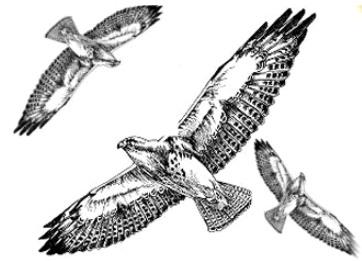


THE KETTLE



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983

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 our 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

January 11, Wednesday [6:30 pm] Seven National Treasures: Parks from Badlands to Tetons

Come to the Cheboygan Area Public Library to enjoy "Seven National Treasures: Parks from Badlands to Tetons." Film-maker Tom Cadwalader and his wife Gloria will present stunning video accompanied by stories of the wildlife, geology, and natural history of these western parks as experienced during a 37-day RV camping adventure. SAAS members and past



volunteers, Tom and Gloria have attended several of our potlucks where they shared films of sharp-tailed grouse courtship on a lek in the Upper Peninsula, and diverse feathered and furry animals seen near their Lake Huron shoreline home. This presentation promises to be the best yet, so be sure to join us. Refreshments and raffle and door prize drawings will follow the meeting.

Future Programs:

February 8 - Isle Royale - by Rick Barber

March 14 - Wildlife Rehabilitation - by Susan Good

April 11 - Connecting the Nature Dots - by Mike Supernault

May 9 - Vehicular Air Pollution - by Tom Grahame

Upcoming Field Trips

[There are no January field trips scheduled.]

Field Trip Reports

Hike in Pigeon River Country December 1, 2011

by Bev Kirby

Led by Don and Donna Mittlestat, five members met at Wolverine to make our third trip to the Pigeon River State Forest, this time to look for winter birds near Inspiration Point. We were hoping for snow but again we had rain. Birds were few and far between and it was the first trip

where we did not even see a black-capped chickadee. Blue jays, lots of purple finches, common raven, American robin, cedar waxwings, hairy woodpecker, a buteo species, American crow, starling and a fly-by of pine grosbeaks was the extent of our bird sightings. We did notice how the elk had been rummaging around in the bushes and trees and there were many broken branches as evidence. We met a hunter who told us where he had seen two bald eagles previously that morning. At this point with the temperature at 34 degrees and heavy rain beginning, we decided to call it a day and head for lunch in Indian River. It was still fun to be out in the woods.

Touring the Eastern U.P. December 7, Wednesday

by Bev Kirby

Led by Steve Baker, 8 members in 3 cars started early in the morning for birding in the U.P. Our first stop was over the bridge to Pte. LaBarbe where we saw 40 mute swans, a herring gull, common mergansers, bufflehead, common goldeneye, redhead and a few surprise gadwall. Two bald eagles were seen over U.S.2, along with a common raven carrying a Styrofoam coffee cup! At Brevort Lake there were common mergansers, common goldeneye, and mute swans. A quick stop at Frenchman's Lake at Trout Lake gave us white-breasted nuthatch, hooded mergansers, bufflehead and more common mergansers. Driving on to Hulbert Bog to look for gray jays, we were rewarded even before we stepped out of the car with 3 very tame gray jays landing on the road in front of us.



Photo by Jack Kirby

Suet and seed, strategically placed by Steve the previous day, seemed to be the trick for our easy and rewarding sighting. Near Brimley, a great-horned owl sitting on a hay bale stopped the convoy in its tracks. It turned out to be a plastic owl and on we went to lunch in Brimley. ☺ Seeing 15 guinea fowl in a field on M28 spurred us on to find a flock of 100 or so snow buntings in one field, a bald eagle in another field and a northern shrike in Kinross. At the Dafter landfill, 13 eagles were the highlight along with a red-tailed hawk. Proceeding on, we next viewed a dark-morph rough-legged hawk and another red-tailed hawk. We stopped at the Dunbar feeders, then on to the St Mary's River where we saw tundra swans, common

goldeneye, and near the Neebish Island ferry, a common loon. Three more rough-legged hawks were seen near Riverside, Pickford, and Dryberg areas. Throughout the day we made 25 stops and saw 28 species of birds. No snowy owls, short-eared owls, great-black backed, Iceland or glaucous gulls, boreal chickadees or sharp-tailed grouse were seen, but there is always hope for the next trip to the U.P.

SAAS CBC Reports

December 16, Friday - Mackinaw Straits Area CBC

by Steve Baker

The Mackinac Straits Christmas Bird Count was held on Friday, December 16, 2011. The oddly mild weather this season seems to have allowed many birds to linger. Thirteen birders surveyed the count circle centered on the Mackinac Bridge including the villages of St. Ignace and Mackinaw City and Mackinac Island. A record total of 51 species (4972 individual birds) were seen. Birders travelled about by car, foot, ferry boat, and bike. Highlights include large rafts of Redheads in the straits, Surf Scoters, White-winged Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Red-necked Grebe, a very late Dunlin, Glaucous Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, and a Snowy Owl on the bridge, American Robin, Common Grackle, and White-winged Crossbills.



Dunlin - Photo by Steve Baker

Species list:

Canada Goose	20
Mute Swan	83
Gadwall	11
American Black Duck	7
Mallard	113
Redhead	2512
Greater Scaup	3
Surf Scoter	2
White-winged Scoter	1
Long-tailed Duck	120
Bufflehead	5
Common Goldeneye	267
Hooded Merganser	2

Common Merganser	28
Red-breasted Merganser	55
Ruffed Grouse	4
Red-necked Grebe	1
Bald Eagle	11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	1
Dunlin	1
Ring-billed Gull	72
Herring Gull	25
Glaucous Gull	1
Great Black-backed Gull	1
Rock Pigeon	134
Mourning Dove	57
Snowy Owl	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3
Downy Woodpecker	6
Hairy Woodpecker	2
Pileated Woodpecker	3
Northern Shrike	2
Blue Jay	22
American Crow	79
Common Raven	26
Black-capped Chickadee	209
Tufted Titmouse	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4
White-breasted Nuthatch	4
Brown Creeper	1
American Robin	6
European Starling	654
Cedar Waxwing	107
Northern Cardinal	7
Common Grackle	1
House Finch	10
White-winged Crossbill	21
Pine Siskin	165
American Goldfinch	61
House Sparrow	38
Total Species	51
Total individuals	4972

A big thank you to all who participated and contributed to this record count. Steve Baker - Compiler

December 18, Sunday - Cheboygan Area CBC

by Ed Pike

Below is the total for the count. We had some unusual sightings which included a Ring-necked Duck, American Kestrel, American Robin, Common Grackle, and a Varied Thrush. The numbers of Red-bellied Woodpecker and Tufted Titmouse continue at higher levels than a decade ago when they were rare species this far north. This is the largest number of species seen since the count was

started in 1985; with the next highest count occurring in 2008 with 49 species seen.

Species list:

Canada Goose	769
Mute Swan	99
American Black Duck	6
Mallard	531
Ring-necked Duck	1
Greater Scaup	2
Bufflehead	15
Common Goldeneye	193
Hooded Merganser	2
Common Merganser	109
Red-breasted Merganser	32
Ruffed Grouse	1
Wild Turkey	48
Bald Eagle	8
Coopers Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	3
Rough-legged Hawk	4
American Kestrel	1
Ring-billed Gull	13
Herring Gull	34
Rock Pigeon	197
Mourning Dove	267
Snowy Owl	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	12
Downy Woodpecker	21
Hairy Woodpecker	13
Pileated Woodpecker	3
Northern Shrike	1
Blue Jay	62
American Crow	70
Common Raven	25
Black-capped Chickadee	427
Tufted Titmouse	13
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12
White-breasted Nuthatch	24
American Robin	14
European Starling	546
Cedar Waxwing	45
American Tree Sparrow	13
Song Sparrow	1
Dark-eyed Junco	7
Snow Bunting	86
Northern Cardinal	18
Common Grackle	1
Pine Grosbeak	1
Purple Finch	2
House Finch	30
Pine Siskin	450
American Goldfinch	246
House Sparrow	21
Varied Thrush	1
Total Species	51
Total individuals	4503

A big thanks to everyone who helped on the count. Ed Pike - Compiler

SAAS Chapter Notes:

Treasurer's Report

by Rose Rynerson

In January I will be contacting those on our SAAS roster who have not yet renewed for this season. Membership is not required for participation in our programs, but dues and donations are tax-deductible gifts which help cover costs of *The Kettle* newsletter, payments to each month's guest speaker (\$50), and small gratuities (\$10) for our remarkable field trip leaders.

As many of you know, each year SAAS also conducts at least one fundraiser, the spring Big Bird Count, which creates a fund for special grants.

It is a pleasure to be treasurer for this program and witness such generosity and interest in our SAAS mission.

SAAS welcomes 100th member!

by Kathy Bricker

During the Cheboygan Christmas Bird Count, Pat and Larry Schmidt welcomed counters Rosanne Rynerson and Kathy Bricker to their living room on Indian Trail Road to spy tree sparrows, song sparrow, and dark-eyed juncos. After sharing their backyard wildlife, Pat and Larry Schmidt joined SAAS, becoming our 100th membership. They run Pat's Posey Patch, a locally-owned greenhouse. In season, they sell annuals, perennials, cut flowers, herbs, and vegetables. They also volunteer with Earth Week, demonstrating their brush piles, special plantings, and water courses, designed for best bird nesting and open for public viewing. We are thrilled to have Pat and Larry, and all other 99 families, in SAAS!

Website Links

Sad story of birds mistaking snow-covered land for water in Utah. <http://news.yahoo.com/thousands-birds-crash-landing-utah-152219107.html>

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 4th day of the month.

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