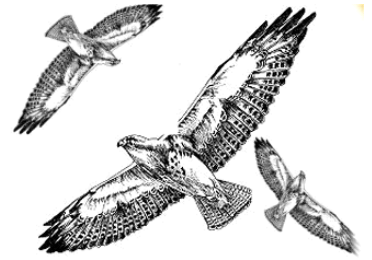


The Kettle



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter Est. 1983

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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 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

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.



Submitted Photo

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

There are no SAAS Field Trips scheduled for the month of January.

SAAS Chapter Notes

Treasurer's Report

by Rose Rynerson

I am pleased to be Treasurer for this group and thank you all for your involvement. Our Income & Expense records for 2010 are completed. Copies will be available at the January meeting. In a nutshell, we had \$1,103.48 at the beginning of this year and now have \$2,818.18 in the checking account. Some grants from our 2010 fundraisers are pending final disbursement to the tune of \$1,634.26!

About a third of SAAS members have not yet renewed for this season. Current members received a thank-you letter containing a bookmark as receipt for their dues. If you are not sure, whether you owe for membership through September 2011, please see me at the January meeting, call me at 627-3741, or email me at reesparrow@localnet.com. Thank you!

December Potluck Meeting

By Jim Bricker

21 members came, and one of them even brought along mice (which I am happy to say were all captured and devoured before the end of the evening).

We voted to give Cheboygan Area Public Library an unrestricted grant of \$100 in appreciation for use of their facilities all year.

Photo by Kathy Bricker



Field Trip Reports

Dec 2

Pigeon River Country Birding

by Bev Kirby

On a snowy morning, and with 8” of snow on the ground, Steve Baker led a hike into the Pigeon River State Forest. Jack and Bev Kirby, and Gloria and Tom Cadwalader accompanied Steve as we looked for winter birds. Our first good sighting was a northern shrike, always a great bird to see. The highlight of the trip was two groups of pine grosbeaks, feeding on the abundant fruiting trees in the area of a former CCC camp. In the first group there were 11 birds and the second group had 16, affording good photographic opportunities. They did not seem to worry that we were sharing their territory. Also seen along the trail were many black-capped chickadees, 2 robins, and a crow. A raven was heard calling near the Cornwall Flooding, where one wild turkey was seen down in the valley. A beautiful spot and a peaceful quiet morning of hiking was enjoyed.

Photos by Jack Kirby



Pine Grosbeak [male]



Pine Grosbeak [female]

More Chapter Notes

Waterfowl Die Offs

By Susan Good, R.N. CWR

I've had quite a few calls regarding large waterfowl die offs in and around lakes late in the season. Because it's cold, the idea of botulism is slim as cold weather does not support the bacteria.

I have read about die offs occurring with other avian species as well, such as vultures. The general consensus is that weather may be the problem here; wind and wind shear. High winds can blow migratory birds off course and wind shear slams them into the water or the ground at a high velocity causing death.

Necropsies were done on some of the birds found and the result was concussion type injuries, which would support the wind shear theory.

Something to consider when there are large die offs. It may not be a disease process but instead, may be weather that is responsible.

Binocular Care

from Eagle Optics website

With regular use, the lenses of binoculars and spotting scopes will collect dust, dirt, and grime. Following these steps will free your optics of spots and smudges and give you optimal viewing.

1. Remove grit: First remove abrasive materials such as sand or dirt from the lenses. To do this, use compressed air or a soft brush designed to clean lenses without scratching the surface.
2. Remove residue: Once the lenses are cleared of debris, remove fingerprints or oils with a microfiber or soft lens cleaning cloth.
3. Remove water spots: If stubborn water spots may remain even after these cleaning steps use a cleaning cloth with any ammonia-free lens cleaner suitable for cleaning eyeglasses and camera lenses, it should do the job.

Dec 16 The Mackinac Straits Christmas Bird Count

By Steve Baker

Ten participants in 4 parties searched the area till 1 pm. After lunch, 7 of us did some extracurricular birding (out of the count area) by heading to the Dafter dump for gulls and raptors where at least a dozen eagles were harassing the herring gulls and one glaucous gull.

The CBC was somewhat slow for birds as we hit the tail end of a major snow and wind event. All inland water was frozen and even the Great Lakes had a good start on ice shelf development. Dick and Linda Taylor covered the area SW of Mackinaw City (with their bird dogs). Kenyon and Sally Stebbins searched the SE side of Mackinaw City and claimed to have seen a female shoveler but the documentation was weak. The photo did not show the shoveler bill very well, and the navy blue winter plumage was unusual so this compiler will not be submitting this sighting (sorry Kenyon!).

Photo by Kenyon Stebbins



Shoveler [female]

Ed Pike, Gerald Vork, and Steve Baker (yours truly) birded the UP side of the bridge. Special kudos to Jim and Kathy Bricker who trudged all over Mackinac Island and contributed an impressive number of birds. They made two boat trips back and forth to practice their pelagic birding skills. Birding highlights included a horned grebe by Mackinac Island, 2 white-winged scoters, a ruddy duck in St. Ignace, Bohemian waxwings and pine grosbeaks, a merlin, 2 tufted titmice in the LP, and 95 long-tailed ducks in the straits. We totaled 2376 individuals of 39 species. My thanks to all who joined in this effort and made it a very enjoyable day of winter birding. Steve

Dec.18

SAAS 25th Annual Cheboygan Christmas Bird Count

By Ed Pike

Fourteen people came out to search for birds in the field and eleven people counted birds at their feeders. The day of the count it snowed all day long reducing visibility to about one half of a mile which restricted most observations on Lake Huron. The temperature was in the mid-twenties with light winds and eight to ten inches of snow on the ground. The inland lakes and most of the Cheboygan River were frozen. We still had a really good count with 45 species seen and a total of 2904 individual birds counted. One unusual species seen was an immature rose-breasted grosbeak near some feeders at the north end of Mullet Lake. A few winter finches are making an appearance with pine grosbeak, pine siskin and Bohemian waxwings. Big thanks to all who helped with the count.



Photo by Kathy Bricker

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 addition to be sent out by the first of the month and the printed addition to be mailed by the 4th day of the month. Thank you.