

** e-newsletter version. for inserts, click below:

www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Dinner



On the Wing

February / March 2014

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Photo: Anne Swaim

A group of intrepid SMRA birders braved sleet and cold winds on a recent field trip to Long Island. These long-tailed ducks were seen off Point Lookout. See page 3 to find out about future birding trips to Long Island and coastal New Jersey.

AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

Join us! For more information call 914.666.6503 or visit

Eagle Monitoring at Verplanck

Thursdays in February (February 6, 13, 20, 27) ♦ 3:30–5:15 pm



We're joining our sister chapter, Bedford Audubon, to monitor the winter roosts of bald eagles on the Hudson River shore. We start about an hour and a half before dusk at the Verplanck Dock and count and age the eagles coming to roost along the river. Stop by and join us! Call if you need directions. [Photo: Bonnie Talluto]



Hudson River EagleFest 2014

Saturday, February 8 ♦ 9:00 am–4:00 pm (Snow date: Feb. 9)

Our celebration of the return of the bald eagle to the Hudson River Valley continues with this day-long event, Teatown Lake Reservation's Hudson River EagleFest. Eagle viewing locations include the Croton River boat ramp, George's Island Park, Croton Dam, and Peekskill Riverfront Green. SMRA is sponsoring warming tents at the first two locations, leading birds walks from the Eagle Headquarters pavilion in Croton Point County Park and offering our "Raptors for Rookies" program in the morning inside the Eagle Headquarters. General admission to EagleFest allows you to participate in all activities for one fee, including: entrance to Eagle Headquarters, Eaglet Stage shows, Bird Shows, Bird Walks, activities in the Kids Tent and more (bus tour is extra). For more information visit:

www.teatown.org/teatown-events/eaglefest.html



General admission to EagleFest allows you to participate in all activities for one fee, including: entrance to Eagle Headquarters, Eaglet Stage shows, Bird Shows, Bird Walks, activities in the Kids Tent and more (bus tour is extra). For more information visit:

Winter Seed Sales

Every Third Saturday:

February 15

March 15

9:30 am–12:30 pm

At Pruyn Sanctuary

We still have an
assortment of
high-quality seed!

Weekday sales are available
Mon/Wed/Fri 10:30 am–3:30 pm.
Call 914.666.6503 for more info.
All proceeds support SMRA's
local conservation work.

FeederWatch at Croton Point Nature Center

Saturdays and Sundays in February and March ♦ 8:00–10:00 am

Project Feederwatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders in backyards, nature centers and other locations sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Drop by the Croton Point County Park Nature Center on any Saturday or Sunday through March 30 to help us identify and count the birds visiting the bird feeders. For more about Project FeederWatch visit: feederwatch.org

Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook

Saturday, February 8 ♦ 9:00 am

Our monthly walks continue year-round at our largest sanctuary: Brinton Brook in Croton-on-Hudson. Walk with us and experience the changing seasons. No pre-registration needed. For ages 6 and up. Held regardless of weather except in cases of severe weather or road closures.

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

Christmas Bird Count Results

SMRA would like to thank our members and friends who participated in the 114th annual Christmas Bird Count in December, 2013. Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves 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.

Locally, 91 species were recorded in the Peekskill count circle. The six most numerous species were: Canada goose (2920), common merganser (1318), dark-eyed junco (977), European starling (837), white-throated sparrow (624) and ring-billed gull (551).

For thirteen species only one individual was recorded, including peregrine falcon, merlin, lesser scaup, ruby-crowned kinglet and eastern meadowlark.

For Additional information about the Christmas Bird Count, visit: birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count

A Duck Dynasty in New York

Did you know that the Central Park Zoo is home to more sea ducks (by numbers and species count) than any zoo in the world? Overall, the zoo's collection boasts 23 duck species, some of which are rare or threatened in the wild. A captive breeding program for ducks at the Central Park zoo has been very effective and is helping inform conservationists about how ducks breed. For more information and to plan your visit, go to: www.centralparkzoo.com



The pink-eared duck, a native of Australia, is on exhibit at the Tisch Children's Zoo in the Central Park Zoo.

Photo: Wikipedia.org

AUDUBON ANNUAL DINNER

Sunday, April 6, 2014, 5:00 pm

Table 9, Cortlandt Manor

Join us at our 2014 Annual Dinner. We'll celebrate another year of Audubon activities connecting people with nature at Table 9 Restaurant on the Annsville Circle in Cortlandt Manor.

Enjoy great food, good company and engaging and beautiful presentations. Don't miss this fun and friendly gathering! Will you be in our pictures of 2013 places and faces? Come and see!

We're especially pleased this year to recognize Executive Director Anne Swaim for her 25 years of service to Saw Mill River Audubon.

Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Dinner to reserve your spaces or use the enclosed form.

Our thanks to Joan Coffey

Saw Mill River Audubon is grateful for the dedicated volunteers on our board and committees who help us connect people with nature. One of these is Joan Coffey who recently resigned from our board after 12 years of service. Joan was a great assistance on our field trip committee and at many different special events and continues to be involved with the Monday Walkers.

Restoring Wildlife Habitat at Croton Point



On Tuesday, February 18 at 7:00 pm, the **Croton Green Living Series** will feature a presentation on restoring wildlife habitats at Croton Point. Held at the **Croton Free Library**, the program will be presented by SMRA Executive Director Anne Swaim who will discuss how area conservationists are working together to protect and improve this significant bird area. Join us for beautiful photographs, a discussion of the current issues facing the park, and some simple ways you can help save this invaluable Westchester County treasure.

Jeff Seneca photographed the above rough-legged hawk at Croton Point Park this winter.

Whipping Winter Winds and Wandering Widgeons

The winter session of SMRA's Birders U took place on January 3–4, with a dozen duck enthusiasts taking Anne Swaim's 1-hour crash course on waterfowl at the Croton Point Nature Center on Friday. The following morning, a slightly smaller group braved freezing temperatures and the howling winds of Long Island Sound to put their knowledge to the test, spotting shorebirds at Edith Read Sanctuary in Rye; a yet more intrepid group soldiered on to Stratford, CT in the afternoon.

The rewards of the day were many—a total of 50 species was counted, using many of the techniques and hints spelled out in class the night before. Scaup, red-breasted and hooded mergansers, and bufflehead were among the half-century of species; a quintet of fish crows in Rye was probably wondering why the heck we were out there at all.

Although a much-hoped-for snowy owl did not show itself against the snows and sands of Connecticut, we did spy, amongst a flotilla of American widgeons, a surprise visitor: a male Eurasian widgeon, distinguished by his striking chestnut-colored head. At Short Beach State Park we also ID'd some lovely Lapland longspurs mixed in with a flock of snow buntings. Eagle-eyed Phil Heidelberger noticed a merlin in the distance, which we watched as it patrolled an open field in search of winter prey.

Overall, what a great experience! We returned to our well-heated homes with a new copy of Chris Earley's *Waterfowl of Eastern North America* and a much better idea of the variety of birds passing through our waters. Thanks to Anne for the great class and to Christine McCluskey for reporting our findings via eBird—my pen stopped working after an hour or so.

The Spring 2014 Birders U session will focus on warblers on the evening of Fri May 2 followed by a field trip on Sat, May 3.

--Brian Kluepfel

FEBRUARY (cont.)

Mondays ♦ 8:30 am

Monday Morning Birdwalks

Come along with us on a free weekly birding walk at a local birding hotspot. Call or email for directions and where to meet or if you want to borrow binoculars. Beginners encouraged! The February/March schedule includes:

Feb. 10 & Mar. 10—Rockefeller State Pk.

Feb. 17—Kingsland Point County Park

Feb. 24 & Mar. 24—Croton Point Park

Mar. 3—Muscoot Farm County Park

Thursday, February 13 ♦ 7:00 pm Intro to Nature Photography Croton Free Library

Don Elmendorf, an experienced outdoor photographer, will offer an introduction to nature photography with valuable tips and techniques, to be followed by a hands-on workshop at Croton Point Nature Center on Saturday, March 1. The Croton Library program will be free and open to the public. We'll be offering free but limited registration for the March 1 field workshop. Preview Don's beautiful photography at: www.donelmendorf.com



Photo: Kyle Bardwell

Sunday, February 16 Field Trip: Birding the New Jersey Coast

We'll be traveling to New Jersey to make a few steps at likely waterfowl spots including Barnegat Lighthouse for harlequin ducks. Register at 914-666-6503 or office@sawmillriveraudubon.org and we'll keep you in the loop on meeting place and departure time.

MARCH

Saturday, March 1 ♦ 3:00–5:00 pm

Workshop: Field Photography at Croton Point Nature Center

Professional photographer Don Elmendorf will lead this hands-on workshop on nature photography in Croton Point County Park. Registration is free but space will be limited so contact us ASAP at 914-666-6503 or office@sawmillriveraudubon.org to reserve your place!

Saturday, March 8 ♦ 9:00 am

Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook Sanctuary

See Feb. 8 event on p.1 for details.

Saturday, March 15 ♦ Eve

Field Trip: Woodcock Walk

Watch for details on an excursion to view the evening flight of woodcock.

Thursday, March 27 ♦ 7:00–8:30 pm

Public Program: Rockefeller State Park Preserve Habitats

Susan Antenen, Rockefeller State Park Preserve's new Park Manager, will update us on ideas to highlight RSPP's native flora and fauna including restoration and stewardship of the forest, fields and aquatic systems. She will present analyses of Park Naturalist Richard Nelson's 25 year of bird observations and ideas for how local birders can help the Preserve expand its bird monitoring.

Saturday, March 29

Leaders Choice Birding!

This trip's destination will depend on recent bird reports. Join SMRA Exec Dir Anne Swaim from morning to early afternoon for early spring birding. Register at 914-666-6503 or at office@sawmillriveraudubon.org and we'll let you know the itinerary and time and place to meet up.

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Save the Date!
Audubon Annual Dinner
April 6, 2014

Deadline for next newsletter: **March 1**


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A SENSE OF COMMUNITY
“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect”
Aldo Leopold



Saw Mill River Audubon has been a local voice for the environment since 1953. Your gift helps us fulfill our mission of habitat preservation, education and advocacy—for now and for generations to come.

I WISH TO DONATE

Enclosed is:

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Enclosed is \$30
 Please send me planned giving info

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