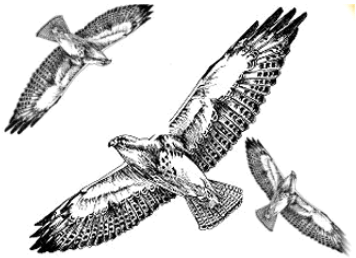
The Kettle



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter Est. 1983

December 2010 Vol.11 No 9 - Page 1

SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, 100 S. Bailey St. at 6:30 pm. Refreshments will be provided. You may also 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 Supply 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

Dec 8 **Potluck and Member Slide Fest**
by Roger Benter

Do you have cool nature pictures or stories you'd like to share with others, yet don't want to give a full Audubon program? Your opportunity is our annual Slide Fest and holiday potluck dinner. The potluck will feature everyone's culinary talents, so bring a dish to pass and your own table service. NOTE that dinner STARTS AT 6 pm, one-half hour earlier than normal meetings to give us plenty of time to eat. After dessert, we will enjoy images and stories from any members and guests. Bring up to 20 pictures per person in a photo album to pass around, or on a computer disk or thumb drive. The meeting will end at least by 8:45 p.m.

Jan. 12 **Future of Fish and Fishing in the Mackinac Straits**
by Randy Claramunt

This Department of Natural Resources and Environment fish biologist will describe the special adaptations and beauty of several types of fish that live beneath the Mackinac Bridge. You will hear about factors that influence fish, what caused the rise and fall of salmon numbers, and some effects of foreign species on fish and fish-eating birds. Some possible scenarios for the future will be discussed, including the invasion of Asian carp.

Feb.13 **Whale Tails and Other Stories**
by Kate Caldwell

This professional naturalist experienced the wonders of whales nearly every day during her work on Alaskan cruise ships. She will describe the life of the gray whale on its amazing annual migration from the Bering Sea to the warm calving grounds off Baja California, and the birds that accompany it. Other whales of Alaskan waters will be shown as they leap and feed in front of the boat, enthralling passengers in our Cheboygan Library chairs as well as on the ship deck.

Upcoming Field Trips

Dec 18 **Christmas Bird Count**
by Ed Pike

Meet at 7:30 am at Cheboygan McDonalds to join the 25th annual SAAS Christmas Bird Count. We will split into groups to bird-watch all day, traveling within 7.5 miles of the junction of M-33 and M-27. If you live within that circle, you can assist by counting your feeder birds. Some people split the day between home and helping in the field. Our record count in 2008 tallied more than 3,500 birds of 49 species. Our lowest was 31 species. For more information, call Ed Pike at 231-758-3319.

SAAS Chapter Notes

SAAS Gives Grants
by Kathy Bricker

At the May meeting, members cast 143 votes for possible ways to help our community enjoy and learn about the natural world, using money raised at our spring bird count. The first-place grant, $127, went to Ed Pike for his work to research owls through his long-standing banding project. We used $68 for a laser pointer to help educate the community about the stars and night-sky-friendly lighting.

In the coming months, we will also award money to:

- Develop and offer a scholarship to a Cheboygan student with a proven interest in nature and commitment to conservation.
- Expand the SAAS partnership with the Cheboygan Youth Center.
- Purchase supplies for the North Central Michigan Trail cleanup along Mullett Lake.
- Help to provide a portable electronic projector for loaning to non-profit groups.

Shepherd Hooks For Bird Feeders
by Susan Good, R.N. CWR

Last winter I went on a rescue call for a grey squirrel caught in an iron shepards hook that had been installed for hanging bird feeders. This was a double hooked one with a hook on each side. The squirrel had gotten its hind leg wedged in-between the two hooks and had been hanging upside down for sometime resulting in her gnawing on her leg to try and facilitate escape.

The ground was still frozen and I was not able to pull the pole from the ground. In my panic to release the squirrel (and a spurt of Herculean strength!), I pulled the two hooks apart from the weld allowing the squirrel to fall to the ground and escape. She had swollen teats indicating that there were babies at home to feed so I had to let her go and was not able to tend to her injuries.

If you install these double hooked feeder poles, I suggest that duct tape be used to wrap the ‘crotch’ area a few inches up or wedging something in-between the hooks preventing this from occurring. For esthetics, duct tape comes in black and will make it less noticeable.

Field Trip Reports

Aug. 12 **Stargazing**
by Jim Bricker

Eight SAAS members enjoyed this trip with Dale Giddings on a haywagon ride to view the Perseid meteor showers. “Catch a falling star” seemed possible, with many dozens of meteors lighting long arcs through the sky. We viewed many constellations and an astounding five planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter.

Sep 10 **Rare Ferns of the Eastern UP**
by Steve Baker

Twelve folks attended this trip on Sep. 10. We car-pooled to several sites in the UP for a very enjoyable outing. Everyone went home with a new appreciation for the variety of ferns that occur in these special limestone areas. We saw more than 16 species of ferns, including several rare and fragile ones. Ferns included: Evergreen Wood Fern, Maidenhair Fern, Bulblet (Bladder) Fern, Ostrich Fern, Lady Fern, Hart's-tongue Fern, Walking Fern, Northern Holly Fern, Mackay's Fragile Fern, Interupted Fern, Bracken Fern, Sensitive Fern, Green Spleenwort, Maidenhair Spleenwort, Common Polypody, Narrow-leaved Beech Fern.

Sep 18 **Search for Uranus**
by Kathy Bricker

Five people enjoyed playing peek-a-boo through the clouds on Sep. 18. Despite initial haze, between 7:30 and 11:30 p.m. we had plenty of good stargazing. Besides constellations, we were treated to views through guest Jim Woodworth's new telescope. Everyone saw Jupiter's banding and its four Galilean moons, the Double Star system of Albirea (the head of Cygnus the Swan), and even planet Uranus in its rare convenient location less than one degree from Jupiter. The gibbous (nearly full) moon showed a gorgeous crescent of the 12,000 foot tall Ura Mountain Range and nearby craters. Hot cider and treats topped off a great night of observing.

Sep 26 **Wilderness State Park**
by Bev Kirby

Sunday, September 26, 2010, a lovely fall day, was enjoyed by 10 hikers as trip leader Steve Baker led us out to Waugoshance Point to look for fall wildflowers and migrating shorebirds. Aside from a few fringed and bottle gentians, small flowered gerardia and harebell, and a number of different kinds of goldenrod, wildflowers were in short supply, as most had bloomed a few weeks prior to the hike. Due to the rains incurred this past week, the area was very wet, and we sloshed our way out to the tree line and then on to the beach.[cont.]

Wilderness State Park [cont.]

A total of 27 species of birds were observed. Black-capped chickadees and yellow-rumped warblers kept us company as many blue jays migrated overhead. Although unable to find any American golden-plovers, one of our target birds for the day, we did see lots of horned larks and American pipits, and all were thrilled to have great looks at many Lapland longspurs. One dunlin and 2 sanderlings were observed along the shore as well. On a more somber note, we were sorry to find a total of 8 birds dead from botulism, a current scourge on Lake Michigan. 1 common loon, 1 double-crested cormorant, 1 gull species, 2 horned grebes and 3 red-necked grebes were found dead along the shore. Moving on to Sturgeon Bay, we were delighted to find 5 or 6 golden-crowned kinglets, and a ruby-crowned kinglet joining them as they flitted through the cedars. A northern harrier glided over the marshy area. One of the highlights of the trip was watching an otter eat a big carp near the shore and rocks of Cecil Bay. A great time was had by all and there is always next year for the elusive golden-plovers. Hikers..Steve and Sue Baker, Jack and Bev Kirby, Jim and Kathy Bricker, Ed Pike, Janet Trudeau, Linda Baney, Vickie Lyon.

Photo by Steve Baker

Oct 8 **Owl Banding**
by Bev Kirby

On Friday evening, October 8, 2010, 9 members and 16 guests of the Straits Area Audubon Society met to watch Ed Pike capture and band 5 Northern Saw-whet owls. It was a great opportunity to see how Ed captures the owls in mist nets and then collects data and bands the birds before release. This is all part of his research of Northern Saw-whet owls as they migrate through the Straits of Mackinaw. The nets are checked every ½ hour or so. After an owl has been captured, Ed untangles it from the net. It is then weighed, tail and wing measurements are taken, age and sex determined, and a numbered band placed on the leg.

Owl Banding [cont].

Everyone has a good chance to see this small owl and to watch it being released into the surrounding evergreens. While waiting around the bonfire for the next net check, we were treated to zucchini bread from the Brickers and cider and donut holes from the Kirbys.. Scopes were set up and everyone was able to see Jupiter and it's 4 moons. A great night to look at stars also. Early on in the evening we were visited by 2 Michigan State Police troopers who had heard that there were kids having a party in the woods. It was only us. ☺ A fun and very informative evening was had by all.

Photo by Neil Kirby

Oct. 17 **High Springs/Carp Creek Gorge Hike**
*by **Kathy Bricker***

Six members and 6 guests explored nature along Carp Creek from its source at High Springs to its mouth into Burt Lake. Collecting mushrooms proved the highlight, as we plucked many varieties of gilled mushrooms, including edible oyster mushrooms. Some chanterelles, boletes, toothed mushrooms, and tree-growing turkeytails rounded out the fungi. We also cleaned up an old dump site along the trail on University of Michigan Biological Station land, which had been spied during an Earth Week hike there in April. Most participants joined the delicious potluck supper afterward.

Oct. 26 **Straits of Mackinac Waterfowl Trip**
by Bev Kirby

In high winds and lots of rain, Steve Baker, Bev and Jack Kirby, and Beth Ensor searched for and counted birds on the north and south side of the Straits. In the 7 ¾ hours of birding, at 29 sites from Mackinaw City to Moran, 41 species of birds were found. Some of the highlights were 7 tundra swans on Lake Michigan along U.S. 2, snow buntings, horned larks and 7 lapland longspurs at Pte. Labarbe, a white-winged scoter at St. Ignace, 2 Cooper's hawks and a great-horned owl in Mackinaw City. The owl was being mobbed by crows who were very unhappy with his presence. At Straits State Park, an Iceland gull was seen flying along the shoreline. 100's of redheads were observed there also, and long-tailed ducks were in abundance in Moran Bay. Seven bald eagles were seen throughout the day. Greater yellowlegs, American tree sparrows, American Black Ducks, green-winged teal, bufflehead, common goldeneye and all 3 species of mergansers were found. In spite of the wild weather, the birds co-operated and we had another great day of birding.

Photo by Jack Kirby