



April/May 2006  
Issue 298

# On the Wing

News from Saw Mill River Audubon

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## Final Bird Seed Sale of the Season on Sat April 29!

9:30 a.m. to 12 Noon  
Bird Seed Shed, Rt 133  
Pruyn Sanctuary  
20% DISCOUNT.  
BIRDS OF ALL KINDS  
ARE WELCOME.  
INCLUDING ODD DUCKS.

## Have You Returned Your Board Proxy?

Our annual election of board members and officers will be held on Sunday, April 9, 2006. Please fill out and return your proxy by mail.

## SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Join us! For more information call 914.666.6503 or visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org).

### Sunday, April 2 ♦ 6:00 to 7:30 pm ♦ Pinecliff Sanctuary, Chappaqua Spring Peeper Prowl



Spring  
peeper

Come hear and maybe see the tiny spring peeper frogs in their annual chorus of spring calls. Walk around the ¼ mile boardwalk loop at Pinecliff Sanctuary to experience a swamp in early spring. Space will be limited. Free pre-registration is required by calling our office at 914.666.6503. Directions and more information available upon registration.

### Tuesday, April 4, 18, 25 ♦ 1:30 to 3:30 pm ♦ Kendall-on-Hudson, Sleepy Hollow Birds and Birding Course

Join Audubon Naturalist Anne Swaim for a three part course introducing the birds of Westchester, how to identify them and where to go birding in Westchester.

April 4: Introduction to Birds, including Bird Biology, Flight, and Nesting

April 18: Field Identification, Field Guides, Where to Bird

April 25: Birding by Ear – Bird Songs and Calls

Cost is \$20 for three sessions OR \$25 with new chapter membership included.

Call our office to register: 914.666.6503.

### Saturday, April 8 ♦ 9 am ♦ Pruyn Sanctuary, Chappaqua Pruyn Sanctuary Walk

Join our monthly series of walks through our Pruyn Sanctuary on the second Saturday of each month. Dress for the weather. Rain, snow, or shine. Suitable for ages 4 and up. Leader: Anne Swaim. No pre-registration necessary. Free and open to the general public. Meet at the **Woodmill Road entrance** to Pruyn.

### Saturday, April 29 ♦ 11:30 am ♦ Constitution Marsh, Garrison Canoeing at Constitution Marsh

Take a two-hour canoe trip through National Audubon's Constitution Marsh Sanctuary in Garrison. Limited to 15 people. Cost: \$20/adult, \$15/seniors. Deadline: April 26.

Canoes and guide provided by National Audubon's Constitution Marsh Sanctuary. Call our office, 914.666.6503, for further details and registration. Coordinator: Joan Coffey.

### Weekday mornings ♦ 8 am ♦ various locations

### Early Morning Spring Bird Walks

Thursday, April 27 ♦ Croton Point County Park ♦ Leader: Charlie Roberto

Monday, May 1 ♦ Kitchawan County Preserve ♦ Leader: Anne Swaim

Tuesday, May 9 ♦ Teatown Lake Reservation ♦ Leader: Charlie Roberto

Thursday, May 18 ♦ Rockefeller State Park ♦ Leader: Richard Nelson

### Saturday, May 13 ♦ 9 am ♦ Pruyn Sanctuary, Chappaqua Pruyn Sanctuary Walk

See description under Saturday, April 8. Regular second Saturday walk at Pruyn.

### Monday Walks

Explore a new local nature site each Monday. Call Mickey Spano: 914.737.8662

## Audubon Scholarship Awarded

Saw Mill River Audubon has awarded the 2006 Larry Light Scholarship to Harper Pack, a junior at Greeley High School in Chappaqua. The scholarship will cover the majority of Harper's costs to spend a month with a group of students working in the Kirindy Forest Reserve on the western coast of Madagascar. This extraordinary travel-study program is run by Putney Student Travel and will be in cooperation with a grassroots effort: the Malagasy Conservation Organization.

Harper's application included strong letters of reference from a teacher at Greeley and at Seven Bridges Middle School, excellent grades in science courses as well as extracurricular activities that reflected an ongoing interest in the environment.

We are excited to partner with Harper and his family in this summer adventure and look forward to a full report (with pictures!) in a future newsletter issue and at a future public program!

The Larry Light Scholarship program was established by the friends and family of Larry Light, a high school student who had an untimely death while hiking in our area. The scholarships are awarded each spring. Students age 13 to 18 are eligible to apply. To find out more, visit the education page of our web site to review the application guidelines.

## Come to the Garden!

The Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden at Pruyn Sanctuary is one of the outstanding small gems of Westchester County.

This is the 7th season of this beautiful garden which attracts numerous colorful butterflies and other interesting insects as well as Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. It gets more beautiful every year. A wren nests above the garden in the mulberry tree and is often found bathing in the splash pool.

The garden is beautiful because of a handful of devoted gardeners who plant, weed and care for it and the shrubs and meadows surrounding it. But we need more helpers. It does not "grow like topsy". If you have a few extra hours each week, the garden could use your help. You do not have to be an expert gardener but have a love of flowers and nature and a willingness to learn. The camaraderie is fun and we quite often go home with extra plants in tow for our own gardens or for other public gardens.



Call Midge Arnold at 762-0689, Tom McEnerney 238-1459, or the office 666-6503 (M,W,F 10:30 to 3:30). Starting in mid-April, we will be meeting Wednesday mornings (weather permitting) from 9:30 to 11:30 (earlier in the summer heat). PLEASE JOIN US.

And even more importantly, visit the garden often and bring your family and friends. There is plenty of parking at the Arboretum Office at 275 Millwood Rd. (Route 133). And parking is free. Midday on a sunny day brings out the butterflies and other insects. You may observe Monarch Butterflies, a Painted Lady or even a Hummingbird or a Hummingbird moth. Feel free to relax and photograph in the garden, in the surrounding arboretum and meadows and enjoy the hiking trails in the Pruyn Sanctuary.

—Midge Arnold

## Environmental Action Committee News

The state legislature is considering a bill (A2517C in the Assembly and S1290C in the Senate), known as the "Bigger Better Bottle Bill." It would add a five-cent deposit to non-carbonated beverages such as iced tea, water, juice, and sports drinks, and would require return of unredeemed funds to the state for environmental programs instead of allowing the beverage industry to keep those funds. We encourage members and other interested persons to write to state assembly members and senators to urge them to support this bill. The current law has been immensely helpful in ridding parkways, parks, and other areas of unsightly and unhealthy bottles and cans. Extending the scope of the bottle deposit would go a long way toward cleaning up our environment.

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer has filed suit against the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for failing to provide information about toxic air pollution that the state has requested. Under current law, the state is entitled to information that the federal EPA collects from manufacturers and importers of paints and other volatile organic compounds, which contribute to smog and can cause lung damage, asthma, and death. The law requires that this information be shared with the public, but as we have noted, the EPA has been slow in releasing it.

The Attorney General, joining attorneys general of a number of other states, has also called on the EPA to withdraw proposed regulations that would sharply reduce the amount of information available to the public about toxic chemicals released by industry across the nation. If the regulation is implemented, the public will be kept in the dark about chemical hazards in their communities. For example, in Tonawanda, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, the release of enough chemicals to cause severe neurological, respiratory, and developmental problems could go unreported under the new regulations.

—Burton Leiser



## BIRDING

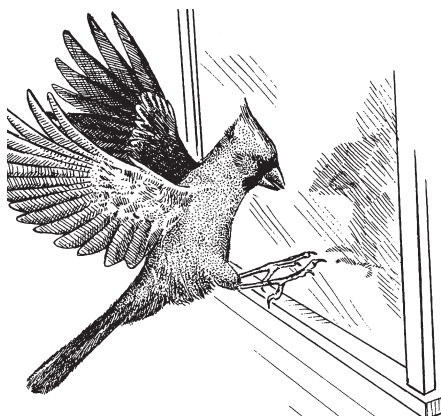


## Help! There's a bird flying at our window every day!

We know nesting season has begun when "window bashing" starts. Typically, this is a male robin or cardinal flying repeatedly at a window. Our calls range from folk concerned for the birds to whether the offending birds have rabies (only mammals get rabies, not birds) to those annoyed by the noise and window smudges. The most dramatic report came from office workers in a building with huge plate glass windows. The bird was a very intense Red-tailed hawk! Fortunately, his window visits lasted only a day, but they were quite off-putting for those inside.

It's territorial. Birds are visual creatures and the window assailant is seeing its reflection in your window. It assumes that an invader has come into its breeding territory (your backyard). This invader appears, to the defending bird, to return every day (as soon as the sun angle is right) and to fight back as vigorously as it is attacked!

**Solutions?** Patience works. This behavior usually stops when the parents' daylong search for nestling food begins. We can't promise this though. One family endured eight weeks of unwanted attention from a determined robin. Anything creative that "breaks up" the outside window reflection might help, such as hanging fluttery mylar strips outside on the window to distract the bird. Note: closing curtains and blinds can increase the outside mirror effect.



## Help! A bird hit our window and can't fly.

Large windows in your home or office can also be a death trap for birds, particularly during fall and spring migration, because they may reflect the surrounding landscape and appear to be a flyway to birds. Birds may hit windows with great force in a single strike and be killed or stunned.

Birds that hit windows in full flight typically either die immediately or within minutes of impact. Stunned birds may sit on the ground for an hour or more. During this time, they are vulnerable to cats, dogs or other predators. Our advice is to move the stunned birds under the cover of nearby shrubs or, if they are able to perch, up off the ground in a thick shrub or evergreen tree. Keep children and pets inside to allow the bird outside to recover and take flight when it is able.

**Solutions?** Many offices and homeowners have added "Bird Savers" to their windows—small black silhouette decals of flying hawks that may help to distract birds and divert window strikes. A fine black mesh, invisible at a distance, can also be erected in front of the window. Both items are available through birding and garden stores in our area.

—Anne Swaim

## What About Avian Flu?

With widespread interest in avian influenza or "bird flu", National Audubon has provided an excellent online summary of information and web links as a resource for those who may be concerned about avian influenza, as well as about how birds are involved. Also included are some general precautions for protecting both human and bird health. We have provided a short cut on Saw Mill River Audubon's web site to the Avian Flu information page.

Visit this web address  
[www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/AvianFlu](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/AvianFlu)  
 (note capital letters)

### Another Online Feature

To read an amusing exchange of letters that has circulated on the Internet regarding a beaver dam, visit this web page: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/NetHumor](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/NetHumor)

## Welcome Members

**Briarcliff Manor** Florence Dexter, Judith Harris, Kaitlin Kablack, Ms. Theresa Rizzitiello

**Chappaqua** Elizabeth Frankel and Charles Steinhorn, Ms. M. Frances Kalamaras, Kevan Full Family, Dr. and Mrs. Michael Kirsch, Thomas L. Klug

**Cortlandt Manor** Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Barra, Cara Kamrowski, Charles H. Park, Jr., Estelle Wheeler,

**Croton-on-Hudson** Ms. Carol Boltin, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Egersole, Daniel D. Ferguson, Paul H. Janis, Kathy Vuille

**Millwood** Dr. Jeffrey H. Shein, Martin T. Trank

**Mohegan Lake** Claire C. McDonald

**Montrose** Ms. Jan Kessler

**Ossining** Virginia Bender, Mary Ryan Curry, Suzanne DiPillo, Edward Kirtman, Charles and Diane Newman,

**Peekskill** Thomas M. Mason

**Pleasantville** Patricia Butter, Armand Crescenzi, Valerie Hurd, Douglas MacDonald, Mr. Rudol Reimann, Mary J. Wolfe

**Scarborough** Seymour Bain

**Tarrytown** Ms. Connie McKeige, Robert Pickert, Jr.

**Valhalla** John Ahern



## Saw Mill River Audubon

275 Millwood Road  
Chappaqua, New York 10514  
914.666.6503

Fax: 914.666.7430 call first  
office@sawmillriveraudubon.org  
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

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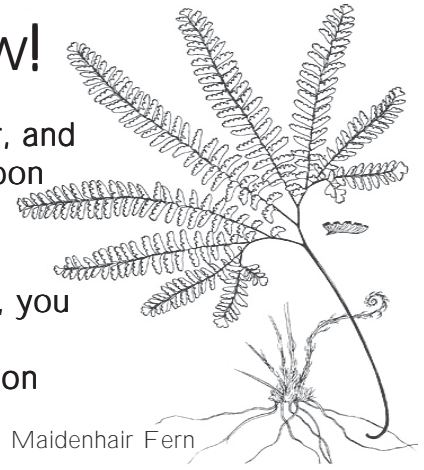
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# HELP US GROW!

Just as a plant needs sunlight, water, and soil to thrive, Saw Mill River Audubon needs your support to maintain and expand our programs.

When you give to our annual appeal, you can be confident that 100% of your donation supports our local education and conservation efforts.



Maidenhair Fern

## I WISH TO DONATE

### Enclosed is:

☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100

☐ \$50 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ My employer will match my gift.

## I'D LIKE TO JOIN Saw Mill River Audubon!

Basic Chapter Membership:

- ☐ Enclosed is \$20  
☐ Please send me planned giving info

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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

Deadline for Next Newsletter: May 1

*Sanctuaries are open  
dawn to dusk every day.  
No public restrooms or  
indoor facilities. Dogs  
on leash are welcome—  
please clean up after  
them. Find maps &  
directions at:  
sawmillriveraudubon.org.*



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**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
275 Millwood Road  
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