



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

DOAS Receives Donation for Sanctuary

By Andy Mason

Our Chapter has received a most generous gift from Nancy New of Oneonta for improvements at the Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain. Nancy is the daughter of John and Betty New and her family's involvement with DOAS goes back over 50 years.

Dr. John G. New was the Chair of the Biology Department at SUNY Oneonta, and was an accomplished ornithologist. He served as DOAS Conservation Chair until his passing in 1983. He also founded the City of Oneonta Environmental Board and was instrumental in establishing the Otsego County Conservation Association as well as the Environmental Planning Lobby in Albany.

Nancy has been passionate about nature, especially birding, all her life. Her parents met at Cornell



Nancy New with her mother, Betty New
Daily Star photo by Sarah Eames

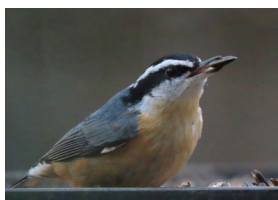
University where John studied ornithology with Arthur Allen, Founder of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Shortly after arriving he met Allen's niece, Betty. Both recognized each other as kindred spirits, married, and raised their children surrounded by natural history. As a result, Nancy's career was dedicated to environmental protection.

Nancy and her mom still visit the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch periodically. John New and two of his students were the first to discover that Franklin Mountain was the site of significant passage of migrating raptors, which eventually led to the present-day lookout.

Nancy told DOAS that her gift is the accumulated proceeds from a small investment her father made for her when she was young, to teach her the value of saving. She felt that donating it to an organization that was important to her parents and to her, and which reflects John New's commitment to the environment, was a fitting tribute. We agree and the Board of Directors heartily thanks Nancy for her commitment to our organization.

Bird Seed Sale Back On!

Good news from Cornell University. As of September 17th, all states affected by the songbird illness over the summer have lifted their do-not-feed recommendations. www.allaboutbirds.org/news/statement-new-songbird-illness/. As a result, DOAS will proceed with the annual fall seed sale. Watch your mailbox for a special mailing with more information and the order form. Support DOAS and stock up on bird seed for the winter!



Red-breasted nuthatch enjoying sunflower seeds at Rick Bunting's feeder

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"You must have the bird in your heart before you can find it in the bush" — John Burroughs

Tidbits and Teasers

by Co-president Susan O'Handley

Fall Raptor Migration

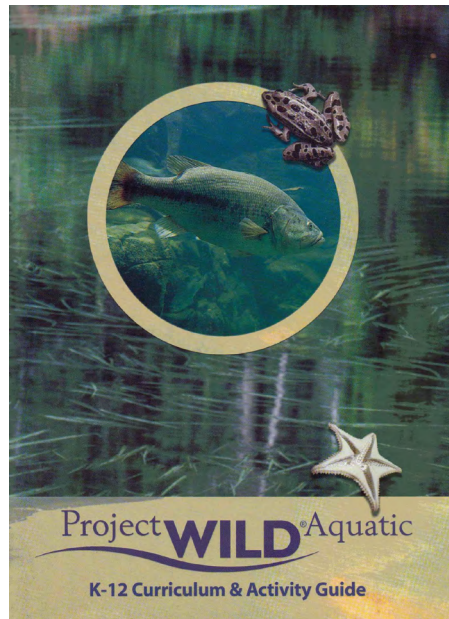
Fall migration season at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch is well underway this year with some stellar days reported for Broad-winged Hawks in September. For any who may be interested in the Hawkwatch, this newsletter may reach you in time to visit our open house event on Saturday, October 2 from 10am-2pm, which includes a raptor ID workshop to begin the day (view schedule details at doas.us/2021-hawkwatch-open-house/).

Welcome, New Board Members

I would like to formally welcome our two newest board members, Nate Cutting and Rob Katz, both of whom were elected this past Spring. Nate is a Biology Teacher at O'Neill High School in the Walton Central School District and Rob is the Manager for School Programs for the Farmers' Museum and the Fenimore Art Museum. Both have involvement with DOAS in the past and have jumped right into board participation. We are looking forward to working with them both as we move forward with our work, especially with student groups and youth programs.

Educator Workshops: Winter 2022

In an effort to reach out to our area educators, DOAS will be planning to offer workshops for the National Environmental Education Curriculums, including Project WILD, Aquatic WILD, Project WET and Flying WILD. Participants will go home with each of the associated curriculum materials



and books (created by educators and aligned with science education standards). These workshops may qualify for in-service credit. We are starting a list for any who may be interested in attending this winter and are asking people to email me (Susan) at info@doas.us. Please use 'EE Curriculums' in the subject line.

Climate Action Continued

Our grant work from National Audubon Society is coming to a close at the end of December, but we are planning to continue efforts to promote climate action throughout our communities. This spring, we will feature a special program to overview one of the most successful projects from our grants - the Town of Delhi Homegrown National Park project - in hopes that other communities may be inspired to implement a similar undertaking in their area. This program will coincide with a special Native Plant Sale

"Tidbits & Teasers" Continued to page 3

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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

Polystyrene containers and peanuts on the way out in New York — Regulations are presently being promulgated to enact a ban on expanded polystyrene foam containers and loose-fill packaging, more generally known by the brand name ‘Styrofoam,’ that goes into effect January 1, 2022.

According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, “Expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam is a major contributor to environmental litter, causing negative impacts to wildlife, waterways, and natural resources. EPS foam is lightweight, breaks apart easily, and does not readily biodegrade, rendering it persistent in the environment and susceptible to becoming microplastic pollution. In addition, EPS foam containers and loose-fill packaging are not accepted by most recycling programs in New York State because the foam is difficult

to recycle, easily contaminates the recycling stream, is often soiled, and has low value.” This seemingly ubiquitous material shows up even in remote locations and essentially lasts forever. Even with this ban, pieces and particles of foam will be with us for a long time.

The ban covers typical take-out food containers such as clam shell packaging, foam cups, bowls, trays, etc. Unfortunately, containers for pre-packed food such as supermarket meats are not covered by the ban, and there are other exemptions that weaken its effectiveness.

Loose foam pellets or peanuts will no longer be able to be sold in the state, but the ban does not restrict shipping and packaging materials which arrive at our homes in large quantities. (Fortunately, clean Styrofoam can be taken to the Reuse Center on Duane Street



in Oneonta, and is also accepted at the Southern Transfer Station in Oneonta’s west end.)

DEC is holding a public comment period until November 22 on the rules for the foam ban, and this would be a good time to emphasize that it doesn’t go far enough and has too many loopholes. Information on commenting, including a virtual public hearing planned for November 15, can be found at: www.dec.ny.gov/press/123756.html



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“Tidbits & Teasers” Continued from page 2 fundraising event to help support these efforts next spring.

In addition we are in the beginning stages of planning a Youth Climate Rally in Cooperstown for Earth Day 2022. Keep an eye out for additional information on this as it begins to take shape.

For these and other activities, we are looking for help on our committees. If you think you might like to be involved, please reach out for more information at info@doas.us - please indicate “Committee Support” in your subject line. And lastly - don’t forget to begin tracking your household carbon impact at doas.us/carbon-tracker and request to join our Climate Action Network at network.doas.us.

Learn, Share, Act, Impact!

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.

Reflections of a Rookie Atlaser

By DOAS Director Pamela J. Peters

It's August 21, 2021 and I'm walking along a lovely dirt stretch of Delaware County road flanked by pasture and hay fields. I know this road and have walked it for years in every season, in every weather condition. On this late summer morning, it's quiet. The Killdeer are gone, a single Kestrel is hunting the recently mown fields, a Song Sparrow and Catbird are hopping about the roadside shrubs. A lone Blue Jay and Crow call in the distance.

This is the last day for any serious atlas work before fall sets in. But if only I could confirm a few more birds on my list. I spot movement at the edge of the field near the woods. Three female adult Wild Turkey are herding a dozen poults, little ones wiggling through the grass. Thank you, turkeys. Number 40 on my list of confirmed species. Confirmed meaning I have evidence these birds are breeding in my atlas block. I hate to tell the turkeys I saw six coyote pups on the other side of that hay field recently.

In July, every corner of this fertile patch of farmland was alive with breeding birds. Scarlet Tanagers feeding in the maples at the edge of the field, Bluebirds teaching young to fly along the treeline, Snipe calling in the wet mucky pasture, Savannah Sparrows buzz-



Common Yellowthroat carrying food for its young; Photo by Pam Peters

ing about the stone wall, a young Red-tailed Hawk whining in the far pine forest. Out of the 88 total species I've identified in my block, over 30 live on Ceresna Road.

I got involved in the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas last summer. Since I am retired and would be out hiking and birding anyhow, I thought I could help document the bird population while I'm at it. Ambitiously I signed up for three blocks. I attended training and town halls, read articles, studied eBird checklists. 20 hours over 5 years, plus 2.5 hours of nocturnal observation would be needed for each nine-square mile block. That sounded totally doable. Reality check: 70 hours in one year and I've almost finished one block.

They say the classic newbie mistake is to go out every day all spring and summer hoping to see

something and not wanting to miss anything. That was me. I ignored my garden and let the kayak sit while I hunted warblers and thrushes and cuckoos.

If I hadn't been scouting religiously, I might have missed the elusive Mourning Warbler carrying a spider to its nest, or the Indigo Bunting calling to its young for 15 minutes, all the while hanging onto a juicy green worm. (I have certainly learned that birds can talk with their mouths full.) I watched Cliff Swallows passing insects to their young on the wing, and Cedar Waxwings feeding each other shadberries. I discovered a fledgling Eastern Kingbird that seemed to appear out of nowhere one morning, begging for food. Every day my appreciation for the birds in my block grew as I witnessed their drive and determination to raise and defend their young in habitats that at times seemed safe and abundant with food, and other times unforgivable with harsh weather and predators.

This was a good first block, and I hope I have contributed in a small way to the greater body of scientific knowledge. I will be a little more strategic with the next two blocks, but I don't want to miss a thing. January will be here before you know it, and I am already thinking where I can find a Great Horned Owl to start the new breeding season.

Bird-Friendly Coffee

Want to order coffee? Email your order to bachmanj@hartwick.edu or call 607-431-9509. Payment is due at the time of delivery. Cash, checks and credit cards are accepted. More at <http://doas.us/bird-friendly-coffee/>

August—September Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

At this time of year, one can still find a good variety of birds: fly-bys moving southward, migrants stopping to bulk up before continuing their journey, the occasional wandering bird from southern parts making unexpected appearances, a few late breeders still raising young, and of course our year-round species.

In mid-August, a Carolina Wren was visiting Barb Palmer's place in Jefferson. Red-breasted Nuthatches returned to Kathryn Davino's yard in Delhi after a summer hiatus. Jessie Ravage enjoyed watching young Bald Eagles practice their hunting skills on Otsego Lake as the adults supervised from further up the lake. Also in that area was a Great Egret flying up the west side of the lake, spotted by Andy Mason. Landa Palmer observed a pair of Northern Harriers feeding in a field on top of Meridale Mountain.

Andy Cooper alerted me to an Osprey carrying a big stick to the top of one of the stadium lights in Neahwa Park (Oneonta). This bird apparently was attempting to prepare in advance for next breeding season but will need to improve its

building skills; despite numerous attempts over the following weeks (as evidenced by the growing pile of detritus below the light), only one stick has remained on its high perch.

In the last week of August, Dorian Huneke was surprised by an unusual visitor to her barn in Treadwell: a Yellow Warbler. Early September brought flocks of American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds moving through at the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch, along with smaller numbers of other songbirds.

Charlie Scheim and I were still finding a number of species raising young in September, including Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireo, Goldfinches, Juncos, Pigeons, and Indigo Buntings. While those species are not uncommon at this time of year, the Winter Wrens found by Tom Salo in the Adirondacks certainly were. According to historical data, the adults should have been finished with their breeding responsibilities in early September, yet this group of downy chicks was still in the nest, with nary a pinfeather showing, on September 7th.



Black Vulture
Photo by Janet Potter

In the second week of September at the Hawkwatch, Randy Lynch spotted a Black Vulture and Tom Salo photographed a partially leucistic Turkey Vulture. Barb Palmer observed Black-throated Green and Nashville Warblers, a Savannah Sparrow, and a trio of Bobolinks perched on sunflowers. Barb Hein reported seeing a Snowy Egret, as well as Green and Great Blue Herons, while kayaking in Portlandville. She enjoyed watching the two Osprey chicks at Springbrook grow over the summer months, though she noted that they were a very noisy family!

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

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Broad-winged Hawk
Bettina Arrigoni, Wikimedia Commons

As of mid-September, hawk watchers were still awaiting the big migratory flights of Broad-winged Hawks that provide one of nature's finest avian spectacles. The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch on the DOAS Sanctuary had respectable numbers of Broad-wings with 111 tallied on September 10 and 158 on the 13th, but nothing approaching last year's big day of 912 on September 11.

Also moving have been modest numbers of Osprey, American Kestrels and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Forty migrant Bald Eagles have

Hawkwatch News

By Andy Mason

been spotted, continuing the upward trend for this species.

October will bring increasing numbers of sharpies and Cooper's Hawks at the lookout, along with Red-tailed Hawks and the first Golden Eagles during the second half of the month.

In other news at the Hawkwatch, some of the trees blocking the horizon to the northeast have been removed, partially restoring this important view to its previous extent. More work will be done to maintain this vista, which had been lost in recent years, affecting the raptor count.

Counters are present each day at the Hawkwatch, except during rain. The best flights come on north and northwest winds, especially follow-

ing a cold front. Visitors should dress warmly as the site is often colder than anticipated.

Visitors and spotters are always welcome at the Hawkwatch. For more information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, salothomas@gmail.com.

Forecasts of anticipated good flights at the Hawkwatch are sent out by email a day or two in advance. To receive these alerts, visit www.franklinmt.org to sign up. Daily tallies from Franklin Mountain are also available by email—contact Andy Mason as above.

More information and directions to the Hawkwatch can be found at www.franklinmt.org.

Charter Celebration, featuring Scott Weidensaul's presentation: "Late Nights and Wee Owls"

Join us for the **54th Anniversary Celebration** of the founding of Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society on Friday, October 15 starting at 6:30 p.m. Like last year, the celebration will take place completely online due to Covid concerns. The Charter Celebration Bucket Raffle is currently underway on our website. It features six fine items, generously donated by local artisans and patrons. Raffle items include a Saw-whet Owl Silhouette crafted by Joel Kazmierski, an Owl-themed Quilted Bag from Julie Wexler, a Loon Photo by Nina

Schoch, A Wild Animal Quilt designed by Gretchen Adams, a Great Egret Photo from Rob Katz, and an Oriole Feeder donated by Kathryn Davino. Photos of all raffle items and information for how to obtain raffle tickets are available at doas.us/2021-raffle-items/. Raffle items will be also be on display and raffle tickets will be available for purchase at our October 2 Open House.

The evening will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a welcome and the DOAS Annual Report via Zoom. Raffle ticket sales will end at 7:30 p.m. when our Keynote Presentation begins.



Northern Saw-whet Owl
Audubon Photo by Debra Herst

Our featured presenter, naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul, will speak about his "Twenty-five years of late nights and wee owls." Scott presented a captivating program for us in April on the wonders of migration, so we look forward to this presentation on the Northern Saw-whet Owl.

For the past quarter-century, Mr. Weidensaul has overseen a major project to understand the migration of Northern Saw-whet Owls in "Celebration" Continued to page 7

Upcoming Activities

October

October 2 – Open House: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain. Join us for a Raptor ID workshop at 10, a children's activity at 11a.m. concurrent with a trail walk for others. At 12:30 p.m. Wildlife Rehabilitator, Missy Runyan from the Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Center will present and describe live raptors. More information at doas.us/2021-hawkwatch-open-house/.

October 15 – 54th Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society: Our virtual celebration will feature author and naturalist Scott Weidensaul's presentation about Northern Saw-whet Owls, "Twenty-five Years of Late Nights and Wee Owls." See article on page 4 and register at doas.us/2021-charter-celebration.

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

November

November 19 – DOAS Public Program: "Through the Eyes and Lives of Crows." During our Zoom program beginning at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Anne Clark of Binghamton University will speak about her research on the American Crow.

December

December 7 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

December 18 – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count. Contact Sandy Bright at brights@hartwick.edu or phone 607-287-4465.

January

January 2 – Delaware County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Pam Peters: ovenb1rdp@gmail.com or 607-829-6545.

January 15 – DOAS Eagle Trip: Field trip to view wintering bald eagles in Delaware County. Watch for details in next issue, contact Andy Mason, (607) 652-2162, AndyMason@earthling.net.

DOAS PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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

"Celebration" Continued from page 6 the central Appalachians, using a variety of techniques — banding, geolocators, radio telemetry, even radar and infrared cameras — to study their movements. After banding more than 12,000 owls, he and his colleagues have peeled back much of the mystery around this smallest of Eastern owls, but many questions still remain — and they're not going to get a good night's sleep in the fall any time soon.

Scott Weidensaul is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Living on the Wind"



and his latest, the New York Times bestseller "A World on the Wing." Weidensaul is a contributing editor for Audubon, a columnist for Bird Watcher's Digest and writes for a variety of other publications, including *Living Bird*. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithological

Society and an active field researcher, studying Saw-whet Owl migration for more than two decades, as well as winter hummingbirds, bird migration in Alaska, and the winter movements of snowy owls through Project SNOWstorm, which he co-founded.

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/2021-charter-celebration/> by October 15th.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
PO Box 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820
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Saturday, October 2
10am-2pm

Hawk ID Workshop
Activities for Children
Guided Trail Hike
Live Birds of Prey
Bird-friendly Coffee
Free Refreshments
2021 Bucket Raffle

2021

**HAWKWATCH
OPEN HOUSE**

at the DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain
www.doas.us/2021-hawkwatch-open-house/

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 <https://doas.us/membership/> 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!

Please Note: Your mailing label above 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.