



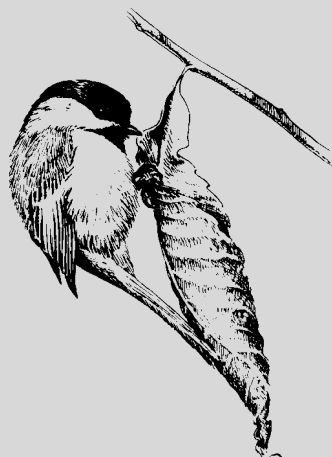
Winter 2009

Issue 316

On the Wing

News from Saw Mill River Audubon

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Need More Seed? Winter Seed Sales

9:30 am-12:30 pm

On the following Saturdays

Saturday December 19

Saturday January 16

Saturday February 20

at Pruyn Sanctuary

Weekday sales are available

M/W/F 10:30 am to 3:30 pm

Call 914.666.6503 for more info.



WINTER EVENTS

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



Saturday, December 12 ♦ 9:00 am ♦ Angle Fly Preserve, Rt. 139, Somers Hike at Angle Fly Preserve

This newly established 654-acre preserve in Somers offers a variety of habitats and brand new hiking trails. Meet at the main entrance on Rt 139, north of Route 100. Leaders: Rik Kaufman & Anne Swaim.

Saturday, December 12 ♦ 10:00 am ♦ Choate Sanctuary, Rt 133, Mount Kisco Work Day: Choate Sanctuary

Come pitch in with us to spruce up our Choate Sanctuary before winter. We'll be doing both litter patrol and trail grooming. Jobs for all energy levels! Meet at the Mount Kisco Presbyterian Church parking lot. Wear gloves and dress for the weather. RSVP to our office by email or phone so we know to expect you. Ages 8 and up welcome.

Saturday, December 19 ♦ All Day ♦ Various Times and Locations Peekskill Christmas Bird Count

New and experienced birders are welcome to go with established teams to take part in the census of birds in the count circle. See the related article on page 3 for more about this important citizen science project with a long tradition. Contact the SMRA office for specific places and times of this day-long event. Several SMRA birders also participate in the January 2nd Putnam Christmas Bird Count.

Friday, January 1 ♦ 10:00 am ♦ Rockwood Hall, Rockefeller State Park Preserve

New Year's Day Bird Walk

Meet at the parking for Rockwood Hall (next to Phelp's Hospital) and start 2010 with a birding walk along the Hudson River. Leaders: Rik Kaufman & Anne Swaim.



Saturday January 9 ♦ 9:00 am ♦ Croton Harmon Station and Croton Point Park Croton Point Bird Walk: Eagles and More

Meet at the Croton River boat ramp parking area (drive into parking area for Croton station and continue past station). Bring binoculars. Dress for the weather. We hope to see bald eagles and other interesting birds. This is one of our most popular local field trips! Co-sponsored with Westchester County Parks. Leader: Charlie Roberto

SPECIAL EVENT with REGISTRATION DEADLINE OF DECEMBER 15!

Friday, January 15 to Monday, January 18 ♦ Adirondack Mountains

Winter Birding In The Adirondacks

Break out your long johns and join us over the long holiday weekend for winter birding in the beautiful Long Lake area! Join us Friday OR Saturday. Trip details and registration info: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/ADK. Limited space. **Deadline: December 15th.**

Saw Mill River BioBlitz

Saw Mill River Audubon co-sponsored and participated in the 2009 Saw Mill River BioBlitz on September 25-26. Organized by Groundwork Hudson Valley's Saw Mill River Coalition, the BioBlitz brought together more than 50 scientists in different fields to do a complete census of the flora and fauna that inhabit the Saw Mill River watershed in Westchester County. SMRA coordinated the birding activities in the BioBlitz. In addition to the intense 24-hour survey of the region's biodiversity, there were lectures at Pace University and field trips to the Science Barge in Yonkers.

On the BioBlitz, New York Botanical Garden bryologist (moss specialist) Dr. William R. Buck, collected mosses at three Westchester preserves. He reports that the most interesting and diverse location was SMRA's Pinecliff Sanctuary. Even though sandwiched between a major highway and a residential neighborhood, the preserve nevertheless proved to have a surprisingly diverse flora. One of the mosses that he found in Pinecliff is listed as a rare moss in New York State: the tongue-twister *Schwetschkeopsis fabronia*. We are at the northern end of its range in New York; the moss is more common in the southeastern United States, and is also found in eastern Asia. This moss forms thin mats on tree trunks, in this case near the base of the tree where humidity is higher. The plants are immediately distinctive under the microscope because of their short, double costa (midrib) and the relatively short leaf cells. A single, healthy colony was found on the base of a tree, near the swamp. Dr. Buck explains that the additional humidity surely played a part in its occurrence there.

Mosses are widely recognized as important bio-indicators of environmental health—a rich moss flora indicates relatively clean air and water. Although often overlooked, Dr. Buck notes that mosses also play an important role in the ecology of a habitat. They absorb water directly through their leaves when it rains and slowly release it, helping to maintain habitat humidity. Mosses growing on soil and rotting logs often act as a seed bed for woody plants and a home for a host of invertebrates and small amphibians; and mosses growing on slopes help to prevent erosion. Because they are evergreen, these green jewels can be viewed year round. Besides the rare moss, there were several lichens identified in the BioBlitz that are very rare or new in Westchester County.

The data from the BioBlitz will be used to educate the public and the agencies that are working to protect and enhance biodiversity within the watershed. Our congratulations to Groundwork Hudson Valley for a successful event! For more information visit <http://groundworkhv.org/wp-content/bioblitz09/>

989 and Counting!



That's 989 books, not birds. **SMRA's book collection** is one of its better kept secrets. Cataloging and organizing this whole collection of books (with a few CD's, tapes and videos thrown in) has just been completed. And what a resource it is! With books ranging from birds to wildflowers, trees, other flora and fauna as well as environmental management, the collection is a treasure trove of information. The books are available for browsing during our regular business hours at the SMRA office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Trish Foy, a Board member who has been responsible for organizing the materials over the past several years, says the collection is a result of a number of generous donations by members, as well as thoughtful acquisitions by SMRA. Her favorites? Some beautifully illustrated volumes on raptors and owls, as well as a wide selection of classic field guides covering the local area and many parts of the world. Come see them!

Welcome Members

Briarcliff Manor Bonnie F. Berger, Daniel M. Levine, Linda O'Dell **Bronx** Mary S. Montalvo **Buchanan** William Swindell **Chappaqua** Rebecca Fierro, Rita Masson **Cortlandt Manor** Anne Bellew, Mary E. Choma, Diane Testa, Maxine Young **Croton-on-Hudson** Jeanette Altamura, Philip D. Michele, Alan Milton, Donna Lee Ubertalli **Mohegan Lake** Andrea B. Jeffries **Montrose** Heather Martin **Mount Kisco** Jonathan Schrott **Ossining** Angela Brown, Winter Donaldson, Shizuka Feeney, Scott Morrison, Joanne Tall and Scott Kamen **Peekskill** Claire Finnigan, Leon Lovett **Pleasantville** Muriel L. Clarke, Asit and Karen Dan, Michael Ems, Susan Jones, Robin Karp, Silvana Leonard **Sleepy Hollow** Elizabeth K. Connors, Stanley A. Hinds, Marion Hoffmann, Julie Larsen Maher, Robert Williams **Tarrytown** Eugenia King, Kim Waddell, Wolfgang Weber **Thornwood** Patrick Magliocchino **Valhalla** Thomas Bellingham, Anne Mullin **Verplanck** Susan Clark

Thank You Volunteers!

A hearty "thank you and job well done" to all the volunteers who helped out on **Saw Mill River Audubon's Annual Seed Sale Weekend** in October.

And a very special appreciation is due to **Pizza Station of Chappaqua** for keeping everyone well fed and happy.

EDUCATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

Audubon Citizen Science Join the Christmas Bird Count

Every year thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists, go out on a mission to count birds, often before dawn. This is the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). For over 100 years, the desire to make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the holiday season. This year you can join one of the teams for our regional count and participate in a tradition that goes back over 100 years. See page 1 for details.

There is a specific methodology to the CBC, but everyone is welcome to participate. The count takes place within "Count Circles," which focus on specific geographical areas. Each circle is led by a Count Compiler. Therefore, if you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher. In addition, if your home is within the boundaries of a Count Circle, then you may report the birds that visit your feeder.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually brave snow, wind, or rain to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations—and to help guide conservation action.

Apply for a SMRA Scholarship

Applications Due Dec. 31

Don't miss the opportunity to apply for our environmental education youth and adult scholarships!

The Larry Light Memorial Scholarship Fund for Youth was established by the Light family and friends to help young people ages 13 to 17 who wish to attend a summer camp, class or workshop with an emphasis on the environment.

Adults interested in attending an environmental class, camp or workshop are also invited to apply for an Audubon adult scholarship.

Applications are available from the office: 914.666.6503 or online: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org Applications are due December 31, 2009. Successful applicants will be notified by January 15, 2010.



Jean Sparacin photographed Manitou the raven at our October 29 program at the Chappaqua Library.

IMPORTANT NOTICE Information for All Field Trips

We ask you to call 914.666.6503 OR email office@sawmillriveraudubon.org before trips so we know to expect you. Most trips run rain or shine. If we do need to cancel a trip we will call or email (your preference) to all who are registered and we will also put a notice on our web site and our office answering machine.

Suggested donation of \$5/person.

February

Saturday February 6 ♦ All Day Hudson River EagleFest

Come celebrate the increase in eagles on the Hudson River! Guides with spotting scopes will be located at Charles Point Park in Peekskill, Georges Island County Park in Montrose and the Croton River boat ramp. Stop inside Croton Point Park during the day for more events and exhibits. Organized by Teatown Lake Reservation. Co-sponsored by SMRA.

Saturday, February 13 ♦ 9:00 am Field Trip: Winter Owl Prowl

Meet at the Millwood A&P for carpooling. We expect to visit several different sites depending on where the owls are, including Jones Beach and Pelham Bay. Call/email to RSVP.

March

Saturday, March 13 ♦ 7:00 pm Free Public Program:

Wildlife Rehabilitation

Details will follow in our next newsletter.

Sunday, March 28 ♦ 6:30 pm Field Trip: Spring Peepers at Pinecliff Sanctuary

Details will follow in our next newsletter.

Save the Dates!

**SMRA Annual Dinner
Sunday, April 11
Travelers Rest**

**Cape May Birding
Friday, May 21 to
Sunday, May 23**

Watch our web site for details:
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org
OR sign up for our events email list by visiting our web site.

Saw Mill River Audubon

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www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

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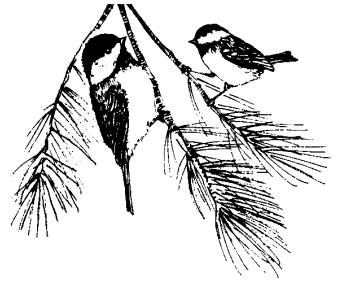
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CELEBRATE NATURE!

"I come to my solitary woodland walk as the homesick go home. I thus dispose of the superfluous and see things as they are, grand and beautiful." Henry David Thoreau

SMRA's eight sanctuaries are special places for wildlife and people right in our backyard in northern Westchester. Your gift is critical to preserve and maintain them. Thank you!



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: January 1

Save the Date!
SMRA Annual Dinner
Sunday, April 11
Travelers Rest

PERIODICAL POSTAGE
PAID
at Chappaqua, NY
and additional offices

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