



# On the Wing

News from Saw Mill River Audubon

Fall 2011  
Issue 325

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**Special Insert: 2011-12 Seed Sale**



**Bird Seed Sale!**  
Our annual seed sale weekend is October 15 and 16. See the enclosed flyer or visit our web site at [sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://sawmillriveraudubon.org)

Each year we buy bulk quantities of high quality seed and re-sell to our members and friends. This is an important fundraiser for our local conservation work. Advance order deadline is October 7

## FALL ADVENTURES

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

**Saturday, September 10 ♦ 9:00 am**

### Second Saturday Walks at Brinton Brook

This month's second Saturday walk will be part of the Hudson River Valley Ramble celebration taking place throughout the Hudson Valley several September weekends. We will explore the trails of our Brinton Brook Sanctuary for 2 hours and then offer the option for a 1.5 hour extension of our walk on the Village of Croton-on-Hudson's Highland Trail. Registration requested as space is limited. Call 914-666-6503 or email [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org) by Thursday, September 8. More information on other Hudson River Valley Ramble events available at [hudsonrivervalleyramble.com](http://hudsonrivervalleyramble.com). Note: second Saturday walks continue all year!

**Monday, September 19 ♦ 10:00 am**

### Hook Mountain Hawk Watch, Nyack

Hook Mountain's summit offers a 360° view of the Hudson Valley and eye-level views of migrating hawks, falcons and eagles. Bring binoculars, water and lunch. Wear sturdy shoes for half-hour uphill walk to summit. Meet at the flagpole at the Rockland Lake State Park golf course at the foot of Hook Mountain where parking and restrooms are available. Leader: Charlie Roberto



**Saturday, September 24 ♦ 8:30 am**

### Constitution Marsh Canoeing, Garrison

We will join with our partners at Audubon New York to explore the Constitution Marsh Audubon Sanctuary in Garrison by canoe. Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary is a unique and beautiful 270-acre tidal marsh managed by Audubon as a wildlife sanctuary since 1970. It is located in Putnam County, New York on the east shore of the Hudson River, just south of the village of Cold Spring. Registration is limited. Fee: \$20/person. Ages 8 and up. Call us ASAP at 914-666-6503 or email [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org)



**Thursday, October 6 ♦ 9:00am from Millwood**

### Fire Island Hawk Watch

The hawk watch at the eastern end of Robert Moses State Park has been staffed by volunteers every fall for more than 25 years. Carpool or caravan with us from Millwood to join the excitement of counting migrating birds of prey on their way south. This is a great location for falcons in particular. We'll be joined by Drew Panko and Trudy Battaly at the hawk watch and see them in action as they identify and record passing raptors. (Their data can be found at [battaly.com/fire](http://battaly.com/fire)) Email or call to register and for more information.

## Suzi Oppenheimer Wins Audubon Award

In recognition for her outstanding commitment to the environment and leadership in advancing numerous conservation measures in the New York State Senate, Audubon New York selected State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer as the 2011 recipient of the William Hoyt Environmental Excellence Award. Oppenheimer represents part of northern and central Westchester, including Ossining, New Castle and the Sound Shore communities.

“Senator Suzi Oppenheimer exemplifies what every state legislator should do to protect the environment,” said John Hannan, Chair of the Audubon Council of New York State. “Her efforts to protect and preserve New York’s open space resources, and conserve the biodiversity of our state, are one of a kind.”



Suzi Oppenheimer (holding picture) receives Hoyt Award at the March 2011 Audubon NY Council meeting. SMRA board member Richard Saravay, current Chair of the Audubon NY Council, is 2nd from left in front row.

## Texas Birding Trip



Saw Mill River Audubon is currently planning an exciting trip in Spring 2012 to south Texas, one of the best birding areas in the entire country. We plan to time our visit to catch the northbound flow of neotropical migrants. Make plans to join us as we visit the lower Gulf coast’s birding hotspots. If you are interested in

receiving early notice of trip details as they develop, email or call our office ASAP. Space will be limited.

## New Board Member Profile

Chris Drury is no stranger to environmental causes, having worked for nonprofit environmental groups for more than 10 years, managing parks and community gardens in New York City. Chris joined the Board of Directors of Saw Mill River Audubon last April. He looks forward to working to increase the diversity of our membership and the communities that we serve. Another focus for Chris, that will tie in with his professional experience, is the management of SMRA’s sanctuaries. Welcome aboard, Chris!

## Ash Borer Threatens Area

Our woodlands and neighborhoods are being threatened by the spread of an invasive insect from Asia, the emerald ash borer (EAB). This beetle has been spreading across New York State. While there have been no sightings of this pest in Westchester, as a recent article in The Journal News points out, it’s only a matter of time—the EAB has been found on the grounds of the nearby U.S. Military Academy at West Point.



Adult emerald ash borer

The larvae of the EAB feed on the tissue of ash trees directly under the bark. This causes branches, and eventually the entire tree, to die. Millions of ashes in the Northeast and Midwest have already succumbed. You may have noticed strange looking purple boxes hanging in trees along local roads. These are traps with a special lure to attract the EAB. They are being placed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with the goal of early detection that will help manage this infestation.

If you see the EAB, you are urged to immediately contact Mike Singho of the USDA at 718.820.1300. More information is available online at: [www.stopthebeetle.info](http://www.stopthebeetle.info) and [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html)

## Welcome Members

- Bronville** Patrice A. Drury **Chappaqua** Bill and Jody Beck, Roger Welch
- Cortlandt Manor** Nicholas Colombo, Chris and Dana D’Ambrosio
- Croton-on-Hudson** Earl DePass, Olive H. Detering, George Pires
- Eastchester** Frank and Suzanne O’Rourke **Forest Hills** Joyce Grad
- Irvington** Anne Jaffe Holmes **Katonah** Peter and Joan Becker
- Mohegan Lake** James Walsh **Montrose** Barbara Anstett
- Peekskill** Kevin Fisher and Janet McGraw-Fisher **Port Chester** Stephanie Pardue
- Scarborough** Stanley and Eva Taben **Tuckahoe** Alan and Hilary Soiefer
- Yorktown Heights** Joseph and Andrea Tortorella

MORE CHAPTER NEWS

Pruyn Garden Gets A Makeover

Great things are happening in the garden at Pruyin Sanctuary! Our dedicated group of volunteer gardeners has been hard at work the past couple of years, making the garden more flowery than ever. And it is attracting, nourishing and sheltering an ever widening variety of butterflies, as well as providing nectar for our other regular visitors, ruby-throated hummingbirds.

The renovation started in the fall of 2009 when a large group of SMRA board members volunteered to dig up the center bed, compost and turn over the soil and replant all the perennials. This year our regular garden work team has done a substantial re-planting of new species. The new plantings provide both nectar and host plants for butterflies, as well as increasing the number of flowering plant species to provide nectar for hummingbirds. The garden is designed to bloom from early spring through late fall, nourishing various species of butterflies that occur throughout the growing season, as well as enchanting visitors whatever season they visit.

In designing the garden, preference has been given to plants that are native to the northeastern U.S. These native plants not only provide food for adult butterflies but are also host plants that feed their larvae, creating more butterflies. Many butterfly larvae can eat from only one type of host plant. We've planted orange milkweed for monarch butterflies, violets for great spangled fritillaries, asters for pearl crescents, Dutchman's pipe for pipevine swallowtails, and many others. You'll also see hummingbird favorites: brilliant red trumpet honeysuckle and bee balm. Check out the plant listings in the updated garden brochure, available at [sawmillriveraudubon.org/garden](http://sawmillriveraudubon.org/garden)

When you visit, be sure to walk into the arboretum outside the garden too. There are many specimen plantings of native shrubs and trees that are host plants, including juneberry, New Jersey tea, black cherry, eastern redbud, chestnut oak, bur oak, sassafras, pawpaw, sugar maple, sweet gum, basswood, river birch, mountain ash and box elder. These larger plants are important for butterflies and moths, as well as for other wildlife, with their nectar, seeds, nuts, berries and shelter.

The renovation and ongoing maintenance of the Pruyin garden has been made possible by a generous grant from Turner Construction Company. This grant has created an endowment for the garden that will give SMRA an annual operating fund to support the work of our volunteer gardeners, who over the years have worked diligently to maintain our beautiful garden. Volunteers work on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 am. If you would like to become a part of the garden team, we would welcome your help. Let us know by calling the office at 914.666.6503.



Garden volunteers (left to right) Donna Lassiter, Robert McCrillis and Joanne McAuley. (Not pictured: Tom McEnerney)

The garden is of a manageable size and we can see the results of our efforts in a single work session. The garden really shows its appreciation for the care it is given.

We gratefully acknowledge the work of our garden volunteers over the years. Special thanks are due to Bill Arnold, who solicited the Turner Construction Company grant, and Midge Arnold, under whose leadership the garden was created in 1999. Their guidance and hard work, with the support of many others, has sustained the garden for many years.

-- Donna Lassiter

## SMRA Monitors Local Development Proposal

A major housing development has been proposed in southern Yorktown in the general vicinity of SMRA's Pruyin and Choate Sanctuaries. The project, known as Croton Overlook, will be built on a 63 acre parcel directly above the New Croton Reservoir near the junction of Routes 100 and 134. The proposal calls for 70 town homes to be built on the site. SMRA has a number of concerns about the environmental impact of Croton Overlook, including potential negative effects on wildlife habitat and water quality. Executive Director Anne Swaim has sent a letter detailing these concerns to the Yorktown Town Board, the "lead agency" for the project. Additional information, including dates of upcoming public hearings and environmental impact documents, is available at: [www.yorktownny.org/townclerk/croton-overlook](http://www.yorktownny.org/townclerk/croton-overlook).

BIRDING

Get Involved with Project FeederWatch!

Join us at Croton Point Park this winter

Project FeederWatch (PFW) is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America.

FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

The 2011-2012 Project FeederWatch season begins November 12. Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

**Who can participate?**

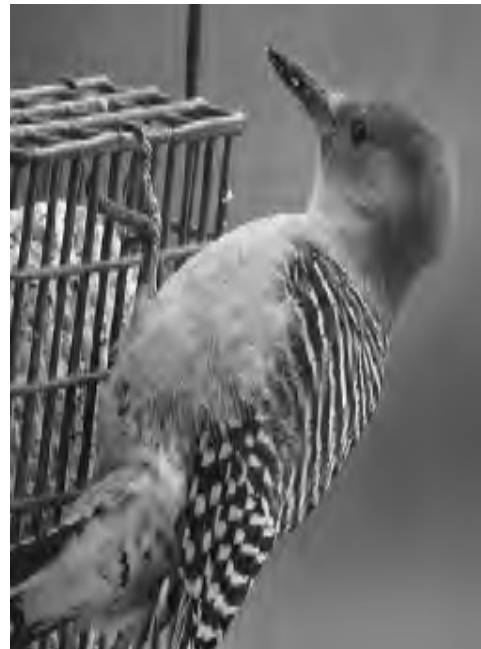
Anyone with an interest in birds! FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs.

**What will I do?**

Count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you have provided (plantings, food, or water). For each species, you will report only the highest number of individuals that you see in view at one time. By following this procedure, you are certain to avoid counting the same bird more than once. You will report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology either over their web site or on their paper data forms. Learn more about how to count birds for FeederWatch in the instructions section of the PFW website at [www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw).

**Does It Cost Money?**

There is a \$15 annual participation fee for those counting at their own locations, which covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and a year-end report (Winter Bird Highlights.) Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of participants, this project wouldn't be possible. To participate at Croton Point, there is no fee.



Red-bellied woodpecker at suet feeder

**Join a Local FeederWatch this winter at Croton Point**

Saw Mill River Audubon is partnering with Croton Point Park Nature Center to establish a Project FeederWatch site this winter.

Every Saturday and Sunday morning from 8:00 am to 10:00 am from Saturday, November 12 until Sunday, April 1, we are seeking volunteers to stop by the nature center and observe and count birds visiting the feeding station. You are welcome to drop by the nature center without pre-registration to take part in the feeder watch.

**Project FeederWatch Volunteer Training**

We will hold a training session for interested volunteers on Saturday, November 5, 10:00 am at the Croton Point Nature Center. Come to this training if you plan to volunteer on weekends at Croton Point OR come to this workshop if you'd like to know more about Project FeederWatch to do a feeder watch somewhere else! A small donation of \$5/person is requested for this workshop for materials. See event details on page 5.

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 MORE FALL ADVENTURES  
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**Saturday, October 8 ♦ 9:00 am**  
**Second Saturday Walk**  
**at Brinton Brook**

See description for September 10.

**Saturday, October 15 and Sunday, October 16**  
**9:00am to 2:00pm both days**

**Fall Bird Seed Sale Weekend**

Our annual bird seed sale is a significant fundraiser for our local conservation efforts. We purchase bulk supplies of high quality seed with a major delivery this fall weekend by tractor trailer behind the New Castle Town Hall in Chappaqua. Pre-order deadline is October 7. Visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seedsale](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seedsale) for seed types and prices, and to pre-order seed. Volunteers are needed and warmly welcomed during our fall sale weekend with jobs for all energy levels. To volunteer, call or email our office. Coffee, donuts and pizza provided for seed sale volunteers!

**Saturday, November 5 ♦ 10:00 am**  
**Project FeederWatch Workshop**  
**Croton Point Park Nature Center**

Come find out about Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project Feeder-Watch. To attend this volunteer workshop, please call or email us by Friday, November 4 so we have sufficient materials and space. A \$5/donation is suggested to cover materials and refreshments.

**Tuesday, November 8 ♦ 9:00 am**  
**Election Day Birds at Teatown**

Cross-listed as a courtesy. Teatown Lake Reservation is offering this free bird walk on the Election Day holiday. After you vote, come take a bird walk!

**Friday, November 11 ♦ 7:00 pm**  
**Public Program:**  
**Wonder of Wildflowers**  
**Ossining Public Library Theatre**

Be introduced to some of the most spectacular flower displays on the planet by guest lecturer Dr. Bob Gibbons, well known British author, photographer, and tour leader. His amazing photo essay will showcase flowers and landscapes from the most flowery places on earth.

This program is co-hosted by Teatown Lake Reservation and is free and open to the public. Dr. Gibbons' talk will highlight the work involved in his latest book, *Wildflower Wonders of the World*. Suggested for ages 10 and up.

**Saturday, November 12 ♦ 9:00 am**  
**Second Saturday Walk**  
**at Brinton Brook**

See description for September 10.

**Saturday, November 19 ♦ 8:00 am from Millwood**  
**DeKorte for Waterfowl and More**

Hackensack Meadows/Richard W. DeKorte State Park in New Jersey offers good fall birding within 2,000 acres of the Meadowlands including marsh harriers, winter sparrows and abundant waterfowl. To register, call or email by Thursday, November 17. A donation of \$5/adult is suggested.

**Friday, November 25 ♦ 10:00 am**  
**Turkey Mountain Hike, Yorktown**

Come walk off your Thanksgiving feast with a moderate 1.5 hr hike on the trails atop Turkey Mountain in Yorktown which offers a beautiful vista of the lower Hudson Valley. Bring binoculars and water. Call or email our office to register by Wednesday, November 23. A donation of \$5/adult is suggested.

**Saturday, December 10 ♦ 10:00 am**  
**Attracting Winter Backyard Birds**  
**Croton Point Park**

Saw Mill River Audubon will be offering this workshop in partnership with the Croton Point Nature Center. Come and learn about different seeds and feeders that attract winter birds. Learn what different birds like to eat and answers to frequently asked questions about bird feeding in our area. Free and open to the public.

**Information for All Field Trips**

We ask you to call our office at 914-666.6503  
 OR email us at [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org)  
 before all SMRA-led trips that require registration  
 so that we know to expect you.

Most trips run rain or shine. If we do need to cancel a trip, we will call or email all who are registered.

Please let us know which contact you prefer.

We will also put a notice on our web site and our office answering machine in the event of trip changes or cancellations.

To support our local conservation efforts, we also ask for a voluntary donation of \$5 per adult for SMRA-led trips.

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
275 Millwood Road  
Chappaqua, New York 10514

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

Deadline for Next Newsletter: Nov. 1

**Saw Mill River Audubon**

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# PLANT THE SEED!

“We come from the earth, we return to the earth, and in between we garden.” Author unknown

Your gift to Saw Mill River Audubon helps us encourage more people to enjoy the natural world and care about the protection of birds and other wildlife and their habitats.

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



## 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
- Please send me information about planned giving opportunities.

Name(s)

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone/Email

Please make checks payable to:

Saw Mill River Audubon  
275 Millwood Road  
Chappaqua, NY 10514