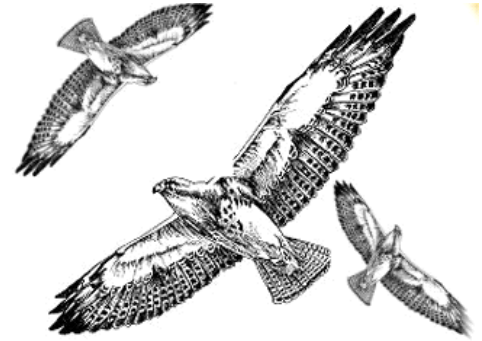


The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



March 2010

Vol. 11 No. 3

President: Kathy Bricker
627-4830 kathyhomeaccount@hotmail.com

Vice President: Jim Bricker
627-4830 pivot777777@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Rosanne Rynerson
627-3741 treeparrot@localnet.com

Secretary: Amy Durant
627-6082 amyjdurant@gmail.com

Past President: Ben Lillie
627-5128 lilliepad@nmo.net

Executive Com. At-Large: Gloria Cadwalader
597-0426 gcadwalader@gmail.com

Michigan Audubon Society Rep.: Art Frock
627-5128 frockja@aol.com

Youth Outreach: Mike Supernault
238-8029 msupernault@hotmail.com

Greeter: Marie Bartlett
625-9078 stubb@straitsarea.com

Field Trips: Steve Baker
238-8723 2sjb@sbcglobal.net

Bird Reports/Counts: Ed Pike
758-3319 aes05@localnet.com

Conservation: Maureen Conklin
625-9058 Maureen_conklin@yahoo.com

Raffle/Door Prize: Judy Vanderhart
627-6249 vantagegdh@charter.net

Hospitality: Alice MacFarland
597-8173 macfarlands@charter.net

Kettle Layout: Linda Baney

Kettle Printer/Producer: Ann/Roger Benter
627-3992 rogerbenter@webtv.net

Audiovisual/Web Master: Roy MacFarland
597-8173 roymac@charter.net

Website: www.straitsareaaudubon.org

Meetings: PLEASE NOTE that SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, **starting at 6:30 pm.** We thank the Library for providing this space at 100 S. Bailey St.

March Meeting – A Boy's Adventure with Venomous Snakes in Kenya

by Jim Bricker

Sometimes an article jumps out at you. That happened with "I Smell... ADVENTURE!" which we saw in both the November 2009 Chicago Herpetological Society Bulletin and the January 2010 Michigan Herpetologist. The author had recently taken his young son to Kenya to experience green and black mambas, gaboon vipers, spitting cobras, and other snakes. Yep, that's an adventure, all right. When we noticed that they live in southern Michigan, one contact led to another. Before long we connected the dots to discover that the author is the nephew of immediate past president of SAAS, Ben Lillie! It's a small world!



Ollie Najar displays non-venomous African brown house snake. Copyright 2009 Y. Tom Rajan

On Wednesday, March 10, join us at 6:30 pm at the Cheboygan Area Public Library to hear Ollie Najar, 10-year-old amateur herpetologist, present "A Boy's Adventure with Venomous Snakes in Kenya." With his father, Ollie will regale us with stories and photos of their visit to see the less-publicized wildlife of this east African country.

All attendees are eligible for the door prize, plus raffle tickets will be sold to support SAAS nature education. After the program, refreshments will be served, donated by Gloria Cadwalader, B.D. Gillig, and Rose Rynerson.

Memorial to Nora Kilpatrick

Longtime SAAS member, speaker, and youth advocate Nora Kilpatrick died in a snowmobile accident on February 5. Nora, 66, established and operated Second Chance Ranch. She was volunteering with Earth Week 2010 and planned to make a presentation on wildlife rehabilitation for it. At the memorial service, Nora's family highlighted the following quote:

"Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace." Albert Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*

Nora is survived by her husband Harold Reckinger and countless animals to whom she offered a second chance. Thank you for sharing your life, Nora.

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.

SAAS sponsors: "Lake Superior: Land of the Woodland Drummer "

by Jim Bricker

The feature film "Lake Superior – Land of the Woodland Drummer" will be hosted by SAAS at the Cheboygan High School on Thursday, March 18 at 7 pm. Renowned wildlife cinematographer Tom Sterling will personally narrate this classic film. You will want to tell all your neighbors and friends about this event, so here is more background.

Tom will take the audience on an armchair journey to see the beautiful vistas and amazing animal behavior of northern Lake Superior. Viewers will be treated to the antics of moose as well as fisher and black bear. In spring, ending his winter sleep and beginning to forage, a bear encounters a carcass that wolves already have claimed, to the surprise of each animal. The sounds of drumming grouse fill the woods; a persistent woodsman can find these birds strutting on mossy logs. June, orchid season, proves that the Superior region displays some of nature's finest flowers. The warm days of summer bring a family of bears, nesting loons, otters, and a den of wolf pups, along with the excitement of catching northern pike on an Ontario lake. Much of the autumn story occurs on the unique and protected wild archipelago of Isle Royale National Park, where intrepid hikers can enjoy 180 miles of hiking trails and intimate encounters with wildlife such as beaver.

The film reveals answers to many questions such as "What do fishers eat?," "Why do wolves (and dogs) roll in dead, smelly things?," "How did the ruffed grouse earn its name and how and why does it drum?".

Tom, a long-time friend, fellow biolo-

gist, and filming mentor to Kathy and me, has photographed wildlife for over 30 years. He regularly lectures on prestigious platforms including National Geographic Society and New York City's Museum of Natural History. Born in Jackson, Michigan, Tom spent his boyhood years outdoors with nature, encouraged by a father who appreciated wild things. Following high school, Tom served in the U.S. Air Force, then earned a degree from University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources. Besides presenting live wildlife and travelogue films on the Windows Cinematographer Travel Circuit, Tom has produced several nature films for the Discovery Channel, PBS, and Canadian Broadcasting Company.

Pure enjoyment for all who attend, this film is being offered by SAAS as a one-time community benefit. A small admission charge will raise funds, half for Cheboygan Schools and half for the nature education work of SAAS. Families cost \$10; Adults cost \$4; Children cost \$2; Children under 10 admitted free.

During the day on Thursday, every Cheboygan Middle School student will see one of the two reels; Tom has sent lesson plans to share with teachers in preparation for the program.

We thank Tom in advance for donating both his time and travel costs for this fundraiser.

Volunteer opportunities are still available for selling tickets at the door, staffing the Just Ducky Quilt raffle table, and providing cookies or other refreshments during intermission. SAAS volunteers will get free admission so call me at 627-4830.

The warm days
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bring a family of bears,
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*Moose share the Superior region with grouse, the woodland drummer.
Photo by Jim Bricker*




Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Bricker



Thanks to the core SAAS members guiding Earth Week, who have met seven times since November. Shown here, left to right: Rose Rynerson, Maureen Conklin, Jim and Kathy Bricker, Gloria Cadwalader. Not pictured are Marie Bartlett, Judy Vanderhart, Randy Mateer (doing the flier and brochure), and Roy MacFarland (doing the website). Photo by Jim Bricker

Where were you in the spring of 1970? For me it was northern Ohio. When people came together to celebrate the first Earth Day, I remember thinking that every day should be Earth Day, as we admit and appreciate that our very existence depends on the health of this unique planet. We share it with countless species besides humans, and have a right and corresponding responsibility in regard to the use of our power. Late-comers, humans bring a measly 5 million years of experience, compared for example to 310 million years for reptiles and 480 million years for sharks. The earth, our overall mother, needs our care. She is vulnerable and fragile, yet thankfully also resilient and resourceful.



In 2010, the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, SAAS will serve as the Lead Sponsor for Earth Week in Cheboygan County, carrying this message to our friends and neighbors. Along with many people from other organizations, we have come together to plan nearly 30 fabulous and fun family and hands-on events.

You will find something to suit your tastes, whether you enjoy growing and cooking healthy foods/composting/beekeeping, seek ways to save money and energy in your home, want to learn about local recycling and re-use opportunities, would like to hike or bicycle with experts, think it's good to improve your household health with eco-friendly cleaning products, or desire to help hands-on with cleaning a trail.

Soon, you can see the full schedule at the Cheboygan and Indian River libraries and www.straitsareaaudubon.org. Earth Week in Cheboygan County will run from April 14 to 22.

Besides participating, please consider volunteering. People are still needed to help by putting up and taking down signs, baking cookies, photographing the events, helping oversee childrens' activities, and a dozen other ways. Please contact me at 627-4830 to share your unique talents.

2010 Ornithological Congress coming to Petoskey

by Thomas Funke, Director of Conservation, Michigan Audubon Society

We invite SAAS members to join the 2010 joint Ornithological Congress and Michigan Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting. This year's meeting will be held April 7 to 10 on the campus of North Central Michigan College in Petoskey, Michigan. A number of structured symposia and workshops will highlight topics including:

- monitoring efforts for nocturnal birds and pest species of insects and plants where the public can help
- how to recruit kids, women, urban residents, and other "non-traditional" audiences into wildlife conservation
- falconry and raptor rehabilitation
- management and restoration of grassland habitats
- the impacts of non-native insects on Michigan's forests

- using the online eBird database to keep track of bird sightings and share data with others

In addition, Michigan Audubon Society will host a Bird Monitoring Orientation on Saturday April 10 for birders interested in helping monitor birds and/or coordinate volunteers regionally to help conduct surveillance/monitoring for birds such as peregrine falcons, piping plovers, Kirtland's warblers, cerulean warblers, trumpeter swans, and many more.

Visit <http://www.mibci.org/index.php?id=199> or call 517-886-9144 for more information about the conference, including a full schedule and registration information. A single day registration costs \$30, while full registration costs \$75. Both include lunch and dinner on-site.

Field Trips

by Steve Baker

Saturday, March 20

Making Maple Syrup—Will Mandrick

Come on March 20 at 1 pm to see how maple syrup is made the traditional way. SAAS member Will Mandrick runs a small sugar shack on his property by Munro Lake and has invited us to tour his sugar bush and syrup making operation. If the weather cooperates this spring, Will should be very busy collecting sap and working the boiler by this date. To find Will's place, go west on Levering Road to 2 miles west of I-75. Turn south (left) on Heilman Road to where the pavement ends. Turn right on Munro Lake Access Rd. and go 2 miles to 10150 W. Munro Lake Drive. Look for "The Mandricks" sign on your right.

Friday, April 9

SECOND ANNUAL Headlands Park potluck, owl banding and stargazing

At 6:30 pm on April 9, 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 nearby. Saw-whet owls will be the main target, 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 and released. Ed will demonstrate techniques that biologists use to learn more about these nocturnal hunters. In between checking the nets, star-gazing and constellation identification will take place.

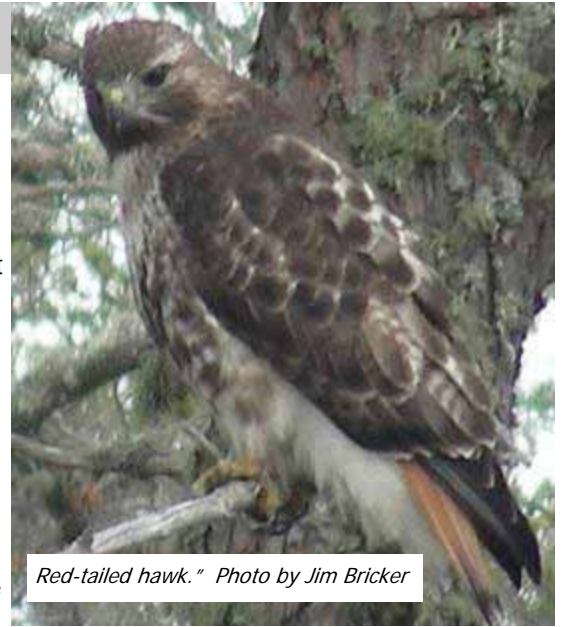
Stay as late as you like. A limited number of people can spend the night dormitory-style. The Emmet County Headlands Park is located just west of Mackinaw City. From the entrance, follow the signs to the Guest House.

Saturday, April 10

Hawk Watch and trail pickup at Headlands Park

At 10 am on April 10, Headlands over-nighters and any others are invited to help survey hawks as they migrate over the tip of the mitt.

Drive down the dirt road into the Mackinaw City historic park opposite the entrance to the Headlands. Dress warmly, bring a lawn chair and binoculars, and plan to enjoy the spectacle of hawks and eagles as they kettle high overhead on thermals. We may also see northern shrikes, blue jays, northern flickers, and other migrants. Around noon, join a brown bag lunch back at the Guest House and help rake leaves or clear trails in return for the use of this fine facility. In inclement weather, instead of watching hawks, we'll take a nature hike on the extensive Headlands trails. Anyone who wishes may stay overnight again on Saturday to help Ed with owl banding and do more star gazing.



Red-tailed hawk." Photo by Jim Bricker

Call for Field Trip suggestions and leaders

I would welcome any suggestions for upcoming field trips. I am sure there are many able trip leaders out there. Would someone be interested in leading a hike or bike ride? How about a wildflower hike to your favorite woodland? One need not be an expert, just willing to share a special spot or outdoor activity. I'll be waiting for your call. Don't be shy. Steve Baker 231-238-8723.

More on birds and calcium supplements in egg shells

by Bev Kirby

I enjoyed reading the February Kettle, as usual. Lots of information. Regarding the article, "What are those blue jays eating?".....in the spring and summer of 1997 and 1998, I participated in a Birds and Calcium Project for Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. The whole idea was to find out which birds ate calcium at critical periods during their nesting season. Birds eating egg shells at my Troy, Michigan feeders were blue jay, white-breasted nuthatch, downy woodpecker, house sparrow, starling, and crow.

Once after having just finished cooking

my eggshells and waiting to put them out for the birds, I caught my son Neil grinding them up in the garbage grinder! I said, "What the heck are you doing?" and he said, "Putting these eggshells down the disposal". I said, "Don't you recognize a scientific experiment when you see one???" This was just after my husband Jack threw out a bucket of dryer fluff I was saving in the basement for nesting material! Turns out, the dryer fluff wasn't good after all. I read later that the fluff holds water and does not allow the rain water to sink through, so the nestlings might drown.

Response from Susan Good, R.N., CWR, Northern Wildlife Rescue:

From a rehabbers point of view, I agree with not using 'fluff' from the dryer. Neither should string or yarn be offered as nesting material. String/yarn can get tangled in wee legs and feet, causing amputations to birds as well as squirrels.



Chipping sparrow with eyeline
by Jim Bricker

What you missed at the February meeting

by Alice MacFarland - substitute secretary

Jeff Dykehouse, Curator of Natural History at Mackinac State Historic Parks, gave the 43 February SAAS attendees an interesting and amusing program. Introduced by long-time friend Will Mandrick, Jeff started "Birding for Beginners" with the basics. He said that a birder's most important tool is curiosity about wildlife.

He then explained why we use field guides and how they are organized. Jeff recommends *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Jeff urges beginners to purchase the best binoculars you can afford (about \$200+). For general use, a 7 or 8 power is best. Spotting scopes are helpful but not needed. They are best used with good tripods. You can get a 25 to 40 power scope for about \$300+.

Jeff gave the following bird identification aids:

1. Size: Compare the size with birds everyone knows, like sparrow, robin, eagle
2. Shape and length of bill, wing, tail, and leg: all are important clues
3. Silhouette: many birds are backlit so it is good to have a silhouette guide
4. Body parts and colors: watch for eye line, wing bars, crown, mustache
5. Color patterns: wing feathers (primaries, secondaries), head, beak, legs
6. Behavior: is the bird in flocks, alone, fishing, spreading wings?
7. Bird calls and songs: take one bird at a time and try to memorize its sound.
8. Habitat: Is the bird in a tree, marsh, swamp, open field, river bank?
9. Seasons and geography: note the place and season to help identify the bird.

Ben Lillie, past president, ran the meeting. Rose Rynerson, Treasurer, spoke about the passing of Nora Kilpatrick,

animal rescuer extraordinaire and owner of the Second Chance Ranch which is dedicated to helping animals. Rose also asked members and volunteers to receive their thank you notes at meetings, to help save money on postage. She announced that Earth Week, April 14 to 22, has about 30 events scheduled. The schedule will be available on the SAAS website as well as on the DNRE website, with a map and detailed information on each event. There also will be library displays, a youth sculpture exhibit, and poster contest.

Alice MacFarland presented Just Ducky Quilt raffle tickets, available to members who wish to sell them to benefit the work of SAAS and the Cheboygan school system. They will also be sold at Rogers Jewelers and Cheboygan Used Books. The quilt will be displayed in the Cheboygan Public Library during the month of March along with many other quilts made by area groups or individuals. Mel Eno announced coming library events; Jim Bricker announced March Audubon events.

Wildlife sightings included pheasants, rough legged hawk, juncos, titmice, eagles and the snowy owl.

The door prize of a framed picture of an Aplomado Falcon donated by Steve and Sue Baker was won by Lynne Nissley. The raffle prize of a two-story decorated bird house donated by Nancy and Brian Nowitzski was won by Jim Bricker. Thanks to both Lynne and Jim for donating these items back for others to win later. We also thank Sue Emerson for helping Judy Vanderhart with the January raffle and for helping the raffle tonight. Refreshments, donated by Ann Benter, Dorothy Woosley and Marilee Lillie, were enjoyed by all.

Jeff Dykehouse offers these tips for beginning birders:

- Bird a lot, both alone and with others.
- Do not wear white or bright colors.
- Bird in the morning or, in the case of roosting birds, when they come back to roost in the early evening.
- Do not disturb birds, especially nesting birds.
- Stay off private property or obtain permission.
- Respect habitat, taking care not to destroy vegetation or fragile areas.
- Let local people and businesses know that you are a birder and are there because you value the natural features they preserve.
- Put out a variety of bird feeders and food to attract a variety of birds.
- If interested, keep a life list of all the birds you have seen.
- Read and participate in rare bird alerts on the bird list servers available on the internet.
- Participate in citizen science projects such as the Michigan Bird Feeder Census, Great Backyard Bird Count, and Christmas and Spring Bird Counts.

Red Rock Wilderness, Utah

by Kathy Bricker

Great news! In early February, Jim and I met with the Traverse City staff of U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow to thank her through them for already co-sponsoring the bill. In fact, she has co-sponsored it five times! They appreciate our members' interest and gratitude.



Join Straits Area Audubon Society

Kettle Contribution Due Dates
In order to deliver The Kettle in a timely matter, please submit your photos and articles by the following due dates: 3/22/10 4/26/10

Send your submissions to
saas_kettle@yahoo.com

SAAS thanks Benter Chiropractic for its in-kind donation of the printing of the monthly *Kettle* and hosting of the SAAS website.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Coming Events

Mark your calendars now to be sure you can attend:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

Make checks payable to:
Straits Area Audubon Society

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

Single Membership: \$12

Family Membership: \$15

3/10 Monthly program: "A Boy's Adventure with Venomous Snakes in Kenya" by Ollie Najar, 10-year-old amateur herpetologist
3/18 "Lake Superior: Land of the Woodland Drummer" by Tom Sterling, Cheboygan Area High School, 7 pm (small admission charge)
3/20 Field Trip: Making maple syrup with Will Mandrick
4/14 Monthly program: "The Weather Machine Shifts Gears" by Dave Barrons, Retired Channel 9 and 10 weatherman
4/10 & 11 Field trips: Headlands potluck, owl banding, stargazing, hawk watch, hike, trail cleanup
4/15 to 4/21 Earth Week activities to be announced
5/12/09 "International Lessons in Caring for Water: Great Lakes in U.S. and Africa" by John Gannon, Ph.D., Acting Director, International Joint Commission and former Chief Scientist, University of Michigan Biological Station

SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library.

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

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