



SMRA

SAW MILL RIVER AUDUBON™

Fall 2022



Great Egret
Marsblands
Conservancy
Photo:
Chris Kennelly

Fall Highlights

For fall programs, we are planning both in-person gatherings and Zoom events. See more at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs
Bird walks continue September through December and are listed on page 3.
Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips



Our free bird walks continued through the summer. This group was birding at Muscott Farm on July 4. See page 3 for our fall walks. Photo: Anne Swaim



Eighteen people explored the Gaspé peninsula of Quebec on Saw Mill River Audubon's special extended birding trip in June. See October 19 program about this trip. Photo: Anne Swaim



Over 120 people enjoyed James Eyring's raptor program that we sponsored at Croton Point Park in June. Why not learn more about raptors this fall? See page 7. Photo: Anne Swaim

Featured Dinner Speakers will be Scott Craven & Caroline Ranald Curvan, co-authors of a new book about Croton Point Park, August 2022 release.



Saw Mill River Audubon's
2022 Annual Dinner
Friday, September 9
Crabtree's Kittle House

Join with our friendly community of Audubon members and friends to celebrate the past year of connecting people with nature.

Reservations online
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

Friday, September 9
2022 Annual Dinner
5:00 pm Reception
6:00 pm Dinner

All are invited to our 2022 Annual Dinner! Feel comfortable to come alone or with family and friends

with our open seating and welcoming tables of eight. At 5:00 pm, enjoy our opening reception under a canopy in the Kittle House garden patio, with hors d'oeuvres and complimentary glass of house wine or beer as well as book purchases and signing with our guest speakers. Cash bar available for other beverages throughout the evening. Dinner seating promptly at 6:00 pm with our dinner program starting at 6:30 pm. **All details and online reservations: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/dinner or call our office.**

Support Our Work with Bird Seed!

September kicks off our next bird seed season with our new 2022–2023 bird seed arriving at Pruyn Sanctuary on Wednesday, September 14. **Our first staffed bird seed pickup is on Saturday, September 24, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.** Order by Wednesday, September 21 if you'd like our volunteers to load up your seed that Saturday morning at Pruyn. Or you can choose the day of your choice for self-loading, no-contact pickup. **See enclosed flyer or visit: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed.**

Did you know that Ukraine is a large supplier of black oil sunflower? For this reason and others, you will see a significant price jump this fall for black oil, mixes containing black oil, and other seed types. Please know that we have increased your prices only as much as our costs increased, forgoing any additional markup because we value you as our customers. Remember also: bird seed sales support our local conservation work.

More fall events on page 3 and www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs

President's Message—In Praise of Fall

As I write this in the heat of early August, it doesn't feel like fall, but fall migration is definitely happening. South-bound shorebird migration is underway now. Raptor migration will be ramping up as we enter September. If you've never been to a hawk watch, why not try one this year? (Some local hawk watches are listed on page 7.) State Line Lookout is literally a drive-up site; others may involve a short hike but all offer beautiful vistas along with the views of migrating hawks plus the opportunity to learn raptor ID from volunteer counters, even how to identify raptors at a distance. You may also be treated to amazing views of other migrating bird species that you otherwise might not notice.

Fall has always been a season that I look forward to as bringing renewal—or at least new experiences. This may be just a leftover feeling from the start of the school year—more than 40 years in the past for me now—but in the birding world, fall, like spring, is truly a time of change and movement. Fall migration has the added challenge of seeing many familiar birds, both migrating and not, in unfamiliar non-breeding, transitional, or first-year plumage. If you want to follow the migration as it rolls out, try the migration tools at www.birdcast.info, which provides three-day migration forecasts, near real-time nightly radar data, and local bird migration alerts.

SMRA has several new things to offer this fall. See articles in this newsletter about the Adventure Lab geocaching game installed by Board Member Lynn Salmon in our Prun Sanctuary and about the Sanctuary Greeter Program coming once a month to both Prun and Brinton Brook sanctuaries. If you would like to volunteer with the trail greeter program, call or email the SMRA office or visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/volunteer.

We're excited that our Annual Dinner will be making a return on September 9 after a 2½-year hiatus due to the pandemic. See page 1 for details. We're looking forward to reconnecting with some of our members in person.

Be sure to make your reservation soon at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/dinner or, if you prefer, call our office at 914-666-6503 to make dinner reservations.

Our school programs have resumed after the pandemic pause with 18 Ossining classes signed up for fall trips at Rockefeller State Park Preserve this fall. Our annual Birdathon is coming up the weekend of October 14–16. See page 3 and visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/birdathon. Consider forming your own team to compete in one or more categories including backyard birding. Also consider supporting our work with your bird seed purchase this fall and winter. See flyer enclosed or visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seed. *Article continues on page 4*

Saw Mill River Audubon

275 Millwood Road Chappaqua, New York 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

Editor: Jennifer Stern Circulation: Jean Sparacin

Executive Director: Anne Swaim

Office Manager: Barbara Daniel

Sanctuary Maintenance: Danny Ferguson

Educators: Pete Salmansohn, Patricia Mutolo

Education Partner: The Rewilding School

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2022 Birding Quilt Raffle!



Our annual birding quilt is raffled off to support the education and conservation work of Saw Mill River Audubon. The winner will be announced at our 2022 Annual Dinner to be held at Crabtree's Kittle House Friday, September 9.

Our thanks to Patricia Loquet who designed this year's quilt for the benefit of Saw Mill River Audubon.

See detailed color views of the quilt squares and purchase raffle tickets here:
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt

To view this newsletter as a PDF in color and with clickable links, visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/news

Fall 2022 Schedule

Birding Field Trips

Details & register: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips

Get updates & reminders: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/list

SEPTEMBER — WALKS START 7:00 am

Saturday, September 3, Croton Point Park
 Monday, September 5, Muscoot Farm
 Monday, September 12, Rockefeller SP Preserve
 Saturday, September 17, Rockefeller SP Preserve
 Monday, September 19, Croton Point Park
 Sunday, September 25, Marshlands Conservancy
 Monday, September 26, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Field Trips Outside Westchester County

Saturday, September 10, Black Dirt Birding
 Friday, September 23, State Line Lookout Hawk Watch

OCTOBER — WALKS START 8:00 am

Monday, October 3, Muscoot Farm
 Wednesday, October 5, Croton Point Park
 Wednesday, October 12, Rockefeller SPP
 Monday, October 17, Croton Point Park
 Saturday, October 22, Rockefeller SP Preserve
 Wednesday, October 26, Marshlands /Edith Read
 Saturday, October 29, Croton Point Park

Field Trips Outside Westchester County

Thursday, October 6 to Monday, October 10
 Coastal Birding Weekend. Space limited. See details at:
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/coastal
 Sunday, October 16, Hook Mountain Hawk Watch
 Thursday, October 20, Fire Island Hawk Watch

NOVEMBER — WALKS START 8:00 am

Thursday, November 3, Croton Point Park
 Monday, November 7, Muscoot Farm
 Saturday, November 12, Croton Point Park
 Saturday, November 19, Rockefeller SP Preserve
 Wednesday, November 23, Croton Point Park
 Wednesday, November 30, Marshlands/Edith Read

DECEMBER — WALKS START 8:00 am

Saturday, December 3, Croton Point Park
 Monday, December 5, Muscoot Farm
 Saturday, December 10, Edith Read Sanctuary
 Monday, December 12, Rockefeller SP Preserve
 Monday, December 19, Croton Point Park

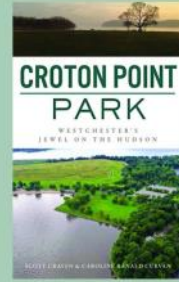
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Sat 12/17: Peekskill Count
 Sun 12/18: Greenwich–Stamford Count
 Sat 12/24: Bronx–Westchester Count
 Mon 1/2: Putnam Count

www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count



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Other Fall Events

Second Saturday Walks, Brinton Brook Sanctuary 9/10, 10/8, 11/12, 12/10. Meet at 9:00 am in the main lot. Walk typically lasts two hours. Rain does not cancel but, if extreme weather forecasted, always check our website calendar before traveling. For adults, and youth 8 and up. No registration required.

Nature Book Club, Tuesday, September 6 and Tuesday November 8, 7:00 pm. May be in-person or Zoom: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/book-club

Zoom Public Programs

Get more details and register for Zoom at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs

Thursday, September 22, 7:00 pm via Zoom Introduction & review of raptor ID. See page 7.

Wednesday, October 19, 7:00 pm Birding the Gaspé Peninsula. May be in person or Zoom. Watch web site and email notice list.

Wednesday, November 2, 7:00 pm via Zoom Gardening for Birds Workshop with Stella Miller

Thursday, December 15, 7:00 pm Members' Best (and maybe holiday desserts!) May be in person or Zoom. Watch web site/email.

Bird Chat, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 7:00 pm. A Zoom gathering of regional birders. Beginners very welcome. Past Bird Chat videos are on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/sawmillriveraudubon. Zoom link and reminders: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/chat



Go Birding and Help Audubon

2022 Birdathon: Fri, Oct 14 to Sun, Oct 16

Join a Team or Form a Team. We Can Help!

www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/birdathon

President's Message—In Praise of Fall *continued from page 2*

Fall is also a good time to visit the two native plant gardens at our Pruyun Sanctuary, which are as interesting, and in many ways as beautiful, in the fall as in the summer. We don't cut or clear the dying foliage, instead leaving stems and seed heads to feed the birds, which also provides visual interest for human visitors throughout the fall and winter. The dead material left on the ground provides cover for overwintering insects.

If this very hot and unusually dry Northeastern summer has heightened your concerns about global warming, as it has for me, you might want to consider adding to your own efforts to combat climate change. Now may be the time to add more native species to your yard and to replace some gas-powered tools with electric ones (or just use a rake instead of a leaf blower). Perhaps the most important action you can take is to talk with friends and family about climate change. For tips on how to do this and why it's important, as well as tips on ways to reduce your own carbon emissions, visit National Audubon's Guide to Climate Action, www.audubon.org/climate-action-guide. You can also calculate your own carbon footprint using the Carbon Tracker tool developed by CURE100, which is available on the front page of the SMRA website, www.sawmillriveraudubon.org



*Visit National Audubon's Guide to Climate Action
www.audubon.org/climate-action-guide*

Finally, it's also important to stay connected to each other and to nature. For many of us, there's no substitute for getting out to bird with others. We learn from each other, and the shared experience enhances our connections. Consider joining some of our fall bird walks in local birding hotspots and the monthly Second Saturday walks at Brinton Brook Sanctuary. We welcome everyone, novice birders (or just curious) as well as long-time birders.

Valerie Lyle, President, Saw Mill River Audubon



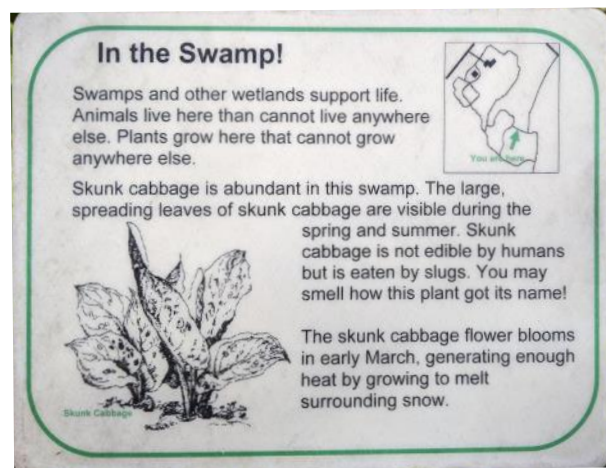
New Adventure in Pruyun Sanctuary

Geocaching is a high-tech outdoor treasure-hunting game or hobby that's been around since May, 2000, and SMRA is happy to host more than 30 separate geocache hides in our sanctuaries.

A new and slightly different app-based game called the Geocaching Adventure Lab (available for iOS and Android) is now in play at Pruyun Sanctuary.

Unlike traditional geocaching where people navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and find a hidden container, the Adventure Lab is a virtual experience played in a specific place.

The Adventure Lab app guides players through a process of finding clues or solving puzzles one location at a time. The Explore Pruyun Sanctuary Adventure Lab has five stages beginning at our demonstration meadow garden and guides users on a short walk around the sanctuary. At each location, a simple verification question can be answered based on signage at that spot.



Here is an example of one Adventure Lab question at Pruyun Sanctuary. What plant, pictured on the nearby sign is abundant in the swamp? (See sign above.)

To give it a try, download the free app at www.geocaching.com/sites/adventure-lab/en/

To learn more about geocaching and the 30+ geocaches currently hidden in SMRA sanctuaries, visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/geocaches/

Lynn Salmon



Young birders at the American Birding Association's Camp Avocet held in Delaware for teen birders. Visit www.aba.org/camp-delaware-bay/ Photo: ABA

Apply Soon for Youth Scholarships

For more than three generations (since 1955), Saw Mill River Audubon has helped cultivate the next generation of birders and even bird scientists by offering scholarships for youth ages 13 to 17 to attend environmental camps, workshops, and classes.

Past recipients have used the funds to attend National Audubon and American Birding Association youth birding camps as well as for science research trips and other activities. Many of the youth birding camps fill very quickly once registrations open in mid to late fall.

Our scholarships are not awarded on the basis of financial need but on the level of environmental interest shown by the applicant through coursework and/or extracurricular or volunteer activities. We especially focus on applicants who will apply their experience in ongoing environmental education and outreach in their community, school, or work.

Our youth scholarships are provided by the Larry Light Memorial Scholarship Fund for Youth, which was established by the Light family and their friends in 1981 and augmented since then by additional gifts from our members and friends.

We have a rolling deadline for applications. For more information on our scholarships, visit our website at: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/scholarships. Help us spread the word about this special opportunity for teens!



A view of a few of the guests at the SMRA Birding Tea on May 21. Photo: Cary Andrews

This Tea Was for the Birds!

The annual SMRA Birding Tea was held on May 21 at the home of Board Member Cary Andrews and was a fun fundraiser.

Featured were bird-themed homemade goodies including bird-shaped cookies and bird's-nest treats.

Cary talked about the SMRA mission, our seven sanctuaries, our educational activities, and our conservation efforts, especially our ongoing advocacy for maintaining the grassland at Croton Point Park.

Cary also encouraged attendees to participate in the wonderful bird walks, twice-monthly Bird Chat, and educational talks led by Executive Director Anne Swaim. And Cary's own beautiful yard plantings helped to highlight the importance of maintaining habitats for birds and other wildlife.



Birding Tea hostess Cary Andrews with a spread of special birdy treats. Photo: Loomis Mayer

A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT CLEAN WATER AND BUILD SAFER COMMUNITIES

The largest environmental bond act in State history, the Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act authorizes \$4.2 billion to fund critical environmental restoration projects throughout the state.



You Can Vote to Help Birds!

This November, New York State voters will be asked to approve the \$4.2 billion proposed Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. If passed, it will authorize the state to borrow up to that amount to fund climate change mitigation projects (\$1.5 billion), restoration and flood risk reduction projects (\$1.1 billion), open space land conservation and recreation projects (\$650 million), and water quality improvement and resilient infrastructure projects (\$650 million). (Another \$300 million is unallocated). At least 35 percent of total funding must benefit disadvantaged communities.

This is the first environmental bond act to be placed on the ballot since the \$1.75 billion Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act passed in 1996 during Governor George Pataki's tenure.

"Birds are telling us that we are in a climate emergency, and it is wreaking havoc on our communities, our lands, and our waters. Investments in the conservation and restoration of our environment are now more important than ever, and increased funding for clean water infrastructure and the Environmental Bond Act—including critical nature-based solutions like restoring and enhancing wetlands and salt marshes—will provide direct support to communities that are experiencing the impacts of climate change." said Erin McGrath, Senior Policy Manager, Audubon New York.

As far as projected climate change impacts go, the \$4.2 billion price tag is a drop in the bucket. One state-sponsored analysis, ClimAID (www.tinyurl.com/yt6nfeb), estimated that "unless resilience measures

are put in place, by mid-century the total costs of climate change for key economic sectors in New York State each year may approach \$10 billion (in 2010 dollars)," according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Other bird-friendly legislation is expected to be proposed again in the state legislature, having failed to pass last session.

The **Birds and Bees Protection Act**, addressing the use of the nicotine-based pesticide neonicotinoids, passed in the state Assembly but failed to come to a vote in the Senate. The law would have banned use of neonics on outdoor ornamental plants and turf

(unless needed to control invasive species) and banned the sale, distribution, or purchase of corn, soybean, or wheat seeds treated with these chemicals.

'Birds are telling us that we are in a climate emergency, and it is wreaking havoc on our communities, our lands, and our waters.' Erin McGrath, Audubon New York

A **state lights-out/dark skies law** introduced last year would require *all* buildings to extinguish their exterior lights between 11 pm and sunrise or to install lights that are fully shielded, with no light shining upward. (Exemptions are included for ad signs; airports; and worker safety, emergency, and holiday lighting.)

Our parent organization, Audubon New York, has an email-based Action Network for those interested in learning about and supporting bird-friendly laws. Sign up for these alerts here: ny.audubon.org/conservation/advocacy.

Jennifer Stern, SMRA Newsletter Editor



RAPTORS for ROOKIES
Thursday, September 22
7:00 pm via zoom
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

Seasonal Birding: Hawk Watches

Starting in mid-August and continuing through November, the Hudson Valley becomes a raptor highway as thousands of raptors—including eagles, hawks and falcons—follow the Hudson River, regional ridgelines, and the Long Island and Atlantic coastlines on their migrations south, as they have done for millennia.

And all along these routes are hawk watches, counting stations where volunteers scan the skies, identify and count the passing raptors, and enter this data at www.hawkcount.org, Hawk Migration Association of North America's Raptor Migration Database.

Get Ready for the Raptors!

To get ready for the raptors, we invite you to our Zoom workshop on Thursday, September 22, at 7:00 pm for an introduction or review of raptor identification. Register at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs. Download the free handouts offered with this workshop: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/raptors. Another way to learn and improve your raptor ID skills is to visit area hawk watches when volunteer counters and other birders are watching the migration. Some are listed in the box to the right and you can find even more hawk watches at www.hawkcount.org. We also plan to visit three hawk watches this fall in our field trip calendar: State Line Lookout, Fire Island and Hook Mountain. Dates and details: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips.



SMRA trailside banner at the Prunyn meadow garden in August.

Photo: Anne Swaim

Watch for Trailside Greeters!

Starting this fall, we plan to have greeters at some of our sanctuaries, sitting by our new trailside banners (see photo above) to meet and greet sanctuary visitors. We want to hear from you why you are visiting, get your sanctuary suggestions and observations, and answer any questions you might have.

Is this something you might want do?

We plan to have a SMRA board member or staff member paired with a SMRA volunteer for each Trailside Greeter session. (This could also be a good opportunity for trailside birding.)

To find out more about this and other SMRA volunteer opportunities, visit our volunteer web page: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/volunteer

A Few Area Hawk Watches

State Line Lookout—Drive-up, wheelchair-accessible hawk watch overlooking the Hudson. Daily counters. <https://hawkcount.org/siteinfo.php?rsite=343>

Lenoir Preserve—Great view of the Palisades and Hudson. Weekend counters by Hudson River Audubon. <https://hawkcount.org/siteinfo.php?rsite=112>

Chestnut Ridge—In Butler Sanctuary, Mount Kisco. Short uphill walk. Daily counters from Bedford Audubon. <https://hawkcount.org/siteinfo.php?rsite=534>

Hook Mountain—Half-hour steep uphill walk in Rockland County. Eye-level views of passing raptors and 360-degree views of the lower Hudson. Daily counters. <https://hawkcount.org/siteinfo.php?rsite=368>

Fire Island—Viewing platform just beyond parking lot #5 in Robert Moses State Park. Daily counters. <https://hawkcount.org/siteinfo.php?rsite=359>



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and additional offices



Cooper's Hawk, Chappaqua. Photo: Mitchell Goldfarb
(See page 7 inside to learn more about hawks.)



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. Small-group bird walks. Online and in-person programs. Sanctuary walks.

We connect people with nature!



Crabtree's Kittle House
Restaurant & Inn

Saw Mill River Audubon Dinner
All are invited!

Friday, September 9, 5:00–8:00 pm
Crabtree's Kittle House, Chappaqua

Join our friendly community for an evening celebrating the past year of connecting people with nature. Hear from the authors of a new book

about Croton Point! Feel comfortable to come alone or with family and friends with our open seating and welcoming tables of eight. **More details and reservations are here: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/dinner**

Connecting with Nature: Your gift helps us connect people and nature.

I wish to donate. Enclosed is:

- \$1000 \$500 \$250
 \$100 \$50 \$35 \$_____

My employer will match my gift.

I'd like to join Saw Mill River Audubon

Basic Chapter Membership:

- Enclosed is \$35
 Please list my gift anonymously

Name(s)

Address

City / State / Zip

Email Address

Please make checks payable to: Saw Mill River Audubon and mail to our office address listed inside this newsletter.

OR join/renew/donate online
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