



# THE BELTED KINGFISHER

## DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

### Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Name Change Questionnaire

To Our Members:

As noted in last month's *Belted Kingfisher*, controversy has arisen over use of the Audubon name for various entities including the National Audubon Society and local chapters such as ours. This has come about from discussion of the character and actions of John James Audubon, including his role as a slave owner and opponent of abolition.

The National Audubon Society has decided to retain the Audubon name. However, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society is an independent entity and can make its own decision in this matter. The National Audubon Society has advised

chapters that they are free to make their own decisions on this matter. Some Audubon chapters have changed their name to remove Audubon, while others have not.

DOAS is currently considering this issue and our Board of Directors wishes to solicit the views of our members. We have prepared a questionnaire and comment form for this purpose which can be found at <https://doas.us/member-survey-2023/>

If you prefer to provide your thoughts by email or by mail, please email them to [info@doas.us](mailto:info@doas.us) or mail them to DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820. If



you would like to receive a printed copy of the questionnaire, contact us at this address or call (607) 397-3815. Please provide your feedback by June 30, 2023.

If you are interested in exploring the issue, several articles, opinions, and information from other chapters on the topic can be found at: <https://bit.ly/45gqnYy>.

**We hope you will take the time to share your opinion on the Audubon name.**

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

*By Susan O'Handley*

Join us at Damaschke Field in Oneonta to learn about EVs from the people who own them and from local dealerships. The show runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Those who have ordered plants from our Native Plant Sale can pick up their orders at the show from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. We may have limited addi-



tional plants for sale as well. Thank you to all who participated in the DOAS Native Plants fundraiser and to Connie Tedesco for her help.

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Co-Presidents' Column.....	2
Conservation & Legislation .....	3
DOAS Election Results.....	3
Northern Parula Trip.....	4
Bird Sightings .....	5
Greenway Walk Report.....	6
Board Retreat.....	6
Upcoming Activities .....	7
Davis Park Hawkwatch.....	8

# Co-Presidents' Column

by Co-presidents Becky Gretton and Andy Mason

This issue of *The Belted Kingfisher* is a notable milestone for our newsletter and for our organization. Editor Janet Potter is stepping down after eight years in that position.

DOAS has been fortunate to have excellent editors over its 50 plus year history. A few who come to mind include Iolita Ersland, Bob Miller, Helen McClain and Carol Robbins among others. All of these editors moved the publication forward in some way, but none more than Janet. When she took over, the *Kingfisher* was being printed in black and white. Janet researched the requirements, costs and pros and cons of printing in color and made the change to the bright, lively newsletter we now enjoy.

Along the way, Janet oversaw a redesign of the *Kingfisher*, modernizing its look. She has continued to provide a variety of articles, images, calendar of events, bird interest items and more. We exchange newsletters from other Audubon chapters and bird clubs and none surpass



the quality and readability of the *Belted Kingfisher*.

In addition to her role as editor, Janet has provided thoughtful and carefully considered opinions and information at each Board meeting. Her insights added to the topics at hand, along with her positive approach in general. Janet volunteered to assume membership duties as well, donating even more of her time and expertise to DOAS.

We thank Janet for sharing her many talents and much time with us for the past eight years, and look forward to staying in touch with her in the future. Our organization has much improved because of Janet Potter!

## Shop DOAS Sales

You may order bird-friendly coffee, as well as DOAS mugs and Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch caps, by emailing Jane Bachman at [jbachwim60@gmail.com](mailto:jbachwim60@gmail.com) 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. More information at <https://doas.us/shop/>.

*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*

**Legislation to Ban Wildlife Killing Contests in NY**—Most New Yorkers may not realize it, but there are regularly held contests with prizes to kill the most and largest of various species of wildlife in the state. Notable among these are crow-killing contests, but other targeted wildlife includes coyotes, foxes, squirrels, rabbits, woodchucks, bobcats and raccoons.

In our region, coyote, fox, and squirrel killing contests are held in Chenango, Delaware, Montgomery, Cortland, Greene, and Sullivan Counties. Prizes for winners typically include cash, firearms and accessories. Some contests have special categories for youth hunters and are advertised as “kid friendly.”

Although these contests are stated to follow hunting regulations in NY, they are far from the typical hunting envisioned by the public and wildlife agencies. Sponsors often promote them as ‘predator control’ and claim they are beneficial to wildlife management, but rarely is there any threat to other wildlife populations or humans from the targeted animals. In fact, most predators are

critical to natural control of their prey, rather than the other way around, including coyotes and foxes which limit numbers of field mice and other small rodents.

The contests are contrary to the understood rules of ethical hunting which respect the animals taken typically for food. Hunters use distress calls, lures and bait to attract target animals. In contrast, most carcasses resulting from the contests are discarded after counting and weighing. Many hunters oppose the contests and do not participate.

The killing contests are not widely advertised in order to avoid public outcry. They do appear in hunting club publications and web sites, sporting goods stores and social media. Often they are depicted with a party theme, including “bring the family,” and include celebration dinners at the weigh-ins.

Numerous states have banned wildlife killing contests, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Vermont, and Washington. However, New York remains one of the states with the highest number of such contests.



*Coyote; Photo by Don Owens  
Wikimedia Commons*

Fortunately, legislation is pending in Albany to outlaw these events. Bill S.4099/A.2917 would make it “unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, conduct, promote, or participate in any contest, competition, tournament or derby where the objective of such contest or competition is to take wildlife.” This law would bring NY State into the 21st century in recognizing the value and importance of the wildlife that belongs to all the people of the state.

**What you can do**—Contact your state legislators and ask them to support S.4099/A.2917 and work for its passage this session. Note that this bill does not affect big buck contests held during white-tail deer season, or fishing contests.

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

## DOAS Election Results

The DOAS Nominating Committee presented a slate of six candidates for election to the Board of Directors at the May 19 annual meeting. Included were incumbents Kathryn Davino, Susan O’Handley, Landa Palmer and Pam Peters, as well as candidates Chris DeCesare and Pam Lea (who also presented the May program). The entire slate was elected.

We welcome our new directors to the Board, at the same time that we offer our heartfelt thanks to departing directors Nate Cutting and Janet Potter for their service to the Board.



# Going South to the Northern Parula

By *DOAS Director Jane Bachman*

In March of this year my husband and I went south to escape some of winter (the first time since February 2020!). We headed to South Carolina, spending half our time in the lovely city of Charleston, and half with family on Hilton Head. As always, it was somewhat of a revelation to discover spring so far advanced in places *other* than New York.

In Charleston I was introduced to my first Carolina Chickadee. It was on Hilton Head, though, that the birdsong really blossomed. In the morning the trees were full of Yellow-rumped Warblers, Hermit Thrushes, Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, Northern Mockingbirds, Song Sparrows, along with birds more common in New York at that time—Northern Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Downy Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmice.

I'd also recognized a song that I'd heard for the first time last June in the Adirondacks, coming every morning from the top of a tall pine outside my room—the buzz-zip of the Northern Parula. That memory piqued my interest, and when I referred to the ever-handy Audubon app, I discovered some interesting information about this beautiful little bird.

The Northern Parula commonly breeds in the southern part of this country and in southeastern Canada, with an additional island of breeding area in the Adirondacks. It's a little unusual that the

range is not really contiguous: there's an area around the Great Lakes (parts of Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin) and in the northeast (parts of Connecticut and Massachusetts) where they do not breed. This has been attributed to a decrease in air quality and habitat loss.

The preferred nesting site for the Northern Parula is in Spanish moss—which draped from trees wherever I went in South Carolina, and in much of the south—as well as in hanging Usnea lichens, aka “Old Man’s Beard,” found in the Adirondacks and further north. Both tend to be very sensitive to changes in air quality.

Fortunately, per the American Bird Conservancy, while populations may be declining in some areas, overall numbers of Northern Parulas are stable. It seems that Northern Parulas will nest elsewhere in conifer or deciduous forests, if hanging mosses are not available; sometimes in clumps of dangling twigs or pine needles, or in detritus left hang-



*Northern Parula in Spanish Moss*

*Photo by Arni Stinnissen*

*Audubon Photography Awards*

ing over streams by high water. The female creates a hollow in the lichen (or whatever she finds) and builds a small hanging nest within. Southern birds may start breeding as early as March, and may raise two broods, while migrants are still moving further north.

Over the last month, as I started reading about “FOS” warblers in our area, the reports seemed somehow redundant—and then I realized that I'd last heard these birds hundreds of miles south of here. It's always a joy to hear the sounds of the returning warblers—and I'll look forward to hearing the Northern Parula again, either locally or in the Adirondacks!

# April—May Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

The times they are a-changin', and the birds along with them. Sarah Root reported seeing Belted Kingfishers at least once a week all winter in Portlandville, an unusual occurrence indeed! It's also uncommon for Evening Grosbeaks to be reported at this time of year, but on May 2nd Laura Hurley found one under her feeders near Airport Road in Oneonta, another visited Barb Palmer's yard in Jefferson on the 11th, and Rick Bunting photographed one in Bainbridge on May 7th. A Redheaded Woodpecker appeared two days running in Cynthia Waterman's yard in Delhi. Osprey continue to expand their range; Tamme De Mulder spotted a pair building a nest in Unadilla on April 21th.

Migrants began to arrive, slowly at first and building to a crescendo by mid-May. Pam Peters heard a Yellow-rumped warbler singing at the Audubon Sanctuary April 11th, and 10 days later

Black-throated Green Warbler, Eastern Towhee, and House Wren in Treadwell. Also on the 21st, Eileen Kline found a Black-and-white Warbler in Meredith. I heard a Yellow Warbler sing its "little more sweet" song along the Mill Race in Neahwa Park on the 26th. The next day a Pine Warbler trilled near Airport Road in Oneonta, and Landa Palmer spotted the first Barn Swallow and Savannah Sparrow.

FOS ("first-of-season") birds: May 2nd: Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Portlandville, Sarah Root). May 3rd, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (Jefferson, Barb Palmer; Delhi, Kathryn Davino); Wood Ducks (Cooperstown, Angelika Rashkow). May 5th: Gray Catbird (Sandy Ackerson)

May 6th: Baltimore Orioles (Janice Downie, Oneonta); Spotted Sandpipers, American Redstarts (DOAS Bird Walk, Oneonta). May 7th: Chestnut-sided Warbler and Ovenbird in Portlandville (Sarah Root); Eastern Kingbird (Suzanne Gaynor, East Meredith); Wood Thrushes and Black-throated Blue Warblers (West Burlington, Tom Salo); Bobolinks (Unadilla, Prudence Danforth).

May 8th: Least Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Bobolink, and Veery (Walton). May 9th: Warbling Vireo, Indigo Bunting, Blue-winged and Nashville

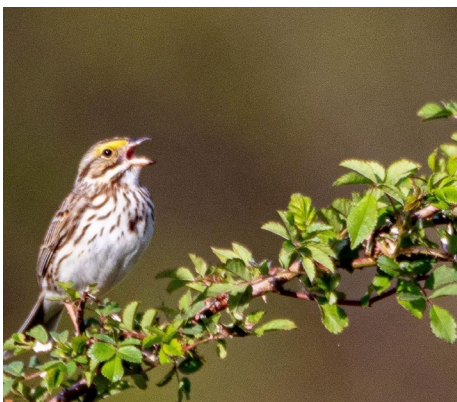


*Solitary Sandpiper*  
Photo by Rick Bunting

Warbler (Bloomville); Common Yellowthroat (Dorian Huneke, Treadwell). May 9th: Northern Waterthrush and Great-crested Flycatcher (Tom Salo, Brookfield).

May 12th: Red-eyed Vireos showed up in Delhi (Kathryn Davino). I heard a Prairie Warbler and the staccato burst of a Canada Warbler's song near Deposit. Pam Peters found Blackburnian Warblers singing and foraging high the trees and watched a Solitary Sandpiper feeding in a mud-flat in Franklin. Sarah Root found Northern Parula in her woodland on the 13th. Pam found the first goslings of spring near Delhi (5/14), and a Mourning Warbler and Black-billed Cuckoo near Treadwell. (5/15).

While it's exciting to see our "first-of-season" birds, it's their behaviors, and the occasional oddity, that keep this hobby interesting. Charlie Scheim watched a male Northern Cardinal feed the white-headed leucistic female that has visited our yard for three years now, a sweet reminder that those birds' primary occupation this time of year is procreation.



*Savannah Sparrow*  
Photo by Landa Palmer

*If you have bird sightings to report, contact Sandy Bright, [brights@hartwick.edu](mailto:brights@hartwick.edu) or 607 287-4465.*



# Bird Walk at the Greenway

*By Sandy Bright*

A dozen people gathered in the parking lot on a cool, foggy morning for the bird walk at the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway trail at Silas Lane May 6th. As we walked toward the river we were quickly rewarded with sounds of several species, including Black-and-White Warbler, American Redstart, and many finches: Purple, House, and Gold. Spotted Sandpipers remained hidden but very vocal. Two Red-tailed Hawks put on quite a show, as one had caught a squirrel which the other would very much like to have had. A total of 31 species

were found.

When we had gathered that morning, the salient feature of the mostly-green field was white clouds of Cuckoo-flower that appeared through the fog like cushion batting escaped from the nearby waste center. Emerging from the woods two hours later, we were astonished to find the field glowing yellow, a veritable carpet of dandelions that had opened their blooms to greet the first sunny day all week.

*Photos from the Greenway Walk by Janet Potter*



# Board Retreat Held In May

*By Kathryn Davino*



The DOAS Board was hard at work Saturday, May 13 during a retreat at Uplands Center near Walton, NY. Uplands Center is a wonderful facility on gorgeous Delaware County property, with an amazing, dedicated staff that gave us great nourishment and support. Rene Hardenkamp skillfully facilitated our work. We spent the day focusing our discussions around our operations in each of our four program areas; Advocacy, Research, Education, and Conservation. We discussed our organization's capacity to continue to work on our current initiatives, and took a look at where we might want to expand and what we would need to do to get there. It was a good day and we made a lot of headway. More work to come!

*DOAS Board of Directors; Photo by Renee Hardenkamp*

*Front row from left: Tom Salo, Charlie Scheim, Kathryn Davino. Back: Landa Palmer, Dorian Huneke, Susan O'Handley, Janet Potter, Andy Mason, Jane Bachman, David Diaz, Becky Gretton, Pam Peters, Nate Cutting.*

*Quotation of the Month: "Adopt the pace of nature; her secret is patience" — Ralph Waldo Emerson*

# Upcoming Activities

## June

June 3 – Electric Vehicle Car Show at Damaschke Field parking lot, in Neahwa Park in Oneonta, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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 4 – Andes Rail Trail Bird Walk, beginning at 8 a.m. Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright will lead a bird walk on the Andes Rail Trail in Andes, NY. We will meet at the Andes Rail Trail parking lot (266 Depot Street, Andes). The walk will be roughly a mile to a mile and a half and last 1 1/2 to 2 hours. We will follow the Rail Trail, which is firm dirt, but not paved, along generally level terrain, no steep uphill. (We'll turn around before the trail starts heading uphill very much.) There is a decent amount of parking at the beginning of the rail trail, but no restrooms.

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. The trail traverses a variety of surfaces: grass, gravel, and boardwalk, and it includes an occasional step up/down and a few gentle slopes. The total distance traveled is about .5 miles. There are no rest areas along the route, but there are benches near the pond. The parking lot has plenty of room to accommodate vans. Accessible bathrooms are available. Meet in the big event parking lot. Upon return to the parking lot, participants will be invited to drive a short distance to see a Bald Eagle nest that currently has a pair of adults caring for one or more fledglings. Pre-registration is appreciated at <https://doas.us/>. Call Kathryn Davino (607-746-7396) with questions.

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.

## 2023 Business Sponsors: Support Those Who Support DOAS!

For information about becoming a business sponsor, please contact Susan O'Handley at [info@doas.us](mailto:info@doas.us) - use "Business Sponsorship Inquiry" in the subject line.



Like us on Facebook!

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## 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/>

## Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park Spring Hawkwatch

*By Becky Gretton*

DOAS has acquired data from Davis Park since spring of 2010 when migratory activity was originally observed. There has been coverage ever since, with special excitement about Golden Eagle sightings. Its location affords migrating raptors mountain ridges which provide lift for energy efficient travel with appropriate wind direction.

A wind break provided by Glimmerglass Park is installed for us each March. The parking lot was plowed for us this season as in the past, and the area used by our counters was beautifully shoveled by Park staff.

This annual service and dedication to monitoring raptor migration is sincerely appreciated by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. Thank you!

More information at <https://doas.us/betty-and-wilbur-davis-state-park-hawk-watch/>.



### Is Your Membership Current?

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