



*Osprey
over Hudson River.
Photo:
Steve Rappaport*

Fall 2018 *Upcoming Events*



In June, SMRA volunteers added gravel to the entrance of Haas Sanctuary on Sheather Road. Thank you! Photo: Phil Heidelberg



Peekskill High School student Daniel Machado set up ten plant monitoring plots in SMRA sanctuaries this summer as part of his science research. Thanks, Daniel! Photo: Anne Swaim



Our Plants for Birds garden grew well this summer with much rain and good care by our volunteers. See our web site for garden visit days and November program to right. Photo: Anne Swaim

Visit our Google calendar at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar for more events, event details, and any schedule changes. Be sure to subscribe to our free, private email list to get additional details and early notice of new trips and events, including “pop-up” trips that we may add a few days before the trip. Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list to subscribe.

Every Monday, 7:30 am or 8:30 am, Free Bird Walks

September walks start at 7:30 am and October through April walks start at 8:30 am. See page 5 for weekly locations or check our website.

Every Second Saturday, 9:00 am, Brinton Brook Sanctuary Guided Hike
Every Third Sunday, 3:30 pm, Prunyn Sanctuary Guided Hike.

Fall Public Programs — See Pages 4 & 5 for more fall events

Tuesday, September 25, 7:00 pm at the Ossining Public Library

Wildlife of Ecuador: Brian Kluepfel & Paula Zorrilla

Special event presented in English & Spanish! Cosponsored by Ossining Public Library Ecuador has more than 1600 bird species, from the world's largest flying bird, the Andean Condor, to 130 multicolored jewels of hummingbirds. From the steaming Amazon, to breathtaking Andean peaks, to the wonder of the Galapagos, travel writer and SMRA board member Brian Kluepfel with his wife, Paula Zorrilla, will take us on a visual journey of Ecuador's many natural wonders. In Spanish and English. Suitable for all ages. Refreshments follow.

Below event co-sponsored by all five Westchester County Audubon chapters:

Bedford Audubon, Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon, Central Westchester Audubon, Hudson River Audubon and Saw Mill River Audubon

Sunday, October 21, 2:00 pm at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center
Author Talk & Book Launch: Birding the Hudson Valley

Author, ecologist, and birder Kathryn Schneider will discuss her new book, *Birding the Hudson Valley*. Three years in the making, *Birding the Hudson Valley* offers birders key information about where, when and how to explore key birding hotspots from Troy to New York City. Book sales and signing will follow the program with light refreshments.

Thursday, November 8, 7:00 pm at the Croton Free Library
Celebrate Plants for Birds

Come celebrate and explore our new Plants for Birds demonstration garden through this multimedia program. Learn how you can add native plants to benefit birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Presenters will be SMRA Garden Coordinator Donna Lassiter and SMRA Executive Director Anne Swaim.

To enjoy this newsletter in color, visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/news

President's Message



Valerie Lyle, SMRA President

Looking back at my two-plus years as SMRA president, I see exciting new initiatives and engagements in each of our mission areas. All owe much to the hard work and talents of our staff, board members, and volunteers.

We have stepped up our advocacy with Westchester County Parks: monitoring natural resource management in Croton Point Park, including the planned

grassland restoration, and encouraging County Parks to develop natural resource management plans.

We have guided nearly 1,000 children on field trips at Rockefeller State Park Preserve through NY State's Connect Kids to

Parks grant program. This fall, all 18 Ossining 6th-grade classes will visit Rockefeller with SMRA in this program. We have placed Mr. Lunetta's Explorer Bags in seven local libraries, and have offered two guided Explorer Bag walks, with two more upcoming: September 1 at Gedney Park and October 2 at Hendrick Hudson Library. SMRA's bimonthly Nature Book Club has been a big hit with adult members and friends.

At Pruyne Sanctuary, the new Plants for Birds garden for native plants and grasses has already grown way beyond expectations. This garden and the older but thriving butterfly and hummingbird garden attract a variety of pollinators and will provide

seed for birds in the fall and winter. Stop by the garden open house on September 16. Through the efforts of SMRA, Feed the Birds in Croton, and Croton Point Park Naturalist John Phillips, a Purple Martin colony of at least 20 birds has been established at Croton Point Park: the only known such colony in the county.

Our usual full schedule of community and classroom programs, walks, field trips, and sanctuary work days continues. Look for more information about new initiatives and our ongoing work elsewhere in this newsletter, on our website and event calendar, and on our Facebook page.

Valerie Lyle

Saw Mill River Audubon

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SMRA Youth Scholarships

Saw Mill River Audubon offers students age 13-17 the opportunity to attend an environmental class, camp or study trip with funding support from our Larry Light Youth Scholarship Fund, established by family and friends of Chappaqua resident Larry Light.

DEADLINE: October 15, 2018. Apply online at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/scholarships

Connecting with Nature: Your gift helps us connect people and nature.

I wish to donate. Enclosed is:

\$500 \$250 \$100

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I'd like to join Saw Mill River Audubon

Basic Chapter Membership:

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Please list my gift anonymously

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Welcome New Saw Mill River Board Members

Ginger Bernardin

Growing up in Queens, I spent time birding in Jamaica Bay with my family.



While camping in the Adirondacks, the eerie call of the Common Loon captured my imagination and a passion was born!

I recently retired from nursing after 39 wonderful and rewarding years. Now I enjoy spending my free time with like-minded people and have enjoyed recent SMRA trips to Ohio and Arizona.

Future plans include working with SMRA on local environmental issues. I also volunteer at Saw Mill River Audubon's Project FeederWatch weekend mornings at Croton Point Nature Center.

Earl DePass

My wife and I befriended an Ossining-Croton couple who moved to Brooklyn and wrote children's books together. The husband happened to be Pete Seeger's co-author on a children's book. After being introduced to Mr. Seeger at a fundraiser, my wife and growing family started making annual campouts at the Clearwater Festival and came to know the beauty of the Hudson River estuary.

I moved with my wife and four daughters to Croton-on-Hudson in 2011. Soon after purchasing a house directly on the Croton River, I often found myself stymied and unable to confirm avian species for visiting birders, who expected me to be an expert based on the location of my home.



I joined SMRA to simply educate myself, but soon fell in love with its mission and members. I also became a founding member of the Croton River Task Force.

I served on my first not-for-profit board as a Trustee and Chair of Trustees for the Brooklyn Heights Montessori School, from 2004–2010. I learned much about board governance and development from that experience. I hope to contribute to SMRA by building a healthy and dynamic board profile and strengthening its community outreach.



Earl at Croton Earth Day for SMRA. Photo: SMRA

Lynn Salmon

What do a Polish salt mine, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Buddhist



cave temples on the Silk Road, the Grand Canyon, and the Byzantine churches of Cyprus have in common? They were my research sites when, as a senior scientist at Caltech, I specialized in the study of effects of atmospheric pollution on cultural properties.

Where might you find me now that I've retired? I might be travelling. I might be geocaching. I might be birding. And in winter I definitely will be curling.

Geocaching, hiking, and birding have taken me to every park and preserve in Westchester County. Through my outdoor activities I've come to appreciate the importance of natural habitats and the work of Saw Mill River Audubon.



Red-tailed Hawk on Croton Point Park landfill. Photo: Bonnie Coe.

2018–2019 Bird Seed Sale — Flyer enclosed in this newsletter!

Saw Mill River Audubon's annual bird seed sale supports our local conservation and education work. Once a year in the early fall, we order bulk quantities of high-quality bird seed for sale to the members and friends of Saw Mill River Audubon.

At our sale kick-off day, Saturday October 13, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, we offer pick up of pre-orders as well as walk-in orders at our one-day location behind New Castle Town Hall, across from Chappaqua Library.

We also offer seed pickup through the winter into spring during office hours at Pruyn Sanctuary (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm) and also on 3rd Saturday mornings at Pruyn Sanctuary from November to April.

Online ordering is available at our website at:

www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed

Want to help at our sale kick-off day or at our 3rd Saturday sale days? Contact our office at 914-666-6503 or by email to office@sawmillriveraudubon.org to join up with a friendly crew of people working together for Saw Mill River Audubon.

September Events

**Saturday, September 1,
10:00 am–12:00 pm**

**Explorer Bag Walk
Gedney Park, Millwood**
Meet in the main parking lot for this free walk for families and adults to try out the equipment and ideas in the Mr. Lunetta's Explorer Bags (now available for loan at area libraries.) SMRA Educator Eric Stone will lead this walk with an Explorer Bag. Good for all ages. RSVP is helpful but not required. As always, check SMRA Google calendar/web page in case of uncertain weather conditions

**Tuesday September 4,
7:00 pm**

**Saw Mill River Audubon
Nature Book Club
Mount Pleasant Library,
Pleasantville**
Come join the discussion or just to listen. We will be discussing Jon Young's *What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World*. No registration needed.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Sunday, April 14, 2019
Saw Mill River Audubon
Community Potluck**

On alternate years, our annual dinner is a community potluck celebration.

Be sure to save the date for our 2019 gathering and watch for upcoming details about our special speaker and location

**Saturday, September 8,
9:00 am**

**Second Saturday Walk
Brinton Brook**
No registration needed. Rain or shine. Meet in main parking area. Good for adults and young people age 8 and up.

**Sunday, September 9,
6:00 am**

**Rockefeller State Park
Preserve Fall Warblers**
Meet in the main parking area. We've timed this walk for the fall migration of warblers and other birds that concentrate in the Preserve this time of year. No RSVP needed.

**Saturday, September 15,
7:00 am–2:00 pm**

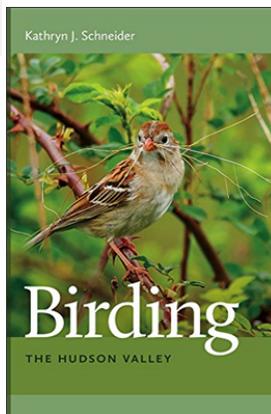
Black Dirt Birding
We're heading over to Orange County's famed Black Dirt region in search of fall migrants including grasspipers. For more information and to register for this trip, please call or email us.

**Sunday, September 16,
1:00–3:00 pm**

Visit Pruyn Gardens
Drop by Pruyn Sanctuary to look over our new Plants for Birds garden plot, our Butterfly & Hummingbird Garden and the adjacent Pruyn Arboretum. Come any time between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm. Stay longer, if you wish, for the 3:30 pm Third Sunday Walk on Pruyn trails.

**Tuesday, September 25,
7:00 pm**

**Public Program:
Wildlife of Ecuador
Ossining Public Library**
Free program presented in both Spanish and English. See page 1 for details.



Three years in the making and available this fall, Kathryn Schneider's *Birding the Hudson Valley* covers birding hotspots, and the when and how of birding from Troy to New York City. All Westchester Audubon chapters are sponsoring this program. Free event. Book sales & signing after the program.

Special Event

**Sunday, October 21
Author Talk & Book Launch
*Birding the Hudson Valley***

2:00 pm

Chappaqua Performing
Arts Center
480 Bedford Road, Chappaqua

October Events

**Tuesday, October 2
4:30–6:00 pm**

**Explorer Bag Walk
Hendrick Hudson Library
Montrose**
RSVP to library (914) 739-5654 x307 See Sat 9/1.

**Saturday, October 6,
9:00 am**

State Line Lookout
Join us at this accessible hawk watch along the Palisades overlook in Rockland. For more details, see our web site or call or email SMRA office

**Saturday, October 13,
9:00 am**

**Second Saturday Walk
Brinton Brook**
See description for Saturday, September 8.

**Saturday, October 13
9:00 am–5:00 pm**

Seed Sale Kick-off
Our 2018-2019 bird seed sale begins on this date with the opportunity to pick up orders or buy seed as a walk-in customer at the Town of New Castle parking lot across from Chappaqua Library. **A seed sale flyer is enclosed in this newsletter with more info.**

**Saturday, October 20,
7:00 am–3:00 pm**

Long Island Birding
Meet us at Jones Beach Coast Guard station as we begin our day of birding the Long Island coastline. Call or email us for details and to register.

**Sunday, October 21
2:00 pm**

**Special Event: Birding the
Hudson Valley
Chappaqua Performing
Arts Center**
See box above for details.

**Thursday, October 25 to
Sunday, October 28**

**Audubon Council of New
York State Fall Meeting**
The Audubon Council of New York gathers chapters from across our state twice a year. The Fall 2018 meeting will be in Lake Placid and will include some pre-conference Adirondack birding guided by local birders. SMRA people are planning to attend and if you want to come along, call or email our office for more details.

November Events

Saturday, November 3
7:00–9:00 pm
Owl Talk & Prowl
Muscoot Farm
 Multimedia review/intro to local owls with a night walk to listen and look for owls.
Space limited. For adults and young people age 6 and up. Registration required via Muscoot Farm by calling 914-864-7282.

Tuesday November 6
7:00 pm
Saw Mill River Audubon Nature Book Club
Mount Pleasant Library
 Come join the discussion or just to listen. We will be discussing *The Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmstead* by Justin Martin.

Thursday, November 8,
7:00 pm
SMRA Public Program:
Celebrate Plants for Birds
Croton Free Library
 See page one for details.

Saturday, November 10,
9:00 am
Second Saturday Walk
Brinton Brook
 See description for 9/8.

Saturday & Sunday,
November 10 & 11,
9:00–11:00 am
Project FeederWatch
Croton Point Nature Cntr
 Count birds at the bird feeders viewing from inside the nature center. Beginners encouraged. Great opportunity for photography too. Continues weekly until April 7, 2019. To learn more, visit www.projectfeederwatch.org

Friday, November 16,
7:00–8:30 pm
Birders U: Waterfowl ID
Intro and Review
 Croton Point Nature Cntr
 See web site for details.

Saturday, November 17
9:30 am to 12:30 pm
Third Sat Bird Seed Sale
sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed

Saturday, November 17
8:00 am
Field Trip: Waterfowl ID
 Meet in parking lot by Playland Lake for waterfowl watching at Edith Read Sanctuary. No registration needed.

Friday, November 23,
9:00 am
Turkey Mountain Hike
 Walk off your Thanksgiving feast with a walk up Turkey Mountain in Yorktown. No registration needed. Meet in main parking area off Route 118. Good for adults and young people age 8 and up.

Sunday, November 25,
7:30–10:30 am
Croton Point Birding
 Meet us in the ballfield parking lot on the left as you enter Croton Point Park. No registration needed.

Christmas Bird Counts
 Now in its 119th year! Birders count all possible birds in 15-mile diameter count circles. See local count dates listed below. Contact SMRA office to connect with counts.

Sat, Dec 15:

Peekskill Area

Sun, Dec 16:

Greenwich-Stamford

Sat, Dec 22:

Bronx-Westchester

Sat, Dec 29:

Putnam

Learn more at:
www.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count

December Events

All Saturdays & Sundays,
9:00–11:00 am
Project FeederWatch
 See November 10 & 11.

Saturday, December 1,
7:00 am–12 noon
Ducking in Westchester
 Join us for a morning of waterfowl watching at various sites in Westchester County. Call or email us to register, for possible carpooling info, and for location of our first stop.

Saturday, December 8,
9:00 am
Second Saturday Walk
at Brinton Brook
 No registration needed. Rain or shine. Meet in main parking area. Good for adults and young people age 8 and up.

Buy our bird seed and support our local conservation work!
 Details & online ordering: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed

Weekly Monday Morning Free Bird Walks

7:30 am start in Sep. 8:30 am start Oct–Apr.

Held regardless of weather but check our website if uncertain.

1st Monday: Muscoot Farm

Meet in main parking lot

2nd Monday: Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Meet in main parking lot

3rd Monday: Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Meet at Sleepy Hollow Road trail entrance

4th Monday: Croton Point Park

Meet in main parking lot by Nature Center driveway

5th Monday: Location varies

Check SMRA website: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org



Birding Croton Point. Photo: Bill Kellner

Advocacy



All Audubon chapters in New York State work with our state office, Audubon New York, in developing annual legislative resolutions. These statements focus our advocacy work in the coming year. Over 50,000 Audubon households across the state are a powerful voice for the environment in Albany.

Twenty legislative resolutions for 2018 are now under review by our state's Audubon chapters. Highlights from just three resolutions below overview some key advocacy issues.

Combat Climate Change & Urge Wise Energy Decisions

- Urge the Governor and Legislature to maintain funding for the New York Sun – Solar program, and the Clean Energy Fund and Greenbank; promote bird-friendly energy choices; assist in consumer energy-efficiency decisions; and promote habitat protection to assist bird species as they respond to a changing climate.

H2H Continues to Grow

SMRA continues to participate in the Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2H RCP). This past year has seen the transformation of the organization from the original U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded Conservation Initiative into an independent consortium of conservation organizations.

In support of the H2H mission to “advance the pace and practice of regional land protection and stewardship from the Hudson to the Housatonic by collaborating across boundaries to enhance the connection between people and nature,” committees have worked on support for partners’ conservation activities through municipal outreach, landowner/community engagement, and partner capacity and training.

SMRA will be leading an H2H training program on eBird as citizen science this fall as well as organizing conservation activities for the River Towns focal area. For dates, see our SMRA calendar or consult www.h2hrpc.org. *Tom Ruth*

A Sample of Audubon New York Legislative Initiatives

- Advocate that the New York Congressional Delegation support legislation to combat climate change, reduce dependency on fossil fuels, reduce CO2 emissions, and provide resources to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats from a changing climate.
- Work with NYS DEC to hold EPA and GE accountable for the proper remediation of the Hudson River, ensuring a cleanup that meets the intended goals of the plan and complies with state standards.

Hudson River Protection & Restoration

- Ensure that the most stringent environmental regulations govern the transportation, distribution, and storage/anchorage of oil by rail cars and barges to ensure the health and safety of the river's communities and natural resources, including enforcement of tanker car safety, development of oil spill response plans, and opposition to any future barge anchorage proposals.
- Initiate studies that characterize, protect, and restore in-river spawning and nursery habitats, ecosystem changes and assessments of adult spawning stock, and juvenile surveys of both sturgeon and shad.

Reduce Pesticide Use / Promote Bird-Friendly Yard and Garden Land Management

- Support programs and legislative initiatives designed to significantly reduce the use of pesticides and to implement Integrated Pest Management programs, include measures to restrict the current use of neonicotinoid pesticides until further analysis can be conducted on their impact on birds and pollinators.

Richard Saravay

Learn more about Audubon New York advocacy here:
ny.audubon.org/conservation/advocacy

Education



Know Some Teachers? We need your help!

We need your help again this school year to help connect more teachers and students with FREE field trips to Rockefeller State Park Preserve, guided by Saw Mill River Audubon educators and funded by the New York State Connect Kids to Parks program. This state grant program can fully fund not only the program costs for classroom field trips but also bus transportation costs.

In the past year, our educators have led Connect Kids to Parks field trips at Rockefeller State Park Preserve for more than 1,000 students, including all sixth grade students from the Ossining school district. **Download a flyer to share from our website here:** www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/CKTP

Mr. Lunetta's Explorer Bags Launched this Summer

Seven Westchester County libraries are now offering free loans of Mr. Lunetta Explorer Bags, a project from Saw Mill River Audubon to provide nature study tools and ideas for adults and children. The Explorer Bags were funded by memorial donations from family and friends in honor of Chappaqua naturalist Don Lunetta. Each bag contains two pair of binoculars, magnifying boxes, bird and tree identification cards, colored pencils and sketch pads, and a wealth of ideas for adults and children to explore local nature. Find out more at: sawmillriveraudubon.org/explore



Explorer Bags queued up in SMRA office. Photo: Anne Swaim



SMRA receiving FCWC "Year of the Bird" recognition in June. (L-R: Anne Swaim, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay.) Photo: Ken Novenstern

Westchester County Year of the Bird

All five Audubon chapters in Westchester worked together to prepare a county resolution recognizing 2018 as the "Year of the Bird." (**Find out more about Year of the Bird and what you can do: birdyourworld.org**) We thank County Executive George Latimer for supporting this effort and the County Legislature for its passage.

The Federated Conservationists of Westchester County also chose this year to recognize all five local Audubon chapters. Our thanks to FCWC for this recognition at the FCWC dinner in June.

Saw Mill River Audubon — Kaye Anderson Lending Library

Did you know that the SMRA office has a library of over 1,100 books on a wide range of nature-related subjects, including plants, insects, birds, and environmental education? Our library is named in honor of our first naturalist: Kaye Anderson. Are you trying to identify a wildflower or butterfly? Planning a birding trip? We may have a field guide for you to borrow.



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Young Red-tailed Hawk in nest getting close to flying.
Croton Point Park, June 2018. Photo: Bonnie Coe

Connecting People and Nature since 1953

Explore Nature with Saw Mill River Audubon this Fall!

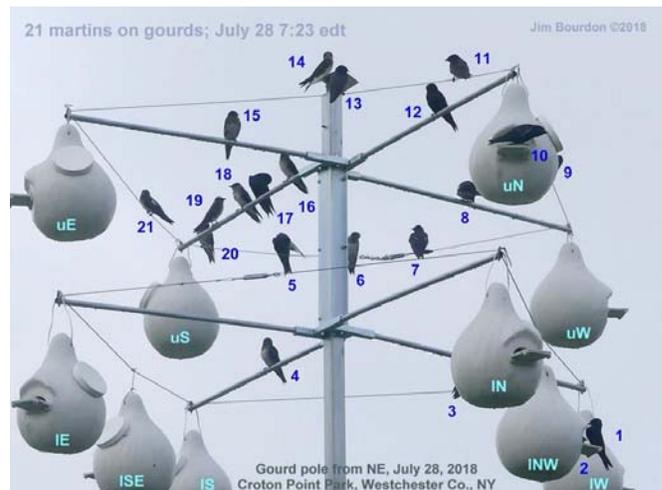
We have more than 30 events scheduled between September and November to connect you with local habitats, birds and other wildlife!

Our Monday morning bird walks happen every week, now average 20 people, and are always a friendly and welcoming gathering especially for beginning birders. (And we have binoculars to loan you for all our field trips.)

Our weekend day trips near and far offer you opportunities to discover some of the best wild places in our region.

Our free monthly evening programs feature regional environmental experts to connect you with ongoing issues and expand your natural horizons.

Visit the Google calendar at our website for event listings: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org



At least twenty-one Purple Martins have been seen this summer at the Purple Martin nesting structure that Saw Mill River Audubon established just last year at Croton Point Park. This is the only known martin colony in our county. Our thanks to the Feed the Birds store in Croton and Croton Point Naturalist John Phillips for project support. Photo: Jim Bourdon

Bird Seed Sale Flyer enclosed in this newsletter!

Our annual bird seed sale offers you high-quality seed at good prices and supports our local conservation and education work.