



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

## DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

### The Annual Charter Dinner and Raffle are Back!

By Kathryn Davino

**2022 Charter Dinner**  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21  
5:30-9:00PM  
IN-PERSON AT  
THE QUALITY INN, ONEONTA

DELAWARE-OTSEGO  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

Featuring **John C. Robinson**  
The Essentials of Birding by Ear;  
A Universal Method for Learning to  
Identify Birds Using Calls or Notes.

[www.doas.us/2022-charter-dinner](http://www.doas.us/2022-charter-dinner)

Please join us for the DOAS Annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 21, 2022 at the Quality Inn on State Highway 23 in Oneonta. The evening begins at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour, followed by The Hills Buffet at 6:15 p.m. (featuring Roasted Salmon, NY Sirloin and Vegetable Lasagna), and the program at 7:30 p.m. A cash bar will be available. Masks and Covid-19 vaccinations are not required but are strongly

recommended. The cost for the full evening is \$35 per person. Our featured presenter will be John C. Robinson who will share his expertise on “The Essentials of Birding By Ear.” The program will be streamed live at the dinner. Those who wish to only attend the 7:30 p.m. program can do so at no charge. Dinner reservations must be made by October 15. To register for the dinner, or the Zoom program, visit <https://doas.us/2022-charter-dinner/>. Call Kathryn Davino for more information at 607-746-7396.

As in the past, there will be door prizes and several fine items offered in our Charter Bucket Raffle. Our thanks go to those who donated items for the raffle: Gretchen Adams, Jane Bachman, Sandy Bright, Kathryn Davino,

Jennifer Hyypio, and Julie Wexler. Tickets for the raffle are now available online by visiting <https://doas.us/2022-charter-dinner-affle/>. Tickets will also be available October 8 at our Hawkwatch Open House at the DOAS Sanctuary. Raffle Tickets cost \$5 each or \$20 for 5 tickets.



Our collection of Charter Raffle items are pictured above. Get your raffle tickets for chances to win these fine prizes!

### Bird Seed Fundraiser Reminder

The DOAS Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser is your opportunity to buy quality bird seed and help support DOAS programs at the same time. Proceeds from this sale support speaker fees for meetings, field trips, programs and special events throughout the year, as well as youth summer programs and the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch.

We encourage you to stock up for the winter months ahead. Orders are now in progress for our November 5 Delivery Date.

- ORDER DEADLINE: SUNDAY, October 23, by 5 p.m.
- PRODUCT PICK UP: SATURDAY, NOV. 5, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
- PICK UP LOCATION: VP Supply Corp., 69 Country Club Road, Oneonta, NY.

Order at <https://doas.us/2022-bird-seed-sale/> . Thanks for your support!

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Co-president's Column.....      | 2 |
| Conservation & Legislation..... | 3 |
| Introducing David Diaz.....     | 4 |
| Bird Sightings .....            | 5 |
| Sanctuary Open House.....       | 6 |
| Sanctuary Workday.....          | 6 |
| New Sanctuary Benches .....     | 6 |
| Upcoming Activites .....        | 7 |
| BBA III Update.....             | 8 |

# Hope for the Newest Generation

by Co-president Becky Gretton

Most people have heard about the hazards to migrating birds our lighting causes. Hopefully people are shutting off their lights at night and installing window treatments to avoid daytime window collisions.

A few recent events caused me to reflect on the survival rate for first-year birds before they begin their journeys.

I received a phone call from a local young woman who was concerned about a bird she rescued from the roadside that was unable to fly. She had purchased meal worms and the bird was eating and chirping nicely. This busy young lady took the time and spent the money to give the bird a chance at survival, to her immense credit. I referred her to Falcon Heart Rescue in Herkimer, NY. Deb Saltis received the bird which ultimately did not survive. I have credited Falcon Heart in a previous column for their devotion to rehabilitating injured birds. It's all out-of-pocket for her and husband John. They are a gift to wildlife. We look forward to their live raptor presentation at our Open House (see article on page 6).

Another phone call described a hawk that was consuming a gray squirrel in a most unlikely location: very close to people who work on equipment in a garage and manage a large composting operation. It left half of the squirrel there and came back later to pick it up! I determined that it was an immature Red-tailed Hawk and wonder if



Photo from: <https://www.residencestyle.com/window-crashers-how-to-prevent-bird-window-collisions/>

it was so comfortable with the "buffet" there that it somehow did not fear humans. After further discussion it turns out that this bird actually flew into the garage using the overhead door access a number of times. The folks there are dedicated to its safety, so hopefully things will continue to go well. How does a young bird like this one lose its fear of humans?

While driving recently, I saw what turned out to be an injured juvenile Cooper's hawk near the shoulder of the road. I quickly turned around, moved it well off the road and hurried to get the necessary items for another trip to Falcon Heart. When I approached it again it had passed away. I am terribly sad that the gorgeous bird with small dark lines on its breast is no longer hunting, and I will always feel privileged to have touched a barely living and later deceased young Cooper's hawk in my effort to help.

As bird populations dramatically decrease in numbers, here's hope for this new generation and thanks to those who work to keep them safe.

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

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Janet Potter

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**ON THE WEB:** <https://doas.us/> and  
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To contribute notes or articles for  
The Belted Kingfisher, email:  
[editor@doas.us](mailto:editor@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.*

# Conservation and Legislation

By Andy Mason

**Election 2022**—November 8 will bring a full ballot before voters. Contests for Governor, US Senator, US Representatives, state Senators and Assemblymembers, and an important environmental bond measure will all be decided. In addition, redistricting has brought about changes with incumbents running in places they may not be well known.

Good sources for environmental records and platforms of incumbents are Environmental Advocates, (EA, [www.eaaction.org/](http://www.eaaction.org/)), and the New York League of Conservation Voters (LCV, [www.nylcv.org/](http://www.nylcv.org/)). Both have excellent legislative scorecards based on votes on environmental legislation.

**Candidates**—Governor Kathy Hochul has had a generally positive environmental record in her short time in office. She has promoted electric vehicles and other measures to transition off fossil fuels. In her budget proposal this year she increased the size of the proposed environmental bond act significantly. Her opponent, Lee Zeldin, has a 14% record from the LCV for his time as a US Representative, with votes against wilderness and marine mammal protection, but for protection against pollution.

In the US Senate race, incumbent Chuck Schumer has a lifetime score of 93% from the LCV. His opponent, Joe Pinion, has not held public office so has no voting record. His web site states that he supports private development of renewable energy.

In local Congressional races, in the new 19th District, covering all of Delaware and Chenango Counties and southwest Otsego County, including Oneonta, Republican Marc Molinaro faces off against Democrat Josh Riley. As a state legislator,

Molinaro generally received ratings above the average Republican member. Riley has not held public office; his website calls for quick action to reach zero net greenhouse emissions, and he has been endorsed by the Sierra Club.

In the new 21st Congressional District, covering northern and eastern Otsego County and all of Schoharie County, newcomer Democrat Matt Castelli opposes incumbent Republican Elise Stefanik. Castelli's website states, "We are already seeing the effects of extreme weather conditions threatening the Adirondacks and our upstate farms." Stefanik has a consistent record of anti-environment votes, with a 13% rating from LCV in the past year.

New local state legislative districts are very convoluted. For example, Otsego County falls into four different Assembly districts. The eastern part of the county, plus eastern Delaware County and all of Schoharie County are in the 102nd district, where incumbent Republican Chris Tague faces Democrat Nicholas Chase. Tague has a 2022 score of 32 of 100 from EA, and 33% from LCV. Chase, a local teacher, calls for "incentives given to any household or business who decides to start transitioning to green energy".

In the new 101st Assembly district, covering Otsego County towns of Pittsfield, Edmeston, Morris, Laurens and Otego, plus Delaware County towns of Franklin, Hamden and Andes, Democrat Matthew Mackey faces Republican Brian Maher. Mackey states, "Climate change is an existential threat to our district..." Maher's Facebook page does not mention the environment.

The new 122nd Assembly dis-

trict includes the middle of Otsego County from Richfield south to Oneonta. Incumbent Republican Brian Miller is opposed by Oneonta Democrat Dan Buttermann. Miller has a 37% rating from EA and 33% from LCV. Buttermann's web site calls for "transition of gas and coal plants to large scale solar and wind farm utilities."

The new 121st Assembly district covers nearly all of Chenango County, western Delaware County, and Butternuts and Unadilla in Otsego County. Republican incumbent Joe Angelino is running unopposed. He has ratings of 34% from EA and 33% from LCV.

In the state Senate elections, nearly all of our area falls in the 51st district where Republican incumbent Peter Oberacker faces Democrat Eric Ball. Oberacker received a 41% rating from EA and 44% from LCV. Ball lists protecting "pristine water, healthy soil, and clean air..." as a legislative priority.

**Ballot Measure**—The Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act, if approved by voters, will provide \$4.2 billion for land and wildlife protection, among other environmental programs. This will fund storm resilience, open space land conservation and recreation, and water quality improvement.

Of particular benefit to birds is at least \$1.1 billion for restoration and flood risk reduction, including wetland, floodplain, and stream restoration, and endangered and threatened species conservation programs. Other pluses include projects to establish stream buffers, up to \$650 million for open space conservation and farmland preservation.

Be conscious of the environmental bond act this fall. You can help passage with supportive letters to the editor and social posts, talking to friends and family, and of course, your own vote.

# Q & A with New Board Member David Diaz

Compiled By DOAS Director Pamela J. Peters

**David Diaz joined the DOAS Board of Directors in the spring. Welcome, David.**

**PAM:** What brought you to work in Otsego County?

**DAVID:** After a brief stint away from conservation work, I was able to land a great position at the Otsego Land Trust (OLT) in 2017.

**PAM:** How did you get interested in land conservation?

**DAVID:** I was always interested in nature as a kid, fishing, looking at insects, then plants and birds. My high school teacher encouraged me to take classes in environmental science. After graduating from high school, I went to the College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY) and pursued a career in land conservation.

**PAM:** What inspires you about your work?

**DAVID:** Land conservation has an impact beyond our lifetime and ensures something is left for generations. We wouldn't have national or state parks and forests if those before us hadn't done the same.

**PAM:** Are you hopeful about NYS moving towards a cleaner environment? How can we, as average citizens, help?

**DAVID:** Yes, I am hopeful. Overall, we are going in the right direction but we also have a lot of work to do. We haven't been the most progressive state when it comes to environmental legislation but that is changing. The NYS Environmental Protection Fund is one bit of proof of that progress.

**PAM:** What can the ordinary citizen do?

**DAVID:** Start small, start local. Attend a local town board or



Photo submitted by David Diaz

planning meeting. Just pick one thing and try it out, see what suits you. You'll get tuned into issues facing your community. The other thing you can do is look at local conservation organizations. Attend one program or outing. Instead of going big, try going small first.

**PAM:** Where did you get your start with birding?

**DAVID:** I've always liked watching birds but wasn't a convert until the late 1990's. I started going with a friend to hawkwatches (including Franklin Mountain) when I was living in NYC. I was hooked! That led to interest in warblers, shore birds and other types of birds.

**PAM:** Describe one of your favorite walks or birding spots.

**DAVID:** Brookwood Point on Otsego Lake, which is a public space created by Otsego Land Trust, is a great park, especially during spring migration. Fetterly Forest has diverse habitats and fairly easy trails with a view of Canadarago Lake. Around Cooperstown there are some sweet spots that are easily overlooked but great for birding, like the trails behind the Clark Sport Center and in town

along the Susquehanna River. Star Field is a nice birding trail with multiple bird habitats and a nice view of the lake from the east side.

**PAM:** Do you keep a life list of birds, why or why not? If so, what's the last life bird you saw?

**DAVID:** Yes, I began with a spiral notebook, and then moved to Sibley's *Birder's Life List and Field Diary*. I've also been using eBird since 2007. I love the way my notebook is really a diary of my life, all the trips I took and the people I met and birded with, whether it was tracking down an Upland Plover or accidentally happening upon a Black Skimmer nest in an abandoned toilet seat. My last life bird was a Yellow-legged Gull seen near Cannes, France this past June.

**PAM:** How did you get interested in the DOAS?

**DAVID:** Years ago, I worked in Brooklyn in Prospect Park and started coming up to the Franklin Mountain and other regional hawkwatches. I became familiar with DOAS and the work it was doing then. Fast forward to 2017 when I started working with the OLT, it was only a matter of time before I was ready to become more involved with DOAS.

**PAM:** What are some ways DOAS can connect with young people?

**DAVID:** Young people are naturally attracted to raptors and the hawkwatch, so maybe some programming around that. The key point is to get kids excited. If the educator or field trip leader is passionate and gets other people excited - young or old - that is contagious.

# August—September Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

In the second half of August birds were much quieter. Rather than finding birds by their songs one must listen for the quieter chips and notes. Charlie and I continued to find evidence of breeding, including families of Kestrels, Chickadees, and Bluebirds; Yellowthroats, Ovenbirds, and Vireos feeding young; Waxwings, Cardinals and Towhees carrying food, and plenty of fledglings. A new experience for me was learning the sound of begging Yellow-throated Vireo fledglings. It was a good year for Wild Turkeys: we came across at least one group with poults in nearly every BBIII atlas block we visited, and often saw more groups while driving to our destinations.

According to one study, about 1 in 30,000 birds is leucistic, and it seems more are being noticed and reported in our area recently. Sometimes those birds are easy to identify because they display some normal plumage. Sometimes they are more easily identified by the company they keep; a ghostly white hawk perched companionably near a Red-tailed Hawk can safely be identified as a Redtail. Then there are the mystery birds. Nancy Simons posted videos of a stunning all-white sparrow in Meredith. Based on a faint vocalization in the video, she tentatively identified it as a Song Sparrow.

Species that breed in colder climes began passing through. Randy and Carol Lynch sent

pictures of a Cape May Warbler near Harpersfield. The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch (FMHW) is a great place to find migrants small and large. Tom Salo spotted an Osprey carrying a medium sized orange fish and commented “No koi is safe!” John Heidecker photographed a particularly dark Broad-winged Hawk, which resembled the dark morph Broadwings in Western U.S., but it was decided that it was just an exceptionally dark Eastern bird. On September



*Particularly dark Broadwinged Hawk*  
Photo by John Heidecker

8th, Randy Lynch posted pictures captioned “Strange Bedfellows at FMHW”: a Turkey Vulture soaring with a Red-tailed Hawk; an Ovenbird perched near a Field Sparrow; and a Scarlet Tanager on the same small branch as an Olive-sided Flycatcher. Randy certainly has a photographer’s eye!

Angelika Rashkow enjoyed watching Common Mergansers swimming in Oaks Creek and watched a Sharp-shinned Hawk eating its prey on a roadside Cooperstown. She recalled Phoebes

nesting twice this past summer, making a mess on her porch, but didn’t mind waiting till they were finished to clean up.

Late summer is a great time for kayaking the Susquehanna and Goodyear Lake. Every time I drove to the boat access, I noted Osprey guarding nests in two locations; by September 10th they must have moved on. While paddling, Laura Hurley and I observed foraging Green Herons and Belted Kingfishers, Sandpipers, a Double-crested Cormorant. A female Northern Harrier hunted a swampy area, then moved to the river and continued along the bank before suddenly dropping to grab at something before rising and flying over the treetops, out of sight. Laura also mentioned that she regularly hears a Barred Owl sounding off near Airport Road, outside of Oneonta.

Unusual flight caught my eye one day while driving near Home Depot in Oneonta. A bat, the first I’ve seen all year, flew in a straight line over the road in mid-day. Observing unusual behavior in any creature raises questions. Is it sick, flying during the day? Or perhaps it got disturbed off its roost? Could that straight-as-an-arrow flight indicate migration? The experience saddened me, thinking about the drastic decline of insect populations with the corresponding decline in bats and, of course, our avian insectivores.

*Quote of the Month: “Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.” —Albert Camus*

# Happenings at the DOAS Audubon Sanctuary

## Sanctuary Open House



Join us on Saturday, October 8 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., for our annual open house at the DOAS Sanctuary and Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch in Oneonta. The address of the Sanctuary is

Grange Hall Spur Road, Oneonta; directions may be found at <https://doas.us/conservation-and-environment/franklin-mountain-sanctuary/>. At 10 a.m., a Franklin Mountain hawk counter will conduct a workshop on how to identify flying hawks. At 11:30 a.m. there will be a nature walk for kids around the Sanctuary. Concurrently, a DOAS board member will lead a trail walk through the Sanctuary, ending at the Hawkwatch. At 12:30 Deborah Saltis will present a live raptor program. Deb is the founder of Falcon Heart Rescue, "Helping



*Deb Saltis of Falcon Heart Rescue with Iscah, one of her rehabbed raptors.*

Wildlife and Educating People," a non-profit wildlife rescue and educational facility in Herkimer NY.

A variety of snacks and drinks will be offered. Raffle items for the upcoming October 21 Charter Dinner will be on display, and raffle tickets will be available to purchase. Bird-friendly coffee will also be available for sale.

## Sanctuary Work Day

On Saturday September 17th an enthusiastic group of SUNY Cobleskill wildlife management students, under the direction of Professor Roger Masse, participated in a workday at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. They helped clear woody areas around the Hawkwatch to improve and maintain the view. DOAS Board



*Work Day Crew  
Photo by John Heidecker*

members Andy Mason, Nate Cutting and Tom Salo worked alongside this great group of energetic students. The DOAS board and Franklin Mountain hawk counters are very grateful for their help. It will make maintenance of the newly cleared area much easier in future years.

## New Benches

DOAS's Accessibility Committee has been doing research and determining places at the Sanctuary that need some rest stops. Two new benches have been installed on the walk up to the Hawkwatch. These are nice places to take a rest, sit and watch the birds, and possibly see some raptors flying overhead.

The backless resting bench was built and donated by Andy

Mason. The bench with the back, shown at right in the photo by Jane Bachman, was built and donated by the Palmers, Ron and Landa.

Landa chairs the Accessibility Committee, formed to initiate changes that make the Sanctuary welcoming to anybody. Other members of the Committee are Pamela Peters, Jane Bachman, and Andy Mason. The Committee has been active in the pursuit of ways to improve accessibility at



the Sanctuary. If you have ideas or would like to make a contribution towards our accessibility plans, please contact Landa at [landavpalmer@gmail.com](mailto:landavpalmer@gmail.com).

# Upcoming Activities

## October

October 8– 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 nature walk at 11:30 a.m. concurrent with a guided trail walk for others. Live raptor presentation with Falcon Heart Rescue at 12:30 p.m. More information on page 6.

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

October 21– DOAS Annual Charter Dinner: Quality Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn), State Highway 23, Oneonta. The speaker will be John Robinson presenting via zoom “The Essentials of Birding by Ear: A Universal Method for Learning How To Identify Birds Using Songs or Call Notes.” Festivities begin at 5:30 p.m. program begins at 7:30 p.m. Reservation deadline is October 13. See article on page 1.

October 23, by 5 p.m.– Deadline for Birdseed Order. For more information, see reminder on page 1. Pick up on November 5, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

## November

November 5 – Bird Seed Sale Pickup: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Pickup Location is VP Supply Corp., 41 Country Club Road, Oneonta.

November 18 – DOAS Public Program: “Favorite Stories from 2022” with Rick Bunting sharing photos. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

## December

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

December 17 – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count. Contact Sandy Bright at [brights@hartwick.edu](mailto:brights@hartwick.edu) or phone 607-287-4465.

## January

January 1– Delaware County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Pam Peters at [ovenb1rdp@gmail.com](mailto:ovenb1rdp@gmail.com) or phone 607-829-6545

January 15 – DOAS Eagle Trip: Field trip to view wintering Bald Eagles in Delaware County. This trip is open to DOAS members only. For more information contact Andy Mason, 607-652-2162, or [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

January 16 – NYS Ornithological Association's Annual Statewide Waterfowl Count: This effort involves identifying and counting ducks and geese in our region. Anyone interested in helping with the census, please contact Andy Mason, phone 607-652-2162, or email [AndyMason@earthling.net](mailto:AndyMason@earthling.net).

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

January 20 – DOAS Public Program: Landa Palmer will share her photos and stories from Iceland. Venue to be determined.

**In case you missed it**—Past webinars are available online at <https://doas.us/webinars/>.

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For information about becoming a business sponsor, please contact Susan O'Handley at [sjohandley@gmail.com](mailto:sjohandley@gmail.com).

## 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!**

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PO BOX 544, ONEONTA, NY 13820

<https://doas.us/>



The third New York State Breeding Bird Atlas has now completed three of its five planned seasons. Statewide, over 3000 atlasers have contributed to the BBA, finding 302 possible breeding species. Of these, 225 (about 75%) have been confirmed as breeding in New York. Overall, coverage in the state has been quite extensive: atlas data has been recorded in 90% of the 5710 blocks into which the state is divided, and in 96% of the 1815 “priority blocks.” As observant birders might guess, the five most commonly confirmed breeders in the state are American Robin, European Starling, Canada Goose, Common Grackle, and Red-winged Blackbird. There have also been rare confirmations of much less common breeders, such as King Rail,

Tricolored Heron, Mississippi Kite, Philadelphia Vireo, and Cape May Warbler. With two more breeding seasons to go, it might still be a bit early to discuss overall trends in bird populations in our state, but it is certainly the case that BBA results so far confirm both the increase in breeding of species such as Bald Eagle and the alarming declines of other species such as grassland birds and avian insectivores.

Locally, in Otsego County, atlasers have surveyed 106 of its 109 blocks (97%), and all of its 37 priority blocks. Of the 161 species coded so far in the county, 118 (73%) have been confirmed as breeding here. In Delaware County, 149 of its 166 blocks (90%), and all but one of its 56 priority blocks, have seen coverage, and of the 157 species recorded, 107 (68%) are confirmed breeders.

There is still a good deal of atlasing work that needs to be done.

So far, only 90 priority blocks in the state (5%) have been designated as “Complete”, meaning that at least 55 species have been coded in the block with at least 50% confirmed as breeders. The BBA is sorely in need of birders who are willing to visit areas repeatedly to devote the time and careful observations necessary to not only identify local species but also to confirm breeding species. Locally, Otsego County has 9 complete priority blocks and Delaware has 5. As our area’s BBA Coordinator, I ask for your help in trying to bring other blocks to completion. I (together with my wife and birding partner Sandy Bright) am very glad to correspond or meet with birders willing to become involved. We can give instructions on how to confirm species and point you to blocks that need further work. Please do consider joining in this important citizen science effort.