



On the Wing

February / March 2012

News from Saw Mill River Audubon

Issue 327

1 Events and Programs

2 Chapter News

New Members ♦ Annual Dinner
Sanctuaries Update

3 Project FeederWatch

More Events

4 Contact Us!

People ♦ Memberships & Donations

SMRA ANNUAL REPORT ONLINE

Our thanks to everyone who supported SMRA with their donations. To conserve paper and reduce printing costs, the 2011 annual report will be available online on February 1 at: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/news/



Have you seen this bird?
Project FeederWatch has recorded a serious decline in evening grosbeak populations. See p. 3, for more info.

Winter Seed Sales

Every Third Saturday

9:30 am–12:30 pm

Sat. Feb. 18 Sat. Mar. 17

At Pruyn Sanctuary

Weekday sales are available
Mon/Wed/Fri 10:30 am–3:30 pm
Call 914.666.6503 for more info.

SPECIAL EVENT: Hudson River EagleFest 2012

Saturday, February 4 ♦ 9:00 am–4:00 pm

John James Audubon painted this bald eagle getting ready to feast on a catfish in 1828. By the end of the 19th century, our nation's symbol was in serious trouble in New York State and by the middle of the 20th century it looked like the bald eagle would forever disappear. But with the banning of DDT in 1972 and the initiation of an ambitious bald eagle restoration program by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 1976, the tide began to turn. 1997 saw the first bald eagle born along the Hudson River in over 100 years. Flash forward to 2012—bald eagles are increasingly common in the vicinity of the river.



Celebrate this incredible conservation success story at the 2012 EagleFest. This year's event features expanded eagle viewing sites (two of which are sponsored by SMRA) around the area and special exhibits, lectures and theatrical presentations at the main exhibition tent in Croton Point County Park. EagleFest is organized by Teatown Lake Reservation. More information at: www.teatown.org/eaglefest

Second Saturday Walks at Brinton Brook

Saturday, February 11, 9:00 am ♦ Saturday, March 10, 9:00 am

Enjoy the special beauty of winter and join us on our monthly walks at our largest sanctuary: Brinton Brook in Croton-on-Hudson. No pre-registration needed. Good for all ages. Held regardless of weather except in cases of severe weather or road closures.

2012 Great Backyard Bird Count

Friday, February 17—Monday, February 20

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Find out more: www.birdsource.org/gbbc

Birding Weekend on Cape Ann

Saturday, February 18—Monday, February 20

Join us on this holiday weekend excursion to Cape Ann in Massachusetts. We can expect some fabulous winter birding. Co-sponsored with Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon. Contact us ASAP if interested in trip details by calling our office: 914.666.6503.



SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE AUDUBON PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Sanctuaries Update



There are now three deer exclosures in Pruyn Sanctuary. The forest health in our Brinton Brook and Graff Sanctuaries. We have just completed a third "deer exclosure" in Pruyn Sanctuary, with cost-sharing assistance from the New York City Watershed Agricultural Council. Our thanks to Nick Fischer for supervising the deer exclosure project. With the assistance of volunteer Trail Walkers, we are continually monitoring both the trail conditions and boundary integrity of all eight of our sanctuaries in northern Westchester. For more information on our Trail Walker program, visit our web site and choose "Trail Walkers" from our Quick Links drop down list.

Saw Mill River Audubon is continuing to gather information about the forest health of our sanctuaries. We are currently seeking technical assistance from the New York State

Department of Environmental Conservation to assess

John James Audubon Original Paintings

Did you know that the nearby New York Historical Society owns all 435 of the original watercolor paintings used to create the plates in



John James Audubon's *Birds of America*? To preserve these incredible works of art, only a small selection are on display at any one time. Until April 8, 2012 the five paintings from the second fascicle of the famous book are being exhibited, including the wild turkeys pictured here. And make plans to visit the museum in the Spring of 2013 when all 435 watercolors will be on display. Visit nyhistory.org for more information. The New York Historical Society is located at 77th Street at Central Park West in Manhattan.

Saw Mill River Audubon presents
"Welcome to Spring Program"
 featuring
 Annual Dinner
 2012 Annual Meeting & Election of Officers
 Video & Scholarship Presentations
 Surprise Guest Speaker
Sunday, April 1, 2012, 6:00 pm
 The Travelers Rest, Millwood

Keep an eye out for a special mailing and email notices to reserve your space at this special event!

Audubon Action Network

Do you want to make a difference in local, state and national issues? Here's your chance. As part of the **Audubon Action Network** you will receive periodic email action alerts on current and pressing local, statewide, and national conservation issues. When you join, your voice will join thousands of others calling on legislators to support conservation issues and protect New York's and our nation's great natural heritage. To sign up, visit ny.audubon.org and select "Audubon Action Network" under "Issues & Action."

Apply for a Scholarship

Saw Mill River Audubon is still seeking qualified young people to apply for a 2012 youth scholarship. The deadline has been extended to March 1. The **Larry Light Memorial Scholarship Fund for Youth** was established to assist young people ages 13 to 17 to attend a summer camp, class or workshop with an emphasis on the environment. For more information or to download an application visit:

www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Scholarships.html

Welcome Members

Briarcliff Manor David Resnick **Chappaqua**
 Daniel Biederman **Croton-on-Hudson** Michael Sarver
Jersey City Jon Goodnough **Millwood** Doris Lim
Ossining Drew Gitlin, Cynthia and Matthew Smart
Pleasantville Robert Jones, Ralph Klieforth, Barbara Loizeaux,
 Bill Schiavo **Tarrytown** George A. O'Lear

CITIZEN SCIENCE

MORE AUDUBON EVENTS

Project FeederWatch Results

Project FeederWatch (PFW) is an annual, winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders across North America. Participants count the birds that they see at their feeders and report the results to PFW. The 2011–2012 season is the 25th year for PFW. In the 2010–2011 PFW season, over 15,000 participants submitted 115,000 checklists with more than 6 million birds.

With data covering such a long period of time and so many locations, PFW is able to alert scientists to long-term trends in the distribution and abundance of many species of birds. PFW data can help distinguish between a species' normal population fluctuations and a long-term decline or increase. An example is the evening grosbeak, which has steadily declined, with only half the number of locations reporting this bird compared with 20 years ago.

Some interesting trends for the eastern PFW region (Great Lakes, northeastern U.S. and eastern Canada) from the 2010–2011 season include a drop in numbers of non-native house sparrows and rock pigeons. Species reported at more locations in the eastern region than the



long-term average included downy woodpecker (shown at left), white-breasted nuthatch, northern cardinal, red bellied woodpecker, Carolina

wren, and Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks. Chickadee (combination of black-capped and Carolina) appeared at more locations in the eastern region than any other bird, appearing at 98% of PFW sites. Learn more at: www.feederwatch.org

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 25 ♦ 9:00 am Birding Field Trip to Tarrytown Lakes

Past year trips have seen a variety of wintering ducks. Contact our office by phone (914.666.6503) or email office@sawmillriveraudubon.org to register and to be put on the trip list to be contacted for alternate trip locations in case of ice coverage on the lakes.

MARCH

Saturday, March 10 ♦ 9:00 am Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook Sanctuary

See p. 1 of this newsletter for details.

Wednesday, March 21 ♦ 7:30 pm Program: Natural History of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

This program, cosponsored by Teatown Lake Reservation, is a special presentation by Don Riepe, former naturalist and manager at the National Park Service's Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Queens. Don is New York Chapter Director of the American Littoral Society and is currently serving as the "Jamaica Bay Guardian." He is a prolific author and photographer. His work has appeared in many publications, including *Audubon*, *The New York Times* and *National Wildlife*.

Don's program will feature his photos taken over a 25-year period and will include a discussion of the history and ecology of the Jamaica Bay Refuge as well as many stories about his experience as manager of this 9,000 acre urban preserve for wildlife.

Follow up this program with a field trip to Jamaica Bay! See next event.

MARCH

Sunday March 25 ♦ 7:00 am Field Trip to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Join us on our birding field trip to this world-renowned wildlife refuge so close to home. The Jamaica Bay preserve features 9,000 acres of protected estuary habitat in nearby New York City. Dress for the weather. Bring binocular, lunch and water. Spotting scopes will be shared. Call or email to register and inquire about carpooling or caravanning arrangements from Westchester.



Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge has a variety of shoreline habitats.

APRIL

Sunday, April 1, 6:00 pm Saw Mill River Audubon Welcome to Spring Program

See page 2 for details.

IMPORTANT NOTICE Information for All Field Trips

Suggested donation of \$5/person.
(Youth & children under 18 are free.)

We ask you to call 914.666.6503 OR email office@sawmillriveraudubon.org before the trip so we know to expect you. Most trips run rain or shine. If we do need to cancel a trip we will call or email (your preference) to all who are registered and we will also put a notice on our website and our office answering machine.

Saw Mill River Audubon
275 Millwood Road
Chappaqua, New York 10514

PERIODICAL POSTAGE
PAID
at Chappaqua, NY
and additional offices

Save the Date!
SMRA Annual Dinner & Welcome to Spring Program
Sunday, April 1, 2012. Details on page 2.

Deadline for Next Newsletter: **March 1**

Saw Mill River Audubon

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PLANT THE SEED

“It is no excuse to leave the acorn unplanted because you won't live to see the oak.” *The Talmud*

Saw Mill River Audubon has been a local voice for the environment since 1953.

Your gift helps us fulfill our mission of habitat preservation, education and advocacy—for now and for generations to come.



I WISH TO DONATE

Enclosed is:

- \$500 \$250 \$100
 \$50 \$30 \$_____

My employer will match my gift.

**I'D LIKE TO JOIN
Saw Mill River Audubon!**

Basic Chapter Membership:

- Enclosed is \$30
 Please send me planned giving info

Name(s)

Address

City/State/Zip

Please make checks payable to:

Saw Mill River Audubon
275 Millwood Road
Chappaqua, NY 10514