

Saw Mill River Audubon

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CELEBRATE NATURE!

with Saw Mill River Audubon

Join Saw Mill River Audubon and become part of our active group of chapter members.

Whether you give \$20 or \$200, you can be confident that 100% of your funds will support our local conservation efforts.

I'd Like to Join
Saw Mill River Audubon!

Basic Chapter Membership:

Enclosed is \$20

I Wish to Donate

Enclosed is:

\$500 \$250 \$100

\$50 \$20 \$

My employer will match my gift.

You:

Name(s)

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone/Email

Please make checks payable to:

Saw Mill River Audubon
275 Millwood Road
Chappaqua, NY 10514

Find the beautiful Trout Lily
at Pruyn and Brinton.

Got Seed? We do!
Don't miss our Saturday sales!



February / March 2005
Issue 292

On the Wing

News from Saw Mill River Audubon

INSIDE:

SPECIAL PULLOUT INSERTS!

Audubon Events Calendar

February through May Programs,
Field Trips, and other Activities!

2004 Annual Report

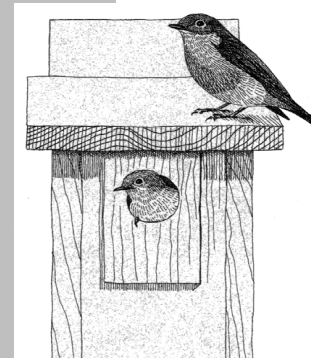
Our thanks to everyone who supported
SMRA with your donations last year!

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Upcoming Programs ♦
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In Praise of SMRA ♦
- 3 Birding**
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People ♦ Memberships & Donations



Get into Birding
This Spring!
Take our birding
workshop in April!

Got Seed? We do!
Buy bird seed at our
sales in February and
March at the shed at
Pruyn Sanctuary. See
event schedule for
dates and times.



A Convocation of Eagles: Wintering Eagles on the Hudson

Sunday, February 13 ♦ 9 am to 1 pm

Don't miss the first year of this festival celebrating the Bald Eagle! The Convocation of Eagles was the idea of Charlie Roberto and is organized by Teatown Lake Reservation and cosponsored by Saw Mill River Audubon. See the enclosed events insert for more information and details about this exciting new festival!



Along the Hudson River ♦ 9 am to 1 pm

Find guides stationed at Croton River Boat Ramp, George's Island County Park and Charles Point Park (China Pier) with warming tents and hot chocolate available.

At Teatown ♦ 10 am to 1 pm

10 am Eagles on the Hudson
11 am Close Encounters with Birds of Prey
12 pm Close Encounters with Birds of Prey
1 pm Photographing & Viewing Eagles

At Jacob Burns Film Center ♦ 12 noon
Showing of the film *Glacier Bay*
followed by a falconry demonstration
and a live eagle. Tickets required.

Bird Builders: Learning About Bird Nests & Bird Box Building Workshop

Saturday, March 12 ♦ Croton Free Library

2:00 to 3:00 pm ♦ Bird Nests Program ♦ Free!
3:15 to 4:00 pm ♦ Bird Box Workshop ♦ \$20/box



Look forward to spring by enjoying a multimedia presentation about birds and bird nests! Children and adults will love this program presented by Audubon naturalist Anne Swaim including digital images, video segments and bird songs featuring the birds of your backyard. Bring your questions and stories about bird nesting! A time for discussion and refreshments follows the 50 minute presentation. The program is free and open to the public.

Preregister to build a bluebird or wren box at the workshop following the program that you can take home! Preregistration is \$20/box; please send a check to SMRA, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514. At least two pairs of hands are needed for building so register two people per box or we can partner you with someone to help complete each other's box. One adult should accompany no more than four children per box. Materials and directions will be supplied with a fact sheet about where to place your box and some of the birds that might move in!

Deadline for Next Newsletter: March 1

PERIODICAL POSTAGE
PAID
at Chappaqua, NY
and additional offices

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

Whether you love the outdoors or prefer a quiet office...

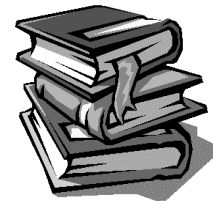
whether you want to volunteer a few hours a week or a few hours a month...whether you like working with others or on your own...Saw Mill River Audubon needs you!

Here are a few ways you can make a difference. If you'd like to learn more about one of these opportunities—or suggest another way that you can get involved—call our office at 914.666.6503 or e-mail us at office@sawmillriveraudubon.org.

Photographer: Send us copies of your images of area wildlife and habitat and we'll include them on our web site, in our newsletter or in our digital classroom presentations. During the day, we'd love to have you photograph our classroom programs and field trips. Evenings and weekends, we need

photos taken of our public programs and field trips. (Programs: about 1 hour. Field trips: 1 to 3 hours.)

Environmental Advocate: Join those on our board and staff who monitor and research local environmental issues, attend local planning board and other community meetings, and draft comments from Saw Mill River Audubon about environmental issues. (Minimum: 2 hours per month)



Librarian: We are actively seeking a volunteer librarian to organize and catalog our extensive collection of nature and wildlife books at the office. (About 10 to 15 hours total.)

Committee Member: You don't have to be a board member to help advance our mission. Whether your skills and interests are in finance or field trips, education or advocacy, we welcome your participation. Committees seeking new members include: **Environmental Action** (meets as needed), **Sanctuaries** (meets quarterly), **Education** (meets twice a year), **Programs & Field Trips** (meets twice a year), **Insurance** (meets as needed to review SMRA insurance).

Holiday Tea and Program Thanks!

Many thanks to our hard-working Holiday Tea Committee including Chair Margo Peters, Sophie Keyes, Joan Coffey, and Nancy Ruffner. Many thanks to all who contributed cookies and helped make the tea a fun time for all.

Nominations Sought for Board Elections in April

Are you interested in getting involved in protecting our local environment? If so, please consider joining our board of directors. Members live in our chapter territory. Responsibilities: attend monthly board meetings and volunteer on a committee (which usually meet once a month). To learn more, call Stan Wecker at 914.666.6503. Thank you!

We Are Making a Difference!

Letters like the one below received this fall remind us that our programs are appreciated! Thanks Anne!

Dear Mr. McCrillis,

I wanted to make you aware of a program that was recently presented to my teachers, by an exceptional educator with Saw Mill River Audubon. Anne Swaim, Education Director/Naturalist, came to the University to work with a group of elementary school teachers attending a summer ecology course that I teach.

Anne gave two programs for me as she has for the past seven years. One enlightened teachers as to the techniques and skills involved with outdoor education, and the other provided practical ways they could attract wildlife into their schoolyards.

As always Anne came prepared, organized and provided a professional image that gave a very positive reflection of Audubon. She quickly developed a good rapport with the teachers and it was obvious that they were intrigued with her presentations. She received very high marks on the course evaluations.

I hope that Audubon continues to support these outreach programs. I believe there is no better way to protect our environment then through hands-on education.

Thank you for providing such a valuable educational resource.

Sincerely,

Angelo Spillo, Director, Pace University Environmental Center

Welcome Members!

Briarcliff Manor Elliot & Leslie Burns **Chappaqua** Thomas R. Kelly, N. Laun, Marie Mason, Barry & Lisa O'Brien, Meredith Y. Smith **Cortlandt Manor** Seth Jacobs, Daniel & Elizabeth Littrell **Croton-on-Hudson** Erika Schenker, The deGraaf Family **Millwood** Elissa SooJin Schilmeister **Mohegan Lake** Paul S. Jeffries **Mount Kisco** Ms. M.A. Johannsen **New York** Joya Jassem **Ossining** Robin Fitzsimmons Meng, Mai A. Peters, Robert Sherman, Frank Tassini **Pleasantville** Joan Friedman **Sleepy Hollow** Lisa Kelly, Sarah Van Driesche **Thornwood** Lawrence Tabacchi **Valhalla** Mrs. Raymond H. Ball

Peekskill Christmas Bird Count Turns 50!

The 50th Annual Peekskill Christmas Bird Count was held December 18, 2004. With an all-time record breaking high count of 96 species, the count was a major success! With 32 participants in eight parties combing the countryside for birds, over 15,000 individual birds were counted! The count area covers northern Westchester from the Hudson River eastward to Chappaqua, Mount Kisco, Bedford Hills, and Katonah.

Highlights of the count included 12 Black Vultures in a roost near Peekskill, one Snow Goose on the Croton River in Ossining, 55 Brant flying down the Hudson River at Croton Point Park, three Northern Shoveler ducks, a Greater Scaup, 15 Bald Eagles, two Peregrine Falcons at the Bear Mountain Bridge, 12 Eastern Screech-Owls, seven Great Horned Owls, two Short-eared Owls, two House Wrens at Teatown Lake Reservation, 100 Eastern Bluebirds, one Brown Thrasher, eight American Pipits, four White-crowned, an incredible 60 Savannah Sparrows at Croton Point, two Eastern Meadowlarks at Croton Point, and finally an immature Lark Sparrow (see below), which is new for the count.



The Lark Sparrow is a rare western stray to the east coast of North America and is rarely found in Autumn on the east coast. This represents one of only a very small number of winter records for Westchester County.

Because of the relatively mild weather leading up to the count, many half-hardy species lingered in the region through count day. Conversely, certain species had not arrived because the severe cold had not pushed them south into our region. For example, 15 Bald Eagle were found on count day, while last year 32 were found. This year 59 Red-tailed Hawks were found compared to last year's 84. Northern winter finches were virtually absent in the region this year. It is interesting to note that three Red-necked Grebes and a Merlin both seen at Croton Point the day after the count were not seen on the count. What a difference a day makes!

For complete count results, visit the following page at the Bedford Audubon Society web site: <http://www.bedfordaudubon.org/cbc/cbc-2004-peekskill.html>

— John Askildsen, Compiler, Peekskill CBC

Who's Visiting Your Feeder this Winter?

Send in your Feeder Watch form by March 1!

We encourage you to keep your own list of backyard birds and send it to us by mail or email (you can also use the form in the last newsletter).

We'll publish a summary of sightings in our newsletter.

Trail Notes

We've had inquiries at the Audubon office about the closing of the Highland Trail adjacent to our Brinton Brook Sanctuary in the Village of Croton. This trail connects to Brinton Brook trails but is not on Audubon land. It is on private land and has been maintained by the Village of Croton. The new owner of this property has closed the trail. The Village of Croton is exploring solutions to this issue.



Pussy Willow

February

Look for Skunk Cabbage at Pinecliff
Listen for Great Horned Owls calling in the afternoon at Brinton & Graff
Smell the skunks out after evening thaws at Pruyn!

March

Watch for flocks of red-winged blackbirds at Brinton
Listen for Barred Owls calling in the afternoon at Pruyn
Look for start of pussy willows at Pinecliff

Take your School or Group on a Field Trip!

Choose from 16 different topics. We offer indoor presentations and/or outdoor walks offered at your location or at one of our sanctuaries for ages kindergarten through senior adults! Visit our web site for more details: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org