



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

The Annual Charter Dinner and Raffle Celebrate 55 Years

By Kathryn Davino

Please join us for the DOAS Annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 20, 2023 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 Eggplant Parmesan). A cash bar will be available.

The program will start at 7:30 p.m. Our featured live presenter will be Warren Greene, of Gloversville, New York. Mr. Greene will present bird and nature photographs with a mainly Adirondack theme.

The cost for the full evening is \$38 per person (online ticket charge is \$40). Those who would like to

attend only the program will be able to join us at no charge either at the Quality Inn or on Zoom starting at 7:15 p.m.

Dinner reservations must be made by October 15. Masks and Covid-19 vaccinations are not required, but are strongly recommended. In order to provide patrons with more space, each table will be limited to 6 seats.

To register for the dinner and purchase raffle tickets, visit

<https://doas.us/events/2023-charter-dinner/>

To register for the Zoom Program, visit

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_s25btsd7Rui5rxneGv_Peg#/registration/

Call Kathryn Davino for more information at 607-397-3815. *We have secured a few additional spots for late registrants.*



Get your tickets for these beautiful items that will be raffled off at the Charter Dinner!

Photo by Kathryn Davino

Bird Seed Fundraiser Reminder

By Susan O'Handley

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 help 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 4 Delivery Date.

- ORDER DEADLINE: SUNDAY, October 22, 5 p.m.
- PRODUCT PICK UP: SATURDAY, NOV. 4, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
- PICK UP LOCATION: VP Supply Corp., 69 Country Club Road, Oneonta, NY.

Order online at www.doas.us/2023-bird-seed-sale

Thank you for your support!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Co-Presidents' Column	2
Conservation & Legislation	3
Introducing Chris DeCesare... ..	4
Bird Sightings	5
Updates from FMHW.....	6
Sanctuary Open House	6
Upcoming Activities	7

President's Message

By Co-president Andy Mason

Fall is always a busy time for DOAS. Coming off a two-month hiatus (although much has been going on behind the scenes) there is a full slate of activities on tap.

First is the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch, now in its 35th season. The Hawkwatch kicks off in late August with the movement of early season raptors. Our dedicated team of counters will be on the mountain until the end of December, covering every day except rainouts. Visitors from near and far visit to see the fall migration spectacle.

Our programs started up again in September, and program chair Becky Gretton has again arranged a varied and interesting series of public presentations. We still have a mix of in-person and online programs, with the Zoom events available and archived at www.doas.us.

Of particular note is the annual Charter Dinner, scheduled this year for October 20, with a great speaker and photographer, Warren Greene. Details for registration are on page 1.

October 7 is the Open House at the DOAS Sanctuary. This is a popular and well-attended event, with live birds of prey that are always a big draw. Trail walks, a raptor ID session, refreshments, and hopefully a good hawk-watching day are on tap as well. See details on page 6.



Osprey

Photo by Landa Palmer

Our bird seed sale—an important fundraiser—runs through late October, with pickup on November 4. It's hard to believe, but it will be time to fill the feeders soon and enjoy the finches, chickadees and woodpeckers we enjoy through the winter. Stock up now!

Our Chapter is most fortunate to have a great board of directors and other volunteers who work together to organize and carry out these and other activities, all of which are free and open to the public. We can always use new faces and ideas, so please join us for one or more activities and consider helping out.

A note on our consideration of the Audubon name for our organization: we completed a member survey this summer, which drew a good response, with thoughtful comments on both sides of the topic. The board is planning to meet shortly to review the survey and discuss the issue, with a decision to follow.

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Founded 1968

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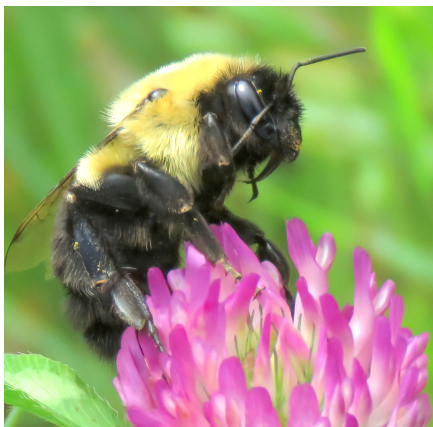
Conservation and Legislation

By Andy Mason

Three worthy bills still await Governor's signature

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul has three valuable environmental bills on her desk, waiting for her approval. The bills passed the Assembly and Senate by healthy margins. The Birds and Bees Protection Act (A.7640/S.1856A) has been a frequent topic here over the past 2 or 3 years. It would ban most uses of neonicotinoid pesticides in the state, chemicals that are toxic to pollinating insects, birds and aquatic life. The EPA recently disclosed that these pesticides threaten the survival of over 200 endangered species, 11% of all species on the endangered list. Support for this bill is widespread, something the governor should take into account.

Another bill in front of Gov. Hochul—with less local impact, but of global importance—is the New York Tropical Deforestation-Free Procurement Act (S.4859-A/A.5682-A). This legislation would require vendors and suppliers of products purchased by New York State government to certify that their goods are deforestation-free—that is, that they do not come from or contribute to areas of unsustainable



Bumble bee
Photo by Rick Bunting

clearing of forests. All environmentalists are aware of the widespread cutting of swaths of the Amazon basin, southeast Asia and elsewhere.

This results in loss of biodiversity, erosion, and the great carbon-sequestering value forests provide. There is little we can do personally to stop this devastation, but the purchasing power of New York State is a powerful tool to promote green suppliers. By signing this bill, the governor can set an example for other states and municipalities.

Bill S.4099/A.2917 is also still waiting on the governor's signature. This bill 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" in New York State. This long-overdue legislation would put an end to contests where prizes are awarded for killing the most coyotes, foxes, crows, squirrels, raccoons, etc. across the state, including our local areas. These events often feature celebrations and dinners, and are promoted as "family events" and "kid-friendly". Carcasses of the targeted species are typically thrown away after judging. Exempted from the bill are big buck contests and fishing derbies.

What you can do

The governor can improve her environmental standing and do some real good for the natural world both within and beyond the state's borders by signing these bills into law. **Please contact her so she knows that citizens are watching and that she needs to demonstrate conservation leadership and commitment.** Include the bill numbers in your communications.

Gov. Kathy Hochul
Executive Chambers
Albany, NY 12224

Correspondence.office@exec.ny.gov

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.

Q&A with New Board Member, Chris DeCesare

Compiled and edited by DOAS Director Pamela L. Peters

Chris joined the DOAS board in the spring. Welcome, Chris!

PP: How did you end up in Delaware County?

CD: My partner Karen and I were living in Oneonta and looking for a home with more open space, room for our dog and gardens. We fell in love with the house we are living in the first time we saw it.

PP: You've spent a lot of time working with local youth. What are they concerned about when it comes to the environment? How hopeful are you about entrusting the future to them?

CD: Kids connect with animals and so one thing I've seen that they are concerned about is endangered species. I guess I am hopeful because I'm an optimist at heart.

PP: What is the best way we can connect young people with nature and instill in them a passion and commitment to protecting it?

CD: Find ways to get kids outside and once you do, show them all the cool stuff that's happening out there and your sense of wonder about it. Once they learn to look and observe, they get excited too. Tools like the Merlin app can also help connect kids to nature.

PP: When did you first realize you had a passion for nature?

CD: Growing up in Massachusetts, my parents took us on vacation to the White Mountains in New Hampshire, and we often went for



Chris DeCesare

walks in nature at local wildlife refuges and nearby parks. We enjoyed being outside every chance we got.

PP: What makes you want to share your passion for nature with others?

CD: I get excited about all the neat stuff that happens in nature and I like to see others get excited.

PP: When did you develop an interest in birding?

CD: In college I majored in biology and had to take an ornithology class, and my professor was awesome. I remember going on a field trip to Quabbin Reservoir to look for Bald Eagles, which weren't that common at the time. On another trip to see Woodcocks, I have a vivid memory of a group of awed college students flat on our stomachs in the field, listening to the woodcock calling and doing their aerial display.

PP: Do you keep a life list of birds? If so, what's the last life bird you saw?

CD: I do keep a list, especially if we're traveling. My last life birds were European Goldfinch and European Robin which I just saw

in Scotland this August.

PP: Describe one of your favorite birding spots.

CD: Montezuma Wildlife Refuge in the spring is definitely one of my favorite places to bird. I really enjoy watching the Snow Geese, Swans, and the variety of ducks. With lots of good habitat, you'll always see something interesting at Montezuma.

PP: How did you get interested in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society? Do you know what areas you would like to focus on as a Board member?

CD: I first learned of DOAS when I worked as an Environmental Educator at Rogers Environmental Center in Sherburne, NY, and we took field trips to Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. Years later, when DOAS was looking for a summer camp director at the Sanctuary, I jumped at the chance to get back into environmental education. I definitely would like to be involved in education projects with the Board.

PP: Anything else you would like our readers to know about you?

CD: I have a really cool dog, Koa, who is a yellow lab. When he was a puppy, I started exploring ways to enrich our playtime together. Instead of just throwing a ball or frisbee, I started hiding his toys around the house and he was able to find them quickly. This led to scentwork training, dock diving and other neat stuff. We travel around the northeast and participate in scent work competitions. I'm proud to say Koa has moved from a novice to master scent dog. It has enhanced our relationship a lot.

September Bird Sightings

By Sandy Bright

Though much quieter at this time of year, many birds were still very busy in late August and early September. Traveling around Delaware County for the Breeding Bird Atlas, Charlie Scheim and I found many fledglings still incessantly, and raucously, begging for food. Among others, we found Chestnut-sided Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, Bluebird, Blue-headed Vireo, Brown Creeper, House Finch, Eastern Kingbird, Carolina Wren, and Song Sparrow young.

Some beggars were more subtle, like the Cliff and Barn Swallow fledglings calmly arrayed on a utility wire until a parent swooped in, or the hunch-backed Black-billed Cuckoo seen near Gilbertsville, silently waiting for the nearby adult to deliver. Adult Ovenbirds, Black-and-white Warblers, Catbirds, and various Woodpeckers were busy finding and delivering worms, insects, and berries to their young. Patience and luck at times led to the reward of watching House Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Tufted Titmouse offspring being fed.

Occasionally we would happen upon a solitary fledgling still displaying the obvious gape, shorter tail, and deer-in-the-headlights demeanor of still-dependent offspring, such as an Eastern Towhee found in Roxbury and an Eastern Wood-Pewee near South Kortright. A few forays on the



*Common Nighthawk
Photo by Richard Stebbins
Audubon Photography Awards*

Susquehanna River revealed a recently used but currently unoccupied Bald Eagle nest near Portlandville (thank you Margot Graham!), a Belted Kingfisher fledgling following an adult, sandpipers, and herons.

Migrants began their journeys, and Rod Spangle reported a group of Common Nighthawks spotted over Covered Bridge Road in Unadilla (8/23). Their aerial acrobatics are fascinating to watch, and they put on quite a show for Rod! In addition, Charlie and I found a Swainson's Thrush near Deposit.

It's also a time when larger water birds tend to wander. Cormorants were spotted around Goodyear and Otsego Lakes, and Charlie and I saw a Great Egret flying over South Kortright.

In the first weeks of September, we were still finding families with dependent young, including Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Bluebird, and

Belted Kingfisher. Some, like American Goldfinches and Cedar Waxwings, start later in the season, while others, such as Northern Cardinals, Chipping Sparrows, Red-eyed Vireos, and Common Yellowthroats may have more than one brood in a season.

If you haven't been up to the Hawkwatch on Franklin Mountain, you don't know what you're missing. It's a great place to find songbirds as well as migrating hawks. In their first month of operation this season, the counters have spotted many passerines, including Scarlet Tanager, Brown Thrasher, Pileated Woodpecker, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, as well as good numbers of Monarch butterflies and dragonflies. Ravens often provide background music, and the counters who are present most days are happy to answer questions and get help in spotting birds!



*Cedar Waxwing
Photo by Landa Palmer*

Updates from the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch

By Andy Mason

Late August and early September brought a modest start to the raptor migration season at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch on the DOAS Sanctuary in Oneonta. However, on the day before this writing, an excellent flight of 709 Broad-winged Hawks appeared over the lookout on September 14, the bulk of a total tally of 745 raptors that day. Counters reported a single kettle, or flock, of 195 birds, a thrilling sight.

In recent years broad-wings have provided the highest species total at the site. In the past 4 years, over 2000 broad-wings have been counted each September, with the peak around the middle of the month. Last year's big day was 518 on the 15th, in the middle of a 4-day triple-digit stretch.

Also moving have been Osprey, Bald Eagles, American Kestrels and Merlins, all early season birds. October brings increasing numbers of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks at the Hawkwatch, along with Red-tailed Hawks and, during the second half of the month, the



Becky Gretton, Julie Brown and Andy Mason
at the FMHW
Photo by Phil Brown

first Golden Eagles.

We had a special treat at the Hawkwatch on Sept. 16, when Julie Brown, Raptor Migration and Programs Director for the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) visited our site with her family.

HMANA is the repository for data from Franklin Mountain and many other raptor monitoring sites throughout the continent. Julie visits as many sites as she can, and will offer a public program for us next year. Thanks for stopping by, Julie!

Counters are present each day at the Hawkwatch, except during rain. The best flights come on north and northwest winds, especially following a cold front. Visitors should dress warmly as the site is often colder than anticipated.

Visitors and spotters are always welcome at the Hawkwatch. Directions can be found at www.doas.us. For more information, contact Andy Mason, (607) 267-8491, AndyMason@earthling.net, or Tom Salo, (607) 965-8232, salothomas@gmail.com.

Forecasts of anticipated good flights at the Hawkwatch are sent out by email a day or two in advance. To receive these alerts, visit www.franklinmt.org to sign up. Daily tallies from Franklin Mountain are also available by email; contact Andy Mason as above. More information and directions to the Hawkwatch at the DOAS Sanctuary can be found at www.franklinmt.org.

October 7 Open House

Join us on Saturday, October 7 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 workshop on identifying flying hawks will be presented. At 11:30 a.m. we'll offer guided trailwalks around the Sanctuary, ending at the Hawkwatch, with the 'unveiling' of our new signage! Starting at 12:30 p.m. we will host Deborah Saltis of Falcon Heart Rescue in Herkimer, NY for a live birds of prey program.

Complimentary snacks and drinks will be offered during the day. Raffle items for the October 20 Charter Dinner will be on display, and tickets will be available to purchase, as will bird-friendly coffee, mugs, and FMHW hats.



Upcoming Activities

October

October 7 - **Open House**, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain. See article on page 6

October 17 - **DOAS Board Meeting**: 6:30 p.m.

October 20 - **DOAS Annual Charter Dinner**, 5:30 p.m. at the Quality Inn, State Highway 23, Oneonta. Speaker Warren Greene will present "Adirondack Nature Photography with Warren Greene". The program begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be available via Zoom. Reservation deadline is October 15. See article on page 1

October 22, 5 p.m. - Deadline for Bird Seed Orders! Pickup is on November 4, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. See article on page 1.

November

November 4 - Bird Seed Pickup, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at VP Supply Corp, 41 Country Club Road, Oneonta

November 17- **DOAS Public Program**: "A Glorious Galapagos Adventure". Kathryn Davino will share her photos and stories from the Galapagos Archipelago via Zoom at 7:30 p.m. Registration required at <https://tinyurl.com/yy4k7va4>.

December

December 5 - **DOAS Board Meeting**: 6:30 p.m.

December 16 - **Oneonta Christmas Bird Count**. For more information contact Sandy Bright at brights@hartwick.edu or phone 607-287-4465

December 30- **Fort Plain Christmas Bird Count**. For more information contact Charlie Scheim at scheimc@hartwick.edu or phone 607-287-4465 CHC

December 31 - **Delaware County Christmas Bird Count**. For more information, contact Pam Peters at ovenbirdp@gmail.com or phone 607-829-6545

January

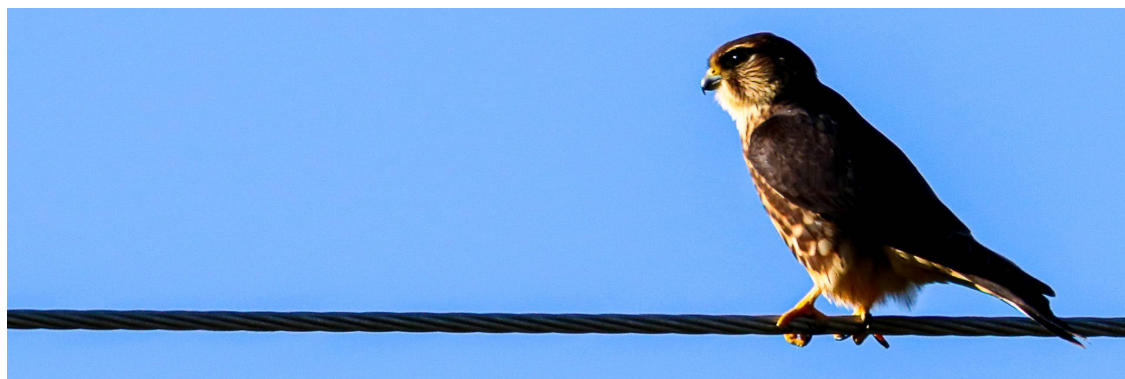
January 14 - **Annual Statewide Waterfowl Count**: This effort involves identifying and counting ducks and geese in our region. Anyone interested in helping with the census, please contact Andy Mason, phone 607-652-2162, or email AndyMason@earthling.net

January 16 - **DOAS Board Meeting**: 6:30 p.m.

January 19 - **DOAS Public Program**: Linda Melchionne (Andy's seeking more info)

DOAS PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

In Case You Missed It — Past Webinars Are Available Online at <https://doas.us/webinars/>.



*American Kestrel
Photo by Landa Palmer*



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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!