

The Kettle



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter Est. 1983

April 2011 Vol.12 No 4 - Page 1

SAAS meetings are held at 6:30 pm. on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, September through May at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, 100 S. Bailey St. Refreshments will be provided and you may participate in door prize and raffle drawings.

The scheduling of a meeting or program in the library does not in any way constitute an endorsement by the library of the group, its activities, or of the ideas and opinions expressed during the course of meetings or programs.

SAAS thanks Roger and Ann Benter and **Williams Office Equipment** for donating printing costs for **The Kettle** and **Benter Chiropractic** for hosting www.straitsareaaudubon.org.

Straits Area Audubon Society
c/o Rosanne Rynerson
10490 E. U.S. 23
Cheboygan, MI 49721

Mission Statement: The mission of the Straits Area Audubon Society is to educate the community, including its children, about conservation and enjoyment of the natural world with emphasis on the local natural communities of wildlife. This will be accomplished through regular seasonal meetings and by sponsoring fieldtrips, classroom studies and field studies.

Join Straits Area Audubon Society

NAME: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Make checks payable to: Straits Area Audubon Society;
Single Membership: \$12
Family Membership: \$15

Please mail checks to:
Rosanne Rynerson - Treasurer
10490 E. U.S. 23
Cheboygan, MI 49721

SAAS Events Calendar

Upcoming Programs

April.13 2011 **Snakes Alive !**
by Jim McGrath

This special Earth Day program will feature the founder of Nature Discovery, a Lansing-based nature education company. Jim's presentation will inspire both awe and respect for these maligned creatures that have succeeded in their way of making a living since before the time of the dinosaurs. He will discuss their role in the environment and specialized adaptations. Jim will bring many species of snakes that live in Michigan and make these gentle creatures available for program attendees to closely inspect and handle.

NOTE: On April 14, SAAS will pay for Jim to present additional programs to the entire Cheboygan Middle School 5th grade, five sections, and then to feed the snakes with students watching at the Cheboygan Youth Center's After School Program.

May.11 2011 **Caribou Summer – Secrets of the Tundra**
by Kathy and Jim Bricker

NOTE: THIS MEETING WILL BE IN THE CHEBOYGAN HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM.

Join biologists and adventurers Kathy and Jim to hear about their seven-week-long canoe trip to the tundra's barren grounds on Canada's Arctic Circle. Camping alone in this vast land of millions of square miles of majestic wilderness, you will discover Arctic wildflowers and birds, grizzly bears, and other wildlife. The Brickers were fortunate to spend many days among the barren ground caribou as they migrated through the area.

Upcoming Field Trips

April 8 2011 **Third Annual Headlands Park Potluck**

Owl banding and stargazing at 6:30 pm on April 8, SAAS members and guests will gather at the Guest House at the Headlands Park for a potluck dinner. Afterward, we will help Ed Pike set up mist nests and an owl calling station on-site. Ed targets saw-whet owls, with boreal and long-eared owls also possible. The first net check will be about 30 minutes after sunset. Any captured owls will be measured; aged, sexed, banded, photographed, and released. Ed will demonstrate techniques that biologists use to learn more about these nocturnal hunters and describe his findings during decades of banding.

Upcoming Field Trips [cont.]

In-between checking the nets, we will learn about the stars and constellations either inside or outdoors if weather permits. Stay as late as you like. Up to ten people can stay overnight, on a first-come basis. Contact Jim Bricker, 231-627-4830, to reserve your space. The Emmet County Headlands Park is located just west of Mackinaw City. From the entrance, follow the signs to the Guest House.

April 9 2011 **Hawk Watch in Mackinaw City**

At 10 am on April 9, Headlands over-nighters and others are invited to help survey hawks as they migrate over the tip of the mitt. We will meet at the Mackinaw City historic park opposite the entrance to the Headlands. Dress warmly, bring a lawn chair and binoculars, and enjoy the spectacle of hawks and eagles as they kettle high overhead on thermals. Migrating northern shrikes, blue jays, northern flickers, and others are possible. About noon, we will take brown-bag lunches to the Headlands Guest House. Anyone who wishes may stay overnight on Saturday for more owl banding and star gazing.

SAAS CHAPTER NOTES

Request for Field Trip leaders
by Jim Bricker

I would welcome SAAS volunteers to lead field trips, either a nature walk or hike or bike ride to your favorite place. Please contact me at 231-627-4830. We can cover some expenses.

Nominating Committee
by Alice MacFarland

The nominating committee wants YOUR ideas for volunteer roles. As a member of SAAS, you can nominate someone, including yourself. Steve Baker, Kathy Bricker, and I are searching for candidates to fill the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer positions, and identify people for other volunteer posts as well. Please contact me at 231-597-8173 or macfarlands@charter.net with ideas by April 20.

Thanks for the Snakes
by Kathy Bricker

SAAS expresses deep gratitude to Citizens National Bank of Cheboygan and to a generous anonymous Cheboygan resident for enabling SAAS to bring Jim McGrath and his Snakes Alive Program to Earth Week Plus in April. When in downtown Cheboygan, be sure to express your appreciation to the people at Citizens National Bank.

SAAS CHAPTER NOTES [cont.]

2011 Earth Week Plus

by Kathy Bricker

The main contribution by SAAS to the 2011 Earth Day will be bringing Jim McGrath of Nature Discovery to Cheboygan to talk about snakes (see April meeting announcement). However, many of our members are helping people from other community groups to plan a broader celebration of Earth Day, building on the 2010 Earth Week. Your help is needed on the Program, Publicity, or Fundraising Committees. Please contact Mr. Laren Corie, larencorie@axilar.net or Judi Chimner, judichimner@yahoo.com, to share your talents, have fun, and make Earth Week Plus a success.

Safe Passage Great Lakes

by Detroit Audubon Society

With one simple act, you can save money, save energy, and save birds. Turn the lights off or draw your blinds or curtains between dusk and dawn every night from March 15 through May 31 and from August 15 through October 30. Scientists estimate that nearly one billion birds are killed every year due to lighted buildings, especially multi-story office buildings. During migration, any lights can interfere with the navigation system of birds flying at tree-top level or over cities. Birds either fly in circles around the building and die of exhaustion, or collide with windows. For more information, contact Detroit Audubon Society, at 248-545-2929 or www.detroitaudubon.org

Lighting Nominations Sought

by Kathy Bricker

SAAS is again invited to submit a nomination for a lighting award for a Cheboygan County business which installed responsible outdoor lighting that ensures safety without ruining views of the night sky. Please contact me as soon as possible with your suggestions, at 231-627-4830.

Call for Grant-Worthy Projects

by Kathy Bricker

SAAS members are welcome to submit ideas for how to best use Audubon funds we will raise on our Big Birding Day on May 21. Please send your ideas to Kathy Bricker, 627-4830 or kathyhomeaccount@hotmail.com by April 21 for publication in the May *Kettle*. Your vote on projects last May was honored, as we earmarked money for projects you selected: \$127 for owl migration research, \$89 for a youth outdoor scholarship, \$80 for the Cheboygan Youth Center, and \$68 for the Saving Starlight and trail cleanup projects.

Editors Note: My apologies to Alice MacFarland for not giving her the byline for the January Journal article in last month's *Kettle*. - Jack

2011 Texas Trip - February Journal

By Alice MacFarland

02/01/11 Passed through very fertile farmland between Victoria and Port Aransas. Saw two crested caracaras on side of road. They are easily identifiable birds and bold like other scavengers so they just stayed in place. Arrived at ferry at low tide, so had to backtrack and go through Corpus Christi to reach Port Aransas. Multitudinous windmills to the west of Corpus Christi Bay because there is always lots of wind there. Driving on Mustang Island we noticed a truly phenomenal change since 2003. Lots of chain resorts built along the east side of the island on the gulf. Lots more development projected for the next 5 years.

The sand on the beach is like white powder. Comes from the rocks washed down through the Guadalupe and Colorado rivers north of here according to geologists who have studied the sand characteristics. The temperature is in the mid-fifties with blustery winds.

02/02/11 Ho, ho, ho. Merry Freezing Weather. 28 degrees at 7:15 a.m. Woke to frozen water hose. Started making coffee and power went out for the whole town. Luckily that didn't last long as we had a week's worth of laundry to do. We thought we had a leak under the sink and a different one under the sofa where the water tank sits, but moisture was from condensation only.

Thursday, Euchre night at Pioneer Beach R.V. Park, was fun. Most of the residents stay here every year; a few widows are year round but most have to leave for at least two months per park regulations. We'd rather explore different places, but they seem to enjoy their relationships and life here.

02/04/11 Just when we thought it was safe to put away our winter clothes away, comes the freezing rain! The entire trailer was encased in ice. Sheets of ice sliding off the palm tree fronds made the thaw wicked, but at least we did have power. The Corpus Christi bridge was closed down for two days and the ferry was not running either.

02/06/11 Weather in the 50's. Birding at Port Aransas locations yielded: red-eared turtles, pied-billed grebes, northern shovelers, blue-winged teal, northern pintail, green-winged teal, coot, great blue heron, moorhen, yellow-rumped warbler, cardinal and laughing gulls.

2011 Texas Trip - February Journal [cont.]

02/08/11 Aransas National Wildlife Refuge Day. Not really worth the trip at this time of year. We saw lots of deer, alligators and a banded armadillo. Birds on the way in: many kestrels, grackles, robin, Caspian tern, Franklin's gull, Bonaparte's gull, red-shouldered hawk, crested caracara eating road kill, coots, black vulture, lesser scaup, snowy egret, American white pelican, double-crested cormorant and great blue heron. New birds in park: shrike, brown pelican, little blue heron, pied-billed grebe, killdeer, lesser yellowlegs, long-billed curlew, belted kingfisher and western kingbird.

02/10/11 Temperatures not even reaching 50 today and very windy. In spite of that we did see some different birds today. At Packery Channel Park: reddish egret, red-breasted merganser pair, ring-billed gull, Forster's tern. At Corpus Christi Intercostal Turnaround: Wilson's plover and bufflehead. At Mustang Island along HWY 361 roseate spoonbills.

02/12/11 Goose Island State Park was a real find. It is a great campground, each trailer separated from the next by lots of bird-filled brush as well as trees. If we come to this area again, this will be our destination. New birds: a family of three whooping cranes, the youth a rusty-headed one-year-old, plus marbled godwits and Anna's hummingbird in camping area where some campers have feeders. Sights: a 1000-year-old live oak named aptly, the Big Tree.

02/14/11 Valentine's Day was Padre Island National Seashore day. Birds: Prairie falcon sitting in a tree near the road gave us lots of time to observe him. Life list bird for us. Semiplumated plover, sanderling, western sandpiper, royal tern, Harris hawk, white tailed hawk (another life list bird).

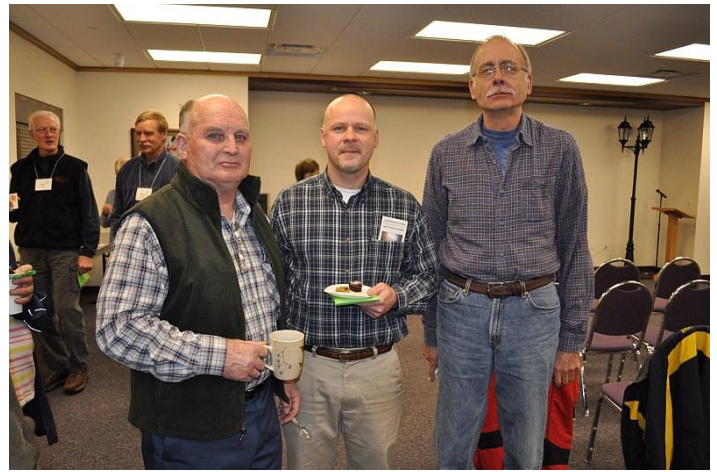
02/15/11 Put mittens away. I have faith in the nice weather. Hurray! 73 degrees, sunny and breezy with some mosquitoes. You know there always has to be a hitch.

02/16/11 Texas State Aquarium and USS Lexington museum on the bay. Somewhat interesting but not as good as seeing wildlife in the wild.

[To be continued in next month's Kettle]

SAAS Photos

March Meeting



Ben Lillie, Steve Baker, Arch Reeves, Scott Whitcomb (speaker) and Don Mittlestat pose at the March meeting on the Big Wild, Pigeon River Country State Forest

March Birds



The view from the Kirby's kitchen window, a male and female Pileated woodpeckers.

Note from the Editor:

Jack Kirby [jskirby@wowway.com]

All articles and photos for THE KETTLE should be submitted to the editor's e-mail box one week BEFORE the end of a publication month. This will allow the e-mail edition to be sent out by the first of the month and the printed edition to be mailed by the 4th day of the month. Thank you.