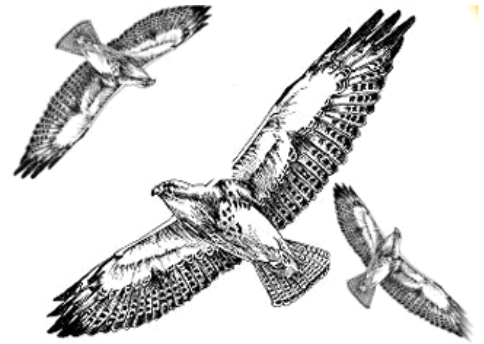


# THE KETTLE

Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983



SAAS meetings are held at 6:30 pm. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 our [www.straitsareaaudubon.org](http://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 field trips, 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

## Upcoming Programs

### **December 14, Wednesday - Potluck/Slide Fest [Starting time – 6:00 PM]**

The SAAS annual Christmas dinner and photo-sharing event begins at the Cheboygan Area Public Library at 6 pm instead of 6:30. That gives us enough time to both talk and eat. During desserts, members and guests will enjoy each others' nature pictures and stories. Please bring a dozen or two of your photos on a computer disk, thumb drive, or (for some) a photo album. Also, bring a food dish to pass, your favorite beverage, and your own table service.

## Upcoming Field Trips

### **December 1, Thursday - Hike in Pigeon River Country with Don and Donna Mittlestat**

We will be walking around the Inspiration Point area again. This beautiful site was the the location of a CCC camp and many ornamental fruit bearing trees( Siberian Crab mostly) attract a wide assortment of birds in the late fall. We will almost certainly see many Robins and hopefully more northern visitors such as Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks. Elk are always a possibility anywhere in the PRC. We will meet at Schultz's Marathon Gas just to the east of the Wolverine I-75 exit, at 8:30 am.



*Inspiration Point - J. Kirby*

case weather conditions force cancellation.

### **December 7, Wednesday - Tour da Eastern UP with Steve Baker**

Holy Wah! we're back to da Yoop. We will be searching for UP early winter specialties such as Gray Jay and Boreal Chickadee at da Hulbert Bog; Rough-legged Hawks, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and Snowy Owls in da Dryberg area; and Glaucous, Iceland, and Great Black-backed Gulls at da Dafter Dump.



*da Dafter Dump Gulls – J. Kirby*

Please call Steve Baker (231-238-8723) to sign up. We will meet in Mackinaw City at 8am at the State Highway Welcome Center/ Rest Area. This will be an all day trip and we will do lunch somewhere da UP, eh?

## **A word about Christmas Bird Counts**

*by Steve Baker*

Christmas Bird Counts have been performed by volunteer birders for 111 years in North America. Valuable conservation data is gathered especially with regard to population numbers and geographical population shifts. For instance, CBC data shows that the range of Purple Finches has shifted north 400 miles in the last 40 years. A Christmas Bird Count must be carried out between December 14 and January 5 and cover a circle of 15 mile diameter (7.5 mile radius). Each counter does their best to tally all the birds within their assigned territory. Feeder counters also provide valuable data numbers. You need not be an expert birder to participate as the compiler will pair you with a more seasoned birder. We have three CBC's in the tip of the mitt area. Come join us for any or all of these counts and learn about citizen science at its best.

### **December 14, Wednesday- Petoskey Christmas Bird Count**

If you would like to help out with the Petoskey CBC, contact Ed Pike (231-758-3319) ahead of time so he can assign territories. This is a national Audubon count and requires a \$5 fee to participate. The meeting location is the Petoskey north side Burger King at 7:30 am.

### **December 16, Friday - Mackinaw Straits Christmas Bird Count**

The Mackinaw Straits CBC is centered on the Mackinac Bridge and includes the Mackinaw City area, St. Ignace area, and Mackinac Island. Please contact Steve Baker

(231-238-8723) for the meeting place if you would like to join us for this low key count.

## December 18, Sunday - Cheboygan Christmas Bird Count

The Cheboygan CBC is a 7.5 mile radius circle centered at the intersection of M-33 and Old 27. Ed Pike is the compiler (231-758-3319) and he can always use help in covering this large area. Just counting and reporting your feeder birds is very helpful.

Please call Ed to sign up ahead of time so territories can be assigned. We will meet at 7:30 am at McDonald's.

## Field Trip Reports

### Exploring in the Pigeon River Country

November 8, 2011

by *Bev Kirby*

Undeterred by impending rain, 9 hikers walked to Inspiration Point overlooking Cornwall Flooding. Don and Donna Mittlestat led us to this site, which was the location of a former CCC Camp. The stars of the show on this dreary day were the many Siberian Crab trees with their beautiful red and orange fruits and even in this dull light golden tamarack trees stood out. Wild turkeys were seen on the road to the area, while robins, purple finch, pileated woodpecker, American goldfinch, hairy woodpecker, blue jay, cedar waxwings, starlings, black-capped chickadees and red-breasted nuthatch were seen or heard near and around the Point. The best



SAAS Group - J Kirby

birds of the day were two evening grosbeaks high in a box elder tree. Good looks were had by all and it was mentioned that it has been a long time since many of us has seen an evening grosbeak in the Lower Peninsula. Along the forest roads on the way out, a ruffed grouse

stood stock still trying not to be noticed, while a bald eagle was seen being harassed by ravens, and a dark-eyed junco flew across the road. By this time, as the rains poured down, it was time for lunch in Indian River. All in all, a satisfying morning of viewing nature

### Late Fall Birds of the Eastern U.P.

November 11, 2011.

by *Bev Kirby*

Thirteen people in 5 cars crossed the Mackinac Bridge to begin our quest for good bird sightings in the U.P. Led by Steve Baker and Ed Pike, we began at Straits Strait Park. Rafts of redhead ducks were seen, with bufflehead, mallard and the first of 8 bald eagles seen throughout the day being spotted here. Along the St. Ignace waterfront many flocks of long-tailed ducks, some hooded and common mergansers, common goldeneye, and white-winged scoters were viewed. Green-winged teal, gadwall, and American black duck were seen near the Mackinac County airport before we moved on to the roads around Rudyard with 4" of snow on the ground.



SAAS Group - S Baker

Approximately 19 rough-legged hawks were counted throughout the day, with one dark morph spotted. Good looks were had at white-winged crossbills, snow buntings, and 5 sharp-tailed grouse. Later in the day, 10 more sharp-tailed grouse were found in a field. Moving on to the Dafter landfill, a red-tailed hawk, bald eagles, ravens and a beautiful adult glaucous gull as well as a juvenile were seen. An Iceland gull swimming in a pond



Iceland Gull - S. Baker

was the highlight of the many hundreds of herring and ring-billed gulls swirling above and was also a life bird for me. Sleet and snow squalls at times made viewing a bit challenging. Tundra swans were found in the St. Mary's River at Dunbar Park and cedar waxwings along the Charlotte River. A Border Patrol agent was quite

interested in our group and when asked, said we were indeed the highlight of his day so far. ☺ At the Dunbar feeders, a large flock of red-winged blackbirds were in the trees overhead. As it was getting dark around 5 p.m., we began looking for short-eared owls in good habitat, but none were found. We had a total of 41 species seen at 22 different stops as Steve and Ed kept us moving. Another great U.P. birding trip.

## SAAS Droppings:

### Haiku

by Kathy Bricker

*Picture puzzle bark  
of the ponderosa pine  
prompts people to pause*



Ponderosa Pine - K Bricker

## SAAS Chapter Notes:

### Raffle and Door Prizes

Popular features of our monthly meetings, door prizes and raffle prizes offer nature-related objects for lucky winners to take home. Door prizes may be won by anyone who signs the attendance list. Raffle tickets are inexpensive, so be sure to get in the running by purchasing your tickets from Judy Vanderhart or Sue Emerson. In 2010, the raffles supplied an extra \$220, enabling SAAS to maintain low membership dues despite increased operational costs. SAAS wishes to thank the **Cheboygan Co-op** for supplying the entire current year of raffle prizes. In addition, **Blaskowski Feed & Seed**, **Zany Kitchen**, and **Court Street Antiques & Gifts** have given single items. SAAS appreciates the efforts of

Maureen Conklin to obtain these prizes, and all others who donate them.

## Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding

October 1 / November 3, 2011

by Ed Pike

I had a good fall netting Northern Saw-whet Owls [NSWO] at Pt. LaBarbe near St. Ignace. During early October the weather was too nice with all the south winds over a week which stalled migration. Members of SAAS came to observe the netting operation on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> and saw several owls banded; a total of 16 owls were banded that night. Most were banded after the observers left for the evening. Some members of the Petoskey Audubon Society also attended and were able to see some owls banded.



NSWO - J Kirby

I was able to get in 13 nights of netting from Oct. 1 through Nov. 3. Nov. 3 looked like an excellent night following a storm with clear skies and a light north wind. I heard 2 NSWO reply to the caller, but none were netted by midnight; the only night of the fall with no owls netted. I netted 96 NSWO; 88 new birds and 8 foreign re-traps. No big nights this fall; busiest night was 17 birds netted. The foreign re-traps were from Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (2007 & 2009), Tofte, MN. (2009); Yellowwood State Forest, IN. (2010); and Chillecothe, OH (2009).

## Note from the Editor

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 4<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

Thank you. Jack Kirby [ [jskirby@wowway.com](mailto:jskirby@wowway.com) ]