



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Summer Family Programs at the Sanctuary

by Susan O'Handley



Photo by Megan Langan

Although we had to forego offering the DOAS John New Summer Day Camp Program for the second year because of pandemic concerns, we are happy to be providing family programs at the Audubon Sanctuary over the summer. These programs are two-hour time slots where the need for materials and bathrooms are minimal. Registration will be limited to the first 20 people total, with 2 instructors, per session. This notice in the newsletter will provide DOAS members an exclusive chance to register before 5 p.m. on June 7th, after which the notice will go out to the general public. We will run a waiting list for those unable to get in. These are family programs, so all children must be accompanied by

adults. Masks and safe distancing will be required when appropriate. A special thank you goes to camp directors Liz Brown and Christina DeCesare for their work in arranging this wonderful alternative to the Day Camp!

Pre-Registration Required – use the links after each description.

The password for each is: YES-IM-A-DOAS-MEMBER

Forest Animal Scavenger Hunt Hike: Sunday, June 27, 2-4 p.m.

Who travels the trails at the Audubon preserve when people are not around? Join us as we hike through the woods and fields looking for signs of wildlife.

Register at: <https://doas.us/event/forest-animal-savenger-hunt-hike/>

Nature's Symphony & Fireworks:

Friday, July 9, beginning at 8:15 p.m. Join us to learn about nature at night. Crickets and owls, bats and fireflies all have something to share. We'll talk. We'll walk. We'll look and listen. Then, finish by catching some fireflies. Bring a container for catch and release.

Register at: <https://doas.us/event/natures-symphony-and-fireworks/>

Insects and Field Activities:

Saturday, August 7, 2-4 p.m. Sum-

mer is a great time to learn about insects! Grab a net and head into the fields with us to get a close-up look at these tiny (and even the not-so-tiny) creatures that are all around us.

Register at: <https://doas.us/event/insects-and-field-activities/>

Pond Exploration: Saturday, August 21, 2-4 p.m. Ponds provide great habitat for all sorts of creatures, from tiny arthropods to frogs and Great Blue Herons. Bring your family to explore the pond at Audubon through observation, activities, and crafts.

Register at: <https://doas.us/event/pond-exploration/>

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One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between Man and Nature shall not be broken.

Leo Tolstoy

Area Climate Action Project Awards

by Co-president Susan O'Handley

As many of you know, DOAS has been working on developing programs for climate action initiatives in our region this year. We hosted a special series of webinars (for close to 200 participants) focused on climate change and carbon reduction and we added a first time Electric Vehicle Car Show as a culminating event. As I write this, that event is just a few days away and I'm hoping the good weather lasts!

Over the course of this time, people have been joining us in the **DOAS Network** and our **Climate Action Leadership group**. We now have over 50 members who are actively seeking to make a difference in regards to local efforts to address climate change.

In addition to the work above, there are five projects that will be moving forward this summer and fall with funding support from DOAS and the Audubon in Action Grant project. The Otsego Land Trust is working on rebuilding and stabilizing the stream banks at their Brookwood Point Preserve and they will be developing native plant habitat as part of their project. A community group in Delhi will be working on pollinator gardens and bird-friendly places throughout their town with a "Homegrown National Park" project. SUNY Oneonta is



building a pesticide free pollinator garden with native plants as part of a program that will result in certification for inclusion in the Xerxes Program. An outdoor classroom project at Guilford School will include bird-friendly habitat. A community group in the Town of Middlefield will be creating a bluebird nesting program on Town properties. As these projects move forward this summer, our climate change resources will grow on the **DOAS Network** as that community grows.

We hope you will consider joining the **DOAS Network** to share information, provide support and learn together. It may just be the thing to spur you on to take action! If you would like to be a part of it, just send an email to us at info@doas.us with your request. And as a good first step, go ahead and complete the process to track your household carbon impact at <https://doas.us/carbon-tracker/>!

Like us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/DelawareOtsegoAudubonSociety



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AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.**
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*

Good legislation awaiting action in Albany — There are a number of positive environmental bills in front of the legislature in Albany that deserve attention before adjournment in June. Last month we listed bills related to electric vehicles. These are still pending and need a push to move them forward.

Other good bills include legislation to improve protection of Class C streams in the state (A.6652 /S.4162). The 41,000 miles of Class C streams in the state are lower on the Department of Environmental Conservation's list for the quality of protected waterbodies, but are still important as wildlife habitat, flood protection, and often feed waterways used for drinking water and recreation. At present harmful activities can take place on these streams, further degrading them. This bill would require a permit for such actions, providing for review of the impacts of such projects.

Also of importance to Auboners



Amazon Forest Clearing, Wikimedia Commons

is the Birds and Bees Protection Act (A.7429/S.699-B). This bill would ban the sale of corn, soybean, and wheat seeds coated with toxic neonicotinoids (neonics), as well as prohibit the use of these toxic insecticides on turf and ornamental plants. Neonics are harmful insecticides that can kill pollinators, birds, and fish and have been linked to massive bee die-offs. Beekeepers in New York have lost over 40% of their bee colonies every year for the past decade. Other states and the European Union have already banned neonics and a study by Cornell University concluded that these insecticides provide little to

no benefits to users and are easily replaced by safer alternatives.

(A.6872/S.5921)—This legislation would require all state agency contracts to ensure that no products being procured by the state are contributing to the degradation or deforestation of intact tropical and boreal forests. This would include products extracted from, grown, derived, harvested, reared or produced on land where deforestation or degradation of tropical or boreal forest occurs. The clearcutting of Amazon rainforests is accelerating, and other forests are being cleared for palm oil plantations and other unsustainable agriculture. Not only does this reduce biodiversity, but these areas serve as important carbon sinks that absorb CO₂.

What You Can Do — Contact your state legislators and ask that these bills be acted upon before the end of the session. Contact information can be found in the Advocacy section of our website, <https://doas.us/>.



Bird Friendly Coffee

You may order bird-friendly coffee, as well as DOAS hats, mugs, and reusable bags by emailing Jane Bachman (bachmanj@hartwick.edu or call 607-431-9509). Contact her to arrange for payment and pickup from Jane's front porch in Oneonta. Cash, checks and credit cards are accepted. More information at doas.us/bird-friendly-coffee/.

DOAS Directors Elected

At the May 21 meeting, the DOAS Nominating Committee (Jane Bachman, chair; Landa Palmer, Pam Lea, and Laura Kilty) presented seven candidates for election to the Board of Directors. Kathryn Davino, Susan O'Handley, Landa Palmer, Pam Peters, Janet Potter, Robbie Katz, and Nathan Cutting were elected for two-year terms.

Farm Conservation

By DOAS Director Landa Palmer

Otsego and Delaware County are home to many farms. The role of farming is critical to our area's economy. Farmers are stewards of not just animals, but also of the land, and one of our greatest area assets is water. Many farmers are also conservationists and have had support from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), which is provided through our county's Soil and Water Districts. The benefit of farmland conservation projects impacts birds, wildlife, water life, and humans alike.

Our family farm, located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed in Delaware County, has had the support and expertise of NRCS on a variety of conservation projects. The goal has always been to protect the environment and water of the farm, and the quality of the water downstream. By participating in these conservation plans we also protect the value of the land for future generations through soil fertility and soil

moisture maintenance.

Protecting our wetlands and our watershed is crucial to migrating birds. Open fields are also important not just for grassland-type birds, but also raptors as they seek their food source.

Our farm incorporates the preservation of a wetland area where you can find the Savannah, Song, and Swamp sparrow. A pair of Wilson's Snipe has returned for three years, as have the Great Blue Heron and Green Heron. The Belted Kingfisher has nested in the muddy banks of our streams. Our streams have buffers to protect the water from nutrients of the manure, which we use to strengthen the quality of the soil and cropland. A top-of-the-hill pond has been fenced off from grazing cattle, who now find their water source by a gravity-fed water hydrant on a gravel pad. The pond is home to a pair of Common Mergansers. Chestnut-sided Warblers are also plentiful around tree buffers



Eagles looking over the wetland at the Palmer farm, photo by Landa Palmer

protecting that pond. Red-tail Hawks and the Bald Eagles are common sightings as well.

Hay season is coming soon, and the Barn and Tree Swallows are very swift with their insect harvesting. The American Kestrels sit on the wire or fence post waiting to grab a mouse or vole. In the late evening, if you are lucky, you can see the Great Horned Owl on top of a pole waiting to swoop down on the newly cut field to grab a meal. Cornfields are full of Red-wing Blackbirds, and once the corn is harvested, the Wild Turkeys are plentiful.

You do not need a large farm to benefit from the expertise of NRCS. Small land parcels can benefit as well. To learn more about conservation planning, contact USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or the Soil Conservation District that serves your county. Trained conservationists are available to meet with you. NRCS office locations, updated program information, and applications are available online at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/>.



Palmer Farm, photo by Landa Palmer

April-May Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

Birds do a lot of things instinctively, but sometimes instinct isn't enough to get the job done. In mid-April, Dorian Huneke watched a pair of Robins continually try but fail to build a nest on a too-narrow board in her barn. Seeing no sign of their giving up, she finally climbed a ladder and built them a better ledge. Success was immediate: within an hour, the birds were at the mudding stage of nest-building.

Early migrants continued arriving in the area, some to stay and breed, others resting before flying further north. David Diaz listened to two Field Sparrows counter-singing near Cooperstown (4/18), and watched a Merlin strafe a Northern Flicker. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were still foraging and singing in Oneonta. A Broad-winged Hawk perched on a wire between Franklin and Walton (4/20, Linda Burkhart, Pam Peters). Then there are the wayward birds, those deviating from their normal range. Such was the case with the Snowy Egret found at a pond near Otego by Bob Ciganek (4/22). Dorian Huneke reported a Snowy Owl that had been hanging around Otego for a couple of weeks.

On the 23rd, Yellow-rumped Warblers arrived in Oneonta (Jane Bachman) and Portlandville (Sarah Root). Susan Ryder and Jim Mills still had Common Redpolls in their Oneonta yard. Jean Petter-son observed an Osprey in a tree along the river east of Hamden. The first Rose-breasted Grosbeak

was spotted by Kay Crane in Walton. Black-throated Green Warblers arrived in Treadwell (Pam Peters, 4/28). On the 29th, Sarah Root found Ovenbirds in Portlandville, Catbirds began singing in Delhi (Kathryn Davino), and a Green Heron showed up in East Meredith (Landa Palmer). April ended with the arrival of Blue-winged Warblers and Yellow Warblers at New Island, Oneonta (Charlie Scheim).

May 2nd was a big day for firsts. Arriving in the Franklin area were Warbling Vireo, Chestnut-sided and Cape May Warblers (Pam Peters), Eastern Kingbird, Barn Swallow, Least Flycatcher, and Hooded and Black-and-white Warblers (Charlie Scheim); near Charlotteville, Bobolink (Alice Pantaleoni); in Milford, Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Gerianne Carillo); and in Oneonta Chimney Swifts. Suzanne Gaynor found a Baltimore Oriole (East Meredith) and a Northern Waterthrush (Davenport Center), plus a Common Raven on a nest.

Many Purple Finches were reported during this period. Randy Lynch snapped pictures of some in Jefferson, along with a lingering Pine Siskin. The third brought Wood Thrush, Common Yellowthroat, and Blackburnian Warblers to Franklin (Pam Peters), and the fourth, Prairie Warblers to Otego (Charlie Scheim).

Large nests, always of interest, are few and far between but easy to spot and monitor. A new Osprey nest was discovered near Spring-



Ovenbird

Photo by Landa Palmer

brook by Carly and Gerianne Carillo (5/4), and a Bald Eagle nest was found in the west end of Oneonta by Alice Lichtenstein (5/11).

May 5th brought American Redstart to Portlandville (Sarah Root) and Indigo Bunting to Cooperstown (Angelika Rashkow). A hike with Susan Brunswick at Riddell Park yielded Great-crested Flycatcher and Black-throated Blue Warbler (5/7). White-crowned Sparrows continued at Marilyn Huneke's feeders in Delhi. Suzanne Gaynor discovered a Mute Swan on the wetlands in Oneonta's west end. White-crowned Sparrows lingered in Delhi (5/11, Marilyn Huneke), and Evening Grosbeaks in Jefferson (Barb Palmer, 5/13). On the 12th, a Northern Mockingbird sang outside my window in Oneonta. Pam Peters spotted the first Veery near the Cannonsville Reservoir, and had Scarlet Tanagers around her yard on the 14th. Andy Mason witnessed an adult Bald Eagle feasting on a woodchuck in Catella Park, Oneonta.

Birders were out in full force on the 15th for the Big Day count, so stay tuned for more interesting sightings and first arrivals!

DOAS Big Day Bird Count Report

By Charlie Scheim



Solitary Sandpiper, photo by Rick Bunting

The DOAS Big Day Bird Count on May 15, 2021 brought out 20 teams of 35 total birders, with 9 teams of one, 10 teams of two, and 1 team of six counters. The teams ranged over our DOAS region, with reports coming in from Otsego, Delaware, and Schoharie counties. Some teams covered extensive areas by car, some walked our meadows and forests, some paddled in canoes, and some folks simply observed their backyard birds. Thanks to all who participated.

There were a number of species that were found by just a single team (a few examples: Bufflehead, Mute Swan, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Eastern Wood-pewee, Northern Parula, Bay-breasted Warbler, and others), which shows just how important it was to our effort to have so many teams scouting our area. Birding is to some degree a matter of being in the right place at the right time. The more teams, the more likely it is that someone will be around when seldom seen species show up!

In total, we found 120 different species. Among these were three species of sandpipers (Spotted, Solitary, and Least), eight raptors (Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Broad-winged Hawks), six woodpecker-type species (Downy, Hairy, Pileated, Red-bellied, Northern Flicker, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker), five flycatchers (Pewee, Least, Great-crested, Phoebe, Kingbird), five swallows (Barn, Tree, Cliff, Bank, Rough-winged), four vireos (Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, Red-eyed, and Warbling) seven sparrow species (Chipping, Field, Savannah, Song, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned) and twenty-one species of warblers. See the complete listing of all of this year's sightings at <https://doas.us/2021-big-day-bird-count-results/>.

Is your Membership Current?

Your mailing label on the back page of this newsletter will inform you of your membership expiration date. This is the only notice you receive to let you know you need to renew your membership. Thanks for rejoining when your membership expires.

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: \$ _____

Upcoming Activities

Summer

DOAS Summer Family Programs: See article on page 1 for details and registration information. All programs will be held at the DOAS Sanctuary.

June 27 – Forest Animal Scavenger Hunt Hike: 2-4 p.m.

July 9 – Nature’s Symphony and Fireworks: beginning at 8:15 p.m. Bring a container for fireflies catch and release.

August 7 – Insects and Field Activities: 2-4 p.m.

August 21 – Pond Exploration: 2-4 p.m.

Fall dates to save

August 10 – DOAS Board Meeting: 5 p.m.

October 15 – DOAS Annual Charter Dinner: We hope to meet in-person at the Quality Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn), State Highway 23, Oneonta if we are able to. More information in the September *Belted Kingfisher*.

DOAS PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

In Case You Missed It — Past Webinars Are Available Online at <https://doas.us/webinars/>.

2021 Business Sponsors Support Those Who Support DOAS!



We appreciate our business sponsors.

For information about becoming a business sponsor, please contact Susan O’Handley at info@doas.us or leave a voicemail at 607-397-3815.

The mission of Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society is to protect our natural environment and connect people with nature to benefit birds and other wildlife through conservation, education, research and advocacy.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820
<https://doas.us/>

Electric Vehicle Car Show

As part of the 2021 Climate Action Leadership Program, DOAS presented an Electric Vehicle Car Show at Damaschke Field in Oneonta's Neahwa Park on Saturday, May 22, 2021. Hundreds of EV enthusiasts attended to see over 20 vehicles owned by individuals and several showcased by car dealerships. Royal Hyundai of Oneonta brought the Kona Electric Limited and Ioniq PHEV Limited. Oneonta Ford displayed the Mustang Mach E. Those attending were able to check out the cars and connect with owners and dealers to get answers to their questions.

From Susan O'Handley, DOAS Co-President, "We are excited to see this first-time event move forward. New NY State incentives

for new vehicle purchases are set to go into effect at the end of June. We've seen reports that there may be additional funds for Federal rebates for new EVs as well as a rebate for used vehicles. Transition to EVs and mass adoption will be a great first step towards reducing our carbon emissions. Sales figures are strong and there is a great deal of growing interest in EVs, so this is a perfect fit for this public event.

There was a steady stream of people at the table where the Friends of Rogers Environmental Education Center were selling raffle tickets for the 2020 Tesla



Model 3 displayed nearby. Good luck, DOAS members, when the winner is chosen in October!

The car show was made possible through support from National Audubon Society's Audubon in Action program, Oneonta Outlaws, Otsego County Conservation Association, Charge NY, Friends of Rogers Environmental Education Center, Royal Hyundai of Oneonta and Oneonta Ford.