



SMRA

SAW MILL RIVER AUDUBON

Feb/Mar 2016



*Monday morning birders, Croton Point
Photo: Anne Swain*



Charlie Roberto demonstrating eagle flight at our January Eagle Walk. Photo: Edward Mertz



Lining up for nine kinds of soup at our January Croton Point Soup Gathering! Photo: Bill Kellner



*End of year lunch gathering for Monday birders
Photo: Gillian Corfield*

Upcoming Events

Visit our Google calendar at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar for 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

Meet in main parking area for all walks except Croton Point which meets in the ball-field parking at park entrance.

- 1st Mon: Muscoot Farm
- 2nd Mon: Rockefeller State Park
- 3rd Mon: Teatown Lake Reservation
- 4th Mon: Croton Point County Park
- 5th Mon: Location varies

Every Second Saturday, 9:00 am Guided Hike at Brinton Brook

Rain or shine. Meet at main parking lot off Route 9A.

Every Saturday & Sunday, 9:00 am to 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

Saturday, February 6, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Hudson River EagleFest!

Organized by Teatown Lake Reservation. SMRA is sponsoring warming tents at Croton Boat Ramp and George's Island, leading bird walks and offering our raptors ID program. See page 6.

Sunday, February 14, 2:00 pm Show the Birds Some Love! Build Nest Boxes for Birds Croton Point Nature Center

See page 5.

Saturday, March 5, 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm Special Event: Warblers!

White Plains Presbyterian Church

A special afternoon about warblers featuring authors of *The Warbler Guide* and sponsored by all five Westchester Audubon chapters! See page 4.

Friday, March 25, 7:00 pm Birders U Spring Workshop Spring Birding by Ear Croton Point Nature Center

Tune up your ears for spring by learning and reviewing spring bird songs. See page 5 for more details.

Check out page 5 for more upcoming events. Visit our website for new events added after newsletter deadline and for event updates including changes due to weather.

SMRA Board News

SMRA bid a fond farewell to **Nick and Cathy Fischer** who recently relocated to North Carolina. Nick was a very active board member, especially in our sanctuaries, helping to plan, build and maintain the deer exclosures at Prun Sanctuary and repair the Prun bird blind among other projects.

We are also missing the warm and friendly participation of **Sally Dow**, who also resigned from our board. Sally Dow was always ready to lend a hand at special events and participated on several of our special excursions. We thank her for her service.

We look forward to a special recognition of Board President **Robert McCrillis** at our Spring Dinner as he closes a record-setting 12 years in that position.



Participants at the Fall 2015 New York Audubon Council Meeting.
Photos: Audubon New York

New York Audubon Council

The Audubon Council of New York State Fall Meeting took place November 6-8 at the Windham Resort in the beautiful Catskill Region. More than 55 people, including leaders from 19 of New York's 27 Audubon chapters were in attendance. Saw Mill River Audubon was represented by **Richard Saravay** and **Tom Ruth**. Richard has also served as Council Chair from 2011 to 2015. The theme for the weekend focused on "Forest Protection and Watershed Stewardship." Participants heard a panel on this subject featuring local Catskills experts moderated by Audubon New York's Executive Director Erin Crotty. Her past role as NYDEC's Commissioner allowed for a wonderful background on the history of the Catskill watershed and NYC's drinking water. Evening keynotes focused on the Catskills. Weekend discussions also included chapter capacity and habitat conservation projects. **Learn more about Audubon New York: ny.audubon.org.** (See related article about "Advocacy" on page 3.)

Saw Mill River Audubon

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(914) 666-6503 | office@sawmillriveraudubon.org
Visit us online: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

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Environmental Educator: Pete Salmansohn

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Education

New SMRA Educator: Pete Salmansohn

Saw Mill River Audubon is pleased to announce that Pete Salmansohn has joined our team as a staff environmental educator.

Many in the Audubon world are familiar with “Puffin Pete” through his ongoing work as an educator at National Audubon’s Hog Island Camp and Seabird Restoration Program in Maine.

Pete also works as an environmental educator for the Hudson Highlands Land Trust and serves on the board of Putnam Highlands Audubon. For SMRA, Pete will be working with Executive Director Anne Swaim to develop and present our new education initiative, *Schoolyard Birding*. Pete lives in Millwood near Prun Sanctuary.

Schoolyard Birding

Supported by a generous gift from **Tivia Kramer**, SMRA has purchased 24 pairs of binoculars to use with grades 3 through 5 in our new *Schoolyard Birding* program. We are also grateful to **EagleOptics** for a 1-to-1 purchase match! (We often recommend www.eagleoptics.com as an excellent resource for birding optics.)



Sanctuaries

Audubon Trail Walkers Protect Our Habitats

Saw Mill River Audubon owns eight separate sanctuaries totaling over 300 acres with over ten miles of trails and 11 miles of boundaries.

Our sanctuaries benefit from the Trail Walker volunteers who enjoy walking in these habitats

and letting us know when they see something that needs our attention including needed trail work or interesting animal or plant sightings. **Is that you?**

Some commit to being regular Trail Walkers and use our Trail Walker form to make monthly reports.

To submit a Trail Walker report online visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/walker

We also benefit from the ongoing oversight and volunteer time of our sanctuary neighbors. Thank you!



Advocacy

Issues Important to Audubon in New York

Each year, Audubon New York and the Audubon Council of New York State develop conservation policy resolutions to advance protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitats in state and national legislation and administration. These resolutions provide the basis of NY chapters’ collective advocacy efforts and guide the development of Audubon New York’s annual legislative priorities

Read more about NY issues that matter: ny.audubon.org/conservation/advocacy/policy-resolutions

When state and national legislative and administrative issues arise, SMRA much appreciates the leadership of Audubon New York and our state council to help Saw Mill River Audubon add our voice with the other 26 chapters in New York.

Invasive Species

As a follow-up to our Film Night discussion on January 14 about invasive species, here are some links for more information:

- New York State Invasive Species Info: nyis.info
- Lower Hudson Partnership for Invasive Species Management: lhprism.org
- Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct work days aqueduct.org/volunteer

The Warblers are Coming! Get Ready!

Warbler Program & Workshop

Saturday, March 5, 2016 12 noon & 2:00 pm

White Plains Presbyterian Church

39 North Broadway, White Plains
(Parking in the rear of the church)

All five Audubon Chapters in Westchester County (Bedford, Bronx River/Sound Shore, Central Westchester, Hudson River and Saw Mill River) are offering you two special events to get ready for the spring migration of warblers, featuring noted authors of *The Warbler Guide*: Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle.

We will be offering two events for you to choose!

Public Program: 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm FREE
“The Warbler Guide: The Overlooked ID Points that Make Identifying Warblers Easy” will be free and open to the public. Tom & Scott will help us learn how to tell these jewels of the trees apart by their unique identification points.

Intensive Workshop: 2:00-5:00 pm \$50/person
“The Warbler Guide: A New System for Identifying and Learning Vocalizations” will follow the ID Points lecture as an intensive workshop. Explore the differences in vocalizations and learn a simple, effective system for discerning them.

Yellow-throated Warbler
Photo: Sue O'Rourke



Yellow-rumped Warbler
Photo: Billy Lijewski



Hooded Warbler
Photo: Fran Greenberg



Palm Warbler
Photo: Bill Golden



Yellow Warbler
Photo: Sue O'Rourke



The intensive workshop cost is \$50 per person. This is a fundraising program for Westchester Audubon chapters and we hope you can come out and support us! **Workshop pre-registration requested** so that we may be prepared for you and have a method of contacting you in case of schedule changes. But, you can also chance it and register at the door. **No need to register for our free, noon presentation** of “The Warbler Guide: The Overlooked ID Points that Make Identifying Warblers Easy.”

Workshop registration is available online: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/warblers

What I'm Reading—

Spix's Macaw: The Race to Save the World's Rarest Bird



The fight for survival of the Spix's Macaw reads like a James Bond novel—international intrigue, clandestine, illegal shipments from exotic locales, hundreds of thousands of dollars changing hands while government officials wring their hands.

From the parched caatinga in northeast Brazil to private zoos in the United Kingdom and Germany, to the private wildlife reserve

of a billionaire sheik in the Arabian desert, the motives of naturalists, politicians and private animal collectors are often at cross-purposes as the numbers of this beautiful blue macaw dwindled to a single individual by 1990.

The Spix's tale is engagingly told by Tony Juniper, executive director of Friends of the Earth, who was personally involved in various efforts to save the Spix and its habitat. From Johann von Spix's initial

“discovery” of the parrot in 1817 to the thoughtless plundering of both the bird and its unique environment, Juniper spins a cautionary tale which includes hopeful tales of species preservation in other places, while also signaling a roll call of beautiful birds we'll never see again, like the Glaucous Macaw and the Carolina Parakeet.

Brian Kluepfel

Reading a bird book? Let us know!
Email us your review to share here.

More Upcoming Events

Third Saturday Bird Seed Sale

February 20 and March 19

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Pruyn Sanctuary

Our volunteers will be on hand to help you with your seed selection and help load your car. Bird seed may also be purchased M/W/F 10:30am-3:30pm at our office at Pruyn Sanctuary. Call/email before coming during week. Prices/info here: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed

Sunday, February 14, 2:00 pm

Show Birds Some Love:

Build a Bird Box!

Croton Point Nature Center

Join us for a short multimedia program about birds that will nest in boxes and then help us assemble bird boxes! You may build a box to keep or one for Croton Point Park. **Per box donation of \$20 to take home a box or \$10 to help underwrite a box for Croton Point.** If you can tap a nail with a hammer, you can do this! **RSVP by Wednesday, February 10.**



Saturday, March 13, 6:30 pm

Flight of the Woodcock

Croton Point Park

Gather with us before dusk at Croton Point to enjoy sights and sounds of the American Woodcock's courtship flight. Led by Charlie Roberto. Meeting place & details upon registration. Registration required by calling or emailing our office. Space limited.

Friday, March 25, 7:00-8:00 pm

Birders U Workshop: Spring Birding by Ear

Croton Point Nature Center

Tune up your ears for spring by learning and reviewing spring bird songs. \$10/member of any Audubon group and \$15/nonmember. Pay at door but pre-register to our office, 914-666-6503, office@sawmillriveraudubon.org. Field trip for workshop participants: Saturday, March 26.

Sunday, April 3, 5:00-9:00 pm

Welcome to Spring Annual Dinner!

Come and enjoy this evening with us! See enclosed flyer.

Flight of Fancy Quilt Raffle!



An extraordinary, custom-designed quilt has been created by Patricia Loquet for Saw Mill River Audubon. Don't miss your opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for this beautiful quilt and help support our local conservation work!

- The quilt measures 40" by 50"
- Raffle tickets are \$10/each or three for \$25. All proceeds benefit Saw Mill River Audubon.
- The raffle drawing will take place at our 2016 Spring Dinner on Sunday, April 3 at Table 9 in Cortlandt Manor. You need not be present to win.

To see the full colors of this beautiful quilt OR to purchase raffle tickets online, visit sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt

Tickets will also be available at our 2016 Spring Dinner on Sunday, April 3, 2016. (See enclosed dinner flyer for more details.)

We will also have raffle tickets for sale at all our February and March programs including our display tables at EagleFest on Saturday, February 6. **This beautiful quilt will also be on display at the SMRA table inside the main EagleFest tent at Croton Point Park.**



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Bald Eagle. Photo: Bonnie Talluto

Connecting People and Nature since 1953

Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: stevesachsphotography.com



SMRA Supports EagleFest

SMRA will have our usual strong presence at Teatown's annual EagleFest, held on Saturday, February 6, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. (Rain/snow date: February 7.) Come celebrate the return of our iconic national symbol to the Hudson Valley! EagleFest features a variety of live bird shows, children's activities, displays, and yes—excursions to see real eagles in their natural environment, from Croton to Verplanck to Peekskill and beyond. **Visit www.teatown.org for details.**

SMRA will host EagleFest bird walks, meeting by the Main Tent area inside Croton Point, led by our Executive Director Anne Swaim and SMRA Board Members Christine McCluskey and Larry Trachtenberg. Anne will also offer our Raptor ID class at 9:15 am on the Eaglet Stage. SMRA board members and volunteers will be helping to spot eagles at George's Island and the Croton Boat Ramp, where SMRA is also sponsoring the warming tents. We'll also host a SMRA info table inside the Main Tent at Croton Point Park. Come and say hello!

Visit www.teatown.org for EagleFest info. SMRA would welcome your help with our EagleFest outreach. Please call or email us at the SMRA office to volunteer.

Special Inserts in this Issue!

For all members of Saw Mill River Audubon, please find enclosed your **2016 proxy ballot** for our April 2016 annual election of board members and officers. Or you can vote your proxy ballot online: sawmillriveraudubon.org/proxy Also enclosed for everyone is our **2016 Annual Dinner invitation**. Save the date and plan to join us for this fun community gathering on **Sunday, April 3rd at Table 9!**

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Don't miss your opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for this beautiful quilt and help support our local conservation work!

- The quilt measures 40" by 50"
 - Raffle tickets are \$10/each or three for \$25. You may purchase tickets as part of your dinner reservation. See form on reverse. All proceeds benefit SMRA.
 - To see the full colors of this beautiful quilt OR to purchase raffle tickets online, visit sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt
- The quilt raffle drawing will take place at our 2016 Spring Dinner on Sunday, April 3 at Table 9 in Cortlandt Manor. You need not be present to win but we warmly invite you to come! Find out more about our 2016 Welcome to Spring Dinner: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/dinner
 - This beautiful quilt will also be on display at the SMRA outreach table inside the main EagleFest tent at Croton Point Park during Teatown's EagleFest, Saturday, February 6. (Visit www.teatown.org for more about the 2016 Hudson River EagleFest.)

2016 Photography Exhibit

- ◇ We have a wealth of talented photographers among our Saw Mill River Audubon members & friends!
- ◇ We invite you to showcase your favorite nature photograph(s) at our 2016 Spring Dinner.
- ◇ Please select from one to three photographs to display.
- ◇ Minimum size 5"x7" and maximum size is your choice, as is matting and framing.
- ◇ Please bring a table-top stand or easel for your photograph(s).
- ◇ Please include a caption to be displayed on or near your photograph(s) with:
 - ◇ your name
 - ◇ subject/title of the photograph
 - ◇ date and location
- ◇ You are also very welcome to offer your photograph(s) for sale, if you wish.
- ◇ To be considered for participation in this exhibit, please visit sawmillriveraudubon.org/exhibit to request exhibit space. (Only dinner guests may be part of the nature photography exhibit.)