



# Winter 2015-16



*Sharp-shinned hawk on the wing.  
Photo: Steve Sachs*

## Upcoming Events



*SMRA October Seed Sale Weekend volunteers offering friendly greetings. Photo: Anne Swaim*

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

- 1st Mon: Muscoot Farm,
- 2nd Mon: Rockefeller State Park Preserve,
- 3rd Mon: NEW— Location will vary, see Google calendar.
- 4th Mon: Croton Point County Park,
- 5th Mon: Location varies, see Google calendar.

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

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

### Every Saturday & Sunday, 9:00-11:00 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

#### Thursday, December 10, 7:00 pm Lecture: Christmas Bird Count—Tradition Meets Science Croton Free Library

Michael Bochnik, count compiler for the last 25 years, will tell us about the rich history of the 92-year-old Bronx River-Westchester Christmas Bird Count, help us see what the numbers mean and how we can help. Learn how area bird life was different in past decades and what the future might hold.

#### Thursday, January 14, 7:00 pm Film: The Marion Lake Story—Defeating the Mighty Phragmites Black Cow Coffee House, Croton-on-Hudson

Join us for an informal gathering to view this short film about one woman's effort to rescue bird habitat from invasive plants and learn about local efforts.

**More winter events on page 4! Be sure to check our website for new events added after our newsletter deadline or for event updates including changes due to weather.**



*Erin Baker with snake friend at our October public program. Photo: Anne Swaim*



*SMRA birders in Tobago in October.  
Photo: Anne Swaim*

# Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative

Months of planning and organizing culminated in a special event on September 20 at the beautiful estate of the Weinstein Family in Croton-on-Hudson. The “Who Shares Your Backyard” event engaged 18 key landowners in discussions about maintaining and improving the conservation values of their land.

Hosting organizations included SMRA, Westchester Land Trust, the Native Plant Center at Westchester Community College, Teatown Lake Reservation and Ossining Environmental Advisory Council.

SMRA Executive Director Anne Swaim provided an overview of the Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative (H2H) and briefed participants on the importance of forest lands in the Northeast, where more than 80% of forests are privately held.



Photos: William Kellner

Then the landowners circulated among four sets of experts—Birding and Bird Habitat, Native Plants, Invasive Species, and Trees and Forestry—to discuss their specific interests and concerns. The animated and enthusiastic conversations reflected the landowners’ interest in taking action on their own properties and continuing conversations about land stewardship, both goals of H2H. Follow-up events are being planned.

H2H is a collaboration of regional conservation organizations and municipal partners focused on land use and stewardship of forested lands and waterways in Westchester and Putnam counties and southwestern Connecticut. H2H is led in our area by the Westchester Land Trust. Other local partners include our sister chapter Bedford Audubon, Teatown Lake Reservation, and the Mianus River Gorge.

*Tom Ruth*

### Saw Mill River Audubon

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

President: Robert McCrillis

Vice President: Valerie Lyle

Treasurer: Thomas McEnerney Secretary: Joanne McAuley

Editor: Brian Kluepfel Circulation: Jean Sparacin

Executive Director: Anne Swaim

Office Manager: Ellen Heidelberger

Marketing & Fundraising: Barbara Campbell

Sanctuary Maintenance: Danny Ferguson

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: Saw Mill River Audubon, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514

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

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 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

### Trinidad & Tobago Birding Trip

Mid-October was off-season in Trinidad and Tobago, meaning the price was right, but it could rain (it did; a lot, but mostly at night). Thus the wonders of neotropical birding were in no way diminished for the 22 travelers who enjoyed Saw Mill River Audubon's October birding trip to Trinidad and Tobago.

In Trinidad we enjoyed one of the great birding spots in the world – the veranda at Asa Wright Nature Center and Lodge, where you can put your feet up, get your cameras ready, and drink rum concoctions with Trinidad's own Angostura bitters. During our trip alone we could eyeball, within ten feet (or closer) nine species of hummingbirds (including Tufted Coquette and Long-billed Starthroat), Purple and Green Honeycreepers, Violaceous Euphonias (just the name is cool), many species of tanager (including White-lined, Blue-grey, Silver-beaked, Turquoise, Speckled, Bay-headed), Blue Dacnis, Yellow Orioles, the ubiquitous Bananaquit, and even more.

We also enjoyed several outings including a boat trip into Caroni Swamp to see Scarlet Ibis and other large wading birds as they descended in waves to their night roosts; quite a magical site—and yes, the marvel was abetted with rum punch served by our guides.

Then it was off to Tobago –18 minutes flying time—followed by a long ride along the winding ocean-side road to Blue Waters Inn, Speyside, a scuba lovers paradise. I don't dive but I did snorkel off Little Tobago Island. Fortunately, I was in the water when an eagle ray glided right by a few of us with its four foot “ray-span” and six foot tail. It was an awesome sight. (Google it.)

Little Tobago, reached by a glass bottom boat that glided over reefs, has a colony of Red-billed tropicbirds and there we also saw Brown and Red-footed Booby, Brown Noddy, Magnificent Frigate bird, and a White-tailed Nightjar perched in mid-day.

But the highlight of it all for me was the opportunity to enjoy this trip with my 14 year old grandson Max, a wonderful kid (and birder and photographer), his first neotropical birding trip. I know it was better than a few days of 8th grade on the Jersey Shore and I'm sure glad his wise parents thought so as well. I thank everyone on the trip for making it such a wonderful experience for us both. *Larry Trachtenberg*  
(See a photo by Max on page 4)



## Advocacy

### We are part of the Atlantic Flyway

Birds don't know borders. Audubon's Atlantic Flyway initiative supports birds and other wildlife throughout this important migration route across 17 U.S. states, seven Canadian provinces, several Central and South American countries and Caribbean nations. Along the way are habitats as diverse as the forests of New England, where birds like the Wood Thrush nest and breed, to the Atlantic coastal beaches and marshlands that shelter Piping Plovers, Red Knots and Saltmarsh Sparrows, to Caribbean mangrove swamps. Audubon is employing tactics as diverse as the flyway's habitats to protect scores of bird species and millions of individual birds that travel and rest along this avian highway. **One recent Audubon success was helping to establish the new Joulter Cays National Park in the Bahamas,** a major wintering ground

for threatened shorebirds. Four percent of the world's declining Piping Plover population winter on this 114,000-acre island group. Also protected are significant numbers of Red Knots and Clapper Rails, as well as aquatic species like bonefish and sponge. Audubon's chapter-state-national partnership enables this kind of success, linking local findings to actions with a global reach. *Richard Saraway*



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

PERIODICAL POSTAGE

PAID

at Chappaqua, NY  
and additional offices



*Max Kogut came face-to-face with a Great Antbird during Saw Mill River Audubon's birding trip to Trinidad and Tobago in October and captured this portrait. See related story on page 3.*

**Connecting People and Nature since 1953**

## *Selected Winter Events (continued from page 1)*

### **Third Saturday Bird Seed Sales: Sat 12/19, 1/16, 2/20. 9:30 am-12:30 pm**

SMRA volunteers available at Pruyn Sanctuary, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua on these Saturdays to help load your car. Or visit our office at Pruyn during the week, M/W/F 10:30 am-3:30 pm, for bird seed purchases but please do call or email first. **See Prices & selection online at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed).**

### **Saturday, December 19: Peekskill Christmas Bird Count**

### **Saturday, January 2: Putnam Christmas Bird Count**

Teams of birders go out dawn to dusk to census birds in 15-mile diameter count circles. Email us at [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org) to find out how you can be part of the 116th Annual Christmas Bird Count!

### **Saturday, January 9, 9:00 am**

### **Croton Point Eagles & More Walk with Charlie Roberto**

### **Soup Gathering at Croton Point Nature Center, 12 noon**

Now a wonderful annual tradition! Come birding with Charlie Roberto, starting 9:00 am at the Croton boat ramp and continuing on into the park. Eagles expected! Afterwards, join us for a soup gathering at the Nature Center at noon. Email us if you'd like to contribute soup, bread or beverages for the soup gathering: [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org)

### **Save the Date!**

### **Saturday, February 6**

### **Teatown Lake Reservation's Hudson River EagleFest Returns!**

Saw Mill River Audubon is honored to partner with Teatown in the annual EagleFest.

We will be sponsoring warming tents at the Croton boat ramp and George's Island, helping to lead bird walks in the main event area inside Croton Point, offering our "Raptors for Rookies" program and providing volunteer birders at the Croton boat ramp and George's Island to help spot eagles. Many other activities all day long! Snow date: Sunday February 7.

**For EagleFest info including reservations for some events, visit [www.teatown.org/teatown-events/eaglefest.html](http://www.teatown.org/teatown-events/eaglefest.html)**

### **Warm thanks!**

**To Pizza Station in Chappaqua** for providing pizzas for our bird seed sale volunteers the first weekend in October;

and

**To Chappaqua Starbucks Coffee** for fueling and warming our seed sale volunteers with a generous coffee donation both Saturday and Sunday;

and

**To all of our hard-working seed sale volunteers** who braved a cold rainstorm Saturday and extra bags of seed to move on Sunday!