



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

COMING ACTIVITIES

March

- March 2 – DOAS Board Mtg
- March 3 – Webinar, “Ins and Outs of Electric Vehicles”
- March 9 – Webinar, “Green Heating and Cooling”
- March 19 – Virtual Program, “Highlights from Down Under”

April

- April 16 – Virtual Program, “Photo Showcase”
- April 20 – DOAS Board Mtg

May

- May 15 – DOAS Big Day Bird Count
- May 18 – DOAS Board Mtg
- May 21 – Virtual Program, *to be announced*

More information on page 7

HIGHLIGHTS FROM “DOWN UNDER” March Virtual Program with Dr. Pamela Lea

Take a virtual photo tour of Tasmania and New Zealand presented by local retired veterinarian, Dr. Pam Lea. For the majority of her 40 years in practice, Dr. Lea was owner and sole operator of the Exeter Veterinary Clinic.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the daughter of a Canadian exploration geologist, Dr. Lea inherited her father’s wanderlust. She has traveled to six continents over the years, honing her amateur photography skills. Her last big trip was to Tasmania, Australia, and New Zealand in the fall of 2019.

She will share a photographic travelogue of some of the highlights from that trip to “Down Under.” She is hoping to visit Argentina and the seventh continent, Antarctica, in February 2022.



Tasman Coast
Photo by Dr. Pamela Lea

**Join us on Zoom,
March 19th at 7:30 p.m.
Pre-Registration is required.**

REGISTER AT

<https://doas.us/events/>



**Share
Your Favorite
Bird Photos**

...FOR A SPECIAL AUDUBON
SPRING PROGRAM!



For our **April 16 online program**, we will feature favorite birding photos from our members and friends! We have some talented photographers in our audience (both amateur and professional) and all are welcome to contribute. This is not a contest – it is a chance to share bird images. Each person may submit **UP TO THREE** of their favorite photos. Photos must have been taken by the person submitting our form – your own original images. Depending on the number of submissions we may need to select from among these for our program. Your description is very important. Include information about where the photo was taken, identification information if you can, and information about why it is a ‘favorite’ photo. Learn more and submit at doas.us/share-your-favorite-bird-photos/

The deadline to submit your photos is **March 31, 2021**, but we request that people submit as soon as possible.

Tracking Your Household Carbon Emissions - an Important Step Towards Net Zero

by Co-president Susan O'Handley



This past fall, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society hosted a webinar given by Dr. Chandu Visweswariah from CURE 100 (Communities United to Reduce Emissions 100% by 2040) on the dire need for climate action now. A recording of the presentation can be found at the DOAS website at bit.ly/3tHStJs or <https://doas.us/climate-action-the-dire-need-for-net-zero-and-what-you-can-do-webinar-2020/>.

One of the main takeaways of the program was the need for “carbon literacy,” i.e., for us to learn about our current carbon emissions, so that we can take household actions (now and over the next 20 years) to reduce these emissions and track our progress in order to attain zero net carbon. CURE 100 has developed a resource for this and has officially launched the Carbon Tracker App for Communities. This is a web application where a user can review areas of their household infrastructure and practices. Users enter their current information in 6 different sections in a questionnaire in order to assess their household carbon emissions in the following areas: Transportation, Heating & Cooling, Electricity, Food & Waste, Goods & Services, Zip Code Overhead.

For example - in the Transportation section, the user enters information for each vehicle in the household: year, make, model, type of engine fuel source, approximate

number of miles driven per year, and miles per gallon. Once the data is completed by the user, there is a carbon emissions total (in metric tons of CO² per year) that is provided for that vehicle.

Completing the questionnaire provides a summary of the current carbon emissions for the household along with helpful tips on ways to bring those numbers down (to zero or close to zero goals) in each category. DOAS has been working to provide additional presentations to address each topic area through separate follow up webinars with local and regional experts. (View <https://doas.us/calendar/> for upcoming programs; view <https://doas.us/webinars/> for past events).

If a user makes a change to their current transportation, they can update the information for that vehicle and the total carbon emissions number will reflect that change so that they can ultimately see progress toward net zero for their household. In this sense, the Carbon Tracker is designed to be a “constant companion” in our 20-year marathon journey towards net zero.

Through an agreement with CURE 100, DOAS has licensed the Carbon Tracker Software for use in our communities so that we can track progress towards zero emissions goals within our region.

“Carbon Tracker” Continued to page 3

THE DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY FOUNDED 1968

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ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Delaware Otsego Audubon Society
P.O. Box 544
Oneonta, NY 13820
Email: info@doas.us

ON THE WEB: <https://doas.us/>
www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety

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

What a Difference a Month

Makes— In the last Kingfisher, we wrote about two of the more egregious actions from the Trump administration on the way out the door, including auctioning off oil drilling leases in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), and enacting provisions significantly weakening the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). President Joe Biden, in his first day on the job, placed a moratorium on any federal actions related to the leasing program, and said the Interior Department will review the leases and conduct a new environmental analysis. This means no drilling will occur in ANWR for years and possibly never.

As for the MBTA, the Biden administration put a one-month delay on the rollback of protections to migratory birds four days before it was to go into effect. The Interior Department is working to determine what additional steps it can take and the Fish and Wildlife Service will give the public an opportunity to comment on the rule.

These were just two of a number of actions President Biden took in the first days of his administra-



*Tongass National Forest
US Department Of Agriculture Photo*

tion to roll back Trump anti-environment efforts. Others included cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline, rejoining the Paris Climate Accord, stopping expanded logging in the Tongass National Forest, establishing a policy of restoring scientific integrity and evidence-based policymaking across the federal government, re-establishing the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, and halting cuts in automobile fuel efficiency standards, among many others.

What You Can Do—Let President Biden know you appreciate his swift and strong action in reversing Trump environmental attacks. Urge him to push ahead with steps to undo these and other misguided actions.

Will this be the year for the Environmental Bill of Rights?— A pro-

posed amendment to the New York State Constitution has been pending in the state legislature for several years. A big push this year could get it on the ballot for consideration by voters.

The Environmental Bill of Rights is short: “Each person shall have a right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment.” However, its brevity belies its importance. This legislation would make these rights fundamental and inalienable, providing the same legal strength that protects our rights to free speech, freedom of religion, due process or property.

The amendment is not just symbolic. As part of the State Constitution it would provide procedural and substantive safeguards by requiring the government to consider the environment and our relationship to it in decision making.

What You Can Do—Contact your state legislators and ask them to work toward passage of the Environmental Bill of Rights this year.

Contact information can be found in the Advocacy section of our website, <https://doas.us/>.

“Carbon Tracker” Continued from page 2

User-specific information is kept private and secure; DOAS administrators will have access to aggregate data results for their region when users enter the software through our community web page. Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society has complete information available at <https://doas.us/carbon-tracker/>.

We invite all residents in the DOAS Chapter Region (Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie & Chenango Counties) to join in this effort to address climate change awareness and action this Winter/Spring and begin collecting

and tracking carbon emissions data for households.

The informational support materials provided to users within each topic segment of the Climate Tracker App are extremely valuable as educational pieces for things we can all do to reduce our carbon emissions and be part of a collective solution.

For questions about the Carbon Tracker App or for support in completing the starting questionnaire, please contact Susan O’Handley at info@doas.us. Use “Carbon Tracking” as the subject of the email.

FEEDER HYGIENE FOR HEALTHY BIRDS

by DOAS Director Kathryn Davino

Last summer, I observed a lone Mourning Dove on the ground below my feeders sporting a rather grotesque, gray, warty growth on its beak. Most likely, the poor bird was a victim of **Avian Pox** infection. According to the Northeast Wildlife Disease Cooperative, Avian Pox is caused by a virus and most bird species are believed to be susceptible. These warty growths appear on unfeathered areas of the skin, and while some cases are mild and the birds recover, the growths can interfere with vision and feeding. Internal lesions in the mouth and airway can also lead to breathing difficulty and death.

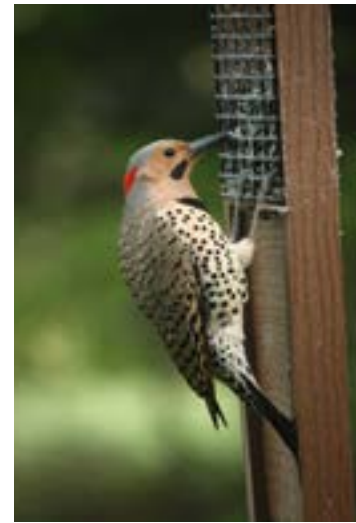
Whenever birds come together in groups to feed, there's an increased risk that they will share a host of potentially deadly diseases. Other common diseases that birds can spread at feeders include House Finch Eye Disease (Mycoplasmal Conjunctivitis, which can infect several other finch species), Salmonellosis (caused by salmonella bacteria), Aspergillosis (a fungal respiratory disease), and Trichomoniasis (caused by a protozoan). Over the years, I have seen several cases of Eye Disease, and I witnessed warty Pox growths on a Wild Turkey several years ago. The Mourning Dove incident brought into sharp focus the need to take action to better protect the birds I was attracting. So, I immediately stopped feeding birds for two weeks and thoroughly cleaned all of my feeders and baths. I also did some research about hygienic practices for preventing infectious

diseases.

It is noteworthy that not all avian diseases yield obvious symptoms like Pox growths or the encrusted eyes typical of conjunctivitis. If you see a listless bird with feathers in poor condition, it's likely there's a disease spreading around your neighborhood. Diseased birds are more likely to die from starvation, dehydration, predation, and severe weather. National Audubon suggests three steps to prevent the spread of illness in the birds that frequent your buffet:

1. Clean feeders and birdbaths regularly. Rinse the feeder well with soapy water, then dunk it into a bleach-water solution. "A monthly cleaning with a nine-to-one water-bleach solution will deter bacteria in plastic, ceramic, and metal feeders," reads an Audubon at Home Guide to Feeder Maintenance and Hygiene. "A dilute vinegar solution (three-to-one) or non-fragranced biodegradable soap should be used on wood to minimize fading." Dry out the feeder before hanging it back up. Double the frequency of cleaning if you suspect disease. Don't forget to empty the water in your birdbath every day. Brush it clean and rinse, then refill with fresh water.

2. Tidy up below the feeder. This can mean raking or shoveling up feces and seed hulls — particularly those that are moldy, wet, or spoiled — and throwing them out. The disease-causing Trichomonad protozoan, for example, can live for up to five days in food and several hours in water. I like to put



Northern Flicker
Photo by Kathryn Davino

seeds on trays which can be easily sanitized. On snow-covered lawns, scraping off a few layers of snow should do the trick.

3. Share the wealth. If possible, spread out the food among several feeders so there's less opportunity for sick birds to touch and contaminate each other. Crowding only expedites the spread of disease, so give the birds variety and plenty of room.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that choosing to not feed birds is probably the best way to prevent the spread of diseases. The New York State DEC cautions folks to not feed wildlife for a host of reasons, including concerns about infectious disease.

That being said, people still love to feed birds and probably always will. Therefore, we shouldn't simply set up our feeders and forget them. We've all become very aware of best practices in preventing the spread of Covid-19, but birds can't wear masks, practice social distancing, or get vaccinated. We should help to keep the birds we love safe with good hygienic practices at our feeders. For more information, www.audubon.org/news/3-ways-keep-your-feeder-disease-free-birds.

FEBRUARY BIRD SIGHTINGS

BY SANDY BRIGHT

David Diaz started this reporting period off with a relatively rare sighting of three Green-winged Teal near Otego on February 17th. Also in mid-February, Evening Grosbeaks visited Jessie Ravage's feeders in Cooperstown. Becky Gretton enjoyed viewing Eastern Bluebirds and a Brown Creeper at Otsego Lake and listening to the hooting of a Great Horned Owl near her home in Richfield Springs. Taking advantage of Andy Mason's *Self-guided Eagle Trip* instructions posted on the DOAS website, Kathryn and Al Davino found 11 Bald Eagles, plus Common Mergansers and a Red-tailed Hawk.

Later in the month, three male American Robins perched in John Davis's maple trees while a deer searched for apples under a Hawthorn tree. Rough-legged Hawks were observed by Charlie Scheim near Morris, and by Becky Gretton north of the Town of Warren. A Great Horned Owl called on the hill behind John Davis's home near Cooperstown, the first he had heard in several years. Gerianne Carillo also heard a Great Horned, calling for several nights in Milford, and found American Coots, Common

Goldeneye, Hooded Mergansers, and Eastern Bluebirds in Cooperstown. Kathryn Davino had Redpolls at her feeders and turkeys in her yard in Delhi. Angelika Rashkow got some good close views of a Red-bellied Woodpecker at her feeder near Cooperstown, along with Cardinals and a House Finch.

In early February, Jennifer Hyypio sighted two Red Crossbills at the pond entrance to the DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain. Tom Salo reported Common Redpoll, Evening Grosbeak, and Carolina Wren in West Burlington. Jessie Ravage discovered a Barred Owl on the Clark Tower trails in Cooperstown. An American Tree Sparrow showed up in Pam Peters' yard in Treadwell, feeding alongside Mourning Doves and Juncos. Jennifer Hyypio and Yolanda Bush spotted a Snowy Owl near Norwich and photographed a Rough-legged Hawk in Guilford. Another Rough-leg was found near Franklin by Pam Peters. Near Schenevus, Eva Davy watched as a Sharp-shinned Hawk feasted on a Mourning Dove, then took off with the carcass.

Mid-February brought the sweet song of a Carolina Wren wafting



Tree Sparrow
Photo by Barb Palmer

up from the gully behind Dorian Huneke's barn, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk flying across her yard in Treadwell. In Jefferson, Barb Palmer enjoyed watching her regular feeder visitors, including various nuthatches, woodpeckers, and Tree and Song Sparrows, plus a brief visit from a Northern Goshawk. On North Harpersfield Road she spotted a Red-tailed Hawk eating something while a young Bald Eagle perched nearby, eyeing the prize.

Kay Crane's report of Common Redpoll and Eastern Bluebird was a nice mix of summer and winter birds. Randy and Carol Lynch found Bald Eagles, Common Goldeneye, and a few Redheads at Otsego Lake. David Diaz passed on a report of Boreal Chickadees, described to him in detail by Pat Szarpa of Cooperstown, mixed in with a flock of Black-capped Chickadees. This serves as a nice reminder to look carefully at those common birds at your feeders!

If you have bird sightings to report, contact Sandy Bright, brights@hartwick.edu or 607 287-4465.



DOAS Reusable Bags

\$5.00 each

Bag dimensions are 12" front x 5" side x 13" high.

There is an insert included for base stabilization.

Contact Jane Bachman - bachmanj@hartwick.edu or call 607-431-9509

Also contact Jane if you want to order **bird-friendly coffee**.

More information at <http://doas.us/bird-friendly-coffee/>

2021 WATERFOWL COUNT RESULT

BY ANDY MASON

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society section of the statewide waterfowl count was held the weekend of January 16-18. Areas covered included Canadarago Lake and watershed; Unadilla River and tributaries, Leonardsville to Sidney; Otsego Lake and tributaries; Youngs Lake; Summit Lake; Susquehanna River, Otsego Lake to lower Unadilla bridge; Ouleout Creek, North Franklin to Susquehanna River; West Branch Delaware River, Stamford to Deposit; and Cannonsville Reservoir.

Results:

Canada Goose--919

Mallard--452

Green-winged Teal--3

Gadwall--3

American Black Duck--96

Ring-necked Duck--54

Bufflehead--47

Common Goldeneye--162

Hooded Merganser--239

Common Merganser--327

American Coot--35

TOTAL--2337

Other species of interest included many Bald Eagles, Belted Kingfishers, Ring-billed Gulls, Herring Gull, Cedar Waxwings, Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkeys, Eastern Bluebirds, Brown Creeper, a road-killed Barred Owl, and mink.



Green-winged Teal

Audubon Photo by Richard Spener

Thanks to participants Bob Donnelly, Kay Crane, Carol Lynch, Randy Lynch, Tom & Joanne Salo, Lisa Gorn, Kathy Griswold, Andy Mason, Pam Peters, Linda Burkhart, Bill Carbine, Italo Bironi, David Diaz, and Becky Gretton.

BIRD FLIGHT PATTERNS AND MUSIC:

FREE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS, EDUCATORS AND HOMESCHOOL PARENTS

Explore the exciting connection between bird flight and musical motion in this concert video with accompanying teacher's guide and curriculum. The teacher's guide will provide music, science, writing and visual art activities that further the bird flight pattern and music exploration. Sign up today at doas.us/contact-us/ to receive access to the concert video and the teach-

er's guide with clickable links to music videos, activity demonstrations, etc.

The video features performances by the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra and NBSO Education Trio with special guest Heloise Degrugillier, Recorder Soloist performing the world premiere of Jamie Allen's Nightingale Concerto.

ROCKY THE OWL SHIRTS AVAILABLE TO BENEFIT DOAS



Dan Buttermann and Ana Laura Gonzalez's family wearing Rocky Owl Shirts

The Village Printer in Oneonta has created "Rocky the Owl" T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts to commemorate the adventures of the Saw-whet Owl rescued from the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree which came from Oneonta in December. They are generously donating 10% of shirt sales to DOAS—we thank them for their support.

Shirts can be purchased from The Village Printer, (607) 432-5259, sales@thevillageprinter.com, or at the Greater Oneonta Historical Society, 183 Main Street, Oneonta. Photos and more information at doas.us/rocky-the-owl-shirts-available-to-benefit-doas/

Upcoming Activities

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.

March

March 2 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

March 3 – DOAS Climate Action Webinar: “The Ins and Outs of Electric Vehicles” with Tom and Celeste Theis, who will share their motivations and feedback for being an EV household in New York State and welcome questions. The program, which begins at 7:30 p.m., is part of the DOAS Climate Action Leadership Training Program, funded in part through a 2020-21 Audubon in Action Grant from National Audubon Society. Learn more and register at doas.us/event/the-ins-and-outs-of-electric-vehicles-an-owners-perspective/

March 9 – DOAS Climate Action Webinar: “Green Heating and Cooling” with Bennett Sandler, Campaign Director for Heat Smart Mowhawk Valley, a community-based education and group purchasing program for clean heating and cooling technologies. The program, which begins at 7:30 p.m., is part of the DOAS Climate Action Leadership Training Program, funded in part through a 2020-21 Audubon in Action Grant from National Audubon Society. Learn more and register

at doas.us/event/green-heating-cooling-for-homes-and-businesses/

March 19 – DOAS Virtual Program: “Highlights from Down Under” with Dr. Pamela Lea, retired local veterinarian, describing and showing photos of her last big trip to Tasmania, Australia and New Zealand in the fall of 2019. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. Register at <https://doas.us/events/>. See article on page 1.

April

April 16 – DOAS Virtual Program: “Members and Friends Photo Showcase.” The program begins at 7:30 p.m. Register at <https://doas.us/events/>. See article on page 1.

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

May

May 15 – DOAS Big Day Bird Count

May 18 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

May 21 – DOAS Virtual Program: “Birds and Beans— A Simple Way to Save Migratory Birds.”



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 \$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 <https://doas.us/join-us/>

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

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



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
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OPTICS RAFFLE 2021

WIN NIKON BINOCULARS AND SUPPORT DOAS!
Get your tickets today!

\$10 Donation per ticket. Only 250 tickets available.

Drawing Date: Friday, April 16, 2021, 7:30 p.m., during the online monthly program.

Proceeds to benefit the DOAS Sanctuary and Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch.

Purchase tickets and more information at doas.us/2021-optics-raffle/



FIRST PRIZE

Nikon Monarch 7 Binoculars with
Shoulder Harness
(Value \$510)

SECOND PRIZE

Nikon Monarch 5 Binoculars with
Shoulder Harness
(Value \$310)

THIRD PRIZE

\$50 Gift Card to
Wild Birds Unlimited, Johnson
City, NY

You must be 18 years of age or older to purchase tickets. If you live outside our pick-up area, we will coordinate for first class mail to you. Shipping and Handling fees will be charged at cost.