



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Annual Charter Dinner and Raffle Celebrates 56 Years

By Kathryn Davino

Please join us for the DOAS Annual Charter Dinner on Friday October 18, 2024, 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. and the program at 7:30 p.m. A cash bar will be available.

Our guest speaker for the evening will be Scott Harris, author of *Raptor Quest: Chasing America's Raptors*. Scott will share his adventures and misadventures chasing 53 raptors across 34 states in his Raptor Big Year. Scott will be joining us from South Carolina via Zoom.

As in the past, a "flock" of bird-themed Charter Raffle items and door prizes will be presented. Tickets for the Charter Raffle (a bucket raffle)

will be available that evening, as well as via our website and at our Open House on October 5. Raffle winners do not need to be present at the event.

The cost for the dinner is \$38 per person (with an additional \$2 charge per person for online payment). Those who would like to attend only the program may join us at no charge at the Quality Inn (or from wherever) on Zoom starting at 7:15 p.m.

Reservations must be made by October 12, 2024. To register for the dinner, visit <https://doas.us/2024-charter-dinner/>

To purchase Raffle Tickets visit <https://doas.us/2024-dinner-affle/>

To register for the ZoomProgram

only, visit

<https://tinyurl.com/4ejz4v37>

Please call Kathryn Davino at 607-397-3815 should you need more information. *We have secured a few additional spots for late registrants.*



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

Photo by Kathryn Davino

Bird Seed Fundraiser

By Susan O'Handley

Don't forget--the DOAS Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser is your opportunity to buy quality bird seed and help support DOAS programs at the same time! This year we're happy to again offer local sunflower seed, grown in Edmeston, priced at \$39 for a 40-pound bag. 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. Thank you for supporting DOAS! Orders are now in progress for our **November 9 delivery date**, at VP Supply, 41 Country Club Rd, Oneonta.

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President's Column

By Co-president Andy Mason

When I write this message at this time of year I'm always struck by how much is going on with our organization. After a summer slowdown, it's as if the flood gates have opened for an active fall. A few ongoing and upcoming happenings:



View from the Hawkwatch
Photo by Jane Bachman

- The start of our season of public programs, starting with the terrific photography of Rick Bunting—LIVE—on September 20. This will be followed by another half dozen informative and enjoyable programs arranged by Becky Gretton
 - Our 56th Charter Dinner and raffle on October 18, organized by Kathryn Davino (details on page 1). I dare say we are in the upper percentiles of groups that can claim 56 consecutive years of celebration.
 - The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch, now operating for over 30 years, that brings large numbers of visitors from a wide area to view the spectacle of raptor migration.
 - Our annual bird seed sale, organized by Jane Bachman and Chris DeCesare. Hungry birds will be at your window soon!
 - The very popular Open House on October 5 at the DOAS Sanctuary, featuring live birds of prey, raptor ID session, and trail walk.
 - Progress on our plan to create an accessible trail and viewing platform at the Sanctuary, spearheaded by Landa Palmer. Help us reach our funding goal for this worthy project at www.gofundme.com/f/doas-birding-for-everybody.
 - Three Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by DOAS: Oneonta (12/14), Fort Plain (12/28), and Delaware County (1/5/25).
 - And the numerous presentations, walks, and activities for other organizations, classes and the public that we provide throughout the year.
- So yes--lots going on. Join us for one or more of these happenings and experience the natural beauty of the fall season.

Wild Stories from the History of Bird Migration Research

by Becky Gretton

Mark your calendars for our November 15 program at 7:30 p.m. We've all heard amazing facts about bird migration—the long distances that birds travel, the ways that they navigate, etc. But did you ever wonder how we figured all of this out? While working for the American Ornithological Society, our speaker, Rebecca Heisman, became fascinated with the varied and creative techniques that scientists have used to study bird migration, and this eventually became the basis for her book *Flight Paths: How a Passionate and Quirky Group of Pioneering Scientists Solved the Mystery of Bird Migration*. In her talk, she'll share some surprising stories from the history of bird migration research and discuss why understanding migration is so crucial for bird conservation.

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Founded 1968

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To contribute notes or articles for The Belted Kingfisher, email: editor@doas.us.

Conservation and Legislation

By Andy Mason

Elections 2024—Another four years, another consequential election. All US Representative, State Senate, State Assembly, one US Senate, and of course the US President position will be on the ballot November 5. The environment is rarely near the top of the list of issues reported to be on voters' minds, but it is important to conservationists, as are the positions of the candidates. With that in mind, here is an overview of where they stand:

US President—Republican Donald Trump (www.donaldjtrump.com) had a poor environmental record during his previous term in the office, and if anything has hardened his positions. He made eliminating regulations a priority, including those reducing greenhouse gases, and increasing auto fuel economy standards. He withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement, a pact among 195 nations to cut greenhouse gases. He opened up the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge and offshore waters for oil exploration. In his current campaign, he has vowed to further cut air and water protections, slash environmental agency budgets, and vowed to end federal support for electric vehicles. Democrat Kamala Harris' (www.kamalaharris.com) record is largely defined by that of the Biden administration. They passed massive environmental funding as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. This has been described as a turning point in the effort to slow global warming. Political considerations required allowing Alaska oil exploration and a weakening of environmental review of energy projects

to get the legislation passed. This is a negative, but the bill is considered a major accomplishment for Biden/Harris. Harris has a strong record of advocating for environmental justice. As a prosecutor in California, she successfully brought action against energy companies and other polluters. Since becoming a nominee, she has weakened her position against fracking and fossil fuels.

US Senate—Incumbent Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand (www.kirstengillibrand.com) has supported legislation protecting ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems, and the Crane Conservation Act. She has a “keep it in the ground” position that emphasizes limits on production of fossil fuels, especially on public lands. She has a lifetime environmental score of 96% from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) (www.lcv.org). Republican challenger Mike Sapraine (mikesapraineforsenate.com) is largely an unknown quantity. His web site states he “will invest in our public schools, hospitals, and environmental treasures to ensure New York continues to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family.”

US House of Representatives—Our region falls into the 19th and 21st Congressional Districts. In the 19th, incumbent Republican Marc Molinaro (www.marcforus.com) faces Democrat Josh Riley (www.joshrileyforcongress.com). Molinaro has a 19% score from LCV. He



voted against cleaner auto standards and to rescind protections for the threatened Lesser Prairie Chicken. Riley's web site calls for holding polluters accountable for harm they cause to the environment and restoring the EPA's ability to fight climate change.

In the 21st District, incumbent Republican Elise Stefanik (www.eliseforcongress.com) faces Democrat Paula Collins (www.paulacollinsforcongress.com). Stefanik's LCV rating is 0% for 2023, including votes to block funding for public lands and against limits on soot pollution. Collins has no environmental record; her web site calls for funding to retain small farms in New York.

NY State Legislature—Our region includes Assembly Districts 101, 102, 121, 122, and State Senate Districts 51 and 53. Republican legislators hold all these seats at present. Latest environmental ratings from Environmental Advocates (www.eaaction.org/scorecard-archive) for these incumbents include: Brian Maher (Assembly 101st)—incomplete; Chris Tague (Assembly 102nd)—33%; Joe Angelino (Assembly 121st)—25%; Brian Miller (Assembly 122nd)—33%; Peter Oberacker (Senate 51st)—33%; Joseph Griffo (Senate 53rd)—38%.

Continued on page 4

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.

Challengers, with quotes from their websites, include:

Assembly 101st —none; Assembly 102nd —Democrat Janet Tweed—*endorsed by Sierra Club, “affordable homes need to be built that use less energy, and green transportation options from EVs to bicycles need to be promoted”*; Assembly 121nd —Democrat Vicki Davis; Assembly 122nd —Democrat Adrienne Martini—*“Clean water, healthy soil, pristine lakes, and beautiful open spaces are some of our greatest resources. It’s important that we steward and protect them.”*; Senate 51st —Democrat Michele Frazier—*“We know better than most that pollution, climate change, and overdevelopment can pose an existential threat to our way of life.”*; Senate 53rd —Democrat James Meyers.

To find out which districts you are in, visit: ballotpedia.org/Who_represents_me

Bird Sightings August - September 2024

By Sandy Bright

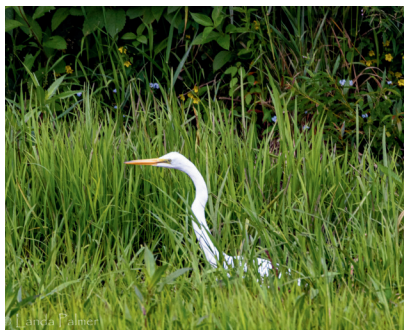
As summer winds down, so do the demands of a breeding bird’s life. Many stop singing, as they no longer need to attract a mate or defend territory. Despite the near silence, there are birds out there.

In mid-August, Sean Camillieri found Solitary and Least Sandpipers and a Double-crested Cormorant in Deposit. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was spotted in Hartwick by Suzanne Summers. Nighthawk migration was underway, reported by Tom and Jo Salo in West Burlington (8/23) and Rod Spangle (9/1).

In late August, a Merlin perched in our backyard “kek-kek-kekking” incessantly, hoping an adult would come back and feed it. It may have been one of the youngsters that hatched in a neighbor’s tree in June.

In early September Tom and Jo Salo identified lots of fall warblers, including Cape May, Tennessee, and Nashville, as well as Ruffed Grouse. They heard Barred Owls calling regularly, and a Screech Owl that called for over a month, “probably a dispersed hatch year bird.” They also reported large flocks of blackbirds, numbering in the hundreds, shaped like Red-wings but possibly mixed flocks. Jo spotted 5 more grouse (9/14).

Some species we think of as being more southern or coastal tend to wander at this time of year. Becky



Great Egret
Photo by Landa Palmer

Gretton discovered seven Great Egrets, four in Portlandville, three more at Otsego Lake. Laura Hurley and I found these egrets on the Susquehanna during several kayaking trips, along with Double-crested Cormorant, Green and Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, and an Osprey. Screech Owls were calling near Becky’s home in Richfield Springs, and she watched American Goldfinches feeding young (9/14).

In late summer Broad-winged Hawks begin their long migration to Central and South America. Tom Salo recorded the first two of the season passing by the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch on August 21st, and less than four weeks later over 1500 had been recorded, 698 of those on a single day (9/13).

While most raptors wait until early fall to migrate, there are always those who travel earlier, such as the family group of four Bald Eagles observed by Peter Fauth in late August. In all, 11

raptor species had been counted migrating by mid-September on Franklin Mountain.

Raptors are not the only birds you might encounter at the Hawkwatch. The mountain location provides great views of the valley as well as of the treetops below and nearby shrubs and fields; thus many songbirds can be observed, both migratory and non-migratory. The August counters reported Olive-sided Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Towhee, Scarlet Tanager, Wild Turkey, Great Blue Heron, Purple Finch, Magnolia Warbler, flocks of Cedar Waxwings and Tree Swallows, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and many others.

While some hummingbirds had begun their journey south, a few were still visiting my feeders in mid-September. I’ll be watching closely, hoping to spot a Rufous Hummingbird, as they sometimes wander into our area this time of year. I’ll keep putting fresh nectar out for several more weeks, hoping to feed late migrants or out-of-range species.



Cedar Waxwing
Photo by Landa Palmer

Gift Ideas: Bird Books for Young Readers

By Melody Gibson, DOAS member

Winter holidays are right around the corner. One way to share the love of birding with the little ones in your life is through a picture book. I've reviewed a few that you may enjoy. Several of these have been in heavy rotation in our house, requested over and over by my bird-loving five-year-old for story time. I hope this list gives you a few book ideas to request from your favorite local bookstore.

***The Little Book of Backyard Bird Songs* by Andrea Pinnington & Caz Buckingham**

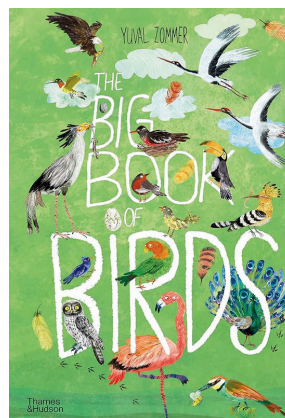
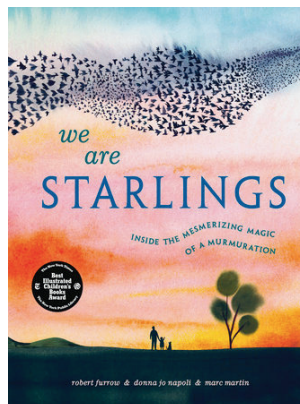
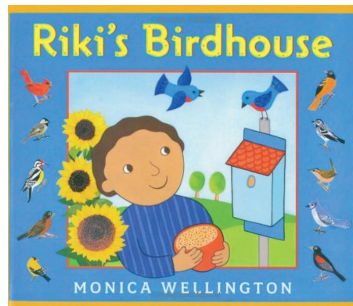
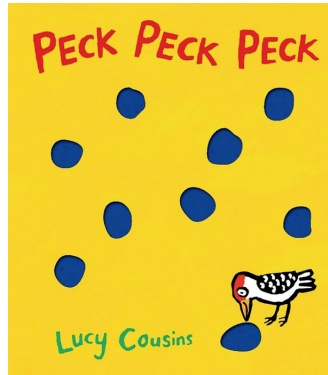
Nonfiction – suggested for any age
If you only check out one book from this list, I highly recommend this one. This book is a mini field guide for kids, complete with illustrations and audio clips for twelve different species, many of which are local to our area.

***Peck, Peck, Peck* by Lucy Cousins**

Fiction – suggested for ages 1–4
In this story, readers follow a young woodpecker who is eager to peck everything in sight. The book's pages include actual holes to simulate the bird's handiwork, and you can't help but smile and poke your finger through!

***How to Find a Bird* by Jennifer Ward, illustrated by Diana Sudyka**

Nonfiction – suggested for ages 4–8
This beautiful book is filled with watercolor illustrations that helped my son identify a handful of birds in our area. The book shows over fifty



species—including a few that are extinct, which sparked some interesting conversation.

***Riki's Birdhouse* by Monica Wellington**

Fiction – suggested for ages 4–8
This picture book follows Riki, a young boy who loves birds. Riki goes through all four seasons and their corresponding bird activities, including building a bluebird house, observing bluebirds nesting, and putting out bird treats at different times of the year.

***We Are Starlings* by Robert Furrow, Donna Jo Napoli, & Marc Martin**

Nonfiction – suggested for ages 4–8
This book showcases European starlings and their murmuration behavior. The starlings appear against a beautiful watercolor sunset that's sure to captivate both children and adults.

***The Big Book of Birds* by Yuval Zommer**

Nonfiction – suggested for ages 8–11
While most of the other books on this list are geared toward a younger crowd, this book would be better suited to independent readers. *The Big Book of Birds* is like a visual encyclopedia, offering a greater level of detail for young birders to peruse at their own pace.

Melody Gibson is a DOAS member who helps with DOAS publicity and website as a volunteer. DOAS greatly appreciates her assistance!



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Q&A With New Board Member, Nancy New

Compiled and edited by Pam Peters

PP: How did you end up in Otsego County?

NN: My parents moved here from Ithaca when I was one, so Dad could teach birding, natural sciences, and many biology topics at the State University College at Oneonta (SUCO). So, I grew up here.

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

NN: Both my parents were extremely passionate about nature and birding. So, I was raised thinking it was normal to be caring for and interacting with all things nature, especially birds. Nature wasn't just being outside, it was interwoven in my life.

PP: Your family traveled a lot when you were growing up. What are some of your favorite adventures?

NN: Our family traveled almost every summer to some program for my dad's study, or just to learn about different parts of this country. Most summers we piled all four kids, the dog, and our canoe into our station wagon, and with our camper trailer in tow, traveled throughout the US and Canada for many weeks. Two different summers we spent more than 90 days on the road driving to and exploring Alaska. We visited most of the National Parks and Monuments. We carried our food box and cooler and stopped for meals where we could watch birds or wildlife. I remember Harlequin Ducks in Yellowstone; Elk, Pika, Hoary Marmots and Stellar's Jays in Rocky Mountain National Park; Road Runners, Gila Monsters, rattlesnakes and Horny Toads in Arizona; Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in Big Bend.

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



Nancy New
Photo by Charlie Scheim

NN: I've never kept a Life List of birds. I simply enjoy the moment I'm seeing a bird. I usually even forget to take pictures because I'm savoring watching the bird and behaviors.

PP: Describe your current favorite walks or birding spots in each of the seasons.

NN: Hands down favorite fall walk: Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. Spring: Where I grew up, on Winney Hill Road in Oneonta, with its great diversity of habitats and bird species. Summer and Winter: Both areas mentioned above.

PP: What got you interested in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society?

NN: The commitment both parents made to helping create and support DOAS. Over many years, I planned my vacations and visits to Oneonta to include the Spring and Winter Bird Census dates and took great joy in that aspect of DOAS. Once I moved back to Oneonta from Washington, DC, I wanted to give back to an organization that was special to my parents and me.

PP: Do you have ideas about how you would like to be involved with the Board?

NN: I'm very interested in supporting the FMHW and the John G. New Summer Camp.

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

NN: Being raised by two energetic and devoted natural history teachers, I'm very much a teacher myself. I strongly believe in the impact individuals can make, so by helping others learn about nature, perhaps they will understand it better and then might seek to help protect it and become stewards. With knowledge comes understanding, and with understanding comes caring.

PP: What are some ways DOAS can connect young people with nature?

NN: The John G. New summer camp is a great opportunity. Given enough volunteer time, funding and/or the ability to hire interns or temporary teachers, we could expand the program, and even offer workshops all year, including on-site at schools, libraries and other locations.

PP: Have you read any books lately that you would recommend to our readers?

NN: DEFINITELY! I highly recommend *The Delightful Horror of Family Birding: Sharing Nature with the Next Generation* by Eli J. Knapp. Beautifully written, with thoughtful humor and insights about experiencing nature and learning about oneself, the book is presented in such a way that you can enjoy a chapter or two, put it down and come back without losing your connection to its messages. It encourages you to think about what is going on around you – past, present and future.

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

NN: Be warned: I'm a punster. No apologies offered.

October 5 Open House

By Susan O'Handley

Be sure to mark your calendars for Saturday October 5, when DOAS will host its annual Open House at the Sanctuary and Hawkwatch from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. The address of the Sanctuary is 52 Grange Hall Spur Road, Oneonta. Directions may be found at



<https://doas.us/research/franklin-mountain-hawkwatch/>.

At 10 a.m. there will be a workshop on how to identify flying raptors. At

11:00 a.m. there will be a trail walk through the sanctuary, and at 12:30 p.m. we will host Deb and John Saltis of Falcon Heart Rescue to see and learn about rescued birds. Complimentary snacks and drinks will be available, as will tickets for raffle items for our annual Charter Dinner, bird-friendly coffee, DOAS mugs, and FMHW hats. Please join us!

Hawkwatch News

By Andy Mason

The season is well underway at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch on the DOAS Sanctuary. Good numbers of Broad-winged Hawks moved through on their mid-September schedule, with the best count to date being 698 on the 13th.

October will bring increasing numbers of Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks, and likely the first Golden Eagles. Forecasts of anticipated good flights at the Hawkwatch are sent out by email a day or two in advance. To receive these alerts, visit doas.us/research/franklin-mountain-hawkwatch/ to sign up. More information and directions to the Hawkwatch can be found at the above web site.



Red-tailed Hawk
Photo by Landa Palmer

Upcoming Activities

October

October 5 - **Open House**, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain. (See article above)

October 15 - **DOAS Board Meeting**: 6:30 p.m.

October 18 - **DOAS Annual Charter Dinner**, 5:30 p.m. at the Quality Inn, State Highway 23, Oneonta. Author Scott Harris will present *Raptor Quest: Chasing America's Raptors*, via Zoom. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. Reservation deadline is October 15. (See article, page 1)

October 27, 5 p.m. - **Deadline for Bird Seed Order**. (to order, visit <https://doas.us/events/annual-bird-seed-sale/>)

November

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

November 15- **DOAS Public Program**: "Wild Stories from the History of Bird Migration Research" with

Rebecca Heisman. Via Zoom at 7:30 p.m.; registration required at [www.doas.us](https://doas.us) (see article, page 2)

December

December 3 - **DOAS Board Meeting**: 6:30 p.m.

December 14 - **Oneonta Christmas Bird Count (CBC)**. Contact Sandy Bright at brights@hartwick.edu or phone 607-287-4465.

December 28 - **Fort Plain CBC**. Contact Charlie Scheim at scheimc@hartwick.edu or phone 607-434-4880

January

January 5, 2025 - **Delaware County CBC**. Contact Pam Peters at ovenbirdp@gmail.com or phone 607-829-6545

January 17 - **DOAS Public Program**: "Birdability"

January 19 - **Annual Waterfowl Count**

January 21 - **DOAS Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m.

DOAS PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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



DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820

<https://doas.us/>

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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!

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.

Fundraising Kickoff!

By Landa Palmer

DOAS is making a concerted effort to increase Sanctuary accessibility for all. In recent years, this has included resurfacing entry areas, adding informational signage, placing donated resting benches in strategic locations, and installing an accessible toilet.

The next planned step is to create an accessible trail and viewing platform overlooking wetland habitat, including a designated handicapped parking area. Costs for this are approximately \$20,000. DOAS has committed \$5,000 towards this work and our all-volunteer organization is looking to raise the balance. A local Eagle Scout candidate is ready to take on the viewing platform as her Eagle Scout project.

Please donate to help us make birding at the Sanctuary for Every Body. You can also support this project by spreading the word about our GoFundMe fundraiser:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/doas-birding-for-everybody>

Please copy the link and add it to your social media or email it to friends and family. If you prefer not to use an electronic fundraising tool, it is fine to send a check to: DOAS, PO Box 544, Oneonta, NY 13820.