



April/May 2009
Issue 313

On the Wing

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Bird Seed Sale Dates

Saturday April 18
Saturday May 16

9:30 am–12:30 pm
Bird Seed Shed, Rt. 133
Pruyn Sanctuary

Weekday sales are available
Mon/Wed/Fri
10:30 am–3:30 pm
Call 914.666.6503 for details

All sales benefit
Saw Mill River Audubon

Trees for Tribs



Sunday, May 31 ♦ 9:00 am
Your help is needed! We need as many willing hands as possible to plant trees and shrubs along Brinton Brook. Bring a group!
Call us at 914.666.6503

SPRING ADVENTURES

Join us! For more information call 914.666.6503 or visit
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

Sunday, April 5 ♦ 6:00–8:30 pm

♦ New Castle Community Center, 10 Senter Street, Chappaqua

Special Event: Annual Dinner

Join us for an evening celebration with Saw Mill River Audubon! Program will include a presentation of birding in Arizona, reports from recent environmental scholarship winners, and a brief annual business meeting. Come spend a great evening with a welcoming community of people who enjoy the natural world and work together to protect it. Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Dinner to RSVP. Suggested donation \$10/person at the door.

Saturday, April 25 ♦ 2:00–4:00 pm ♦ Ossining Public Library

Workshop: Birding for Beginners



This workshop will introduce you to the birds found in your neighborhood and help you identify them by sight and song. Workshop participants will each receive a basic birding kit including a CD of common bird songs. Cost is \$25/person. Ages 10 and up. Space limited. Pre-registration is required with payment by April 20. Call us or visit this web page to register:

www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/birding

Monday, April 27 ♦ 9:30 am – 2:00 pm ♦ Hook Mountain, Nyack

Spring Hawk Migration

Welcome the hawks back from their winter travels as they pass by Hook Mountain in nearby Nyack, NY. Bring binocular and lunch. Meet at the Rockland Lake State Park Golf Course clubhouse. Suggestion donation \$5/person. Call for more information.

Saturday, May 2 ♦ 9:30 am – 2:00 pm ♦ Hook Mountain, Nyack

Spring Hawk Migration

For those who can't see the hawks on a weekday, here's your weekend opportunity to witness vernal hawk migrations at Hook Mountain. (See Monday, April 27 trip details.)

Saturday, May 9 ♦ 6:00 am – 6:00 pm ♦ Starting at the SMRA Office at Pruyn

Saw Mill River Watershed Birding Big Day

See details on page 2. Join us for a birding adventure across the SMR watershed!

Wednesday, May 13 ♦ 7:00 am ♦ Rockefeller State Park Preserve, Tarrytown

Early AM Bird Walk

Great spot for spring migrants! Meet in the main parking area. Bring binocular.

Saturday, May 16 ♦ 6:30 am ♦ Bear Mountain State Park

Bird Walk: Doodletown and Iona Island

Doodletown is an "Important Bird Area," a significant location for the health of bird populations and, offers great spring birding. Meet at the pull-over parking by Iona Island. Call or email to RSVP. Suggested donation of \$5/person.

Birding the Saw Mill River Habitats

Exciting plans are underway for a Saw Mill River Bioblitz scheduled for Saturday, September 26 and coordinated by the Saw Mill River Coalition. A Bioblitz brings together scientists and field naturalists for an intensive survey of wildlife and plants in a particular area. **In advance of this event, Saw Mill River Audubon is sponsoring a Birding Big Day across several SMR birding sites on Saturday, May 9, 6am to 6pm.** Interested in participating in either event? Call or email us.

2009 Hudson River EagleFest: A Great Success



Photo: Danny Wild

Saw Mill River Audubon was pleased to help support the 2009 Hudson River EagleFest on February 7, 2009. Several thousand people turned out to visit the eagle viewing locations along the Hudson and the exhibit site in Croton Point Park. Congratulations to Teatown Lake Reservation for an excellent event! With the increased public awareness of wintering eagles and good fieldwork by Bedford Audubon, Westchester County has provided additional protection for the roost site at George's Island. Birding makes a difference!

Lower Hudson Audubon Roundtable



Photo: William Kellner

Mary Charbonneau, Education Manager for Constitution Marsh Sanctuary, at the Roundtable.

On March 7, Saw Mill River Audubon hosted a gathering of regional Audubon leaders at the Lower Hudson Roundtable. Representatives of Central Westchester Audubon, Bedford Audubon, Rockland Audubon, Saw Mill River Audubon, Audubon New York and the Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary discussed the many ways our chapters can work together to further our mission of environmental protection and education. It was exciting to hear about the many different programs and initiatives that Audubon chapters are leading throughout our region. (See below for a great example of local chapters working together.)

Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Roger Tory Peterson's Birth

Wednesday, April 22 • 7:30 pm
Bronxville School, Bronxville

James Berry, President of Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History, will talk about Roger Tory Peterson's place in the history of field ornithology in the U.S. through an illustrated lecture and video from a New York perspective. Sponsored by Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon, Hudson River Audubon, Central Westchester Audubon and the Greenburgh Nature Center.

For more information and directions, visit
<http://www.hras.org/programs/aprpro.html>

Welcome Members

Briarcliff Manor Peter Andersen, Amy Ludwig, Mark Silverstein **Chappaqua** Teresa Holland, Mark and Leslie Magnotte, the Raichelson Family, John Stine, **Corona** Kim Mintzer **Cortlandt Manor** Jandy Fahey, The Frey Family, Paul M. Weissman **Croton-on-Hudson** Marguerite Bardini, Catherine Helwig, Stefanie McCaffrey, Julie Nord, Bruce Sheffler, Mary J. Smiton **Harrison** Gail Rogers **Hawthorne** Susan W. Morris **Katonah** Ellen Epstein **Millwood** Raquel Moskovits **Montrose** Robert Stevens **Mount Kisco** Lorraine Kroll **Ossining** Mary Efthimion, Alice Layne, George Sinnott, Thomas Vaniotis **Peekskill** John Swatek **Pleasantville** Mr. and Mrs. Peter Q. Eschweiler, Joe Hillesum, Jacqueline Pisani-Burke **Riverdale** Susan Bram **Scarborough** Janice W. Bernard, Rachel Selinger **Sleepy Hollow** Annegret Rice **Tarrytown** Ann Corcoran, Jacqueline McKee, Christopher P. Wynne **Thornwood** Susan Cassone **Valhalla** Michael Lirio, Lou Prusky, Jean Vitarius **White Plains** Stan and Lynn Telson **Yorktown Heights** Jodee Novak

Issues and Advocacy

Your Watershed Address: Why it Matters

I live and breathe watersheds. As a watershed and natural resources educator, I can't help but view our landscape in the watershed context. I grew up and currently live in the Clove Brook Watershed, which happens to be the headwaters of the Bronx River watershed. As a child, I knew Clove Brook and its marshes and wetlands as if they were my friends. I knew every nuance of the seasons, from the first appearance of skunk cabbage, to the salamanders, to the mucky black soil of my beloved wetland. However, it wasn't until I was older, when I thought about the landscape, topography and drainage (and looked at maps), that I realized the connection to the Bronx River and thereby to Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean.

What is your watershed address? Do you wonder where water goes that runs down your street and into a storm drain? And just what is a storm drain, anyway? Do you know that all the water that flows into our storm drains ends up in our creeks and streams, bypassing our sewage treatment systems? Are these just questions that a "water geek" like me ponders? I know that many readers of *On the Wing* are experienced and knowledgeable birders who are well aware of how watersheds impact bird migration. Understanding this critical relationship between watersheds and birds and other wildlife is one of many reasons why knowing your watershed address is important. Where that drop of rain that falls on your lawn ultimately ends up is not an idle question.

What is a watershed? According to the US EPA, a watershed is "the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place." Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. You can think of a watershed as a bowl in which any rain that falls or snow that melts flows down, eventually reaching a collection point, which may be a stream or wetland. Watersheds can cross village, town, county, state, and national boundaries.

Our Audubon chapter, Saw Mill River Audubon, is named after a river and its associated watershed. The headwaters of the Saw Mill River begin in our Pinecliff Sanctuary in Chappaqua. The Saw Mill River watershed covers quite a bit of Westchester County but not all of the 20 communities that make up our chapter are in this watershed. Most of our territory drains into the Hudson River estuary, either through tributaries like the Saw Mill River, Croton River, Furnace Brook, or the Pocantico River, although our southeastern corner (the area around Valhalla) drains into Long Island Sound via the Bronx River. [Check out page 2 for an opportunity to explore the Saw Mill River watershed with us on May 9.]

Why should you care about which watershed you live in? We rely on our watersheds in many ways: drinking water, boating,

fishing, swimming; wildlife rely on them for food and shelter. Watersheds are important wildlife corridors.

Often, municipalities manage their natural resources based on political boundaries. However, managing on a watershed basis is much better for wildlife and for humans alike. For example, one municipality might find that harmful sediment is being deposited into one of its streams from an upstream source. This can result in habitat destruction and flooding. Finding the source of the problem may require looking beyond the municipal boundary to view the stream in the context of its watershed. Without considering the watershed connections, the sedimentation problem might continue, more habitat might be destroyed, and property might be damaged by flooding.

Sedimentation, mainly from construction sites, is a serious problem in our watersheds as residential and commercial development continues in our region. There are many other pollutants that affect our watersheds, including road salt, gasoline, motor oil, pet waste, pesticides and herbicides and other chemicals. Understanding the flow of water through our watersheds allows us to track pollutants to their source and protect our streams and groundwater. Healthy forests and wetlands are key to good water quality because they help to slow the flow of pollutants and act as natural filtration systems. Open space preservation is watershed protection as well. For example, our Pruyn Sanctuary protects New York City drinking water by filtering water that ends up in the Croton Reservoir.

Remember, we all live in a watershed. **Protecting our watersheds is essential to preserving the quality of our environment.** Watersheds matter—they matter to birders, wildlife, fishermen, the caddis fly larvae, paddlers, and the mallard duck paddling by. They matter to every living thing. -- Mary Hegarty

Mary Hegarty, an SMRA member, is the Environmental Management Assistant for the Rockland County Soil & Water Conservation District.



Photo: Joan Kellner

View of the Croton River

Saw Mill River Audubon

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ACT LOCALLY & GLOBALLY

“What helps one location helps all corners of the globe.”
Susan Clay in a letter to Audubon magazine

Caring for our planet begins right here at home. Saw Mill River Audubon needs your support to maintain and expand our programs.



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

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 \$25
- 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: **June 1**

LAST CALL!
Saw Mill River Audubon's Annual Meeting & Dinner
Sunday, April 5th at New Castle Community Center
See page 1 for details.

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