



*Osprey, Rockefeller State Park Preserve, April 20, 2025. Watch for returning Ospreys in March!
Photo: Mitch Goldfarb*



One of the bird walks that Saw Mill River Audubon led at the 2026 EagleFest had over 70 people, shown here after we saw a pair of adult Bald Eagles doing a courtship flight! Photo: Anne Swaim. See more EagleFest pictures on page 5.



Our bird walks continued through a very snowy and cold winter! Our January walk at Rockefeller State Park Preserve had this eBird list (with pictures of birds seen): <https://ebird.org/checklist/S295159878>



SMRA offered a special trip, January 27 to February 4, birding from high, snowy mountains to deserts in New Mexico. Our eBird trip report shows exactly where we birded and the birds we saw: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/469792>

Spring Highlights

See more events on Page 3

We are highlighting several events below. See page 3 for field trips and more. Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs and www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips for the latest information.

Sunday, March 15, All Day | NYS Young Birders Club Meeting

Saw Mill River Audubon is hosting the annual kick-off gathering for the New York State Young Birders Club at Mariandale Conference Center in Ossining, starting with a SMRA-guided bird walk at Croton Point Park, only for NYS Young Birders Club members and their accompanying parents. Learn about the NYSYBC, upcoming events, and membership: www.nysyoungbirders.org

Thursday, March 19, 7:00 pm | Zoom Workshop: Birding 101

Learn/review the basics of birding including bird biology, ID basics, bird sounds, and when and where to go birding in our area. Register for Zoom link and get handout here: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/birding-101

Thursday, March 26, 7:00 pm | Tune Up for Spring Bird Sounds

This multimedia Zoom is hosted by area libraries and is open to the public. Learn/review birds in our area already singing spring songs and which new songs to expect as spring advances and migrants return. Register for Zoom link and handout: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/sounds.

Sunday, April 26, 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm | Annual Dinner Gathering

All are welcome to join us at our annual dinner, which will be a community potluck this year and held at the Mariandale Conference Center in Ossining. Our guest speaker will be journalist Ryan Goldberg, author of *Bird City: Adventures in New York's Urban Wilds*. Space will be limited. See details on page 5.

Thursday, May 7, 7:00 pm | Author Jim Wright, *The Peregrine Falcon*

At this in-person program at the Chappaqua Library, Jim will introduce us to his newest book—to be published April 28—about the world's fastest bird, now re-established all along the Hudson River and Long Island Sound. Program co-sponsored by the Chappaqua Library. This book and Jim's previous books will be available for sale and signing at this program.

Saturday, June 13, 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm | Birding Tea!

RSVP for this special gathering open to all. Flock with us to Croton-on-Hudson, and enjoy a real tea and conversation with Audubon friends. Details on page 5.

Do you prefer a paper newsletter? If you have a current SMRA membership, request a mailed newsletter here: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/paper OR call/email us at 914-666-6503 or office@sawmillriveraudubon.org

President's Message

This is written shortly after 50 mph winds and subzero wind chills forced the postponement of Teatown's 2026 EagleFest in early February. Even the hardiest New Yorkers have had enough of the arctic chill visited on us the past several weeks. It is also written from the vantage of someone who spent the worst of this extended deep freeze feeling a little guilty in the warmer climes of New Mexico on a well-timed and wonderfully led SMRA birding trip. NY-NM temperature differentials closed on 60 degrees, and while calls reporting frozen pipes and significant snowfall kept us "in the mood," our flock of bin-swinging peepers were in short sleeves by the time we overnighted in Truth or Consequences, NM.

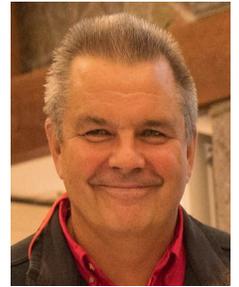
The diversity of birds and landscapes were remarkable. The Sandia Mountains on the first day were snow-covered, while the Mars-like scape of White Sands National Park was composed of just-as-white gypsum flakes.

Were the individual birds species or the volumes of some species more remarkable? Seeing 10,000+ Green-winged Teal at once or a solitary and brilliantly-colored Vermillion Flycatcher against evergreens? Thousands of Snow Geese and the tremendous whoosh as they rose off a pond or the "black cardinal," a Phainopepla, one of the silky flycatchers, that profiled for as long as we wanted to watch? A huge sedge of Sandhill Cranes bugling or a Northern Pygmy Owl unexpectedly calling and flying across a clearing in front of us? Impossible to choose, and while veteran birders picked up more "life" birds than anticipated, we might have been collectively most grateful to be missing the miserable weather we had left behind.

As the 1890s song reminds us, "Make new friends but keep the old." We bonded over birds, music, Southwestern cuisine and humor. The guide's strict ban on politics kept the mood above the waterline; sometimes you need rules, even on holiday. Some of our cohort were regular trippers, while others were on their first SMRA trip...but none were prepared for the World's Largest Pistachio (don't ask).

A reminder as I sign off. If one has an interest in the annual SMRA Spring Dinner, a potluck enterprise at Mariandale on Sunday, April 26, sign up soon. We have a hard stop at 100 attendees, and we're sure to be full. While you are there, please buy a quilt raffle ticket as well. See more about the quilt below.

Yours for the birds,
*Erik Andersen, President,
Saw Mill River Audubon*



Erik Andersen, SMRA

Saw Mill River Audubon

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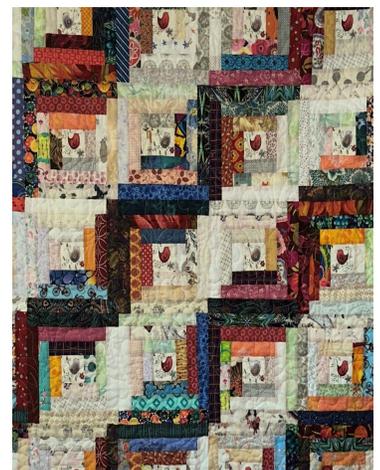
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Don't Miss Our Bird Quilt Raffle!

Created by Patricia Loquet and assembled with the help of Debra Oaks of Winterberry Quilts, our 2026 quilt features a pattern of traditional "Log Cabin" blocks arranged in what quilters call the "furrows" setting. In the middle of each block is a tiny and colorful bird.

This large quilt (58 by 73 in.) will be awarded by a drawing at our annual dinner on Sunday, April 26, 2026. All proceeds benefit Saw Mill River Audubon.



See full design, reverse and detailed views, and purchase tickets at: sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt

Spring 2026 Schedule

Bird Walks & Field Trips

8:00 am for Mar/Apr and 7:00 am for May/June

*** except for any special field trips noted below in boldface**

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

MARCH

Mon, Mar 2, 8:00 am, Muscoot Farm

Sat, Mar 7, 8:00 am, Edith Read Sanctuary

Mon, Mar 9, 8:00 am, Croton Point Park

*** Sat, Mar 14, 7:00 am, Long Island Birding**

*** Sun, Mar 15, 6:30 pm, Croton Pt. Woodcock Walk**

Mon, Mar 16, 8:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Sat, Mar 21, 8:00 am, Croton Point Park

Sat, Mar 28, 8:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Tue, Mar 31, 8:00 am, Cranberry Lake Preserve



APRIL

Sat, Apr 4, 8:00 am, Marshlands Conservancy

Mon, Apr 6, 8:00 am, Muscoot Farm

Sat, Apr 11, 8:00 am, Croton Point Park

*** Sun, Apr 12, 7:00 am, Lyndhurst Estate**

Mon, Apr 13, 8:00 am, Croton Point Park

Mon, Apr 20, 8:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Sat, Apr 25, 8:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Tue, Apr 28, 8:00 am, Cranberry Lake Preserve



MAY

Sat, May 2, 7:00 am, Marshlands Conservancy

Mon, May 4, 7:00 am, Muscoot Farm

Sat, May 9, 7:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Mon, May 11, 7:00 am, Croton Point Park

Sat, May 16, 7:00 am, Croton Point Park

Sun, May 24, 7:00 am, Cranberry Lake Preserve

Mon, May 25, 7:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Sat, May 30, 7:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

JUNE

Mon, June 1, 7:00 am, Muscoot Farm

Mon, June 8, 7:00 am, Croton Point Park

Sat, June 13, 7:00 am, Croton Point Park

Mon, June 15, 7:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Thu, June 18, 7:00 am, Marshlands Conservancy

Sat, June 20, 7:00 am, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Sun, June 28, 7:00 am, Lyndhurst Estate



A=American Woodcock, B=Black-and-white Warbler, C=Wood Thrush

Highlighted Spring Programs

More at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs

Tune up Your Ears for Spring Birds

Thursday, March 26, 2026
7:00 pm via Zoom

Register at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/sounds

Coordinated by Pound Ridge Public Library and co-sponsored by Greenburgh Public Library, Mount Kisco Public Library, Mount Pleasant Public Library, New Rochelle Public Library, and Yonkers Public Library.

Saw Mill River Audubon Potluck Dinner

Sunday, April 26, 5:00 pm

The Center at Mariandale, Ossining

Come celebrate spring with Audubon!

RSVP www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/dinner

THE PEREGRINE FALCON

JIM WRIGHT
FOREWORD BY DIETZ DUNN

THE EPIC LIFE & TIMES OF THE WORLD'S FASTEST CREATURE

A Saw Mill River Audubon Presentation

Thursday, May 7, 2026, 7:00 pm
Chappaqua Library Theatre

Author Jim Wright

The Peregrine Falcon: The Epic Life & Times of the World's Fastest Creature

www.sawmillriveraudubon.org

Even More Spring Events

Second Saturday Walks, Brinton Brook Sanctuary
3/14, 4/11, 5/9, 6/13. Meet at 9:00 am in the main lot. Walk typically lasts two hours. Rain or shine but always check our website calendar before traveling. For adults and youth 8 and up. No registration required.
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/brinton

2nd and 4th Tue, 7:00 pm, Zoom Bird Chat
Tue, Mar 10&24, Apr 14&28, May 12&26, Jun 16&30
See upcoming topics/speakers & register for Zoom link:
www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/chat

Tuesday, April 21, 7:00 pm, Nature Book Club
on Zoom. www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/book-club

Sundays through April 26, 9:30 am to 12 noon
Project FeederWatch | Croton Point Nature Center
Drop in anytime on Sunday mornings to help watch and count feeder birds. Good photography opp too!

Environmental Legislation Wrap-up

Horseshoe Crabs Win

In December, Governor Hochul finally signed the Horseshoe Crab Protection Act, a bill which SMRA and many other environmental groups have been promoting for the past several years, although a final ban on harvesting these creatures for commercial fishing or biomedical purposes will still have to wait until 2029.

“Overharvesting has caused horseshoe crab populations to plummet by 70% in the past 25 years,” says the Center for Biological Diversity. The smaller populations greatly reduce the egg deposits on which Red Knots and other migrating species depend for spring feeding.

In past years, New York State has allowed up to 150,000 horseshoe crabs to be taken from its shores. This amount will be reduced by a fourth over each of the next three years.

Hopefully the ban will enable populations to regenerate and continue to provide, through egg laying, a source of food for threatened bird species.

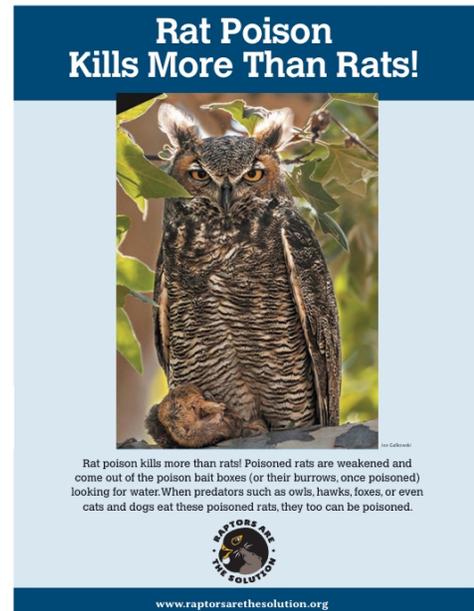
More Work to Do

Other important bills failed to be enacted in New York State. The SMRA Advocacy Committee will continue to monitor their progress and promote their passage.



Bigger Better Bottle Bill

This bill would raise the deposit on bottles in NYS from 5 to 10 cents and eventually raise the handling fee paid by manufacturers from 3.5 to 6 cents. It would also add sports drinks and juices that were not covered under the original 1982 bill. More background is here from NY-PIRG: https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202511/Bottle_Bill_Media_Packet_11-12-25.pdf



RAPTORS Act

Calling for “Restriction of Anticoagulant Pesticide Transactions for Online and Retail Stores,” the bill would restrict sale of these poisons to commercial licensees and prohibit their placement within 500 feet of a wildlife habitat area.



Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act

Also passed last year in the state Senate but not the Assembly, this bill would require major companies to develop a packaging reduction and recycling plan and to cut plastic packaging by 30% over 12 years. It would ban the use of 17 highly toxic chemicals and save New Yorkers an estimated \$1.3 billion in 10 years by shifting the cost of waste disposal to manufacturers. Visit: www.beyondplastics.org/nys-packaging-reduction

Jenni Stern, SMRA Newsletter Editor

Join Us at Our 2026 Annual Dinner

As we do on alternate years, SMRA's 2026 Annual Dinner will be a community potluck. We will gather at the Mariandale Conference Center on Sunday, April 26, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. Our keynote speaker is Ryan Goldberg, author of *Bird City: Adventures in New York's Urban Wilds*, which Kenn Kaufman has called "one of the best books I've ever read about the birds of a special place, and the people who pay attention to them."

Our 2025 Larry Light Youth Scholarship recipient, Vincent Cassetta, will have a brief presentation, and we will have a short multimedia look at our past year activities—will you be in our pictures?—and then the drawing for our 2026 raffle quilt. (Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt to see the quilt and buy tickets.)

The evening will open with a casual reception at 5:00 pm. The arrival deadline for food and beverages is 5:30 pm, when the buffet will open, and our program will begin at 6:15 pm. Join us for a fun and friendly evening with open seating at tables of eight. Feel comfortable to come alone or with friends and family. More: sawmillriveraudubon.org/dinner. You may also make a phone reservation at 914-666-6503.



Ryan Goldberg (pictured above) author of *Bird City: Adventures in New York's Urban Wilds*, will be the featured speaker at the 2026 Annual Dinner for Saw Mill River Audubon.

Bird City: Adventures in New York's Urban Wilds is a book about the author's year-long journey into birdwatching in New York City, exploring the surprising diversity of bird life in all five boroughs. Ryan Goldberg is an award-winning journalist who has written for the *New York Times*, *Texas Monthly*, *ProPublica*, *The Intercept*, *National Geographic*, and *Popular Science*, among many other publications. He lives in Brooklyn, which is where he began birding in 2016.

Some 2026 EagleFest Images



We had twenty SMRA volunteers helping at the 2026 EagleFest! See full list below. Clockwise from upper left: Rosie Foster and Liz Napp, Laura Rice, Kathleen Williamson and Ken Novenstern.

We were also glad to see our friend Charlie Roberto recognized as the EagleFest founder.

2026 Saw Mill River Audubon EagleFest Volunteers:

Avril Armstrong, Ginger Bernardin, Laura Chmielewski, Rosie Foster, Phil Heidelberger, Bill Kellner, Richard Leonard, Judy Lipton, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr, Tom McEnerney, Kevin McGrath, Jim Meigs, Liz Napp, Ken Novenstern, Laura Rice, Lynn Salmon, Jenni Stern, Larry Trachtenberg, Kathleen Williamson

Thank you to all SMRA volunteers for representing Saw Mill River Audubon at the 2026 EagleFest. Thanks to Teatown for EagleFest!



Birding Tea!
Saturday, June 13
 3:00 to 5:30 pm
 Hosted by Cary Andrews
 Croton-on-Hudson
 RSVP & Space limited
 Benefits Saw Mill River Audubon | \$20 person donation

'Drink Your Tea' with SMRA

The annual Birding Tea, hosted by board member Cary Andrews, will take place at her Croton home on Saturday, June 13, from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. Come enjoy high tea and birdie-themed treats, chat about ways to create bird-friendly habitat in one's backyard, and learn other ways to help our feathered friends. Birding bling is encouraged. RSVP to 914-271-4138 or email oomis@aol.com. Space is limited with a suggested donation of \$20.

Calling Garden Volunteers

Spring will be here soon, and we need your help! The Saw Mill River Audubon Bird & Butterfly Garden is seeking volunteer gardeners who would be willing to spend an hour twice a month planting, deadheading, weeding and mulching to create a beautiful and beneficial habitat for native flowers and grasses, chirping birds, and moths and butterflies as well as other beneficial insects. Join our wonderful group of volunteers, and discover a great way to spend an hour helping nature and meeting new gardening friends at our Pruyin Sanctuary in Chappaqua. To be part of this satisfying work with friendly people, contact our volunteer garden coordinator, Mark Magel, by visiting www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/gardening



275 Millwood Road
Chappaqua, New York 10514
Return Service Requested



*In early May, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks return from the South and may visit backyard feeders. Photo: Rose-breasted Grosbeak (male), May 4, 2019, Ossining, Lynn Salmon.
More info: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Rose-breasted_Grosbeak*

Connecting People and Nature Since 1953

Explore Nature with Saw Mill River Audubon this Spring!

We have more than 60 events scheduled between March 1 and May 31 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!



Watch for Red-tailed Hawk pairs perched close together along local roadways as nesting season gets underway in later winter and early spring. (The smaller male is on the left; among all birds of prey, females are larger than the males.) Red-tailed Hawks are our most common bird of prey and feed on squirrels, rabbits, mice, and other small mammals.

Left: Red-tailed Hawk pair in Ossining in late January. Photo by Steve Kowalczyk
More info: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-tailed_Hawk

Connecting with Nature: Your gift helps us connect people and nature. **Zelle us: smrapay@gmail.com**

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