



THE BELTED KINGFISHER

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Feeling the Tug and Making a Difference

By *Director Chris DeCesare*

I started thinking about this column in March and telling myself to pay attention to what might be relevant for June. At the time, I was seeing reports of monarch butterflies that had overwintered in Mexico. Reports were saying that twice as many butterflies were there than the year before. This is great, as winter survival has declined 70% over the last 30 years. Even Anderson Cooper did a segment on them in late April for *60 Minutes*. This is big news. I'm hopeful that many of these monarchs' descendants make it to their summer breeding areas in the United States.

Just like migratory birds, monarch butterflies rely on stopover points along their migration routes. Unlike birds, they won't make it all the way back to our area this summer, but use the stopover points to mate and have offspring that continue the journey north. It takes three to four generations to finish the journey to New York State and beyond. This means many states have a hand in protecting habitat for both birds and butterflies along important migration routes.

Unfortunately, the current administration has cut funding for many



*Monarch Butterfly
Photo by Susan Ryder*

of the federal agencies that oversee National Parks, Forests, Wildlife Refuges, and Land Management Areas. It means State agencies and individuals have more responsibility now to make a difference. I feel compelled to do something.

Two well-respected environmental experts presented opportunities for me to learn and be inspired to do so this spring. Robin Wall Kimmerer spoke at SUNY Oneonta in April about the responsibility we have to the Earth and the other living things we share her with. Her book *Braiding Sweetgrass* provides many wonderful examples of the relationships that we as humans have with the earth and her kin, both positive and negative. It reminded me of the principles that I learned as a young biology major and as a person who has been interested in the earth-based spirituality of indigenous people. In her book, Robin talks of the lessons we can learn from plants,

animals, and waterways. She has inspired me to rediscover that connection to nature which I have put on the back burner for a few years.

I'll admit it is sometimes hard to find time and hope for making a difference in a busy and turbulent world. In March, I was very fortunate to attend a talk by Dr. Jane Goodall in Baltimore. I never thought I would have the opportunity to hear her in person, though she has been a hero of mine for a long time. It was a gift to hear her speak, as she just turned 91 years old. She spoke of how her journey from a young woman studying in the wilds of Africa led her to become a

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champion for not only chimpanzees but also other animals, small village entrepreneurs and women, and young people across the globe. She shared why she has hope for the future, despite some of the backwards steps people have taken over the years. I'm inspired by her words and actions.

It's time to do our part. Time to do a little bit more. I'm thinking about this bumper crop of monarch butterflies headed our way. I'm going to work on making my property a monarch waystation. I have perennial gardens and a field of goldenrod

across the street that will provide plenty of nectar when they arrive. I need to focus on their caterpillars. There are some scraggly milkweeds that could use more space to spread at the edge of my yard. I can make that happen. There are other native milkweed plants to add to my flower beds. I can do that. Project Monarch Watch and Journey North are two groups that engage in citizen science and offer ways to help monarchs. I can contribute. It's only a start, but I can do it. What grabs your heart and what will you choose to do?

Board of Directors Election Results

By **Landa Palmer**

The Nominating Committee presented the following slate for the Board of Directors at the May 2025 meeting. All were approved:

- Kathryn Davino
- Chris DeCesare
- Prudence Danforth
- Pam Lea

- Susan O'Handley
- Landa Palmer

We thank all of our Board of Directors for their willingness and time as they volunteer to keep our organization thriving.

Sanctuary Bird Walk

By **Andy Mason**

A dozen birders enjoyed some long overdue sunshine on the May 11 bird walk at the Audubon Sanctuary. The birds came out to play too, with a good variety found on the property's mixed habitats.

Warblers included Black-and-White, Nashville, Black-throated Green, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Northern

Waterthrush, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat. Other birds included Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Swamp Sparrow, Wood Thrush, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Purple Finch and Eastern Kingbird.

Great looks at Baltimore Oriole and Indigo Bunting were a particular treat.

Thanks to Nancy New and Sue Gaynor for their spotting help.



Ovenbird
Photo by Landa Palmer

DELAWARE-OTSEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Founded 1968

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Jane Bachman

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Finance:	Gray Mason
Historian:	vacant
Sales:	Jane Bachman

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

Conservation and Legislation

By *Andy Mason*

Plastic Waste—a threat to birds and the environment

—The New York State Legislature has an opportunity this session to take a stand against excess packaging and particularly plastic waste. A staggering amount of plastic ends up in the oceans where it remains indefinitely without biodegrading. This pollution has been proven a danger to seabirds and other marine wildlife which consume the plastic, as well as feed it to their young. It also poses an entanglement threat and breaks down into microplastics—a risk to humans as well.

The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA) will require companies (with a total gross revenue of \$5 million or more) selling, offering for sale, or distributing packaging materials and

products to register with a packaging reduction organization and develop a packaging reduction and recycling plan. This legislation will not only require manufacturers to reduce the packaging they use by 30%, but will also improve recycling and recycling infrastructure, prohibit processes that produce toxic byproducts (including advanced recycling), reduce toxins in packaging, and financially support municipal recycling programs.

Even when plastic waste is taken to landfills or incinerated, it can enter the food chain, release toxic chemicals, and contribute to climate change. Cumulatively, this waste accounts for 12% of the state's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Managing packaging waste is a financial burden for local communities.

New York City alone budgeted \$477 million for waste export in 2025. Locally we have waste management fees and added property tax costs for dealing with waste. This legislation addresses this issue by requiring companies to pay for the management and recycling of their packaging waste, rather than taxpayers. **What you can do**—Contact your state legislators and ask them to work to pass the PRRIA (A.1749/S.1464). Point out the significant human health, environmental, and financial benefits of this legislation. This is the year to pass this needed bill.

Contact information for state legislators: <https://doas.us/how-to-contact-your-elected-officials/>

New Prices for Bird Friendly Coffee

By *Jane Bachman*

Birds and Beans, supplier of the triple-certified Smithsonian Bird Friendly®, USDA Organic, and fair trade coffee that DOAS sells, has announced an increase in prices, effective April 15, 2025. We still have limited coffee blends offered at current prices. Once we need to order additional stock, however, DOAS prices will reflect the increase as follows:

12 oz. Baltimore Oriole and Kingbird (Decaf and Espresso):	\$22.00
12 oz. all other blends:	\$21.00
2 lb. Baltimore Oriole and Kingbird (Decaf and Espresso):	\$40.00
2 lb. all other blends:	\$36.00

Please refer to the website for more details on the options - from dark roast to light roast to decaf - that are available, and how to order. Coffee sale proceeds support DOAS programs.



*Brown Creeper
Photo by Landa Palmer*

Pine Lake Bird Walk

By *Jane Bachman*

Five hardy individuals braved chilly temperatures to join co-leaders Suzanne Gaynor and Jane Bachman at Pine Lake on May 20. Despite the chill they managed to see quite a few species that are normally heard but not visible, including Blackburnian and Pine Warblers, and Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireos. Other birds included Common Mergansers with fledglings, Eastern Wood Pewee, Great Crested and Least Flycatchers, Yellow, Chestnut-sided and Black-and-white Warblers, American Redstart, Brown Creeper and Veery. Final tally was 42 species!

April-May Bird Sightings

By *Sandy Bright*

Birds not seen in months are returning to breed, and they seem to be arriving early this year. First of season sightings this spring were: 4/16 Eastern Towhee (Barb Palmer); 4/17 Broad-winged Hawk (Suzanne Gaynor, Sarah Root); 4/18 Blue-headed Vireo (Pam Peters, Barb Palmer), Brown-headed Cowbird (Pam Peters), Chipping Sparrow (Charlie Scheim), Black-and-white Warbler (Suzanne Summers); 4/19 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Barb Palmer); 4/20 Brown Thrasher (Tom Salo), Least Flycatcher (Rod Spangle), Northern Flicker (Sandy Bright); 4/21 Common Yellowthroat (Suzanne Summers); 4/22 Black-throated Green Warbler (Pam Peters), Blue- and Green-winged Teal (Tom Salo); 4/23 Northern House Wren (Pam Peters, Eileen Kline), female Red-winged Blackbirds (males return earlier; Pam Peters), Gray Catbird (Eileen Kline); 4/25 Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green Warblers (Sarah Root), Ovenbird and Black-throated Blue Warbler (Pam Peters), Yellow Warbler (Andy Mason, Eileen Kline), Baltimore Oriole (Eileen Kline), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Deb Miller); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Kathryn Davino), Great Crested Flycatcher (Sarah Root); 4/27 American Redstart (Ruth Pedersen);



Solitary Sandpiper
Photo by Rick Bunting



American Bittern
Photo by Tom Salo

4/28 Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Bonnie Ratnoff, Gerianne Carillo), Warbling Vireo (Suzanne Gaynor), Virginia Rail (Tom Salo); 4/29 Bobolink (Deb Miller), Nashville and Chestnut-sided Warblers (Mitch Light); 5/1 Chimney Swift (Sandy Bright); 5/2 Magnolia Warbler (Suzanne Summers), Northern Parula (David Diaz); 5/3 American Bittern (Tom Salo); 5/4 Eastern Kingbird, Northern Waterthrush (Charlie Scheim); Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-throated Vireo (Sandy Bright); 5/5 Indigo Bunting, Blackburnian Warbler (Sarah Root), Orchard Oriole, Cerulean Warbler (Lance Verderame); Canada Warbler (Becky Gretton); 5/8 Blue-winged and Mourning Warblers (Pam Peters); 5/10 Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush (OSG Bird Walk), Alder Flycatcher (Suzanne Summers); 5/11 Black Vulture (Sandy Bright).

Some migrants winter much further south than others, so early sightings are especially rare. Landa Palmer reported an Eastern Wood-Pewee April 22, and Suzanne Summers a Red-eyed Vireo on May 2.

Migrants passing through to their summer breeding grounds were: 4/16 Fox Sparrow (Bill Vining) 4/19 Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Barb Palmer), Red-breasted Merganser (Jeff Murray); 4/23 Solitary Sandpiper (Lance Verderame); 4/24 Cape May Warbler (Ruth Pedersen); Gadwall, Greater Yellowlegs (Deb Miller); 4/27 White-winged Scoter, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pine Siskin (Lance Verderame); 5/3 Bay-breasted Warbler (Suzanne Summers); 5/4 White-crowned Sparrow (Barb Palmer); 5/6 Tennessee Warbler (Becky Gretton); 5/12 Least Sandpiper (Lance Verderame).

Barb Palmer heard a Winter Wren singing and was pleased to have a Carolina Wren return after a several-week absence. Andy Mason and Landa Palmer observed a Wood Duck flying into a box in the wetland at the Audubon Sanctuary (4/24). Laura Kilty listened to an Eastern Meadowlark singing in a hayfield by her house. Suzanne Summers heard the rattle cry of two Sandhill Cranes, then watched two fly from the swamp across the road to the pond behind her property.

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Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Photo by Barb Palmer

Rick Bunting provided regular reports on the breeding progress of some of the larger birds in his area. By early May, some Great Blue Herons were brooding eggs, others tending to newly-hatched chicks; Bald Eagles were nurturing young

too small to be seen over nest edge; and fluffy yellow Canada Goose goslings were waddling after their parents. By mid-May, eaglets were visibly stretching their wings.

Sometimes photos reveal more than seen even with binoculars. Kathryn

Davino discovered two eaglets when examining her pictures of a Bald Eagle nest near West Kortright. Since that nest failed last year, this was an especially exciting find.

If you have bird sightings to report, contact Sandy Bright, brights@hartwick.edu or 607-287-4465.

Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway Bird Walk

By Sandy Bright

On May 10th eleven participants started off on the Silas Lane trail in gray, damp conditions. The river was fast, muddy, and very high, perhaps a foot away from flooding the area, and still rising from recent rains. Thus, none of the expected river birds were found. But the sun finally made an appearance, cheering humans and birds alike as evidenced by the increase in bird song and sightings.

28 species were found, including Yellow-throated Vireo, Least

Flycatcher, five warbler species, and two “first of season” species, Scarlet Tanager and Wood Thrush. The highlight of the trip was the show put on by a male Baltimore Oriole, who paid his human audience no mind as he worked on construction of a nest overhanging the raging river. This was unusual in itself, as it’s generally the female that builds the nest. The most fascinating aspect, though, was that, while the nest was solid and stable, it was still so loosely-woven that we could



*Baltimore Oriole Nest
Photo by Charlie Scheim*

watch him while he was inside the nest. What a treat to be able to watch this amazing little engineer at work!

An Introduction to Director Prudence Danforth

After filling a vacant seat on the DOAS Board of Directors earlier this year, Pru was recently elected to a two-year term.

I first began to notice birds, at the age of five, while my family was stationed in Germany. The Eurasian Robin was my favorite. Upon returning stateside, Wild Turkey and Ring-necked Pheasant would spend time in our field in Massachusetts. Great Horned Owls in our backyard in Texas and a Roadrunner at a nearby dam had me hooked.

My serious birding days began when I met my future husband, Brian, at Penn State, York campus. We would take day trips to go spot birds. We have been birding together ever since.

As a school librarian, I have tried to impart some of my love of all things nature to my students. It was gratifying to watch them get excited

about the animals, birds and habitats as I read them books.

Now we are passing on our love to our grandsons. They enjoy watching wildlife and birds, and enjoy helping to fill up the feeders. I am looking forward to helping others to learn more about the nature around us through work with the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society.

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.

Useful Bird ID Resource from Derby Hill Hawkwatch

By Co-President Becky Gretton

I recently had the good fortune to visit Derby Hill Hawkwatch, which is a spring migration site near Oswego, New York. Broad-winged Hawks and many other raptor species were moving at the time along with a strong non-raptor migration, so there was a lot, and often too much, to see. At times, clear blue skies allowed birds to fly so high that finding them was next to impossible. David Brown is the full-time counter, and there are other talented folks who work together to achieve a complete daily count. They are tireless and congenial, and share their knowledge in a very accessible way.

David photographs birds daily

with a camera that zooms in amazingly (as does fellow counter Dave Wheeler). At the end of each count day he creates a video that educates the viewer with clear, comfortable narratives and unique photos. He is indeed a well-studied educator.

Identifying hawks in flight is challenging. There is always more to learn. These videos are super resources for those of us who want to improve our skills. On-site, we can be told what to look for in the split-second moment that a bird is visible. Having the time to absorb the information is “luxury learning”.

Non-raptor photos and information included in the videos offer even more close-ups for studying

those new arrivals that challenge us each spring. Viewing species that nest elsewhere is an added treat.

Videos are generally six to ten minutes in duration. They can be accessed on YouTube at this address: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLB8baxseGlb44fA7UiooifcrbLjT2-GE7>

Daily reports are posted at <https://hawkcount.org/index.php> This could be another way to prepare for fall migration at Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch. I encourage you to find the time to enjoy learning more about migratory birds through Derby Hill videos.

Bramley Mountain Walk

By Pam Peters

On May 6, Eileen Kline and Pam Peters led an early morning walk along the quarry trail at Bramley Mountain (just a few miles outside of Delhi). An enthusiastic group of 10 included experienced birders and folks who had never been on a guided bird walk. Maple and cherry trees were starting to leaf out, so finding warblers proved tricky, but we could hear them clearly and got a nice look at an American Redstart.

We ended up with 22 species, from Brown Creeper and Wood Thrush to Black-throated Green Warbler and Winter Wren, whose magical song thrilled the group. A Scarlet Tanager singing atop a bare ash tree was a nice finale as we returned to the parking lot. It was too wet to venture up to the newly constructed fire tower. Save that for another time! An ebird checklist from the walk can be found here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S233923707>.



*Common Yellowthroat (above) and Black-throated Green Warbler (below)
Photos by Landa Palmer*



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Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk

By *Chris DeCesare*

It was a lovely day for the Jean Miller Memorial Wildflower Walk at Gilbert Lake on May 15. The trail around the lake produced 33 different species of plants, from common lawn flowers such as dandelion, violet, and cuckoo flower to woodland plants like foamflower, goldthread, and Canada

mayflower. A particular favorite of the group, Jack-in-the-pulpit, exhibited both the male and female flowers which allowed us to see how food storage in the roots makes a difference in what pops up above ground. Though not everything was in bloom, sunshine, fun facts, and folklore



Foamflower

Photo by Chris DeCesare

made for great conversation and a nice time was had by all.

Upcoming Activities

June

June 7 - Uplands Center Bird Walk: Join DOAS Director Charlie Scheim, *Bird Sightings* author Sandy Bright, and Renee Hardenkamp, the Environmental Director of the Uplands Center for a morning bird walk at the Uplands Center, 2641 Dunk Hill Road, Walton, NY on Saturday June 7 at 8:00 a.m. Our focus will be on observing birds and their breeding behaviors. The Uplands Center (www.uplandscenter.org) has acres of fields and forests, great habitat for breeding birds. We will meet just outside the main lodge, and walk through fields and a wooded area with gentle hills. There are accessible rest rooms at the walk's beginning and end and some rest spots along the way. The walk will likely last about an hour and a half. This program is free and there is no pre-registration required. You may call Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880 for more information or for any last minute weather concerns.

June 14 - Hanford Mills Bird Walk: Join Suzanne Gaynor and Kathryn Davino at 8 a.m. for a morning bird walk in conjunction with Free Family Saturday at Hanford Mills. Veteran birders Suzanne Gaynor and Kathryn Davino will co-lead the walk around the Hanford Mills property, for beginners and experienced birders. The walk covers fairly level terrain and will last about 90 minutes and .5 miles. The trail traverses a variety of surfaces: grass, gravel, and boardwalk, and does include an occasional step up/down and a few gentle slopes. There are no rest areas along the route, but there are benches near the pond, and picnic tables at the parking lot. Accessible bathrooms are available. Participants should meet in the event parking lot (south side of Rt. 12, opposite museum buildings) and bring binoculars, insect repellent, water, and curiosity about birds! When we return to the parking lot, we invite folks to join us as we drive a short distance to see a Bald Eagle nest that currently has a pair of adults caring for one or more nestlings. Call Kathryn Davino (607-746-7396) with questions.

June 21 - Kirkside Park, Roxbury Bird Walk: Join Charlie Scheim, Sandy Bright, and local birder Jeanne Ellsworth for a birding walk in Kirkside Park, Roxbury, NY. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Kirkside parking area accessed via Kirkside Driveway. The walk will last about 1.5 hours and will wander through the park along level unpaved pathways, looking for the birds of late spring and early summer. Restrooms are available near the parking area. For more information or for any last-minute weather concerns, contact Charlie Scheim at 607-434-4880.

Fall

Mark your calendars!

October 4 - **Open House, DOAS Sanctuary on Franklin Mountain**

October 17 - **Annual Charter Dinner**

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

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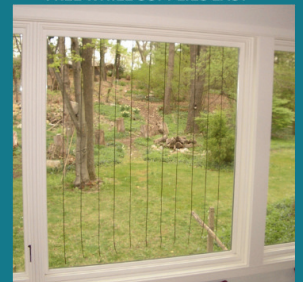
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CONTACT S.OHANDLEY@DOAS.US

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