



Sanderling in flight. Photo: Steve Rappaport

Fall 2019 Upcoming Events



In June, SMRA volunteers Charlie Roberto and Larry Trachtenberg helped lead a New York State Young Birders Club field trip to Fahnestock State Park. Photo: Anne Swaim



Our Burke Plants for Birds Garden grew amazingly well this summer with all the rain! Stop by to see it this fall. Pictured here are garden volunteers hard at work this summer. Photo: Anne Swaim



Our June Board and Volunteer Picnic at Senasqua Park was chillier than expected but enjoyed by many. Pictured are Peter and Gillian Corfield and John and Lynn Salmon. Photo: William Kellner

Visit our Google calendar at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar for more events, event details, and any schedule changes. Be sure to subscribe to our free, private email list to get additional details and early notice of new trips and events, including "pop-up" trips that we may add a few days before the trip. Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list to subscribe.

Every Monday, 7:30 am or 8:30 am, Free Bird Walks

September walks start at 7:30 am and October through April walks start at 8:30 am. See page 5 for weekly locations or check our website.

Every Second Saturday, 9:00 am, Brinton Brook Sanctuary Guided Hike

Fall Public Programs - See Pages 4 & 5 for more fall events

Thursday, September 19, 7:00 pm, Croton Free Library Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge

Bill and Carolyn Golden will present their photographs of the birds from the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Note: SMRA is offering an October 2019 Coastal Birding Trip across the Columbus Day weekend including two nights at Chincoteague! Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/coastal.

Wednesday, September 25, 6:30 pm Reception, 7:00 pm Film *Free Film Screening: Paris to Pittsburgh* Chappaqua Performing Arts Center

See more details on pages 2 and 4 about this special event co-sponsored by many local organizations including seven area Audubon chapters.

Thursday, October 17, 7:00 pm, Croton Free Library Birds and Beasts of Galapagos & Rainforests of Ecuador

SMRA members Lynn and John Salmon spent June 2019 hiking, snorkeling, kayaking, cruising and photographing the Galapagos, the Andean cloud forest and the Amazonian rainforest of Ecuador. More details online.

Saturday, October 26, 9:00 am to 12:30 pm, Westchester County Center *Climate Change Boot Camp*

See more details on page 2 and 4 about this special event co-sponsored by many local organizations including seven area Audubon chapters.

Thursday, November 7, 7:00 pm, Millwood Fire Station New York State's Third Breeding Bird Atlas

How are New York birds doing? What might we learn about climate and habitat change with a new census of birds that nest in New York compared with Atlas data collected by volunteer birders 20 and 40 years ago? Presentation by NYS Atlas Project Coordinator Julie Hart. More details online.

To enjoy this newsletter in color, visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/news

President's Message

"We're not waiting for Washington" is the tagline of the film *Paris to Pittsburgh* which looks at the growing responses of cities and states to climate change across the United States. Regardless of the current political troubles in Washington, we're not waiting either at Saw Mill River Audubon.

This fall, we are offering two different important climate change events, in partnership with six other area Audubon chapters, the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County and other partners.



Valerie Lyle, SMRA President

Our thanks especially to SMRA Vice President Tom Ruth for coordinating our 2019 climate change outreach.

Climate change can seem too complex and overwhelming, leaving us feeling powerless and discouraged. But we're not powerless and we're not discouraged.

Saw Mill River Audubon

275 Millwood Road Chappaqua, NY 10514 914.666.6503 | office@sawmillriveraudubon.org Visit us online: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

President: Valerie Lyle Vice President: Thomas Ruth Treasurer: Thomas McEnerney Secretary: William Kellner Board Chair: Richard Saravay Editor: Brian Kluepfel Circulation: Jean Sparacin Executive Director: Anne Swaim Office Manager: Ellen Heidelberger Marketing & Fundraising: Barbara Campbell Educator: Pete Salmansohn Sanctuary Maintenance: Danny Ferguson

ON THE WING, Saw Mill River Audubon's newsletter, is published four (4) times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer) for \$7.50 a year by Saw Mill River Audubon, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514. Periodical Postage #013281 at Chappaqua, NY 10514. ISSN: 1545-5254 at Chappaqua, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Address changes to: Saw Mill River Audubon, 275 Millwood Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514 Here are two antidotes we are offering this fall:

First is a free screening of Paris to Pittsburgh, Wednesday, September 25, 6:30 pm for a reception and 7:00 pm film start, held at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center. Come get encouraged and inspired by how people like us are taking action to combat climate change. We thank the Town of New Castle for providing this wonderful venue and Films on Purpose for co-sponsoring and arranging a brief panel discussion after the film about what's being done locally.

Second is a "Climate Change Boot Camp," the morning of Saturday, October 26 at the Westchester County Center. Get up to speed about what climate change effects to expect here in the lower Hudson Valley and hear more

SMRA Youth Scholarships

Don't miss Erik Brodsky's article on page 7 about his summer adventure in Maine, supported by a SMRA scholarship. Find out more about our youth scholarships: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org /scholarships about state, county, and local actions to prepare for climate change and help mitigate it. Event support from Audubon New York. Venue provided with assistance from the Westchester County Executive's Office for Energy Conservation and Sustainability.

Visit our website for more details and registration for both events.

Don't feel overwhelmed! Come join us for these climate change events this fall to get climate smart and find out how you can take action with us to make a difference.

Valerie Lyle

See also Audubon New York's take on recent New York State climate change legislation: ny.audubon.org/news/newyork-passes-strongest-climateact-nation

Joan Coffey

Saw Mill River Audubon notes with sadness the passing of former Board Member Joan Coffey in Maine on August 2. Joan delighted in all things nature. Our condolences to friends and family and our gratitude for sharing part of Joan's life.

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Welcome New Saw Mill River Audubon Board Members

Louisa Gagliardi

Hello, my name is Louisa Gagliardi. I grew up in lower Westchester and I have always had a passion for the outdoors.

After moving back to the area about six years ago, I started exploring county and state parks in our area with different eyes.

I am a veterinary technician and my boss, who is a longtime birder, had convinced me to start identifying birds on my hikes.

I was introduced to SMRA just over two years ago, when I went on the spring 2017 trip to Ohio. I was instantly hooked; everyone on the trip was so kind, and the birding was amazing.

I knew that this group would help me learn and expand not only as a birder, but also as a person.



Louisa at 2019 SMRA Dinner where she gave a presentation about SMRA travel. Photo: Debbie van Zyl

The educational programs and walks are what drew me to the club. Then I started to understand the extent of its conservation efforts and I was amazed. I am looking forward to helping make a difference in our community through conservation and education.

Thank you again for the board nomination and this opportunity!

Louisa Gagliardi

SMRA Note: Louisa's first project idea is our Fall 2019 Birdathon! See details on page 4.

Steve Rappaport

My deep affinity for nature began at a young age. Growing up in Dutchess County, I had the privilege of unrestricted access to 75+ acres of woodland right outside my doorstep. Learning and exploring the world around me was my favorite pastime. My father, a teacher of electronics for more than 30 years, sparked my interest in technology at a young age as well, and I continue to enjoy a career in information technology.

In the summer of 2015, on a whim, I decided to hang a hummingbird feeder in my back yard, and the small birds arrived right away! I watched the hummers come and go, and found myself longing to see the details of their tiny feathers. I began tinkering with a DSLR camera in an attempt to capture photos of these



Steve Rappaport. Photo by Steve!

zippy birds, and this activity blossomed into my two favorite hobbies: birding and photography.

Now I look for every opportunity to find, identify, and record the many birds around us, and to share my photos with those who may not know what beautiful life surrounds them in their own backyards.

I often find myself in Saw Mill River Audubon sanctuaries, so I became a member and started participating in events.

Wanting to become more involved with such a great group of people and an excellent organization, I inquired about board membership. I appreciate the opportunity to serve SMRA in any way that I can.

Steve Rappaport

SMRA Note: In addition to generous sharing of his bird photography for SMRA education and outreach. Steve also donated a new bench to SMRA for the Pruyn Garden, in memory of his mother. See page 8.

2019–2020 Bird Seed Sale — Flyer enclosed in this newsletter!

Saw Mill River Audubon's annual bird seed sale supports our local conservation and education work. Once a year in the early fall, we order bulk quantities of high-quality bird seed for sale to the members and friends of Saw Mill River Audubon.

At our sale kick-off day, Saturday September 28, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, we offer pick up of pre-orders as well as walk-in orders at our one-day location behind New Castle Town Hall, across from Chappaqua Library.

We also offer seed pickup through the winter into spring during office hours at Pruyn Sanctuary (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm) and also on 3rd Saturday mornings at Pruyn Sanctuary from November to March.

Online ordering is available at our website at: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed

Want to help at our sale kick-off day or at our 3rd Saturday sale days? Contact our office at 914-666-6503 or by email to office@sawmillriveraudubon.org to join up with a friendly crew of people working together to support Saw Mill River Audubon.

September Events

Sunday, September 8, 5:30-7:30 pm

Croton Point Bird Walk Join us for a walk to enjoy the See more details to the right late afternoon bird activity and see the sunset over the Hudson River. Meet at the ballfield parking lot.

Saturday, September 14, 9:00 am Second Saturday Walk **Brinton Brook**

No registration needed. Rain or shine. Meet in main parking area. Good for adults and young people age 8 and up. This month's walk is part of the Hudson Valley Ramble.

Tuesday, September 17, 7:00 pm Saw Mill River Audubon Nature Book Club Mount Pleasant Library, Pleasantville

No registration needed. Come join the discussion whether or not you have read the book. We will be discussing American Eden: David Hosack, Botany and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic by Victoria Johnson. See page 6.

Thursday, September 19, 7:00 pm

Program: Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Bill and Carolyn Golden will be presenting their photographs of the birds from the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. More info online.

Sunday, September 22, 7:00 am

Birding the Black Dirt We're heading over to Orange County's famed Black Dirt region in search of fall migrants including grasspipers. For more information and to register for this trip, please call or email us.

Wednesday, September 25 Free Film Screening: Paris to Pittsburgh and online. Register today!

Saturday, September 28, 9:00 am-4:00 pm Seed Sale Kickoff Day See details on enclosed flyer.

Sunday, September 29, 6:00-9:00 am Migrants at Rockefeller State Park Preserve We'll be in search of the fall warbler migration. Meet in the main parking lot.

October Events

Friday, October 4 to Sunday, October 6 Fall Birdathon! See box below right & visit our website for details.

Thursday, October 10 to Monday, October 14 **Coastal Birding Trip** We'll be exploring wildlife refuges in Delaware, Virginia and New Jersey. Details online.

Thursday, October 17, 7:00 pm Program: Galapagos and the Rainforest of Ecuador Lynn and John Salmon will bring images and stories of their travels this past June. More details online.

Sunday, October 20, 8:00 am

Birding Croton Point Meet us in the ballfield parking. No registration needed.

Saturday, October 26, 9:00 am-12:30 pm **Climate Change Boot Camp** Westchester County Center

See article page 2 and box above. Register at our website.



Special September Event

Wednesday, September 25 Film Screening Paris to Pittsburgh 6:30 pm Reception

7:00 pm Film Chappaqua Performing Arts Center

Come get encouraged about how towns, cities and states across our country are stepping up to confront climate change and not waiting for Washington! Co-sponsored by Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, Films on Purpose, and seven area Audubon chapters with venue support from the Town of New Castle and the Chappaqua Library. Reserve your free Eventbrite tickets by clicking on the event graphic on the front page of our website.

Special October Event Saturday, October 26, 9:00 am-12:30 pm **Climate Change Boot Camp** Westchester County Center

Don't be overwhelmed but get encouraged and empowered. Find out what local effects of climate change to expect. Learn what's being done locally to prepare for climate change and also how to reduce our impacts. Get climate smart! Visit our website or our Facebook page to learn more.

JOIN THE BIRDATHON!

Friday, October 4 to Sunday, October 6

Bird in your own backyard, or bird at your favorite hotspot, or bird across six counties of New York!

Gather 1–4 other birders to form a team and enter our Fall 2019 Birdathon to compete with other birders, win prizes,

$\sim AND \sim$ Support the local work of Saw Mill River Audubon!

Categories for all levels of birders!

ALL DETAILS & REGISTRATION

www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/birdathon

November Events

Tuesday, November 5, 7:00 pm Saw Mill River Audubon Nature Book Club Mount Pleasant Library

Come join the discussion or just to listen. We will be discussing *The Endurance* by Caroline Alexander, telling the unforgettable story of Shackleton's Antarctic expedition. See more about our book club on page 6.

Thursday, November 7, 7:00 pm Public Program: New York State's Third Breeding Bird Atlas Millwood Fire Station See page one for overview and our website for details.

Saturday, November 9, 9:00 am Second Saturday Walk Brinton Brook See description for 9/14.

Sunday, November 10, 9:00–11:00 am Bird Walk at Constitution Marsh, Garrison Join us for a walk through this wonderful Audubon New York property in Putnam. See details online.

Saturday & Sunday, November 9 & 10, 9:00–11:00 am Project FeederWatch Croton Point Nature Cntr Count birds at the bird feeders, viewing from inside the nature center. Beginners encouraged. Great opportunity for photography too. Continues every weekend until the end of March!

Saturday, November 16, 9:30 am–12:30 pm Third Sat Bird Seed Sale Meet our volunteers at the seed shed at Pruyn Sanctuary to pick up your seed. Saturday, November 23. 8:00 am

Edith Read for Ducks Meet by Playland Lake for waterfowl watching at Edith Read Sanctuary. No registration needed.

Friday, November 29, 9:00 am

Turkey Mountain Hike

Walk off your Thanksgiving feast with a walk up Turkey Mountain in Yorktown. No registration needed. Meet in main parking area off Route 118. Good for adults and young people age 8 and up.

Saturday, November 30, 7:30–10:30 am Croton Point Birding

Meet us in the ballfield parking lot on the left as you enter Croton Point Park. No registration needed.

Christmas Bird Counts

Now in its 120th year! Birders count all possible birds in 15-mile diameter count circles. There are hundreds of count circles across the Americas.

See local CBC dates below and email or call the SMRA office for count organizer contacts. Help us count birds and gather citizen science data!

Saturday, December 14 Peekskill Area CBC Sunday, December 15 Greenwich-Stamford CBC Sunday, December 22 Bronx-Westchester CBC Saturday, January 4 Putnam CBC

Learn more at the Christmas Bird Count: www.audubon.org/ christmas-bird-count

December Events

All Saturdays & Sundays, 9:00–11:00 am Project FeederWatch See November 9 & 10. Continues through March.

Sunday, December 8, 7:00 am–12 noon Ducking in Westchester Join us for a morning of waterfowl watching at various sites in Westchester County. Call or email us to register.

Saturday, December 14, 9:00 am Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook See description for 9/14.

Saturday, December 21 9:30 am–12:30 pm Third Sat Bird Seed Sale See description for 11/16. Thursday, December 19, 7:00 pm Members' Best Photos & Holiday Gathering Croton Free Library Join us for this fun and informal event where SMRA members and friends share their photographic highlights of birding and nature travel as well as enjoy holiday desserts.

Let us know if you would like to share 2–5 of your best photographs by emailing our office by December 16.

Bring holiday cookies and other treats to share and exchange.

(It is also very okay to come without photos or desserts!)

Buy our bird seed and support our local conservation work! Details & online ordering: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed

Weekly Monday Morning Free Bird Walks

7:30 am start in September. 8:30 am start for Oct–Apr.
Held regardless of weather but check our website if uncertain.
1st Monday: Muscoot Farm
Meet in main parking lot

2nd Monday: Rockefeller State Park Preserve
Meet in main parking lot
3rd Monday: Rockefeller State Park Preserve
Meet at Sleepy Hollow Road trail entrance
4th Monday: Croton Point Park
Meet in ballfield parking on the left as you enter the park
5th Monday: Location varies
Check SMRA website: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org



Birding Muscoot Farm in August. Photo: LouAnn O'Hora

Audubon Nature Book Club: Fall, Winter and Beyond

Our Nature Book Club continues to draw a crowd of people interested in a wide variety of books about science, history, birds and—of all things—snails! Our last selection was *Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, an enchanting little book filled with snail facts and literary references, written by Elisabeth Tova Bailey as she recuperated from a devastating illness leaving her confined to her bed—with a wild snail as company.



On September 17th we will follow the current fascination with all things Hamilton and read about the physician David Hosack, whom Hamilton chose to accompany him on his duel with Aaron Burr. A passionate believer in the power of medicinal plants (which he used to save the life of Hamilton's young son), Hosack founded America's

first botanical garden. His story is told by Victoria Johnson in her new book *American Eden*. On that same evening, we will also discuss the essay "Carbon Capture" by Jonathan Franzen, a brilliant and highly controversial writer who also happens to be an obsessive birder. In this essay he attacks National Audubon for their stance on



climate change. You can read this essay online here: www.newyorker.com/magazine /2015/04/06/carbon-capture

On November 5th we will discuss the unforgettable story of Shackleton's legendary Antarctic expedition as told by Caroline Alexander in *The Endurance*. This tome includes the unpublished photographs of Frank Hurley and is simply an exquisite book: beautiful and well-told.

We will also take on Franzen's response to the blowback he received after the publication of his attack on the National Audubon Society by reading "The Essay in Dark Times." You can find that at this link: www.theguardian.com/books/2017/nov/04/jonathan-franzentoo-late-to-save-world-donald-trump-environment or in his most recent book of essays, *The End of the End of the Earth.*



On January 7th, we will discuss *Ice: the Nature, the History, and the Uses of an Astonishing Substance* by Mariana Gosnell. It's a long book but it's divided into distinct chapters, so readers can feel free to read those sections of most interest. (You will never look at ice the same way again!)

Possible books for the spring

are The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century by Kirk W. Johnson. and Seeing Trees: Discover the Secret Lives of Everyday Trees, text by Nancy Ross Hugo and photographs by Robert Llewellyn.

The Audubon Nature Book Club meets bimonthly at 7:00 pm at the Mount Pleasant Public Library in Pleasantville. No registration or commitment is necessary. Come and join us as often as you'd like. Kathleen Williamson

Did You Know? It All Began at Croton Point!

The impetus for the modern field guide to birds sprang from the marshes of Croton Point.

According to John Devlin and Grace Naismith's *The World of Roger Tory Peterson*, Peterson was tramping through Croton Point with William Vogt of the Linnean Society during the December 1930 Christmas Bird Count. The duo noted, among other species, a raft of hundreds of Canvasbacks, as well as a Pine Siskin, which Peterson quickly ID'd through his keen hearing.

Vogt said to Peterson, "Roger, you know more about identifying birds of this region than anyone else, and you can paint. Why don't you pass on your knowledge to other people in a book?"



Plate from 1934 first edition of Peterson's Field Guide.

Vogt promised to help him find a publisher, and, years later, Peterson said, "had it not been for William Vogt, my first field guide might not have seen the light of day." Brian Kluepfel





Coastal Bird Studies for Teens in Maine

This spring I was awarded the Larry Light Youth Scholarship, which gave me the opportunity to attend National Audubon's Coastal Bird Studies for Teens in Maine this June. Here is my experience.

On Monday morning, we all boarded a boat and toured around Muscongus Bay, seeing a variety of water birds. In the afternoon, we headed onto the mainland (or Maineland, if you want) to visit the Great Salt Bay Farm Wildlife Preserve. It was covered in Bobolinks, and barely a moment passed when we couldn't hear one singing. From the marsh we heard a Sora and a Virginia Rail. After several minutes of peering into the undergrowth, we managed to find a Marsh Wren constructing its nest.

Tuesday morning brought a steady downpour, and we spent our time attending presentations on seabird ecology. When the torrents finally subsided, we struck out again. Unfortunately, the pair of vans we planned to use had stuck fast in the mud. It took half an hour of pushing, pulling, and towing to free the mired vehicles and head to a warbler-filled salt marsh.

Hog Island is home to a nesting pair of Ospreys named Rachel and Steve. Their nest is right next to the buildings where we lived and ate, and their life is followed by a camera that streams to the internet. This camera has a microphone, and we were warned that conversations under the Osprey nest might get broadcast around the world. On Tuesday night, we did an owl survey a few hours after sunset using recorded calls from four owl species. Earlier that day, one of the instructors wanted to test the playback system, so he stepped away from the



Atlantic Puffin. Photo: Erik Brodsky

buildings and did a playback of a Boreal Owl call... right under the osprey nest. This caused plenty of commotion, and the folks operating the webcam had to post an explanation.

On Wednesday, we visited Eastern Egg Rock, a research outpost which is host to a colony of

puffins and terns. Its puffin colony was wiped out by hunters around 1885. Audubon's Project Puffin, which started in 1973, relocated puffin chicks from a Newfoundland colony to artificial burrows on Egg Rock, where the birds were raised by hand. This continued for several years; the fledglings went out to sea, and researchers could only hope that they might return to the spot where they were raised. In 1981, eight years after the project's beginnings, puffins started nesting on Eastern Egg Rock.



Banding a Yellow-rumped Warbler. Photo: Erik Brodsky

Thursday started with bird banding. We set up mist nets around nearby feeders and towards the edge of the forest; in total, we banded 3 Purple Finches, 2 American Goldfinches, 1 Northern Parula, 1 Blackthroated Green Warbler, 1 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 1 Black-capped Chickadee, and 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch. The nets snared a Hairy Woodpecker and a Blue Jay, which were both too big for any of our bands.

When Friday came, it was time to say goodbye to new friends and marvelous instructors. Thank you to Saw Mill River Audubon and the Larry Light Youth Scholarship Fund for providing me with this opportunity! Erik Brodsky

See page 2 for more about Larry Light Youth Scholarships.



275 Millwood Road Chappaqua, New York 10514 Return Service Requested



Bonnie Coe captured this view in August of three juvenile Bald Eagles on a sandbar in Croton Bay seen from Croton's Echo Boat Launch. These birds are all from one successful Bald Eagle nest nearby. Photo: Bonnie Coe

Connecting People and Nature since 1953

Explore Nature with Saw Mill River Audubon this Fall!

We have more than 50 events scheduled between September and December to connect you with local habitats, birds and other wildlife!

Our Monday morning bird walks happen every week, now average 20 people, and are always a friendly and welcoming gathering, especially for beginning birders. (And we always have binoculars to loan for all our field trips.)

Our weekend day trips near and far offer you opportunities to discover some of the best wild places in our region.

Our free monthly evening programs feature regional environmental experts to connect you with ongoing issues and expand your natural horizons.

Visit the Google calendar at our website for event listings: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

Come sit for a spell, relax and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. Our sanctuaries offer you a place to unwind and reconnect with nature. Find out more about our eight sanctuaries at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org. Photo above is of a new bench by the gardens at Pruyn Sanctuary donated by Steve Rappaport in memory of his mother. Photo: Anne Swaim

Bird Seed Sale Flyer enclosed in this newsletter!

Our annual bird seed sale offers you high-quality seed at good prices and supports our local conservation and education work.

PERIODICAL POSTAGE

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at Chappaqua, NY and additional offices