



On the Wing

February / March 2011

News from Saw Mill River Audubon

Issue 322

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Winter Seed Sales

Every Third Saturday

9:30 am–12:30 pm

Sat. Feb 19 Sat. Mar 19

At Pruyn Sanctuary

Weekday sales are available

Mon/Wed/Fri 10:30 am–3:30 pm

Call 914.666.6503 for more info.

The 2010 Annual Report for Saw Mill River Audubon is now available online at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org or in our office M/W/F 10:30am-3:30pm



Watch for the skunk cabbage to poke its first leaves above the snow at our Pruyn and Pinecliff Sanctuaries. Can spring be far behind?

SPECIAL EVENT: Hudson River EagleFest 2011

Saturday, February 5, 9:00 am–4:00 pm



The seventh annual Hudson River EagleFest is a wonderful opportunity to view and celebrate the majestic bald eagles that overwinter along the Hudson River. Expert guides with spotting scopes will be located at the Riverfront Green in Peekskill, Georges Island County Park in Montrose and the Croton River boat ramp (just beyond the Croton train station). Visit Croton Point Park during the day for more events and exhibits inside large tents set up for this event.

The EagleFest is organized by Teatown Lake Reservation. Croton River boat ramp warming tent sponsored by SMRA. Visit www.teatown.org/eaglefest_2011.htm for the full schedule of bird walks, educational presentations, eagle viewing sites, and more. Although no reservations are needed for eagle viewing, reservations are required for some of the special EagleFest events so check the EagleFest website today!

SMRA volunteers will be staffing a display table at the main event area inside Croton Point Park and assisting at eagle viewing locations. Additional SMRA volunteers are needed at all locations during this event. Contact our office if you would like to be an Audubon volunteer.



Eagle photos: Kyle Bardwell

Second Saturday Walks: Brinton Brook & Pruyn

Saturdays February 12 and March 12, 9:00 am

Enjoy the special beauty of winter and join us on our monthly walks at our largest sanctuaries: Brinton Brook Sanctuary in Croton and Pruyn Sanctuary in Millwood. We'll record the progress of the seasons with photos and nature notes. An online journal on Facebook will be updated with each walk.

No pre-registration needed. Good for all ages. Held regardless of weather except in cases of severe weather or road closures.



Field Trip: Winter Birds on Long Island Sound

Monday, February 21, 8:00 am, Departing from Millwood

We will head to Greenwich Point Park in Old Greenwich, CT to search for winter birds on the Long Island Sound shore. Possible species include common and red-throated loons, long-tailed ducks, common goldeneye and more. Pre-registration required. Call our office at 914-666-6503 or email in advance: office@sawmillriveraudubon.org.

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE AUDUBON PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Christmas Bird Count Results

From December 14, 2010 through January 5, 2011 tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas took part in an annual tradition that goes back over 100 years. This is the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), in which volunteers tally the number of species and individual birds seen between sunrise and sunset on the designated count day in each territory or "count circle." 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.

The Peekskill CBC took place on Saturday, Dec. 18th. Several members of Saw Mill River Audubon participated, including a number of high school students. Centered in northern Westchester, this count circle includes varied habitats from the brackish marshes of the Hudson River, eastward through the Croton Watershed of the New York City reservoir system, as well as interior woodlands, fields and freshwater wetlands.

The species count total was a respectable 98, with some highlighted species and numbers as follows: greater scaup (4); common merganser (4,262); northern goshawk (1); red-shouldered hawk (2); merlin (2); Virginia rail (1); common raven (6); horned lark (3); marsh wren (1); eastern bluebird (56); American pipit (1); field sparrow (5); eastern towhee (4); white-crowned sparrow; snow bunting (1); eastern meadowlark; purple finch (3); pine siskin (2).

Noteworthy is the remarkable, record-breaking number of common mergansers, which came primarily from a large flock located on the Hudson River off Verplanck. Inland reservoirs were mostly frozen over with a thin coating of ice, which likely pushed the birds to the river. Also



Common merganser

of note is that bald eagle numbers were somewhat depressed from what is typical on this count, with 18 individuals this year.

Editor's note: Thanks to Peekskill CBC co-compilers John Askildsen and Mike Newhouse for supplying this report. Larry Trachtenberg also contributed.

Welcome Members

Briarcliff Manor Margot Bell, Mary Brady, Heidi Degregorio Buchanan James Desocio Chappaqua Gary and Ivy Braun, Ethan Burrows, Barbara Cardone, Margaret Heise, Carin V. Khatchikian, Jennifer Lynn Pariser, Robina Ramsay, Judson Stjohn, Bruce Yablon Cortlandt Manor Michael Biglow, Millie Dellaquila, Linda Hanley, Barbara Levitz, Bob and Rie Schwartz Croton-on-Hudson Geoffrey Thompson Millwood Diane Brizer, Jeffrey Stern Mohegan Lake Susan Cotellessa New York Pamela A. Roach Ossining Roy Ellingsen, Graham Gulian, Mary Anne Katz, Kathleen Logiudice, Rebecca Martin, Margaret Phelan, Ethelinda Tadena Peekskill Celeste Goethe, Maureen Lamb, Debra Shapiro Pleasantville Jeffrey and Judith Kash, J and J Owens Sleepy Hollow Angelina Mazzacone, Helen Rauch South Salem Stephen and Hope Killcoyne Tarrytown Joann Nisco, Meeta Patel, Ross Pepe Valhalla George Calvi Yorktown Heights Linda Evans

SMRA Member Has Top 100 Photo



SMRA member and Ossining High School senior Kyle Bardwell has been recognized by Audubon Magazine in its annual photography contest. His beautiful shot of a chestnut-sided warbler (reproduced here) was selected as one of the top 100 photos of 2010. More than

1,300 photographers submitted nearly 8,000 photographs to the magazine. See the top 100 photos online at www.audubonmagazine.org/features1101/photoawards-top100.html. Kyle's photo, much better in color and full size, is number 31. Congratulations, Kyle!

AUDUBON ANNUAL DINNER Sunday, April 10, 2011, 6:00 pm New Castle Community Center

10 Senter Street, Chappaqua

Join us at our 2011 Annual Dinner. We'll celebrate another year of Audubon activities and environmental stewardship with a community potluck supper.

There will be great food and engaging presentations including reports from our 2010 Larry Light Youth Scholarship winners. Don't miss this fun and friendly gathering!

More details will follow by mail in late February. Also, watch our web site for additional information.

EDUCATION**Scholarship
Winners**

Congratulations to our 2011 Larry Light Memorial Scholarship Winners! Ossining High School senior Kyle Bardwell will be traveling with SMRA on our Costa Rica trip in March. Ossining High School junior Lewis Lolya will be attending the Audubon Coastal Birding program in Maine this summer.

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

Our 2010 Larry Light Scholarship winners will be giving presentations on their experiences at our 2011 Annual Dinner to be held on April 10 (details on page 2). Sophia West of Ossining will describe her environmental service trip to Fiji last June; Benjamin Van Doren, from White Plains, will share his experiences at the American Birding Association's Camp Colorado last summer.

Bird Sighting

Ellen Silverman of Nyack sent us this captivating description of finding a new bird:

"At first I thought this little energetic bird had a bright orange paid sticker stuck on its head. I watched it dance around the patio furniture outside my kitchen window. Just as



quickly as it appeared, it flew out of sight not to return. I rushed to my handy bird books and discovered that I had just seen a male golden-crowned kinglet. What a spectacular little bird."

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS**FEBRUARY**

Saturday, Feb. 19 ♦ 9:30 am–12:30 pm
Winter Seed Sale

Come to Pruyn Sanctuary to stock up on high quality bird seed! All sales benefit Saw Mill River Audubon.

MARCH

Saturday, March 12 ♦ 9:00 am
Second Saturday Walks

Join us on one of our monthly walks at either Brinton Brook OR Pruyn Sanctuaries. See details on page 1.

Saturday, Mar. 19 ♦ 9:30 am–12:30 pm
Seed Sale at Pruyn Sanctuary

MARCH

Sunday, Mar. 20 ♦ 7:30 am
Celebrate Spring at the Edith Read Sanctuary, Rye

We'll depart Millwood at 7:30 am to see lingering winter waterfowl and the first vanguard of spring migrants at this shorebird hotspot. Possible species include lesser and greater scaup, redheads and pintails as well as ruddy turnstones and purple sandpipers on the rock jetties.

Pre-registration required. Please call our office at 914-666-6503 or email: office@sawmillriveraudubon.org.

Audubon's Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual 4-day event that engages birders of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. You can count the birds you see in your backyard, off your balcony, at your local park, or from your window—anywhere you can spot birds! The 2011 GBBC will take place Friday, February 18, through Monday, February 21.

Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the 4-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the GBBC website, www.birdsource.org

As the count progresses, anyone with internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery at www.birdsource.org

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. This is why the thousands of participants in the GBBC make such an important contribution. The collaboration of scientists and citizens in citizen science projects like the GBBC and the Christmas Bird Count (see page 2) provides critical data that allows scientists to get a much clearer picture of the status of our bird populations.

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275 Millwood Road
Chappaqua, New York 10514

**PERIODICAL POSTAGE
PAID
at Chappaqua, NY
and additional offices**

Save the Date!
SMRA Annual Meeting & Dinner
Sunday, April 10, 2011. Details on page 2.

Deadline for Next Newsletter: March 3

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE
“The smallest deed is better than the greatest intention.” John Burroughs

Your gift to Saw Mill River Audubon helps us encourage more people to enjoy the natural world and care about it. You can be confident that 100% of your donation supports our local education and conservation efforts.



SMRA educator Pat Mutolo with the next generation of environmental leaders. Connecting children with nature is a key part of our mission.

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
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