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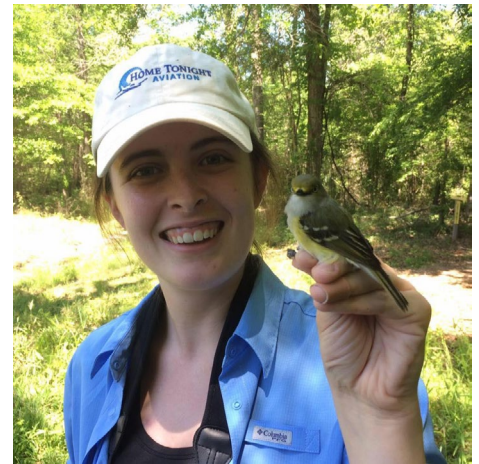
DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

April 21 Program: How High Temperatures Are Affecting Birds and Their Songs

Join us **IN PERSON** on April 17 for “**How High Temperatures are Affecting Birds and Their Songs,**” at 7:30 p.m. at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Guest speaker Casey Coomes will present a slideshow about how rising temperatures are affecting birds all over the world. Climate change poses a huge threat to the persistence of songbirds in North America—in fact, we have already lost almost 30% of our birds in the last 50 years. During her presentation, Casey will discuss how heat can influence bird

survival, reproduction, and even the songs they sing!

Casey’s work with birds began when she attended college at Transylvania University, where she received her bachelor’s degree in Biology. She then went on to receive a PhD from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where her research focused on the effects of high temperatures on communication in Zebra Finches. She is currently a Visiting Instructor and PRODiG Fellow at SUNY Oneonta in the Biology Department, where she teaches Avian Physiology and Behavior.



Casey Coomes, Contributed Photo

The Optics Raffle drawing will be conducted after the program.

Mark Your Calendars for the May 19 Program



Gentoo, Photo by Pam Lea

On Friday, May 19, join us for a return visit from Dr. Pam Lea at 7:30 p.m. at the Elm Park United Methodist Church in Oneonta, NY. Dr. Pam Lea is a local retired veterinarian who has had a lifelong passion for travel. She will treat us to a photo-journey from her adventures in Antarctica where she traveled in February 2022.

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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

Save the Swamp—Like other northerners who have the opportunity, I usually head south to escape the worst of the winter weather. More often than not, Florida is my destination. The state has its drawbacks, but it is consistently warm, the birding is good, and for a kayaker it has numerous slow-moving waterways that provide easy paddling opportunities.

Two rivers that my wife and I particularly enjoy are the St. Marys and the Suwannee. Both are long and meandering, and happen to rise in the same place, the Okefenokee Swamp on the Florida-Georgia border. They quickly diverge however, with the St. Marys heading for the Atlantic Ocean and the Suwannee for the Gulf of Mexico.

Part of the special appeal of these rivers for me is that source—the Okefenokee—for it is where I first got hooked on birds, several decades ago. By serendipity, we connected with an Audubon group who were headed into the swamp and had a couple of vacant seats in their canoes. Deep in the dark, dank waters, surrounded by huge cypress trees with their weird ‘knees’ protruding above the surface and heavily festooned with Spanish moss, a Prothonotary Warbler landed in a shaft of sunlight ten feet away. The bird looked like burnished gold, and I could hardly believe anything could be so beautiful. A Pileated Woodpecker and a Snowy Egret later, there was no looking back!

So I was concerned when I



Okefenokee Swamp

Photo by Stacy Shelton-USFWS

recently learned that an Alabama mining company has applied to build a strip mine less than three miles from the swamp—now a National Wildlife Refuge. Experts have stated how this mine could irretrievably alter the water levels and water flow of the swamp, with negative impacts on its wildlife, vegetation, carbon storage, and the rivers that depend on it. The titanium from this mine would be used to color paint, plastics and items such as toothpaste. There is no shortage of titanium and certainly no need to threaten one of America’s great places to obtain it.

Writer Janisse Ray has called the Okefenokee like no other place on earth.” I couldn’t agree more.

What you can do—Contact Georgia Governor Brian Kemp and let him know that the Okefenokee Swamp is an irreplaceable resource for our nation and that its natural and cultural values must be protected. A major mining operation on its edge is not in keeping with this protection. Write to Governor Kemp at: 206 Washington Street, Suite 203, State Capitol, Atlanta, GA 30334 or go to his web site: <https://gov.georgia.gov/contact-us>.

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The Belted Kingfisher, email:
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Finding More Than We Seek

Guest Column by DOAS Member Nancy New

March 2000: “There’s a pair of Bald Eagles over at the reservoir,” a friend calls as he drives up to our house. “Thanks!” I call back as I head quickly in search of my mom, binoculars, and the car keys. Within minutes we are on our way to look for the eagles.

Why do we act so promptly? Sure, Bald Eagles are great and Mom and I have seen many in our travels. But in March 2000 we have never seen one here, in the community where we have lived for 45 years. My dad taught birding in this area for almost 30 years before he passed on, and never saw an eagle here. So, this makes the possibility of seeing eagles near our home even more special. With great excitement we anticipate seeking, and finding, this pair of Bald Eagles.

As we look out over the reservoir’s vista, an uplifting peace starts to grow within me. I know this place; it has given me many gifts. It’s where Dad and Mom taught me some of my first birds and trees, where I first learned to fish and where I practiced my early photography skills under the patient eye of my father. I know this place, and it is precious. This place, in all its seasons and ages, has been a part of my life since I can first remember yet it is still new each time I visit.

We immediately spot the eagle sitting serene in a majestic old white pine. THIS the newest gift our reservoir has for us. Even after a lifetime of birding, I am not prepared for the power of viewing this close-up treasure through

binocs. The eagle’s head fills the view and I experience its intense gaze. Its presence surrounds me and jolts me into a fresh perspective. I see this eagle as if I am seeing one for the first time. I soak in the image: golden afternoon sun washing over his pure white head, rich yellow beak and dark brown feathers, and an eye that is a large black pupil surrounded by a cool yellow ring. Then it blinks and I am further in awe. The magic of this moment washes over me and I memorize every detail, as he just sits, observing the world, oblivious of the soaring joy he is bringing to me and my mom.

Eventually, we move on in search of the second eagle. We find where I heard my first black-throated blue warbler, and where Dad and I escaped untainted when we released a skunk. We don’t find the second eagle, but we keep hoping, looking.

Our first eagle still sits, looking

out over this timeless landscape and adding his own priceless contribution. We never find the second eagle, but we do find something even more special. Our first eagle brings us hope that someday, we’ll see another eagle here. And our first eagle helps us find peace and abundant joy that have remained with us. They are indelibly linked to this most precious place.

March 2023: It is now 23 years later, and I have often mentally traveled back to that day when I saw this Bald Eagle. Frequently, I think about it while at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch and we see “local” Bald Eagles and need to differentiate them from “migrating” Bald Eagles. I rejoice abundantly every time we have this “problem.” Much has changed but some things still remain: the joy of knowing a place and the endless gifts that continue to appear as we cherish the place we each call home.



*Bald Eagle
Photo by Rick Bunting*

Accessibility and Why

By DOAS Director Landa Palmer

Have you ever walked the trails at the DOAS Bird Sanctuary? It is so relaxing and invigorating. The trail along the wetlands has that damp earthy smell and depending on the time of year, you can get lucky enough to see the Wood Thrush, the Ovenbird, or watch the Redtails sitting across the swamp in an old dead tree. One time in the winter I was nosing around and saw something dark stick its head up through the snow and then come up and down and in and out. I was pretty excited and sent off a message to Andy to say that we had an otter at the wetlands!! I learned it was not an otter, of course, but rather a mink. It was fun to think I had found an otter though.

As you go further into the site you can find yourself in complete silence in the woods. Occasionally another person will join you or you can hear a family further along the trail, having fun and laughing. But most of the time, it is just quiet. On one of my walks, I heard what I thought was the oddest sound of beating and wondered if I was going to cross paths with a beaver beating its tail. Nope. I came across Jane Bachman, hammering materials on trail boards to prevent people from slipping. Perhaps this was when I thought about how important accessibility is.

We have been working on

efforts to improve accessibility at our Sanctuary and within our programs. There are many different facets to think about with accessibility, which is really about our values as an organization and our desire to have every body, and everybody, be able to enjoy birding and the outdoors. Our efforts will need to focus on how we can support those with physical limitations, diverse needs, and what we can do to bring people of different life experiences the enjoyment of our surroundings and the enjoyment of birds.

DOAS committed to accessibility with a committee and a budget line. We have a small start and are looking for those of different backgrounds and abilities to join us and help us. We recognize that we know birds, but we are not experts on accessibility. We reference the Birdability movement and organization as it is a wonderful resource which offers guidance and ideas.

The Birdability organization sets the standard for accessibility by demonstrating their commitment to three values: improving physical accessibility of birding locations; creating a more welcoming and inclusive birding community; and introducing people with access challenges to birding (for more information,



*Birdability's Founder and President
Virginia Rose*

Photo from www.birdability.org

see <https://www.birdability.org/>).

These values are embraced by DOAS. And we have work to do.

Our goals are to create an environment that welcomes all people to our programs. Our online programs have closed captioning, the Bird Sanctuary has resting benches for those who need a rest, and we have placed an accessible porta-john and wheelchair-accessible picnic table at the Sanctuary. We hope to create trails that will allow for those living with disabilities to be able to see out to the wetlands. A Universal Trail Assessment (UTA) is in the planning stages, which will allow people to know what to expect as they enter the site or trail. We are working on interpretive signage with the hope that technology will allow for interpretation of language or reading for those who need assistance. We are excited to join with other organizations to develop bird outings, which are welcoming to all.

Quotation of the Month: *“April prepares her green traffic light and the world thinks, “Go!” — Christopher Morley*

February—March Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

Just as the deadline for last month's article arrived, so did the first Red-winged Blackbirds. Gerianne Carillo had several visits to her feeders on the 15th, along with a couple of Brown-headed Cowbirds. Blackbirds were also reported that day by Tom Salo and Lisa Gorn. When Lisa heard her Redwings singing from a swamp in the evening, they were accompanied by a displaying American Woodcock. Tom, who last month reported the first breeding bird confirmation of the year, can also claim honors for spotting the second confirmation of the year, a Common Raven carrying a stick. A day later, the first Common Grackle visited his feeder, and a large flock settled in trees behind Dorian Huneke's barn. All three reporters also observed flocks of Canada Geese moving. The first-of-season Killdeer landed in Dorian's pasture on the 27th.

While skiing, Jessie Ravage spotted a flock of about 20 pure white doves hanging out on the church at the Farmers' Museum. Becky Gretton mentioned that she has

seen this flock sporadically for several years.

This time of year brings a mix of early migrants and winter visitors. Tom and Jo Salo discovered a Northern Shrike on grasslands in West Burlington (2/28). On March 4th a Winter Wren was heard singing by Suzanne Gaynor "in his usual spring/summer location" in East Meredith. The next day, silence; Suzanne wondered if he was rethinking his early return. Landa Palmer reported a Killdeer flying around a week earlier than usual at her farm in East Meredith. In Stamford, Barb Palmer followed up on a tip from a friend to find a flock of Horned Larks with a few Snow Buntings. Evening Grosbeaks were still hanging around Suzanne Summers' area in Hartwick.

March 7th brought lots of bird activity. The spring season of the hawk watch at Davis State Park started with a bang, with Becky Gretton reporting four Golden Eagles, two Balds, and a Peregrine Falcon among others. Two Carolina Wrens enjoyed the suet



Northern Shrike
Photo by Deborah Miller

offering at Stan Salthe's feeder. Deborah Miller of Fly Creek described a very uncommon experience. Upon checking what sounded like a window strike she looked out the window and saw "two birds having some sort of battle." She grabbed her camera as they moved from porch to driveway where she captured photos of a "Northern Shrike that took a Junco for its meal!"

A Song Sparrow visited Barb Palmer's yard in Jefferson on the 11th. She also spotted an American Kestrel in Blenheim and an immature Bald Eagle along the Westkill. She'll be keeping her eye on a nearby eagle nest to see if there's any activity there.

Shop DOAS Sales

You may order bird-friendly coffee, as well as DOAS mugs and Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch caps, by emailing Jane Bachman at bachmanj@hartwick.edu or calling her at 607-431-9509. Contact her to arrange for payment and pickup at in person meetings or from Jane's front porch in Oneonta. Cash, checks and credit cards are accepted.

More information at <https://doas.us/shop/>.



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DOAS Native Plant Sale— Fundraiser to Support Community Climate Action Projects

By Susan O’Handley

In 2020-21, DOAS was awarded a grant from National Audubon Society’s ‘Audubon in Action’ program to develop a network of community climate leaders. As part of the grant, we distributed over \$8,000 to support local climate projects. We are holding this special fundraiser to help DOAS continue our work in this arena and to provide small grants to support climate action projects in our region.

Through this fundraiser you can acquire beautiful native plants and support climate action programs in our area at the same time. Native plants pre-orders will be accepted through Sunday, April 30. (If you are mailing payment by

check, it has to arrive by April 29.) Order online at <https://doas.us/native-plant-sale-2023/>.

Pickup of all orders will be on Saturday, **June 3 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, at the DOAS EV Car Show at Damaschke Field Parking Lot, Neahwa Park, Oneonta, NY (the car show event runs from 11 to 2).

On Tuesday, April 11, DOAS will present (on Zoom) a recording of a program with Doug Tallamy, *Bringing Nature Home: The Importance of Native Plants*. Local botanist, Connie Tedesco will be on hand following the video to answer questions.

REGISTRATION is required for the Zoom Program (click on April



11 at <https://doas.us/calendar/>). Learn about a model local native plant project in Delhi and find information about *Landscaping with Native Plants* by going to <https://doas.us/native-plant-sale-2023/>.

Please note: If you are coordinating supplies for a community climate action program, we may be able to offer special pricing. Contact Susan at info@doas.us for more information.



Electric Vehicle Car Show: June 3

By Susan O’Handley

We’re excited to be back at Damaschke Field in June to help people learn about EV’s from the people who own them (and from local dealerships). We are currently registering owners who would like to exhibit as well as local dealerships with the possibility of test drives at the event. Information about registrations and sponsorships is available at <https://doas.us/ev-2023/>.

Optics Raffle Reminder

It’s not too late to buy optics raffle tickets and support DOAS at the same time! Proceeds will benefit the DOAS Sanctuary and Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. Lucky winners will select from three prizes, including binoculars and a super zoom bridge camera. \$15 donation per ticket. Only 300 tickets available. Drawing will be held on April 21 during our monthly program meeting. Purchase tickets and find more information at <https://doas.us/optics-raffle-2023/>. Good luck! Our thanks to all who participate in this optics raffle fundraiser! Special thanks also to Barry and Sue Stevens from Johnson City for their support of this program.



Upcoming Activities

April

April 1 through 30 – Native Plant Sale orders accepted. Find out more and order at <https://doas.us/native-plant-sale-2023/>. Pickup of all orders will be on June 3 at the DOAS EV Car Show (more info below)

April 11 – “Bringing Nature Home: The Importance of Native Plants,” a Zoom program from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Local botanist, Connie Tedesco will be on hand following the video to answer questions. Registration required at <https://doas.us/calendar/>.

April 15 – Earth Festival at the Milford School: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Take home a bag or two of bird-friendly coffee. We'll have information on membership available as well as Native Plant Sale order forms, non-lead ammunition information, and our Golden Eagle Display.

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

April 21 – DOAS Public Program: “How High Temperatures are Affecting Birds and Their Songs,” presented by Casey Coomes at 7:30 p.m. at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Optics Raffle drawing after the program.

May

May 6 – Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway Bird Walk: meet at 8 a.m. 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 for more information.

May 14 – Spring Bird Walk at the DOAS Sanctuary beginning at 8 a.m. Returning migrants at this location should include warblers, vireos, orioles, tanagers, and possibly waterfowl and raptors. The walk will last approximately two hours. The Sanctuary

trails vary in difficulty but include rough and possibly muddy areas and hilly terrain. There is an accessible porta-john available and resting benches on the hill to the Hawkwatch. For further information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 267-8491. Directions to the DOAS Sanctuary can be found at the doas website:

<https://doas.us/conservation-and-environment/franklin-mountain-sanctuary/>.

May 17 – Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake State Park: Meet at the beach area at 10 a.m. Led by botanist Connie Tedesco, the walk is approximately 2-3 hours in the Park. Bring water, insect repellent, binoculars if on hand, and your curiosity! Register at

<https://doas.us/events/2023-wildflower-walk/>

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

May 19 – DOAS Public Program: “The Other Continent Down Under—Antarctica,” presented by Pam Lea at 7:30 p.m. at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta.

May 20 – DOAS Big Day Bird Count. See article on page 8.

June

June 3 – Native Plant Sale pickup at the Electric Vehicle Car Show in Oneonta. See article on page 6 Order and find out more at <https://doas.us/native-plant-sale-2023/>.

June 3 – Electric Vehicle Car Show in Oneonta. See article on page 6 and watch for updates on our website at <https://doas.us/ev-2023/>.

Fall

Mark your calendars for the Sanctuary Open House on October 7 and the Annual Charter Dinner on October 20.

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DOAS Big Day May 20 *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 20. 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, 17 teams totaling 25 DOAS Big Day participants found 116 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 to get information on joining in the fun.

Note that the *DOAS Big Day* is not the same as the Global Big Day sponsored by Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology, which occurs the Saturday before ours.



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!