Harbor Seals and Beautiful Waterbirds Are Here to Spend the Winter, Right Here in NYC!

NEW YORK (January 6, 2015) – Harbor Seals and many kinds of beautiful waterfowl have arrived in NYC to spend the winter—and NYC Audubon’s Winter Seals and Waterbirds of New York Harbor Ecocruises will take you right to them! Running most Sundays, January 11 through March 8, our winter ecocruises depart from South Street Seaport’s Pier 16 aboard NY Water Taxi’s eco-friendly vessels. A NYC Audubon naturalist provides a narrated tour of the surprising wildlife of the harbor: Look for harbor seals on the rocky shores of Governor’s Island and the more remote Hoffman and Swinburne Islands. Learn about the surprisingly diverse winter birds of New York City, including ducks, geese, loons, and sandpipers that migrate south from the Arctic. Along the way, see the Statue of Liberty, Ellis and Governor’s Islands, and pass under the Verrazano Bridge while enjoying complimentary hot tea and cocoa.

In recent years, populations of wintering harbor seals have increased in New York Harbor, and are reliably found sunning themselves on the rocks of the remote Swinburne Island, or bobbing in the water nearby. Curious by nature, harbor seals will often approach our boat and can be seen looking back at us as we watch them play and dive. This year, we will have seal behavior researchers on board on several of the cruises; you can read about their past seal research on the NYC Audubon blog, Syrinx. New York Harbor is also a great place to see many wintering seabirds, including long-tailed ducks, bufflehead, Brant geese, loons, and more. These birds spend the spring and summer far north on the tundra, some close to the Arctic Circle, and New York Harbor provides a safe sheltered place for them to spend the winter.

**Cruise Details:** Sundays, January 11 – March 8, 12-2pm (Note: No cruise on February 1). Dress warmly and bring your binoculars. Limited to 90. To register, contact New York Water Taxi at 212-742-1969 or register online at www.nywatertaxi.com/tours/audubon-winter. $35 for adults; $25 for children 3-12; $105 for family pack for 2 adults and 2 children. Recommended for ages 6 and up (but all ages welcome)

**Directions:** The cruise launches from the South Street Seaport, Pier 16, at 89 South Street—a 5-10 minute walk from the A,C,J,Z,2,3 Fulton Street stop. More directions may be found at www.nywatertaxi.com/piers/pier16seaport.

**About New York City Audubon:** NYC Audubon champions nature in the City’s five boroughs through a combination of engaging programs and innovative conservation campaigns. NYC Audubon is an independent non-profit organization affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Through its efforts, NYC Audubon protects many species of birds living in the 30,000 acres of wetlands, forests, and grasslands of New York City. Learn more at www.nycaudubon.org.