



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

## DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

### May 19 Program: The Other Continent “Down Under”: Antarctica

Join us **IN PERSON** or by **Zoom** on May 19 for a return visit from Dr. Pam Lea as she presents **The Other Continent “Down Under”: Antarctica**. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Dr. Pam Lea is a local retired veterinarian who has had a lifelong passion for travel. In February 2022, she was able to visit her seventh continent with 58 fellow travelers on Overseas Adventure Travel’s first trip back

to Antarctica since Covid. Join Dr. Lea, by way of a compilation of her photographs and those of her expedition leaders, to the spectacular South Shetland Islands by way of Buenos Aires (her birthplace), Ushuaia (“City at the End of the World”) and the Drake Passage. Iguassu Falls (wider and higher than Niagara Falls) rounded out the trip.

This live program will also be presented on Zoom. Register by clicking on May 19 at <https://doas.us/calendar/>.



*Photos Contributed by Speaker*

### Work Day at the Sanctuary

*By Andy Mason*

Members of the SUNY Delhi Electrical Engineering Club volunteered at the DOAS Sanctuary on April 16. Ten students and two faculty members cleared the trails and put up posted signs along property lines.



This is the second year in a row the club has helped out at the Sanctuary. Their assistance is greatly appreciated!

*At the Sanctuary  
Photo by Pam Peters*

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# An IMPORTANT Note About Our Day Camp Programs For 2023

We are disappointed to report that we have been unable to find staff for our camp program this summer. We have decided to switch gears to set up a schedule of family/public programs with walks and activities with a focus on different age groups during the months of July and August.

Keep an eye out here in our eNews for details as we move forward. Thank you!

## To Our Members

### Audubon Name Change

To our members:

You may or may not be aware of the controversy over use of the Audubon name for the various entities including the National Audubon Society and local chapters such as ours. This has arisen from a growing discussion of the character and actions of John James Audubon, including his role as a slave owner and anti-abolitionist. Some chapters have dropped the name Audubon as a result.

Our board of directors has begun a process of considering this issue and plans to include our membership in this discussion. We will soon provide a way for you to express your thoughts to the board on this matter.

If you are interested in exploring the issue, several articles, opinions, and information from other Chapters can be found at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ki7dLXC5TcOZh7J8JPP5vtkZ-KysQBR1j>

## Optics Raffle a Big Success!



223 tickets were sold with proceeds going to continue site improvements at the DOAS Sanctuary and Hawkwatch on Franklin Mountain. Our thanks to all who participated in this optics raffle fundraiser!

**Congratulations to our Optics Raffle winners!**

**1st prize – Leah Wawro, Delhi**

**2nd prize – Laurie Rankin, Bloomville**

**3rd prize – Tina Winstead, Oneonta**

Special thanks also to Barry and Sue Stevens from Johnson City for their support of this program.

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

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

**Climate Change Superfund Needed to Address Impacts**—At the start of this year's NYS legislative session, we touched on a proposal to require fossil fuel companies that have significantly contributed to greenhouse gas emissions to bear a share of the costs of infrastructure investments required to adapt to climate change impacts. This is a similar concept to the existing Superfund which requires polluters to pay into a fund that is used to remediate tainted industrial sites around New York state.

It is well-established that the production and burning of fuels provided by oil, gas and coal companies for over a century are the primary source of the atmospheric pollutants that have brought about a warming planet Earth. Likewise, science shows that this climate change is responsible for public health impacts, loss of wildlife habitat, increasingly extreme weather, rising sea levels, and much more. These fossil fuel

companies have garnered enormous profits in the process but have largely escaped responsibility for their actions.

The Climate Change Superfund would halt this free ride by imposing fees on fossil fuel companies to create a pot of money to be used for infrastructure projects such as coastal wetlands restoration, storm water drainage system upgrades, and energy-efficient cooling systems in public and private buildings. This legislation would create a climate change adaptation cost recovery program. The program would operate under a standard of strict liability, which means fossil fuel companies are required to pay into the fund because the use of their products caused the pollution. No finding of wrongdoing is required.

The standard of "polluter pays" is a long-standing tenet of NY law. This would extend that to those companies that are most responsible for climate change and require them to share in the costs



*Global warming--Baluchi5  
Wikimedia Commons*

of addressing the resulting impacts that otherwise will fall completely on taxpayers.

**What you can do**—Contact your state legislators and urge them to support the Climate Change Superfund. Emphasize that fossil fuel companies in many cases were aware for decades of the threats of global warming, but continued to push oil, gas and oil. It is only fair that they should now help pay to remediate the damage.

*(Updated contact information can be found in the Advocacy section of our website, <https://doas.us/>).*

## Upcoming Election

The DOAS Nominating Committee (Jane Bachman, Landa Palmer, Susan Brunswick and Shirley Salton) will present six candidates for election to the Board of Directors, at the May 19th program. The nominated slate includes incumbents Kathryn Davino, Susan O'Handley, Landa Palmer, and Pam Peters.

Also on the slate are Chris DeCesare and Pam Lea. Chris is currently a program director for the CROP after-school program which runs in 14 area schools. Previously she worked for many years as an environmental educator for NYS. She holds degrees in biology and environmental education. When not working, Chris enjoys gardening, hiking, paddling, and entering Scentwork trials with her dog.

Dr. Pam Lea is a local retired veterinarian who owned and operated the Exeter Veterinary Clinic for 37 of the 40 years she practiced. In addition to raising a son and daughter as a single mother, she also raised old-style black Morgan horses for 25 years (producing over 40 foals). Retirement has afforded her the time to indulge her two favorite pastimes, travel and nature photography. She also enjoys kayaking, fishing, swimming, skiing, and reading and her new addiction, pickleball.

Nominations also may be made from the floor at the May program.



# A Glorious Galapagos Adventure

*By DOAS Director Kathryn Davino*

At the beginning of April, I had the exciting opportunity to explore part of the remote Galapagos Archipelago with my husband Alan aboard the National Geographic Endeavor II, a ship with 96 eager passengers and a crew of expert guides. During our week among the enchanted isles, we walked, paddled, and snorkeled amidst an array of fascinating creatures, many of which are found nowhere else on earth. The most amazing thing is that the animals there are uniquely unafraid of people. The very knowledgeable naturalists were excellent teachers, and they introduced us to the flora and fauna on each of the nine islands we visited, as well as those in the surrounding ocean. We had to be careful where we walked, so as not to step on the heaps of marine iguanas and nesting seabirds that abound there. Many bird species were either beginning courtship or raising young, and the land and marine reptiles were busy burying eggs. It is impossible in a few hundred words to adequately describe the plethora of fascinating creatures we encountered, so I hope it will



suffice to share just a few of the highlights and photos of our extraordinary adventure.

One of my favorite islands, Genovesa, serves as a beacon to myriad winged ocean wanderers. Great Frigatebirds decorated the shrubs, filling their brilliant gular sacs with air, photo below left. As females passed by, the males shook their sacs and flapped their shimmering wings, all the while projecting a loon-like call.



Also on Genovesa we found Red-footed Boobies, the only boobies that nest in trees. The powder blue beak and face trimmed with pink are unique and striking features.

We snorkeled nearly every day



in the pleasant 80° F ocean. It was such a delight to swim with enormous schools of Yellowtail surgeonfish, occasional reef sharks, and playful sea lions. One of the highlights was swimming with Galapagos Penguins, one of the smallest penguins and the only species found near the equator. The photo, center below, was taken in a downpour just before they dove in to join us.

For reptile lovers like me, there was no lack of entertainment. The colorful Marine iguana pictured below was demonstrating his eagerness to mate. Nowhere else in the world are marine lizards like this found. While taking a hike on the Island of Santa Cruz, we counted 22 large Land Iguanas in various shades of yellow and orange. Later that day, we were thrilled to discover dozens of Giant Tortoises, for which the Galapagos Archipelago is named, roaming in the lush highlands.

Every moment of our expedition was packed with things to do and learn. If you ever have an opportunity to visit this magical paradise, I would strongly encourage you to take the plunge!



Photos contributed by the author.

# March—April Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

Spring has sprung, and bird activity is on the rise. Dorian Huneke listened to a Belted Kingfisher chattering and watched a pair of Common Mergansers fly off a creek. Jessie Ravage spotted a Bald Eagle in Middlefield. Tom Salo found a Rough-legged Hawk in Edmeston. In Oneonta's west end, Charlie Scheim estimated well over a thousand Canada Geese carpeting the soccer and surrounding fields.

Kathryn Davino spied Turkey Vultures between Andes and Delhi on the 18th. Prudence Danforth had two Eastern Meadowlarks gleaning seeds from around her feeders on the 19th. Bluebirds appeared by Barb Palmer's pond in Jefferson (3/22). On the 26th Wood Ducks arrived at a Franklin pond (Pam Peters), and Becky Gretton heard the first song of an Eastern Phoebe.

On the 27th, Jennifer Hyypio and Kathryn Davino reported the first Tree Swallows in Oneonta and Delhi, respectively. Kathryn also had a Brown-headed Cowbird at her feeder. Gerianne Carillo thought she detected the distinctive call of a Merlin in Milford; they appeared in Oneonta a few days later. In Milford Gerianne also observed a Fox Sparrow digging energetically in leaf litter. Lisa Gorn enjoyed the courtship display of an American Woodcock near Morris (3/29).

Osprey arrived at our local

nests, one guarding the nest at Springbrook (3/28); a pair near Portlandville (3/30, Barb Palmer); and a pair near I-88 exit 17 (3/30, Eileen Kline). Great Blue Herons arrived in Cooperstown (Angelika Rashkow) and Jefferson (Barb Palmer) on the 30th. As March came to a close, Dorian Huneke observed two Red-tailed Hawks in Treadwell, one soaring high with Turkey Vultures, the other, possibly a local concerned about an interloper, flying frantically over the barn. A pair of Wilson's Snipes hung around Landa Palmer's East Meredith wetlands for at least a week. Jennifer Hyypio photographed a Snow Goose keeping company with Canada Geese in Neahwa Park.

A Northern Flicker fed in Pam Peters' Treadwell field on April 2nd. Suzanne Gaynor watched a Red Fox chase a Turkey hen running along the tree line; Tom Salo suggested she may have been leading the fox away from a nest. Chipping Sparrows appeared here in Oneonta, and I heard the diagnostic "Uh-uh!" of a Fish Crow (4/3). Jane Bachman discovered Chimney Swifts at the Silas Lane Greenway (4/5). A day later Field Sparrows sang their cheerful trill in Treadwell (Pam Peters, Linda Burkhardt). A pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers "made quite a racket" in the woods behind Barb Palmer's house in Jefferson.

On the 10th, Angelika Rashkow



*Northern Flicker*

Photo by Shirley Salton

watched a pair of Pine Grosbeaks from her back window, and Landa Palmer photographed a pair of Golden-crowned Kinglets. A Hermit Thrush showed up in Franklin (Pam Peters, 4/12). Sarah Root spotted a Blue-headed Vireo in Portlandville (4/13). On the 14th, a Brown Thrasher sang in Andes, and Louisiana Waterthrushes arrived on Kortright Creek (Suzanne Gaynor) and Springfield (Becky Gretton). Pam Peters saw a pair of Broad-winged Hawks circling over Treadwell. She and Nancy New located Swamp Sparrows at the DOAS Sanctuary.

Resident species are busy with the business of procreation. Ruth Pederson found chickadees excavating a nest cavity, and, from a discreet hiding place, spied a Brown Creeper carrying nesting material under loose bark in Andes. In Morris, Bill Vining snapped a picture of a male Cardinal feeding a female. Checking a Bald Eagle nest in West Burlington, Tom Salo was rewarded with the sight of an adult with two eaglets that he estimated to be at least 5 weeks old.

*Quotation of the Month: "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." — Vincent Van Gogh*





All of us are “bird watchers”; we love to look at the beautiful avian denizens of our world. But have you ever observed more closely to find a Bluebird carrying caterpillars to its young in a nest box, or watched a male Cardinal feeding tidbits to an intended female mate, or listened attentively to the beautifully rich song of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak ringing out as you walk through the woods? These sorts of experiences can move a birder to a deeper knowledge of bird life, and they are exactly the sort of observations that atlasers strive for.

The NYS Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) is a state-wide volunteer effort (under the aegis of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the NYS Ornithological Association, eBird, and others) to document the birds that breed in New York. It occurs every twenty years and lasts for five years. New York’s first BBA was 1980-1984; a second occurred in

## New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III Update 2023

*By Charlie Scheim*

2000-2004. The current NYS BBA III runs from 2020 to 2024. The entire state is divided into 5,170 blocks, about one-third of which are designated as “priority blocks.” Volunteers bird their blocks, usually returning to a block several or even many times, perhaps over a few years, looking for the sorts of behaviors mentioned above, all of which are breeding behaviors. Birds observed are coded as “Possible,” “Probable,” or “Confirmed” breeders, based on behaviors observed. In the past this was done with paper and pencil, but now birders enter their observations into eBird, updating the atlas in almost real time using the servers at Cornell’s Lab of Ornithology.

After the BBA’s first three seasons, 306 species have been coded statewide, with 286 confirmed as breeding in the state. Locally, in Otsego County atlasers have coded 162 species, 119 of which are confirmed breeders. In Delaware County, 157 species are coded with 107 confirmed breeders. And in Chenango County, 165 species have been coded with 126 confirmations.

As long as at least twenty hours have been spent in a block (some during crepuscular or nocturnal hours) and all habitats in the block have been visited, BBA blocks are considered “Complete” if at least 45 species have been coded as either Confirmed or Probable. One of the BBA’s goals is to complete all priority blocks. So far, 16% of the state’s priority blocks are Complete. Nineteen of Otsego’s 37 priority blocks (51%) are Complete, one of the highest county totals in the state. In Delaware, 8 of 56 priority blocks (14%) are Complete. In Chenango, 17 of 34 priority blocks (50%) are Complete, also among the state’s best.

Birders have so far invested a great deal of effort atlasing in New York, but clearly much work remains to be done. Participating in an atlas is a fantastic way to “up your birding game.” The time spent in the field carefully observing birds and their behaviors is incredibly rewarding. Birders of all levels gain a deeper understanding of the lives and habits of our avian companions. The BBA asks you to consider joining our endeavor.

## Report from the Otsego Land Trust Woodcock Walk

*By Sandy Bright*

The weather was unseasonably warm for the April 13 outing on Parslow Road in Hartwick. American Woodcocks were very cooperative, peenting and displaying frequently in the gloaming, affording the two dozen participants several views in addition to the auditory entertainment of their courtship displays. Wilson’s Snipe were also winnowing nearby, and a Wild Turkey provided rather comical background music.



*American Woodcock  
Audubon Photo by Teri Shors*

# Upcoming Activities

## 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](mailto: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 16 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

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 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. To attend the program via Zoom; register by clicking on May 19 at <https://doas.us/calendar/>.

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

## June

June 3 – Electric Vehicle Car Show at Damaschke Field parking lot, in Neahwa Park in Oneonta, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. See article on page 8 and watch for updates on our web site at <https://doas.us/ev-2023/>.

June 3 – Native Plant Sale order pickup at the Electric Vehicle Car Show, Damaschke Field parking lot, in Neahwa Park in Oneonta, **11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** (the car show event runs from 11 to 2).

June 17 – Bird Walk in conjunction with Exploration Days at Hanford Mills. Led by veteran birders Suzanne Gaynor and Kathryn Davino around the property at Hanford Mills, the walk will cover fairly easy terrain and will last about 90 minutes, starting at 8 a.m. Arrangements pending; more details next month.

June 20 – DOAS Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

## Fall

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

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## Is Your Membership Current?

Your mailing label on page 8 will inform you of your membership expiration date. This is the only notice you receive to let you know you need to renew your membership. Thanks for rejoining when your membership expires.

**DOAS Membership** 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 programs with an additional donation!**



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## June 3: Electric Vehicle Car Show and Native Plant Sale Pick up

*By Susan O'Handley*



We're excited to be back at Damaschke Field in Oneonta 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 regis-

trations and sponsorships is available at <https://doas.us/ev-2023/>.

Pickup of all Native Plant Sale 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 a.m. to 2 p.m.).

## DOAS Big Day May 20 *By Charlie Scheim*

Reminder: the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Big Day is scheduled for Saturday May 20. 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. 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! 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 the DOAS Big Day is not the same as the Global Big Day sponsored by Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology, which falls a week earlier. Our counters are welcome to report their results via eBird to Cornell, of course, but reports will also need to be submitted to Charlie.

