. Maintain a 6-foot distance from other people and groups. If this is not



Broad-winged Hawk
Photo by Landa Palmer

possible, masks should be worn. At times, social distancing may make it necessary to observe from off-the-mound.

If you spot birds that have not

been seen by others, speak loudly – holler if necessary. With distance, wind and masks, it is difficult for the counters to hear the visitors.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS. November ONLINE program, “Costa Rica’s Biodiversity” on FRIDAY, November 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. 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.

DOAS Gift Store

Aside from our delicious bird-friendly coffee, DOAS has the following items available for sale:

- * A classy green and black 15 oz. Kingfisher mug (\$10)
- * Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch baseball cap in olive green (\$20)
- * Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society khaki river hat (\$12)
- * Royal blue reusable bag with kingfisher logo (\$5)
- * Sibley’s Raptors of Eastern North America (waterproof; folds to about 4 x 9”; \$9)
- * Peterson’s FlashGuide to Backyard Birds (100+ species, folds to 4.5 x 8.5”; \$9)



If you’d like to order an item, please contact Jane Bachman (bachmanj@hartwick.edu); pickup and payment may be arranged from her front porch in Oneonta.

It's fascinating how birds time their breeding to coincide with availability of their favored food. At this time of year, most young birds are either independent or are being strongly encouraged to become so. But American Goldfinches nest later, waiting for thistles, which are not only a favorite food but also used for nesting material, to mature. I hear fledgling Goldfinches now in many areas, high in the canopy, loudly proclaiming their hunger, demanding to be fed. Soon they, too, will be introduced to our backyard feeders as they become more able to fend for themselves.

In mid-August, Barb Palmer discovered a group of Bobolinks and took several photos. This sparked quite a discussion as to whether they were female, juvenile, or male in winter plumage. Regardless of age or gender, they certainly looked attractive on their sunflower perches!

Later in the month, Elliott Adams had a Rusty Blackbird at his feeder in Sharon Springs. As the sky darkened, he watched a flock of unknown species, possibly a group of early migrators. Rod Spangle found a Northern Mockingbird perched on a wire along Covered Bridge Road in Unadilla. Charlie Scheim and I found a Yellow-throated Warbler near Burlington.

In early September, Andy Mason and Jane Bachman observed an unusual flycatcher that was calling



Bobolink
Photo by Barb Palmer

persistently at the Audubon Sanctuary, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, a species that breeds in the Adirondacks and Canada. Tom and Jo Salo reported a group of about twenty Red-breasted Nuthatches in some big spruces in West Burlington.

While sitting outside one evening in Treadwell, Dorian and Eric Huneke heard first a Belted Kingfisher chattering as it flew upstream, then an Eastern Screech-Owl calling its mournful whinny. A few days later, Dorian discovered a fairly new Mourning Dove eggshell in Treadwell; though these doves breed early, they will raise more than one brood, so this was from a later nest. Dorian also spotted a Cooper's Hawk taking off from the brush near her house. In Deposit, Stan Salthe observed the parenting skills of a male Northern Cardinal as it fed a short-tailed fledgling. Over at the Unadilla boat launch, Rod Spangle discovered another

unusual bird: a male Hooded Warbler.

The Hawk Watch at Franklin Mountain is a good place to spot a nice variety of song birds. A few of the species found there in the first days of the season were Barn and Tree Swallows, Indigo Bunting, Chimney Swift, Song and Field Sparrow, Great Blue Heron, House and Purple Finches, Red-eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, and a number of warblers (Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Blackburnian, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Parula). Plus, of course, the hawks, including 912 Broad-wings in a single day!

As this reporting period came to a close, I spotted some of those young Goldfinches high in a tree, doing their little wing flutters, begging for food, with an adult leaning in to offer regurgitated seed.

*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*.*

Upcoming Activities

Please Note: Many 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.

October

October 7 – “Hunters Urged To Choose Non-lead This Fall” – Zoom Panel Discussion at 7 p.m. More information and register at <https://doas.us/event/hunters-urged-to-choose-non-lead-this-fall/>

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 1.

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 Online 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

January

January TBA– Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count

January 3 – Delaware County Christmas Bird Count

January 15 – DOAS Online Public Program: “Florida Photos” with Rick Bunting.

January 17– New York Statewide Waterfowl Count

January 19 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

January 23– Eagle trip to Delaware County reservoirs. Due to Covid concerns, this year’s trip will be limited in numbers and include social distancing regarding vehicles. More details to come.

DOAS Membership Application

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

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>.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Support DOAS education and conservation programs with an additional donation: \$_____



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“Sanctuary” Continued from page 2

that had been slippery due to buildup of algae on wood panels. Directional signage along key roadway intersections have been produced and are awaiting installation by the Town of Davenport.

We are grateful to the Delaware County Tourism Promotion Department, the O'Connor Foundation, the Town of Davenport and Central NY Mobile Marketing for funding and in-kind contributions to make this project possible. We also thank DOAS Co-President Andy Mason for coordination of equipment and work crews for visitor entryway and sign installations, along with other members of our board who helped with trail work, and volunteers (coordinated by Board member Landa Palmer), Steve and Nate Cutting for their help with drilling through layers and layers of bedrock in order to install the 2nd sign! New entryway configurations and design work was done by Susquehanna Landscaping, Unadilla, NY.

When you visit the Sanctuary next, don't forget to log in and out! This documentation provides us with the ability to better estimate site use and can be instrumental in securing funding for future enhancements. We appreciate your help and invite you to visit and enjoy the Sanctuary this fall.

View at the DOAS Sanctuary

Photo by Landa Palmer



Support our Sponsors!

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