



# Summer 2017



American Kestrel at Croton Point Park.  
Photo: Steven Sachs  
www.stevensachsphotography.com



SMRA Young Birders Walk, April 2017  
Photo: Anne Swaim



Birding the shorelines of Lake Erie with Charlie Roberto in May. Photo: Anne Swaim



SMRA Vice President Tom Ruth, Board Member Roger Garrison and 2016 Larry Light Scholarship Recipient Mack Meller at our 2017 Welcome to Spring Potluck. Photo: Bill Kellner

## Upcoming Events

Visit our Google calendar at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org) for more summer events.

Be sure to subscribe to our free, private email list to early notice of new events as they are added: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list)

### Every Monday, 7:30 am Birding Walks at Area Hotspots

See online calendar for meeting spots.  
1st Mon: Muscoot Farm  
2nd Mon: Rockefeller State Park  
3rd Mon: Pocantico River Trails  
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. No registration needed. Best for adults as well as youth ages 6 and up.

### Every Third Saturday, 4:00 pm Young Birders Walk

Meet at Croton Point Park main lot near Nature Center driveway. No registration needed. Youth 8 to 16 with accompanying adult.

### (Very) Early Morning Bird Walks

Timed to catch the early morning bird chorus. We start at 5:30 am! No registration needed. **Check our web site for meeting locations.** Rain or shine. Binocular loans available.

Thu, June 8: Croton Point Park  
Thu, June 15: Marshlands Conservancy

### Saturday, June 24, 9:00 am Sanctuary Work Day: Choate Sanctuary

Call us (914-666-6503) or email us ([office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org)) for more details on this morning work session to improve wildlife habitat and trails at Choate Sanctuary.

### Upcoming Public Program

### Wednesday, June 28, 7:00 pm Nighttime Jewels: The Moths Chappaqua Library

Meet the beautiful, fascinating, and underappreciated cousins of the butterflies: moths! Photos taken by author John Himmelman illustrate this enlightening and often humorous talk. Book sales and signing follow.



Our Welcome to Spring Potluck Supper filled the New Castle Community Center on April 2nd with a fun evening celebrating SMRA. Photos: Bill Kellner

## Connect Kids to Parks Grants

It is easier than ever for classroom teachers in eligible schools to get full grant funding for a field trip to New York's state parks. Updated guidelines no longer require districts to front the money for bus transportation or program fees; districts simply submit the invoices for each of these costs along with confirmation of the completed field trip.



Saw Mill River Audubon is now booking Fall 2017 field trips to Rockefeller State Park Preserve and we can help your school apply for this grant. Call us today at 914-666-6503.



*Purple Martin nesting structure at Croton Point Park.*

*Photos: Edward Mertz*

## Inviting Purple Martins to Croton Point Park

At Charlie Roberto's suggestion, Saw Mill River Audubon's newest Croton Point project is the installation of a Purple Martin nesting tower in early April. Our thanks to the Feed the Birds store in Croton and the Westchester Parks Foundation for financial support. The new tower is across from the park office.

SMRA volunteers have been visiting the park at dawn to play recordings of martin dawn songs, a known encouragement for new nesting colonies.

As our summer newsletter goes to print, one lone, first-year male Purple Martin — perhaps a scout— has been visiting Croton Point! There are no known Purple Martin colonies currently in Westchester County. Here's hoping we see more martins this year or next!

To learn more about Purple Martins, North America's largest swallow, visit: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple\\_Martin](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple_Martin)

### Saw Mill River Audubon

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Visit us online: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org)

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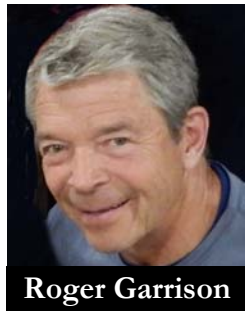
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## Welcome to Saw Mill River Audubon's Newest Board Members!



**Cary Andrews**

I work as a physician's assistant at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, and am married with two sons. Presently I am chair of the Croton Conservation Advisory Committee. One of our projects is Croton Earth Day. I have been interested in birding for many years, but am becoming more comfortable as I go on trips with Saw Mill River Audubon. One of my passions is helping to create backyard habitat. I planted a bird friendly garden, and I am working with the Croton schools to create a schoolyard habitat. What I love about SMRA are the field trips and the patience and kindness of other birders. I have learned a lot and hope to continue becoming a better birder. I also am very interested in assisting the group's conservation efforts.



**Roger Garrison**

I have been an educator for 46 years. When I taught at Ossining High School, I took students hiking and camping in the Smokey Mountain National Park for 10 consecutive spring vacations. It was at this time I fell in love with birding and wild flowers. We had our *Peterson's Guides* and would add to our checklist each year. Subsequently, when I married, my wife and I continued to bird and identify trees and wild flowers, especially in the Teatown area. We joined SMRA and I became the vice president for four years (1984-88.). I have learned over the years about how diverse Audubon's activities are. This, along with the quality of fellow Audubon members that we have come to know, have made our membership both meaningful and enjoyable.



**Sarah Hansen**

I've lived in Westchester County all my life but only started birdwatching a few years ago. It's been almost 3 years since I connected with SMRA. As a new board member, I hope to help with care of SMRA's sanctuaries. I write narrative essays about birds and my birding adventures for my blog: [sarahsbirding.wordpress.com](http://sarahsbirding.wordpress.com).



**Debbie van Zyl**

As a child in South Africa, I didn't enjoy much more than an odd dove or sparrow flying into the house searching for dog food. In 1987 I visited the magnificent Kruger National Park and the city-slicker in me screamed out for more. About 20 years ago I noticed a garden shrub being visited by three different birds. I reached for my folks' old field guide, and have been thrilled and challenged ever since. I joined a local bird club, my knowledge shot up, and I made many new friends. Relocating to the USA in 2016, I needed the help and support of a local bird club. My first SMRA interaction with Ellen Heidelbergberger was so welcoming that I knew I had found a new home. Anne Swaim took me under her wing I was able to spend time with SMRA members on many field outings. Being able to pay the fellowship forward is a gift. I hope to assist in continuing the SMRA legacy.



**Kathleen Williamson**

I live in Pleasantville with my family and I am a poet who, like Mary Oliver, believes "a poem should always have a bird in it." Birds first enamored me in Costa Rica 25 years ago on my honeymoon. I began to bird more seriously 7 years ago. I treasure Saw Mill River Audubon because Anne Swaim is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher.



I Bird NY launches! Find out about New York State's birding promotion including a young birder challenge. Visit: [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/109900.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/109900.html)

**Do you want to get more involved with SMRA?**

Email us at [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org)



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Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Pruy Garden.  
Photo: Steve Rappaport

Connecting People and Nature since 1953



Bailey Elementary School  
White Plains  
Birding with SMRA  
at Croton Point, May 2017  
Photo: Anne Swaim



Tiger Swallowtail.  
Photo: Donna Lassiter

## Pruyn Garden Tour August 5, 10:00 am

Join us in the garden to enjoy more than 80 species of native flowers and shrubs and learn how to attract butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. We'll also have a free raffle for Larry Weaner's stunning new natural gardening book, *Garden Revolution*, graciously donated by one of our garden volunteers. Led by SMRA Garden Coordinator and Master Gardener Donna Lassiter. No registration necessary. Check our web site Google calendar if any questions about the weather. Meet 10:00 am at the office/garden entrance at Pruy Sanctuary, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua.



Yonkers 1st graders,  
Connect Kids to Parks  
SMRA field trip  
May 2017  
Photo: Anne Swaim