



# SMRA

SAW MILL RIVER AUDUBON

## Fall 2014



*Our Prugn Garden volunteers have been hard at work all summer with beautiful results.*



*Ospreys successfully nested on the Croton train station cell tower this summer. Photo: Billy Liljeeros*



*Jim Bourdon captured this beautiful image of a special visitor to Croton Point Park on July 14: an American Avocet! See story on page 2.*



*On the Wing: Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: Jeff Seneca*

## Upcoming Events

Visit our Google calendar at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar) for more event details or call our office at (914) 666-6503 or email us at [office@sawmillriveraudubon.org](mailto:office@sawmillriveraudubon.org). Be sure to subscribe to our free, private email list to get additional details and early notice of new trips and events. Visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list) to subscribe. To receive our newsletters in color via email, visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/enews](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/enews).

**Every Monday:** Free guided bird walks at area hotspots: 1st Mon: Muscoot Farm, 2nd Mon: Rockefeller State Park Preserve, 3rd Mon: Tarrytown Lakes, 4th Mon: Croton Point Park, 5th Mon: location varies.

### September

Saturday, September 6: Field Trip: Sandy Hook National Seashore, NJ  
 Friday, September 12: Special Program: NY Birds & Climate Change  
 Saturday, September 13: Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook, Croton  
 Sunday, September 14: Field Trip: Larchmont Reservoir  
 Wednesday, September 17: Field Trip: Hook Mtn Hawk Watch, Nyack  
 Friday, September 26: Birders U: Birding 101 Workshop  
 Saturday, September 27: Field Trip: Fire Island Hawk Watch

### October

Saturday, October 4 & Sunday, October 5: Bird Seed Sale Weekend  
 Friday, October 10 to Sunday, October 12: Fall Coastal Birding Weekend  
 Saturday, October 11: Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook, Croton  
 Saturday, October 18: Trees for Tribs Planting at Brinton Brook, Croton  
 Saturday, October 25: Field Trip: Great Swamp NWR, NJ

### November

Saturday, November 8: Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook, Croton  
 Saturday, November 8: Project FeederWatch begins  
 Saturday, November 15: Field Trip: Leader's Choice for Rarities  
 Friday, November 28: Field Trip: Turkey Mountain Hike

**Check our Google calendar for additional events & in case of weather changes.**

## Birding Notes

### Avocet at Croton Point

On July 14, shortly after finishing my morning coffee on the bench at the Croton Point Park swimming beach, naturalist Christopher Letts came rushing up to me, wondering if I'd seen the American Avocet at water's edge. The beautiful adult male bird was still in breeding plumage. We both enjoyed wonderful looks at this *bona fide*

rarity, and after getting word out, a few others were able to get to the park for a glimpse before it flew off. Fortunately, also nearby in the park was Jim Bourdon, who captured the image on page 1. This sighting was rare indeed for Westchester, as I later learned from Michael Bochnik of Hudson River Audubon (keeper of the records). This bird, which later crossed over to Rockland before heading for the

Bronx, will be only the fifth accepted record of an American Avocet for the County!

*Larry Trachtenberg*

### SMRA Coastal Birding

On May 9-11 SMRA visited a series of birding hotspots along the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean shoreline. We began at Bombay Hook NWR in Smyrna, DE, with expansive tidal salt marshes offering up views of Black-Necked Stilt, Black-bellied Plover, Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher and Semipalmated Sandpipers. We were also pleased to find a Gull-billed Tern, and get scope looks at a regional rarity, a Wilson's Plover! Purple Martins filled their houses, and a few of us had a close encounter with a stunning Blue Grosbeak.

Throughout the weekend we appreciated a variety of warblers, though we were surprised at their low numbers. After a morning at Prime Hook NWR, we were treated to another

local specialty at Cape Henlopen State Park: gregarious Brown-headed Nuthatches.

A ferry crossing to Cape May, New Jersey's Reed's Beach did not disappoint, as we were wowed by clusters of Red Knots, which migrate over 9,000 miles from Arctic breeding grounds to Tierra del Fuego in South America.

Sunday brought us to "Brig," (aka the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR), 47,000 acres of southern New Jersey coastal habitat. The highlight was extended viewing of the secretive Clapper Rail bathing out in the open!

In sum, a fabulous weekend of bird watching (over 130 species), good company, beautiful scenery, terrific weather and some delicious meals as well!

Stay tuned for future weekend birding trips from SMRA!

*Christine McCluskey*

### Saw Mill River Audubon

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*Listen for Screech  
Owls this fall!*



## Education

### Scholarship Recipient

Alex Chin, a freshman at Greeley High School in Chappaqua, is our 2014 Larry Light Scholarship recipient. Alex attended two weeks of the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's Wildlife Camp this summer. Start planning for next summer! Visit our web site to apply.

### Education Outreach

Our outreach programs for 2014-2015 are booking now! We offer classroom programs about Westchester wildlife and guided field trips to our local sanctuaries. Suitable for all grades and also for scout groups and adult community groups. Visit our web site to see more about our programs.

### Birders U

In 2013, our seasonal, small group birding workshops were all sellouts! Birders U: Birding 101 is being offered on Friday, September 26.

What are New York birds telling us about climate change? Groundbreaking new analysis coming this fall from National Audubon!



## Sanctuaries

### Sanctuary Intern

This fall, Clayton Fagan, a recent graduate of SUNY Oneonta in Environmental Studies, will be mapping invasive species in our sanctuaries, helping with our Trees for Tribes planting (see next article), and investigating water quality in our streams.

### Trees for Tribes

We'll be doing another round of planting native trees and shrubs in Brinton Brook Sanctuary this fall. This NYS DEC program helps streamside habitats of Hudson River tributaries. Want to help? Email or call us for more details.

### New Bench at Pruyn

Thanks to a grant from the Camp Fire Conservation Fund, we have a new bench in Pruyn Sanctuary this summer in a great location to sit and observe both swamp and forest habitat and wildlife.



## Advocacy

### Croton Point Park

We are continuing to monitor the management of the main capped landfill at Croton Point which is valuable grassland habitat. At least three singing Grasshopper Sparrows were present this summer with confirmed breeding success seen in fledglings being fed by adults.

Coming soon is a new interpretive sign funded through Audubon New York that will highlight the park's bird habitats.

### New York Birds and Climate Change

As this newsletter goes to the printer, we are anticipating a major media release from National Audubon on the impact

of climate change on birds. Our September public program (see calendar on page 1) will share this groundbreaking new analysis on birds and climate change gathered by National Audubon.

To learn more and track this issue, visit: [www.birdsandclimate.org](http://www.birdsandclimate.org)





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*Look for White-throated Sparrows to arrive back in our area in late September or early October traveling from their more northern nesting grounds to spend the winter here.*

**Connecting People and Nature since 1953**



*American Goldfinches flocking to the thistle feeder at the Croton Point Nature Center. Photo: Bonnie Talluto*

## *Bird Seed Sale Kickoff!*

**Saturday, October 4 and Sunday, October 5, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm each day,** we'll be in Chappaqua behind New Castle Town Hall for our annual bird seed sale kickoff weekend.

Our bird seed sale provides important financial support for our local conservation work.

**Our 2014-2015 seed sale flyer is enclosed in this newsletter and online at our web site.**

Sales will continue through the fall and winter from Pruyn Sanctuary including our 3rd Saturday Sale Days.

**Volunteers Invited!** Come work with a friendly group of people and help support our local conservation work! Volunteers are invited for our October seed sale kick-off weekend and for our 3rd Saturday seed sales. Call or email us to be part of our seed sale team.

**Want to learn more about bird feeding and birds in your backyard?** Come to our Birders U: Birding 101 special edition workshop on Friday, September 26. Space is limited so call or email soon to reserve your space. See our web site for details and registration.