



# SMRA

SAW MILL RIVER AUDUBON

## Feb/Mar 2017



Red-tailed Hawk preparing nest, Croton Point Park, Winter, 2016. Photo: stevesachsphotography.com



New Year's Day Hike at Rockwood Hall.



Birding along the Hudson River, Croton Point.  
Photo: William Kellner



End of year gathering for Monday birders hosted by Ruth Moy. Photo: Anne Swaim

## Upcoming Events

Visit our **Google calendar** at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar](http://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](http://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.

- 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, snow or shine. Meet at main parking lot off Route 9A. No registration needed. Best for adults and youth age 6 and up.

### Every Saturday & Sunday, 9:00 am – 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 Events & Programs

### Saturday, February 11, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Hudson River EagleFest!

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

### Thursday, February 16, 7:00 pm Exploring the Gaspé Peninsula with Charlie Roberto

**Teatown Lake Reservation**  
Charlie Roberto will introduce us to the beautiful Gaspé Peninsula in Québec and its abundance of birds and other wildlife, including images from Saw Mill River Audubon's trip in 2016. Co-sponsored with Teatown Lake Reservation.

### Thursday, March 16, 7:00 pm Field Guide to Birds of New York With author Corey Finger Chappaqua Library

Author Corey Finger will overview his work on the American Birding Association's *Field Guide to Birds of New York*, published in July 2016 and offering tips on finding and IDing birds in the Empire State. Book sales & signing follows. Come early for best parking. Co-sponsored by Chappaqua Library.

### President’s Message

As we begin this new year in the midst of turbulent national politics, we have a renewed appreciation for time enjoyed outdoors with our friendly community of people who care about environmental stewardship.

Now more than ever, we value Audubon opportunities to work together as a community on positive actions to connect people with nature and to benefit

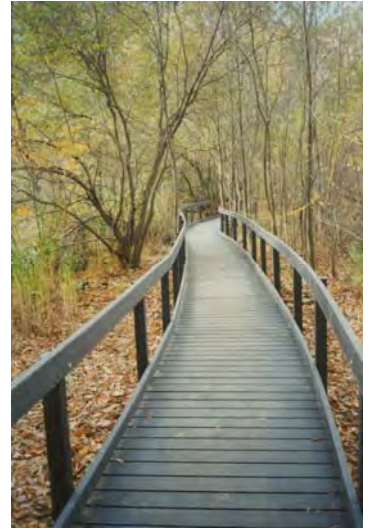
birds, other wildlife, and their habitat. We affirm Audubon National’s statement that “Where Birds Thrive, People Prosper.” Healthier habitats for birds are healthier habitats for people.

Even in winter—maybe especially in winter—being outdoors brings benefits to the body and soul. Whether observing wildlife or working on habitat improvement projects, spending time in nature with oth-

er like-minded people lifts the spirits and can ease the burden of the still-short winter days.

In the weeks and months ahead, we encourage you to get outdoors with us, work alongside us, and be a part of our Audubon community for positive actions that benefit us all. Feel free to email me directly at [president@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:president@sawmillriveraudubon.org)

*Valerie Lyle*



*Pinecliff Sanctuary Boardwalk  
Photo: Anne Swaim*

### In Memoriam: Nina McCall

Saw Mill River Audubon is saddened by the passing of Nina McCall, 91, past SMRA President, at Kendal at Hanover, NH, her home since 2000.

Nina and her husband John were instrumental in the construction of the wheelchair-accessible boardwalk at Pinecliff Sanctuary. Nina raised the money and John oversaw the planning along with the engineering expertise of Bill Arnold. With the work

of over 80 volunteers, the Pinecliff boardwalk was completed in 1996. A plaque on the boardwalk recognizes the McCalls.

Nina and John considered the Pinecliff boardwalk to be among the most satisfying projects in their lives; seeing the first wheelchair roll down the walk was their reward.

Nina is survived by her husband of 69 years, John McCall, two daughters and their families including four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

#### Saw Mill River Audubon

275 Millwood Road Chappaqua, NY 10514  
(914) 666-6503 | [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org)  
Visit us online: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org)

President: Valerie Lyle

Vice President: Tom Ruth

Treasurer: Thomas McEnerney Secretary: William Kellner

Editor: Brian Kluepfel Circulation: Jean Sparacin

Executive Director: Anne Swaim

Office Manager: Ellen Heidelberger

Marketing & Fundraising: Barbara Campbell

Sanctuary Maintenance: Danny Ferguson

Environmental Educator: Pete Salmansohn

ON THE WING, Saw Mill River Audubon’s newsletter, is published five (5) times a year (Sept/Oct/Nov, Dec/Jan, Feb/Mar, Apr/May, and June/July/Aug) for \$7.50 a year by Saw Mill River Audubon, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514. Periodical Postage #013281 at Chappaqua, NY 10514. ISSN: 1545-5254 at Chappaqua, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Address changes to:

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

I wish to donate. Enclosed is:

\$500  \$250  \$100

\$75  \$35  \$\_\_\_\_\_

My employer will match my gift.

I’d like to join Saw Mill River Audubon

Basic Chapter Membership:

Enclosed is \$35

Please list my gift anonymously

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City / State / Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

**Please make checks payable to:**  
Saw Mill River Audubon  
275 Millwood Road  
Chappaqua, NY 10514

**OR join/renew/donate online**  
[www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/join](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/join)  
[www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/renew](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/renew)  
[www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/donate](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/donate)



## Education

### Calling Young Birders

**New for 2017!** Saw Mill River Audubon is offering a series of monthly gatherings for youth age 8 to 15 for guided birding field trips along with hands-on projects to improve birding habitats. Youth attend with one parent or adult chaperone and space is limited. Contact us for details.

### NYS Young Birders

In mid January, Saw Mill River Audubon hosted the 2017 Kick-off Meeting for the New York State Young Birders Club with a Croton Point field trip and assistance with a day-long meeting run by the youth at the Mariandale Conference Center. Find out more about the Club at: [nysyoungbirders.org](http://nysyoungbirders.org)

### Connect Kids to Parks

Saw Mill River Audubon is still seeking additional school classes for Audubon guided field trips to Rockefeller State Park Preserve or FDR State Park this spring with field trip and busing costs to be covered through the New York State Connect Kids to Park grant program. Contact us ASAP for available dates.



## Sanctuaries

### Join Us for a Sanctuary Work Day in 2017!

Saw Mill River Audubon owns eight separate sanctuaries totaling over 300 acres with over 10 miles of trails and 11 miles of boundaries.

**New for 2017,** we will be offering a series of sanctuary work days to help improve wildlife habitat.

Space is limited so email us to RSVP. We welcome youth age 10 and up if accompanied by adult with one adult/youth.

Meeting place and planned tasks will be shared with registrants. Start time of 9:00 am ending at noon. Dress for the weather!

### 2017 Sanctuary Work Days

**Saturday, March 25**

Haas Sanctuary

**Saturday, April 29**

Brinton Brook  
(Earth Day Planting)

**Saturday, June 24**

Choate Sanctuary

**Saturday, September 23**

Graff Sanctuary

### Chapters and Centers Strengthen Audubon's Voice

Since birds don't know borders, it's important that our local, regional and state conservation efforts have the support of our combined voices.

#### Chapter Networking

Chapters provide a grassroots voice for Audubon's mission. Saw Mill River Audubon's 1,000+ member households comprise just one of New York's 27 Audubon chapters totaling over 50,000 member households statewide.

Chapters working with Audubon New York staff and scientists strengthen our efforts on issues.

#### Audubon Centers

Audubon New York also owns and manages sanctuaries and environmental centers increasing Audubon's focus and engagement on major environmental issues within the state. These include: Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center on Long Island;

Montezuma Audubon Center at northern end of the Finger Lakes, Rheinstrom Hill and Rams Horn on the upper Hudson; Constitution Marsh on the Hudson in Garrison; and the Prospect Park Audubon Center in Brooklyn. Through both Audubon chapters, and Audubon centers, Audubon in New York is an important voice for birds, other wildlife and their habitats. *Richard Saravay*

To learn more, visit [newyork.audubon.org](http://newyork.audubon.org)



## Advocacy

## Christmas Bird Counts



Christmas Bird Counters at Croton Point braving the weather on December 17. Snow-covered Brian Kluepfel on left. Photo: Anne Swaim

Several Saw Mill River Audubon members took part in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, a century-old tradition that comprises 15-mile concentric circles nationwide. From dawn until dusk, our members took on the Peekskill Count on December 17 and the Putnam Count on December 30. Despite challenging weather conditions, the teams survived to tell the tale and tally their birds at the closing pot-luck suppers.

I took part with Anne Swaim's team at Croton

Point Park on December 17, which began in a driving snowstorm at 6:00 am. The snow turned to sleet, then rain, as I took shelter at the FeederWatch count in the Nature Center and dried my clothes. The afternoon skies cleared and yielded some great birds: a Merlin perched up high at the end of the point; a Double-crested Cormorant hurrying to a river roost; and finally, a flurry of Horned Larks, flitting around the landfill as dusk settled. Mike Newhouse led the tally at Teatown as we dried our gear and dug into

some hearty grub. County-wide, more than 90 species were recorded.

Larry Trachtenberg led my team on December 30, as we covered Territory 1 of the Putnam Count, comprising Cold Spring and its environs. A bitter wind off the Hudson dampened our enthusiasm, but straight off we saw a Bald Eagle and a Sharp-shinned Hawk at the Cold Spring gazebo—not a bad start. Things got tougher as the day progressed, but we were still rewarded with a cliff-dwelling Peregrine Falcon, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and a rather large coyote at Glynwood Farm/Stone Crop

Gardens. Others in our team got excellent video of a red fox at the Hubbard Lodge. Overall, we spotted 46 species and more than 900 individual birds, despite battering winds and pelting hail.

Charlie Roberto led the count tally at Ralph O'Dell's pre-revolutionary war Putnam Valley home. Ralph began the Putnam Christmas count in 1954 and he is still going strong—and he whips up a nice supper! Thanks to Teatown, Mike Newhouse, Charlie Roberto and Ralph O'Dell for maintaining this wonderful and important citizen-science tradition.

*Brian Kluepfel*

## How many birds will you find?

20th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count  
February 17-20, 2017



**Join in!** Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

[birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org)

American Robin  
Photo: Shayna Marchese/GBBC

## More Upcoming Events

### Third Saturday Bird Seed Sales

**Feb 18, Mar 18 and Apr 15, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm**

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 10:30 am – 3:30 pm at our office at Pruyn Sanctuary. Call/email weekdays before coming. Prices/info here: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed)

### February Birding Road Trips

Space in cars and numbers of cars in caravan will be limited for a better experience for all. Call/email ASAP to register and for meeting place and time, and include your cell number. Minimum of three people per car.

**Sunday, February 5, 8:00 am**

#### Birding at Barnegat & Other NJ Sites

We will be traveling to Barnegat Lighthouse on the New Jersey coast to enjoy the view of wintering Harlequin Ducks, possible Purple Sandpipers and other winter coastal visitors. Based on the most recent sightings reports, we then plan to visit one or more other nearby north New Jersey locations for winter birds.

**Sunday, February 26, All Day**

#### Winter Birding in Dutchess County

We plan to make a circuit of varied habitats in Dutchess County for winter birds including the possibility of winter raptors like Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle or even a Snowy Owl! Along the way, we'll keep an eye out for other winter grassland species like Horned Larks and Snow Buntings. John Askildsen of Dutchess County's Waterman Bird Club will be our leader.

**Flight of the Woodcock, 6:00 – 7:30 pm both dates**

**Saturday, March 11: Muscoot Farm**

**Sunday, March 12: Croton Point Park**

Gather with us at dusk for the seasonal courtship display of American Woodcock. Meeting place & details upon registration. Registration required by calling or emailing our office. Space limited. For adults and youth 10 & up.

**SAVE THE DATE! Sunday, April 2, 2017**

**Annual Welcome to Spring Dinner**

New Castle Community Center. Details to follow!

## Our 2017 Quilt Raffle!



**Another custom-designed quilt has been created for Saw Mill River Audubon! This year's quilt is by Jean Sparacin. Don't miss your opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for this beautiful quilt and help support our local conservation work!**

- The quilt measures 44" by 65"
- Raffle tickets are \$10/each or three for \$25. All proceeds benefit Saw Mill River Audubon.
- The raffle drawing will take place at our 2017 Spring Dinner on Sunday, April 2 at the New Castle Community Center. (You need not be present to win but we hope you will be.)
- **To see the full colors of this beautiful quilt OR to purchase raffle tickets online, visit [sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt](http://sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt)**

Last minute tickets sale will be available at our April 2, 2017 Spring Dinner.

We will also have raffle tickets for sale at all our February and March programs including our display tables at EagleFest on Saturday, February 11. **This beautiful quilt will be on display at the SMRA table inside the EagleFest tent at Croton Point Park.**



275 Millwood Road  
Chappaqua, New York 10514  
**Return Service Requested**

PERIODICAL POSTAGE  
PAID  
at Chappaqua, NY  
and additional offices



*Bald Eagle. Photo: Bonnie Talluto*

**Connecting People and Nature since 1953**

## *SMRA Supports EagleFest*

SMRA is proud to be part of the 8th annual Hudson River EagleFest centered at Croton Point Park on Saturday, February 11 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (The snow date is Sunday, February 12.)

For the past decade, Teatown Lake Reservation has been the prime mover behind this event which celebrates the return of our national bird, the Bald Eagle, to the Hudson Valley. SMRA does our part at EagleFest by leading bird walks inside Croton Point, providing birders with spotting scopes at the Croton boat ramp and George's Island to help spot eagles and other birds, and underwriting the cost of warming tents at both locations. Our own board member, Larry Trachtenberg, donates the cost of the warming tent at George's Island. (Thank you, Larry!)

The festival will also feature live birds of prey shows, two screenings of the film *Eagle Huntress* at Pace University and music by Tom Chapin and other artists. There are even guided bus tours to visit all the key eagle viewing spots. Please note that some special events do require advance reservations before the event.

There is an admission charge to enter Croton Point for the main event tent and other activities there. To find out more and make advance special event reservations, visit: [www.teatown.org/eaglefest-schedule](http://www.teatown.org/eaglefest-schedule)



*Bald Eagle. Photo: Steve Rappaport*