

Spring



Bluebird by B. Onasch

March brings Bluebirds, Robins and Red-Winged Blackbirds—regardless of whether the snow

is gone. (A) By May, close to 100 species flood this area, and their courtship songs may be heard throughout the valley. Birds are driven by the biological need to mate and ensure the continuation of their species. Some are passing through and others will nest here. Birds require specific habitats: food and rest for the migrants, and for those who reproduce here, safe areas in which to nest and raise young.

Turkeys are common in fields. Males strut with their tails in full display to attract their harems of females. They are easy to spot as they feed on the freshly spread manure. Other species mate for life. Duck pairs will be busy building nests near the river. The Robin's song is a welcome sound after the long winter. Owls can be heard at dusk. Screech Owls and Barred Owls are sometimes heard near the Treadwell cemetery. Wood and Hermit Thrushes offer their haunting songs in the forest at dusk and at dawn.



Left to Right: Yellow-Rumped Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Rose Breasted Grosbeak, all by B. Onasch

The birds who nest here are all around. Summer is about raising and protecting their young. On the river

you will see adult geese and ducks floating with their young.



Common Merganser by B. Onasch

(C) Watch for the colorful Wood Ducks, Mallards, Mergansers and the tall Great Blue Heron. You may be lucky enough to come upon a nest. If so, do not disturb it.

It is harder to see through the leafed out trees. Watch for beautiful colors flashing through the air: Goldfinch, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Orioles. Fewer bird songs fill the air in summer. (A, B) Adult birds are busy looking for food and feeding their young. By July you will hear baby birds begging for food from their harried parents. When you hear birds screeching and sounding alarm calls,

Summer



Great Blue Herons, by R. Bunting

look around for a predator! A cat or a snake or some bird of prey -- Crow, Raven or Hawk. In the evening and at dawn, the Thrushes continue to serenade.

Fall

Robins begin their fall migration south during August. The adults move first; the youngsters later.

Throughout the fall notice waves of Robins alighting in your yard in the morning. Hungry from their nightly flight, they feast on worms and any fruits left on the trees. Robins and Cedar Waxwings love sumac, cherry, crab apple and shadberry. Help migrating birds by providing these shrubs and trees. Warblers of all kinds will again pass through SUNY Delhi's Outdoor Education Center (B) and West Branch Preserve. (A) Flycatchers, Orioles and Indigo Buntings begin their journey south. Male Goldfinches are not so gold anymore! Many birds shed their bright mating colors in summer and fall.

Birds who migrate may fly south a state or two, or to Florida, or to Central America, or all the way to South America. Go outside on a crisp October night and listen for Canada Geese passing overhead. Listen also for owls.

Migration is dangerous and many birds will not make it back here next year. Storms, oil spills, wind turbines and tall lit-up buildings pose hazards to the birds who often fly at night.

One of the highlights of fall birding is the migration of birds of prey. From late September through November, hundreds, even thousands of hawks and



Wild Turkey by B. Onasch

eagles head south along the Atlantic Flyway right over Franklin Mountain. (D) Join expert counters from Audubon Society at Franklin Mountain Hawk-watch daily, from late August until early December. They will share their knowledge!

Winter



Chickadee by B. Onasch

Chickadees, Nuthatches, Titmice, Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, and the beautiful Cardinals cheer us

throughout the winter. Birds need open water, food and shelter. Put up bird feeders in secure areas AFTER the bears have dened. Provide water if possible. Create piles of brush—branches, limbs and berry bushes—to act as shelter for winter birds. Occasionally Snowy Owls, Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Crossbills and other birds from Canadian boreal forests provide an exciting addition to our common winter flocks. Expect to see ducks and eagles on or near the river throughout the winter months. Eagles need open water to fish and may often be spotted sitting in a dead tree.



Left to Right: Bald Eagle by R. Lynch; Cardinal by R. Bunting; Snowy Owl by W. Putrycz



Four wonderful birding areas are easily accessible in the Upper Delaware River region (see map above):

A West Branch Nature Preserve

Located on Route 10, 9 miles south of Delhi, in the town of Hamden. Parking is .9 miles south of the County Rt 26 intersection (at the Octagon House). The parking area is on the right side of Rt 10. Totalling 450 acres, the conservancy property includes riverside rail trail walking and trails through steep pine and hemlock woods typical of this area. Some meadows are visible from Rt 10. Visit anytime, but especially in early March when robins and bluebirds return -- even in the snow!

B SUNY Delhi Outdoor Education Park

Route 28, just one mile east of Delhi. With open meadows and treed slopes, this haven for birds also borders the Little Delaware River.

Early May through summer offer excellent birding opportunities.

C West Branch of the Delaware River

Fitch's Covered Bridge is just 2.5 miles north of Delhi on Route 10. There are several pull over spots along Route 10 before the bridge, and also on the east side of the covered bridge on Delaware Ave (also known as Back River Road). Eagles like to fish from the snags (dead trees) near the Delaware County Historical Society's Frisbee House, just south of the covered bridge. A wonderful winter birding location.

D Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch

Located on the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Sanctuary at 52 Grange Hall Road Spur, Oneonta, NY. Overlooking the Susquehanna River valley, this 100 acre preserve is the perfect place to learn about and see a wide range of migrating hawks, spring and fall. Visit <http://doas.us/> for directions.



Bobolink by E. Klysa

Resources:

allaboutbirds.org — Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Tips on Bird identification and songs.

doas.org — Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. Birding checklists, bird counts, field trips and environmental advocacy. Directions to DOAS Sanctuary and Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch. **(D)**

appalachianeagles.org — Golden eagle research project



Ruby-Throated Hummingbird by K. Mario

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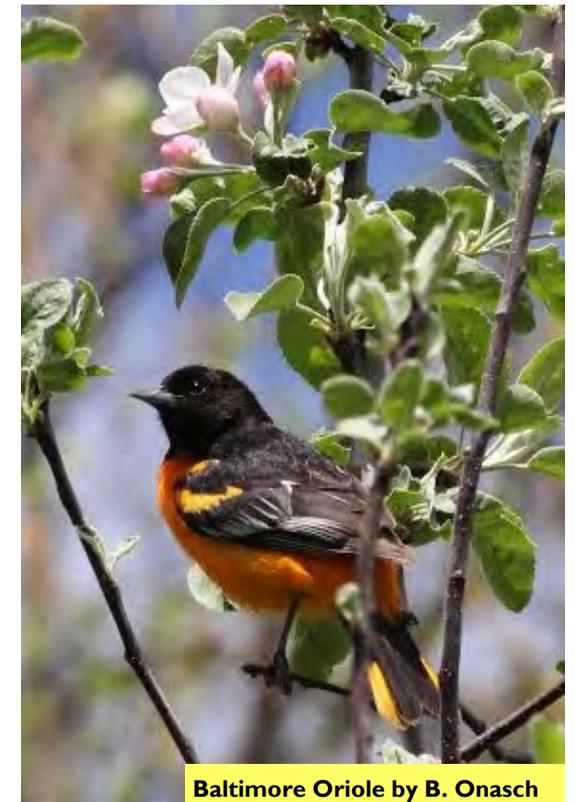
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Birds of the Upper Delaware River



Baltimore Oriole by B. Onasch

This guide to local birds in Delhi, NY and its environs is intended for the novice or expert, the young or old, the native or visitor.

Birds are here throughout the year and throughout the area. We're hoping this guide will help you enjoy them!