



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

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## DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

### Breeding Bird Atlas: 2022 Update with Charlie Scheim

Our May program will be held on Friday, May 20 via Zoom at 7:30 p.m. Birders of all experience levels are invited to attend a presentation by Charlie Scheim regarding the ongoing NYS Breeding Bird Atlas III (BBA). The BBA is a five-year effort conducted every twenty years to document which avian species live and breed in various areas of the state. The current BBA is New York's third and was begun in 2020. Charlie is a Regional BBA Coordinator for Central New York. The presentation will discuss how the atlas is organized, what results have been accumulated state-wide and more specifically in Delaware and Otsego counties in the first

two years, and what birders of all abilities can do to participate in this citizen science project.

Charlie has been a birder since his college days in the 1970s. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society and has been our Treasurer since 2012. He usually leads a number of bird walks each year (with his wife, Sandy Bright) and gives a variety of birding presentations to various groups in our area. In addition to being a regional coordinator for the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas, Charlie covers a number of Atlas blocks in Otsego and Delaware counties. He also



NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS III

does stream testing for the Otsego County Conservation Association and is a member of the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway Committee. He is retired now but was a mathematics professor at Hartwick College from 1980-2018.

**More information and register for this Zoom program at:**

<https://doas.us/breeding-bird-atlasing-2022>

### Plan Ahead for “PhotoShare” Program

For our September program we will present shared favorite photos from YOU: our members and friends! We have some talented photographers in our audience (both amateur and professional) as well as avid birdwatchers.

This is not a contest - it is a chance to share bird images. Plan to submit up to three of your original photos with description, including where it was taken, identification information if possible, and why it's a favorite of yours. We may need to

select from your photos depending on the number of participants we have, so please prioritize your photos by order of submission.



House Wren; Photo by Landa Palmer

Submit your photos at <https://doas.us/events/2022-photo-share/> by August 31. Program is September 16th at 7:30 p.m.

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What a beautiful time of year to photograph birds. We look forward to “PhotoSharing” with you!

# Eco-Fair, No-Mow May, and Grasslands

by Co-president Susan  
O'Handley

Each April, we typically prepare for annual Earth Day activities as a reminder of things we can all do to support conservation efforts and improve our environment. A good deal of our DOAS effort in the past has been through the traditional Annual Earth Festival event at Milford Central School, which for the third consecutive year, has been upended as a result of COVID and now features the recycling portion of the event with Drive-through Drop-off at Brewery Ommegang. As a way to continue to have an annual event for our region's environmental community to interact with families and residents, the new Susquehanna Headwaters Environmental Collaborative (SHEC) is undertaking Eco-Fair as a one-day summer event to take place on Saturday, July 9 at Neahwa Park in Oneonta, NY.

The change in time of year as well as venue brings new opportunities. As an outdoor event, we can be mostly assured that a large public event can be safe for people to attend. With the relocation to Oneonta's Neahwa Park, there is ample space for a host of activities throughout the day and we have the opportunity to bring more people out with plenty of nearby parking. As a coordinating member of SHEC, it has been wonderful to see the support from the City of Oneonta. From the Oneonta Fire and Police Departments and certainly the Parks Department and the Common Council - we have found a great deal of enthusiasm and willingness to work with us to



Image by HG-Fotografie from Pixabay

help start this inaugural event off with strong footing. We hope you will plan on attending the event.

The weather is finally warming up and migratory birds are returning in droves. With one of our primary focuses this year on native plants, we would like to take this opportunity to encourage all homeowners to hold off on mowing for a little while. By waiting until after many of the early spring plants flower, we provide an important source of food for bee species as they begin to emerge from their hives after hibernation.

According to an article by Anne Readell (NYT, 3/28/22) - <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/28/travel/no-mow-may-wisconsin.html>, 'No-Mow-May' homes "had five times the number of bees and three times the bee species than mown parks." What a great initiative - good for bees, and great for birds. If you should decide to not mow in May, please let us know with an email to [info@doas.us](mailto:info@doas.us). Perhaps this is something that can catch on in our neck of the woods!

Also, if you have grassland acreage, please consider holding off longer on cutting if you can. Delaying cutting of grasslands until about mid-July can help conserve critical breeding habitat for many of our grassland bird species. You can learn more at our website at <https://doas.us/grassland-birds/>.

Happy Spring Birding to all!

## DELAWARE - OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. FOUNDED 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Janet Potter

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To contribute notes or articles for  
The Belted Kingfisher, email:  
[editor@doas.us](mailto:editor@doas.us)

# Conservation and Legislation

By *Andy Mason*

**Some Progress for Wetland Protection in New York** — As reported last month, there appeared to be a good possibility of agreement between the Governor and Legislature on strengthening protections for New York State's freshwater wetlands this year. There has been progress with inclusion of reforms in the state budget, although less than hoped. In addition, most of the changes are delayed for a number of years, leaving many areas unprotected.

The minimum size for regulation of wetlands remains at 12.4 acres, with a provision to lower this threshold to 7.4 acres in 2028. Other changes include possible protection of smaller wetlands "of unusual importance," and wetlands not designated on outdated Department of Environmental Conservation maps. However, these regulations do not take effect until 2025.

So essentially the status quo remains at present. Considering the years that improved wetland protections have languished, any action is positive, but the delays included here are disappointing.

**Other Legislation Awaiting Passage in Albany** — The wetland changes described above were part of the state's budget process, which typically is a catch-all for the most important legislation each year. However, other good environmental proposals are before the legislature, including several bills promoting electric vehicle use, reducing plastic waste and increasing recycling, reducing pesticides and other toxins in parks and schools, and pushing forward the switch to alternative energy sources.

More information on the specifics of these proposals can be found at the Environmental Advocate's web site, <https://eany.org/>. One bill that would benefit birds is termed "Procurement Without Deforestation" (A.6872/S.5921). This would require all state agency contracts to ensure that no products being procured by New York State are contributing to the degradation or deforestation of intact tropical and boreal forests. This includes products extracted, grown, or produced on land where deforestation or



*Mourning Warbler*  
Photo by Rick Bunting

degradation of tropical or boreal forest occurs. It would require contractors and subcontractors to provide records verifying compliance. We know the importance of these forests, particularly to migratory birds (our bird-friendly coffee recognizes this), and this law would ensure that the state's buying power does not encourage deforestation.

**What You Can Do** — Contact your state legislators and ask them to sponsor the Procurement Without Deforestation legislation. Review the pending environmental bills promoted by Environmental Advocates and reach out on these too.

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

*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.*

## Upcoming Election

The DOAS Nominating Committee (Jane Bachman, Landa Palmer, Pam Lea and Laura Kilty) will present seven candidates at the May 20th program for election to the Board of Directors. The nominated slate includes incumbents Becky Gretton, Andy Mason, Dorian Huneke, Charlie Scheim, Tom Salo, and Jane Bachman. Also on the slate is David Diaz, currently the Director of Land Protection at the Otsego Land Trust. David has been in the natural resource management and land protection profession for almost 25 years. He is an avid birder, fisherman and naturalist who has lived in the Hudson Valley, Catskills, Finger Lakes, and Brooklyn. In addition to environmental science, he also holds a degree in viticulture and winemaking. Nominations also may be made from the floor at the May program webinar.

# Tips For Attracting a “Bouquet” of Hummingbirds

By *DOAS Director Kathryn Davino*

What do you call a flock of Hummingbirds? While they usually migrate alone, a group of hummingbirds might be called a bouquet, a glittering, a hover, a shimmer, or a tune. As each spring migration rolls around, I look forward most to welcoming back the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Around April 30, I mix up my homemade nectar solution of one-part sugar dissolved in four-parts water and bring it to a boil. I fill my nectar feeders and eagerly await that flash of red and sparkle of green as they zip in for a sip. I have kept a journal since 2001 that records the date I spotted my first bird each year. Up here in the hills of Delaware County, the earliest arrival was May 2 in 2017, but most commonly they appear between May 5 and 12. After moving the feeders around for years, I have found the most popular location is the feeder that hangs beneath the eaves on the east side of my house. It gets morning sun, so it's warm on a chilly morning, but the nectar doesn't overheat. I noticed that feeders sitting in direct sun all day leak nectar as the warm air trapped inside increases in pressure. Warm nectar may also ferment quickly, producing toxic alcohol. On a rainy day, the eaves provide shelter. Because the feeder hangs in front of a window, I have ample opportunities to observe the birds' antics up close. It's also convenient to reach through the window to take in the feeder for refills, and it's well out of the reach of even the most athletic leaping cat.

It is important to keep feeders clean, and to replace the nectar



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird*  
Photo by Kathryn Davino

at least once a week, or every few days if it gets a lot of sun. I often find by late July, there are so many birds coming to sip I have to refill my feeder every day. Initially one male will try to dominate the feeder and make merry chase with intruders, but once the juveniles fledge, there are sometimes as many as 10 to 15 birds coming in at once. This leads to aggressive dodging and swooping about—a delightful scene to watch. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds prefer to feed on red or orange flowers (however, it's not necessary to color the sugar water you put in a feeder), so I have planted many flowers to provide natural nectar. In my gardens, they prefer the Bee Balm and Hosta flowers, and I usually provide a basket of Fuchsia. Basically, they will investigate any flower that has tubular petals, stretching their long, forked tongues down the tubes, licking 10 to 15 times per second to gather high-energy food. I am excited to be adding some Great Blue Lobelias and Cardinal Flowers to my gardens soon. I purchased them from the DOAS Native Plant Sale in April, and both varieties attract hummingbirds. I should mention that, besides

drinking nectar, hummingbirds also consume flies and spiders to balance their nutritional needs.

In all the years of watching hummingbirds, I have never been able to locate a nest. I've been told that the best approach is to observe a bird as it moves around your yard and then attempt to follow it unobtrusively. With enough patience and persistence, you might just get lucky!

Hummingbirds are fascinating birds with many remarkable adaptations. They have incredibly high wing speeds and their heart rates are through the roof! Their tiny feet will not allow them to walk or hop, but they are useful for scratching and preening. On cool nights, hummingbirds go into a state of torpor, slowing their metabolism and heart and breathing rates to conserve energy. Each bird could visit 1,000 flowers in a day, and they have great spatial memory to help them keep track of flowers they have visited so they can return to the same feeder locations year after year. There are more than 360 species of hummingbirds worldwide, with 15 found in the USA, but the Ruby-throated is the only species commonly found in the eastern USA, and it occupies the largest breeding range of any North American hummingbird.

Enjoy these feisty little jewels while they're around; by early fall, they will be bound for Central America, with many crossing the entire Gulf of Mexico (500 miles!) in nonstop flight. For more information, visit [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ruby-throated\\_Hummingbird#](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ruby-throated_Hummingbird#).

# March — April Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

Ponds were beginning to thaw in mid-March, and both Tom Salo and Pam Peters found pairs of Hooded Mergansers foraging in newly open water (Burlington and Walton). Pam heard Barred Owls calling and watched a Common Raven chasing a Golden Eagle at the Arctic China State Forest. Janice Downie spotted a Bald Eagle on the dam by her pond near Oneonta. Sarah Root listened to the song of a Brown Creeper in Portlandville.

Gerianne Carillo reported the return of Merlins to Milford on the 17th. Suzanne Gaynor found a Bald Eagle on nest in East Meredith and heard the song of a Winter Wren (3/19). Tom Salo discovered a Red-tailed Hawk on eggs and a juvenile Golden Eagle heading north (West Burlington). Alice Pantaleoni observed the aerial maneuvers of a group of crows. Becky Gretton watched a Northern Flicker working a neighbor's lawn in the spring sunshine (3/21). Rod Spangle found a Rough-legged Hawk on Covered Bridge Road in Unadilla. White-crowned Sparrows were moving through Portlandville on the 23rd (Sarah Root).

A Ring-necked Pheasant was seen near Milford (Gerianne Carillo), and another in Unadilla (Prudence Danforth). An Eastern Phoebe sang along East Handsome Brook Road (Pam Peters, 3/24). Barb Palmer found Eastern Meadowlark singing (3/25),

Chipping Sparrow (3/27), and Buffleheads among other waterfowl on her pond in Jefferson. Dave Perry and Suzanne Clark saw four Bald Eagles fly over their home in Oneonta. Ellen Sokolow expressed concern for the safety of a female Northern Cardinal that kept hammering on her windows. Suzanne Gaynor watched a pair of Ring-necked Ducks on Pine Lake. Ten Wilson's Snipe, quietly feeding in a wet field in East Springfield were observed by Becky Gretton, Pete Fenner, and Cindy Staley. Randy and Carol Lynch discovered a Great Horned Owl on its nest near Stamford and saw a Red-tailed Hawk nest nearby. Randy photographed a male Wild Turkey showing off its breeding plumage for a hen. Tom Salo reported a Common Raven in Hartwick that twice landed on a live sheep, pulled off some wool, and flew off with it. Those Raven babies will be extra comfy and warm!

In early April, Barb Palmer found a Belted Kingfisher near Hobart, and American Kestrels mating in Jefferson. Suzanne Gaynor spotted a Kestrel, a Bald Eagle, and a Northern Harrier in East Meredith. A trip to the New Michigan State Forest with Matt Young afforded several encounters with Red Crossbills, plus a Pine Siskin gathering nesting material.

Nesting on utility poles puts Osprey at risk, but at least two



*Bufflehead*  
Photo by Barb Palmer

local nest spots have a new safety feature: platforms built to separate nest from electric wires. Becky Gretton was pleased find an Osprey bringing sticks to this now-safer spot atop their favorite pole in Portlandville.

On the 6th, Tree Swallows began calling and swooping in Meredith (Kathryn Davino). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers arrived in Plainfield State Forest (Tom and Jo Salo), Franklin (Pam Peters), and Laurens, where Charlie Scheim encountered one drumming on a metal sign. Angelika Rashkow enjoyed the singing of an American Tree Sparrow perched on a yew in Cooperstown. A Hermit Thrush called in Pam Peters' woods (4/9). Golden-crowned Kinglets foraged in Wilber Park, Oneonta. Sarah Root found Ruby-crowned Kinglets and a Blue-headed Vireo in Portlandville (4/13). In Delhi, Kathryn Davino heard a singing Field Sparrow, and a Broad-winged Hawk swooped through giving its high-pitched "Pettee" (4/14). In a beaver-created wetland in Exeter, Tom Salo found several Soras, indeed a treat for such an elusive species.

*Quote of the Month: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is today." — Ancient Chinese proverb*

# Eco-Fair, a New Environmental Community Event

The Susquehanna Headwaters Environmental Collaborative (SHEC) announces Eco-Fair, a new, one-day environmentally themed event to take place on Saturday, July 9 at Neawha Park, Oneonta. The main event will run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will feature exhibits and displays from local environmental organizations, live birds of prey programs, an electric vehicle car show, vendors, music, and more. Eco-Fair will also include a new “Eco-Feast” from 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Eco-Feast will celebrate both our connection to the Chesapeake Bay and to local agriculture through a crab boil dinner featuring Chesapeake Bay blue crabs and local farm products.

The Susquehanna Headwaters Environmental Collaborative was formed in 2021 to bring together environmentally-minded organizations, businesses and individuals in order to expand their collective impact through cooperative projects, shared resources and goal setting, and improved inter-organization communication. SHEC membership is open to individ-

uals and organizations throughout the Susquehanna headwaters region. To find out more about SHEC, visit <https://occainfo.org/shec/>.

Eco-Fair is still in the planning stages. Confirmed participants include Otsego County Conservation Association, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Otsego County Solid Waste Department, Page Wildlife Center, and Arm of the Sea Theater. Organizers are looking for more organizations to join the planning team, and they are putting out the call to vendors, exhibitors and event sponsors.

Eco-Fair will maintain many elements from the former spring Earth Festival event held at the Milford School — the vendor fair, food trucks, children’s activities, and more.

To find out about Eco-Fair 2022, visit <https://occainfo.org/eco-fair-2022/>. To register as a vendor, exhibitor or sponsor, visit <https://occainfo.org/eco-fair-2022-registration/>. For other inquiries or to register by phone, please call Anna Rutenbeck, SHEC Coordinator, at (607) 547-4488.



**By Charlie Scheim**

Birders of all experience levels are invited to join the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Big Day! The Big Day is a group effort in which birders, working alone, in pairs, or in small groups, will try to locate as many bird species as

we can in a single fun day on Saturday May 14. Birders can spend any amount of time they choose within that 24 hours, and report on their efforts to the Big Day coordinator, Charlie Scheim. Last year, 20 teams totaling 35 DOAS Big Day participants found 120 different species in our DOAS area!

Everyone is welcome, novice or experienced. If you are interested and have not participated before, please contact Charlie at 607-434-

4880 (voice or text) or [scheimc@hartwick.edu](mailto:scheimc@hartwick.edu) to get information on joining in the fun.

Note that even though this year they happen to occur on the same day, the DOAS Big Day is not the same as the Global Big Day sponsored by Cornell University’s Lab of Ornithology. All birders are welcome to report their results via eBird to Cornell, of course, but reports will also need to be submitted to Charlie.

## Native Plant Sale Pickup Reminder

Remember to pick up the plants you’ve ordered on Saturday May 21! Pickup will be from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Hartwick EV Car Show, which will be at Husky Park (at the end of Wells Avenue) in Hartwick, N.Y.

If you have ordered plants, please put this on your calendar. Storage space is limited; however if an emergency prevents you from picking up your order, call Susan O’Handley at 607-643-5680 before the day of pickup (as cell service at the pickup site is not dependable).



# Upcoming Activities

## May

May 7 – Susquehanna Greenway Bird Walk: Meet at 8 AM in the parking lot by the fields near the school district bus garage, just past the transfer station for a two-hour walk to view returning migrant birds on the Greenway trail, located on Silas Lane, off Rte. 205 in Oneonta. This will be an easy hike on level ground. Contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 or [scheimc@hartwick.edu](mailto:scheimc@hartwick.edu).

May 14 – DOAS Big Day Bird Count: The Big Day is a group effort in which birders, working alone, in pairs, or in small groups, will try to locate as many bird species as possible. See article on page 6. Contact is Charlie Scheim (607-434-4880, voice or text) or [scheimc@hartwick.edu](mailto:scheimc@hartwick.edu).

May 17 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

May 18 – Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake State Park: Meet at the beach area at 10 AM. Led by plant expert Connie Tedesco, the walk is approximately 2 hours in the Park. Bring water, insect repellent, binoculars if on hand, and your curiosity! Register at <https://doas.us/wildflower-walk-2022>

May 20 – DOAS Public Program: “Breeding Bird Atlas-ing 2022.” Birders of all experience levels are invited to attend a Zoom presentation by Charlie Scheim regarding the on-going NYS Breeding Bird Atlas III on Friday, May 20th at 7:30 p.m. More information and register at: <https://doas.us/breeding-bird-atlasing-2022/>

May 21 – Native plant sale pickup (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) at

the at the DOAS Tent at the Town of Hartwick EV Car Show at Husky Park, Wells Avenue (the car show event runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.).

## Summer

July 9 – ECO-Fair: Saturday, July 9 at Neahwa Park, Oneonta. To find out more about Eco-Fair 2022, visit <https://occainfo.org/eco-fair-2022/> and see article on page 6.

The John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp program for youth entering grades 3 through 6.

- July 25, 26, 27 & 28 – 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at DOAS Sanctuary (for children entering grades 3 and 4)
- August 15, 16, 17 & 18 – 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain, Oneonta (for children entering grades 5 and 6)

Details and registration information on page 8 and at <https://doas.us/2022-youth-camp-programs/>.

August 16 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

## Fall

September 16 – DOAS Public Program: Members PhotoShare. We will share contributed photos of birds taken by our members and friends. Each photo will include a description of why it is meaningful to the photographer and tell where it was taken. See article on submitting your photos on page 1.

October 21– 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*.

## Support our business sponsors.



**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.

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 to: DOAS Membership Chair, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820-0544 or go to <https://doas.us/membership/>.



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.  
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[www.doas.us](http://www.doas.us)

## Audubon Summer Camps Resume

By Susan O'Handley

The John G. New Audubon Summer Day Camp for youth will resume this summer with the following now available for enrollment in July and August 2022:

- Session 1: July 25, 26, 27 & 28 – 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at DOAS Sanctuary (for children entering grades 3 and 4)
- Session 2: August 15, 16, 17 & 18 – 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at DOAS Sanctuary (for children entering grades 5 and 6)

### REGISTER AT

<https://doas.us/2022-camp-registration/>

Space is limited in each session and spots will be filled in the order



of receipt of registration. If all spots are filled, we will maintain a waiting list if there are cancellations.

Payment is due at the time of registration; refunds for cancellation will not be issued after 6/17/22.

For additional information, please leave a message for Susan O'Handley, Education Chair at 607-397-3815. Fees: \$165 per child. DOAS Family membership is required:

\$20/one year; \$30/two years. Fee assistance may be available through our DOAS Camp Scholarship Fund. Request assistance using the registration form.

Confirmations and complete packets will be available in June and will be emailed to all registrants.

Camp Co-Directors for this summer are Liz Brown and Christina DeCesare. This year will be Liz's fifth year with the program. Chris joined our camp staff in 2018 and we are excited to have her continue with the program. Both women are professional environmental educators with a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to share.

We look forward to a great Audubon summer camp season in 2022!

**Bird-Friendly Coffee** You may order bird-friendly coffee by emailing Jane Bachman ([bachmanj@hartwick.edu](mailto:bachmanj@hartwick.edu)) or call 607-431-9509). Contact her to arrange for payment and pickup from Jane's front porch in Oneonta. More information at <https://doas.us/bird-friendly-coffee/>.