Upcoming Events

Visit our Google calendar at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar for more winter events and event details. Be sure to subscribe to our free, private email list to get additional details and early notice of new trips and events. Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list to subscribe.

Every Monday, 8:30 am
Guided Bird walks at Area Hotspots
1st Mon: Muscoot Farm,
2nd Mon: Rockefeller State Park Preserve,
3rd Mon: NEW—Location will vary, see Google calendar.
4th Mon: Croton Point County Park,
5th Mon: Location varies, see Google calendar.

Every Second Saturday, 9:00 am
Guided Hike at Brinton Brook Sanctuary
Rain or shine. Meet at main parking lot off Route 9A.

Every Saturday & Sunday, 9:00-11:00 am
Project FeederWatch at Croton Point Nature Center
Join SMRA volunteers at the Croton Point Nature Center every weekend morning from now until early April as we identify and count birds visiting the bird feeding station there. We watch from inside the Nature Center. Beginners encouraged. Great opportunity for bird photography as well.

Public Programs

Thursday, December 10, 7:00 pm
Lecture: Christmas Bird Count—Tradition Meets Science
Croton Free Library
Michael Bochnik, count compiler for the last 25 years, will tell us about the rich history of the 92-year-old Bronx River-Westchester Christmas Bird Count, help us see what the numbers mean and how we can help. Learn how area bird life was different in past decades and what the future might hold.

Thursday, January 14, 7:00 pm
Film: The Marion Lake Story—Defeating the Mighty Phragmites
Black Cow Coffee House, Croton-on-Hudson
Join us for an informal gathering to view this short film about one woman’s effort to rescue bird habitat from invasive plants and learn about local efforts.

More winter events on page 4! Be sure to check our website for new events added after our newsletter deadline or for event updates including changes due to weather.
**Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative**

Months of planning and organizing culminated in a special event on September 20 at the beautiful estate of the Weinstein Family in Croton-on-Hudson. The “Who Shares Your Backyard” event engaged 18 key landowners in discussions about maintaining and improving the conservation values of their land.

Hosting organizations included SMRA, Westchester Land Trust, the Native Plant Center at Westchester Community College, Teatown Lake Reservation and Ossining Environmental Advisory Council.

SMRA Executive Director Anne Swaim provided an overview of the Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative (H2H) and briefed participants on the importance of forest lands in the Northeast, where more than 80% of forests are privately held.

Then the landowners circulated among four sets of experts—Birding and Bird Habitat, Native Plants, Invasive Species, and Trees and Forestry—to discuss their specific interests and concerns. The animated and enthusiastic conversations reflected the landowners’ interest in taking action on their own properties and continuing conversations about land stewardship, both goals of H2H. Follow-up events are being planned.

H2H is a collaboration of regional conservation organizations and municipal partners focused on land use and stewardship of forested lands and waterways in Westchester and Putnam counties and southwestern Connecticut. H2H is led in our area by the Westchester Land Trust. Other local partners include our sister chapter Bedford Audubon, Teatown Lake Reservation, and the Mianus River Gorge.

*Tom Ruth*
Education

Trinidad & Tobago Birding Trip

Mid-October was off-season in Trinidad and Tobago, meaning the price was right, but it could rain (it did; a lot, but mostly at night). Thus the wonders of neotropical birding were in no way diminished for the 22 travelers who enjoyed Saw Mill River Audubon’s October birding trip to Trinidad and Tobago.

In Trinidad we enjoyed one of the great birding spots in the world – the veranda at Asa Wright Nature Center and Lodge, where you can put your feet up, get your cameras ready, and drink rum concoctions with Trinidad’s own Angostura bitters. During our trip alone we could eyeball, within ten feet (or closer) nine species of hummingbirds (including Tufted Coquette and Long-billed Starthroat), Purple and Green Honeycreepers, Violaceous Euphonias (just the name is cool), many species of tanager (including White-lined, Blue-grey, Silver-beaked, Turquoise, Speckled, Bay-headed), Blue Dacnis, Yellow Orioles, the ubiquitous Bananaquit, and even more.

We also enjoyed several outings including a boat trip into Caroni Swamp to see Scarlet Ibis and other large wading birds as they descended in waves to their night roosts; quite a magical site—and yes, the marvel was abetted with rum punch served by our guides.

Then it was off to Tobago –18 minutes flying time—followed by a long ride along the winding oceanside road to Blue Waters Inn, Speyside, a scuba lovers paradise. I don’t dive but I did snorkel off Little Tobago Island. Fortunately, I was in the water when an eagle ray glided right by a few of us with its four foot “ray-span” and six foot tail. It was an awesome sight. (Google it.)

But the highlight of it all for me was the opportunity to enjoy this trip with my 14 year old grandson Max, a wonderful kid (and birder and photographer), his first neotropical birding trip. I know it was better than a few days of 8th grade on the Jersey Shore and I’m sure glad his wise parents thought so as well. I thank everyone on the trip for making it such a wonderful experience for us both. \( \text{Larry Trachtenberg} \)

(See a photo by Max on page 4)

Advocacy

We are part of the Atlantic Flyway

Birds don’t know borders. Audubon’s Atlantic Flyway initiative supports birds and other wildlife throughout this important migration route across 17 U.S. states, seven Canadian provinces, several Central and South American countries and Caribbean nations. Along the way are habitats as diverse as the forests of New England, where birds like the Wood Thrush nest and breed, to the Atlantic coastal beaches and marshlands that shelter Piping Plovers, Red Knots and Saltmarsh Sparrows, to Caribbean mangrove swamps. Audubon is employing tactics as diverse as the flyway’s habitats to protect scores of bird species and millions of individual birds that travel and rest along this avian highway.

One recent Audubon success was helping to establish the new Joulter Cays National Park in the Bahamas, a major wintering ground for threatened shorebirds. Four percent of the world’s declining Piping Plover population winter on this 114,000-acre island group. Also protected are significant numbers of Red Knots and Clapper Rails, as well as aquatic species like bonefish and sponge.

Audubon’s chapter-state-national partnership enables this kind of success, linking local findings to actions with a global reach. \( \text{Richard Saraway} \)
Selected Winter Events (continued from page 1)

Third Saturday Bird Seed Sales: Sat 12/19, 1/16, 2/20. 9:30 am-12:30 pm
SMRA volunteers available at Pruyn Sanctuary, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua on these Saturdays to help load your car. Or visit our office at Pruyn during the week, M/W/F 10:30 am-3:30 pm, for bird seed purchases but please do call or email first.
See Prices & selection online at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed.

Saturday, December 19: Peekskill Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, January 2: Putnam Christmas Bird Count
Teams of birders go out dawn to dusk to census birds in 15-mile diameter count circles. Email us at office@sawmillriveraudubon.org to find out how you can be part of the 116th Annual Christmas Bird Count!

Saturday, January 9, 9:00 am
Croton Point Eagles & More Walk with Charlie Roberto
Soup Gathering at Croton Point Nature Center, 12 noon
Now a wonderful annual tradition! Come birding with Charlie Roberto, starting 9:00 am at the Croton boat ramp and continuing on into the park. Eagles expected! Afterwards, join us for a soup gathering at the Nature Center at noon. Email us if you’d like to contribute soup, bread or beverages for the soup gathering: office@sawmillriveraudubon.org

Save the Date!
Saturday, February 6
Teatown Lake Reservation’s Hudson River EagleFest Returns!
Saw Mill River Audubon is honored to partner with Teatown in the annual EagleFest. We will be sponsoring warming tents at the Croton boat ramp and George’s Island, helping to lead bird walks in the main event area inside Croton Point, offering our “Raptors for Rookies” program and providing volunteer birders at the Croton boat ramp and George’s Island to help spot eagles. Many other activities all day long! Snow date: Sunday February 7.
For EagleFest info including reservations for some events, visit www.teatown.org/teatown-events/eaglefest.html

Warm thanks!
To Pizza Station in Chappaqua for providing pizzas for our bird seed sale volunteers the first weekend in October;
and
To Chappaqua Starbucks Coffee for fueling and warming our seed sale volunteers with a generous coffee donation both Saturday and Sunday;
and
To all of our hard-working seed sale volunteers who braved a cold rainstorm Saturday and extra bags of seed to move on Sunday!