

Winter 2013–2014
Issue 336

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Photo: Jeff Seneca

Peregrine falcon at Croton Point County Park. We continue to monitor the grassland mowing here to encourage a healthier habitat for raptors and other birds.

Feed the Birds this Winter!

Stock up at our weekend seed sales on the following Saturdays:
Dec. 14 Jan. 18 Feb. 15
9:30 am – 12:30 pm
At Pruyn Sanctuary

Weekday sales are available Mon/Wed/Fri 10:30 am–3:30 pm.
Call 914.666.6503 for more info.
All proceeds support SMRA's local conservation work.
Holiday gift certificates available!

WINTER EVENTS

Join us! For more information call 914.666.6503 or visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

Monday Bird Walk: Rockefeller State Park

Monday, December 9 ♦ 8:30–10:30 am



On most Monday mornings we feature a free birding walk at a local birding hotspot. This Monday we'll visit Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Meet in the main parking area at 8:30 am. Call or email if you want directions or to borrow a pair of binoculars. Beginners are encouraged to join us! See p. 3 for future Monday Walk schedule.

Members' Best Night

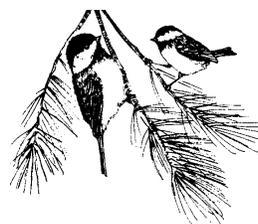
Thursday, December 12 ♦ 7:00 pm ♦ Ossining Community Center

Saw Mill River Audubon will celebrate the holidays with a fun evening of our members' best photography! Bring holiday cookies to share (if you wish) and enjoy those prepared by others. If you want to be part of the Members' Best Night program, email us three or four of your digital photographs of birds, other wildlife or local habitats, which we will project on the large screen for all to enjoy. Contact our office by phone or email for directions and if you are able to share holiday cookies or share photos.



Peekskill Area Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 14 ♦ All Day



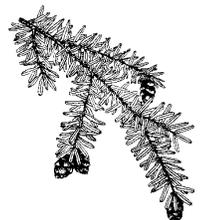
The Christmas Bird Count is a citizen science project with a long tradition. This year marks the 114th annual count! New and experienced birders are welcome to go with established teams to take part in the census of birds in the Peekskill count circle. Contact the SMRA office for specific places and times of this day-long event. **Other Christmas Bird Count circles include Bronx-Westchester on Sunday, December 22nd and Putnam County on Saturday, December 28th.**

Email our office for additional details. Also, to find out more, visit birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count

Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook

Saturday, December 14 ♦ 9:00 am

Our monthly walks continue year-round at our largest sanctuary: Brinton Brook in Croton-on-Hudson. Come walk with us and experience the changing seasons. No pre-registration needed. Good for ages 6 and up. Held regardless of weather except in cases of severe weather or road closures.



Apply for an Audubon Scholarship

Are you or someone you know interested in learning more about the environment? If so, Saw Mill River Audubon encourages you to apply for one of our environmental education scholarships. 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. Applications are due January 31, 2014. An example of a youth program funded in the past is the National Audubon Camp at Hog Island, Maine (visit hogisland.audubon.org for details). For more information or to download a scholarship application visit: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Scholarships.html

Thank You Board Member

Saw Mill River Audubon would like to thank Donna Lee Ubertalli for her service on the board of Directors. Although she left the Board in October, we're pleased to know that Donna Lee will continue to be an active member of SMRA. As an energetic and dedicated Board member, Donna Lee served on several committees and helped coordinate a number of SMRA's successful 60th anniversary events.

Help Us With Project Feederwatch

Become a part of Project Feederwatch this winter by dropping by the **Croton Point County Park Nature Center on any Saturday or Sunday morning from 8:00–10:00 am through March 30** to help us ID and count the birds visiting the bird feeders.



Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatch participants periodically count the birds they see at their bird feeders and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

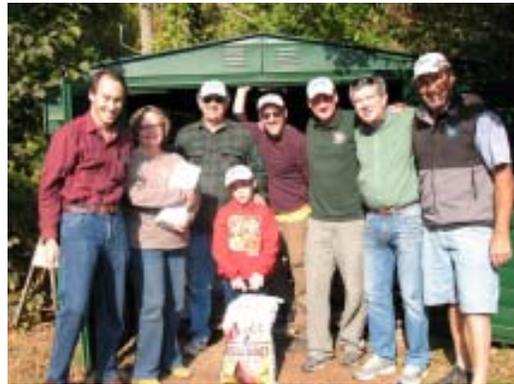
Anyone interested in birds can participate. FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. Participants watch their feeders as much or as little as they want over two consecutive days and report their results.

Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada. For more information, visit feederwatch.org

Volunteers Make Seed Sale a Success!

Without the hard work and dedication of so many wonderful volunteers, our **Annual Seed Sale Weekend** in October would not have been possible. Proceeds from the sale further Saw Mill River Audubon's mission of environmental education and conservation.

Once again, we'd like to extend a special thank you to **Pizza Station of Chappaqua** for their generous donation of delicious pizza that kept our volunteers well fed!



Volunteers at our 2013 seed sale weekend included Henry Blewitt (holding bag in front row) and John Loz, President of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region (third from right), who came all the way from Albany to help out!

Pruyn Bird Blind Gets a Makeover

Visitors to our Pruyn Sanctuary know what a special place it is. From its extensive boardwalk system, many species of birds and other wildlife that frequent the wetland habitat of the Gedney Swamp may be easily viewed. The experience of seeing these wild residents of the sanctuary is enhanced by standing quietly in the concealed bird blind overlooking the wetland. This structure recently received much needed repairs after suffering storm damage and the ravages of time. SMRA very much appreciates the efforts of the volunteers who donated their time and energy to improve Pruyn Sanctuary by building a new roof for the bird blind. We also thank David Watson for generously underwriting of the cost of materials. More about Pruyn Sanctuary online at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Pruyn.html



Pruyn Sanctuary building crew: Danny Ferguson, Phil Heidelberger, David Watson. Not pictured: Nick Fischer.

Chapter News

AUDUBON EVENTS (continued from p. 1)

A Board

Member Reflects

I find myself in a reflective mood preparing to sign thank you letters to the volunteers for the 2013 annual Audubon seed sale. I first came into contact with Saw Mill River Audubon sometime after I moved to Chappaqua in 1988. In the succeeding years I started buying seed from SMRA and became a member of the town's Conservation Board, serving with SMRA Executive Director Anne Swaim.

I joined the SMRA Board around 2002, having been recruited by long-time SMRA leader Stan Wecker, and took over responsibility for the seed sale shortly thereafter. Before then, Jim Anderson had run the seed sale for many years, establishing many of the procedures and relationships which we still use today. When I became responsible, the organization of the seed sale became a three man, or, more accurately, a two women and one man, operation. Anne and SMRA office manager Ellen Heidelberger updated the administration of the seed sale and refined the process over the years so that we can proceed as smoothly and efficiently as we do today.

I started this reflection thinking about the friendships I've developed through SMRA and, in part, through the seed sale. As many of you know, we now have monthly sales at Pruyn Sanctuary starting in December and continuing at least through April. I look forward to the October sale and the monthly sales because of the chance to catch up with the friends I've made and to make new friends. The volunteers at all of the sales give freely of their time, recognizing that if all of us give a little of ourselves, we can accomplish wonderful things.

This concept carries through to all aspects of our SMRA family. So those of you who worked the seed sale last October should expect a letter in the mail, and I promise there is no request for a donation, although of course you can send one if you like! To the rest of you, I look forward to continuing as a part of the amazing group of people who make up the Board of SMRA under the understated but firm leadership and guidance of our President, Bob McCrillis.

--Ken Novenster

DECEMBER (cont.)

Mondays ♦ 8:30 am

Monday Morning Birdwalks

Come along with us on a free weekly birding walk at a local birding hotspot. Call or email for directions and where to meet or if you want to borrow binoculars. Beginners encouraged! The December/January schedule includes:

Dec. 9 & Jan. 13—Rockefeller State Park

Dec. 16 & Jan. 20—Tarrytown Lakes

Dec. 23 & Jan. 27—Croton Point

Jan. 6—Muscoot Farm

Sunday, December 22 ♦ All Day

Saturday, December 28 ♦ All Day

Christmas Bird Counts

See 12/14 CBC event on p.1 for details.

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 1 ♦ 9:00 am

Field Trip: Rockwood Hall**New Years Walk**

Now becoming an annual Saw Mill River Audubon tradition, start off the year and your 2014 bird list with an invigorating walk along the Hudson River shore at Rockwood Hall State Park. Meet in park parking below Phelps Hospital.

Friday, January 3 ♦ 7:30–8:30 pm

Birders U Workshop:**Winter Waterfowl**

Birders U is our new series of workshops focusing on birding skills for the season. This, the second workshop, will focus on winter waterfowl identification. The program will be held at the Nature Center in Croton Point County Park. A field trip for class attendees will take place the following day (Sat. Jan. 4) to a local spot good for waterfowl viewing. (Location depends on current reports). Cost for Audubon members is \$25 and includes an ID guide specific to the workshop. Cost for non-members is \$40 and includes a new SMRA membership—a \$30 value!

JANUARY (cont.)

Saturday, January 11 ♦ 9:00 am

Croton Point Eagles & More

Meet leader Charlie Roberto at the Croton River boat ramp (inside the Croton-Harmon train station) to start this birding adventure and then caravan into Croton Point Park to continue searching for eagles and more. No pre-registration necessary.

Saturday, January 11 ♦ 9:00 am

Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook Sanctuary

See Dec. 14 event on p.1 for details.

Saturday, January 11 ♦ 11:30 am

Soup Social at Croton Point

Warm up your January Saturday with our 2nd annual soup social at the Croton Point Nature Center! Soup/bread donations welcome (email us at office@sawmillriveraudubon.org). Come hang out with a friendly group of people who enjoy the outdoors.

Thursday, January 16 ♦ 7:00 pm

Special Public Program: Owls! Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Come explore the mystery of owls, including the tiny saw-whet owl that migrates through Westchester every fall. Join owl researcher Trudy Battaly for a fascinating update on her work to track these birds of prey. A brief outside walk to listen and look for owls in the park will follow the presentation.



Sunday, January 19

♦ Register for Time & Place

Field Trip: Owl Prowl

Travel with us to a few different sites in our area to see daytime roosting owls! Meeting place and time, and itinerary depend on recent reports.

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

PERIODICAL POSTAGE
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and additional offices

Save the Date!
Hudson River EagleFest
February 8, 2014
Visit teatown.org for more info

Deadline for next newsletter: **Jan. 2**

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www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

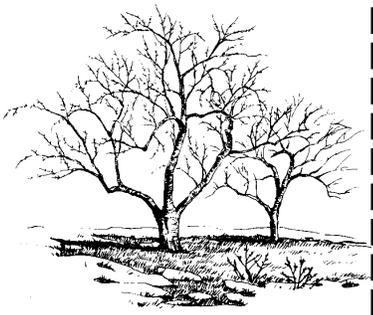
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PLANT THE SEED
"Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?" *Henry David Thoreau*

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:
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