

Hudson River Water Trail

By Carole Nemore

BIRDS FLOCK TO RIVERS and so do bird watchers. So, it made sense, naturally, for Audubon New York to join the advisory group that is helping to develop the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail.

Water trails are recreational waterways that provide small boaters and paddlers with a range of easy access points to a river, lake or ocean.

On the Hudson River nearly forty sites have already been designated as trail access points, ranging from city docks, state parks and campgrounds, to nature preserves. Some sites will have kiosks and flags while others will be minimally identified to protect their aesthetic and pristine qualities.

With another 30 sites in the planning stages, the Hudson River Water Trail is a dream coming true for lovers of the River who want to explore it by water.

With two Audubon Sanctuaries and Centers on the Hudson River, Ramshorn in Catskill and Constitution Marsh in Garrison, Audubon New York is working to become part of the Trail system, while protecting the sensitive wildlife habitats at these sites.

The Hudson River dubbed "The River That Flows Two Ways" by Native Americans now affords the opportunity to paddle over 146 miles from Albany to New York City through the water trail. This summer the Hudson Greenway Communities Council is sponsoring the Second Annual Great Hudson River Paddle from Friday, June 28 through Sunday, July 7, 2002. For event information visit www.greathudsonriverpaddle.net or call (518) 473-3835.



A striking view from the Hudson River Water Trail.

BRONXIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Summers on the New York River Otter Project, Inc.

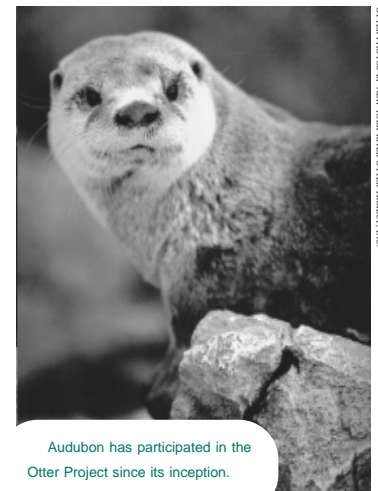
By June Summers
Genesee Valley Audubon

THOSE OF US who have participated in the New York River Otter Project, Inc., (ROP) since 1995 have leaped wide rivers in a single bound and climbed mountains with phenomenal speed.

From the beginning, Audubon was a major participant and supporter both on a chapter level and statewide. In 1995 ROP was charged with the goal of raising over \$300,000 to make the mission of restoring a viable river otter population to Central and Western New York possible. The partnership between ROP, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Bureau of Wildlife, the New York State Trappers Association and individual trappers, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Seneca Park Zoo and a number of other participants made possible the innovation required for this project to be successful.

Over 100 volunteers worked approximately 54,000 hours over 6 years, doing everything from hauling 6.75 tons of fish, building cages, selling 4,477 shirts and hats, and advertising Welcome Back Otter ice cream and Otter Spring Chardonnay by Heron Hills Winery. One volunteer spent many days and nights on Black Creek, in Monroe County, following the otters and collecting scat. You might say he has the scoop on river otter scat and toilet habits.

The number of research projects initiated was 14 total, including ten at Cornell, two at DEC, one at Penn State and one by a

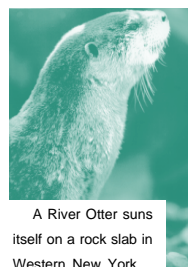


Audubon has participated in the Otter Project since its inception.

OTTER PHOTOGRAPH BY NEW YORK RIVER OTTER PROJECT, INC.

private individual. Twenty-two school groups participated in the project. Trappers set traps for an average of 300 trap nights per otter.

Funding for this project was lobbied for every year, through Audubon resolutions and the technical work of project partners. In the fall of 2000 the last of 279 river otters were released. ROP is currently in the monitoring phase of the project. Sightings reports are being taken over the web at www.nyotter.org. DEC volunteers and staff have been doing tracking surveys in the winter when there is snow on the ground since the project started. An automatic camera system on Black Creek captured the image of a young otter 2 years after the otters were released. This is good evidence of breeding success. Other reports of young otters have come in from private citizens. The success of this project will be measured over time and is a testament to the hard work and perseverance of everyone who worked on the project.



A River Otter suns itself on a rock slab in Western New York.

ADOPT AN IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

Does your chapter want to:

- * participate in scientific research leading to bird conservation
- * offer a new, compelling project to chapter volunteers
- * get involved in a program that can help you to recruit new members
- * promote birds and IBAs through out your community
- * work with Audubon New York's science and education staff

Adopting an IBA in your area can offer these benefits and more! For further information visit <http://ny.audubon.org/adoptiba.htm> or call Jillian Butler, IBA Coordinator at (607) 254-2437.