

The Kettle



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983

November 2011 Vol.12 No 8 - Page 1

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 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

November: The Amazing Amazon

Joey Arbaugh

Come Wednesday, November 9 at 6:30 pm to the Cheboygan Area Public Library. Joey Arbaugh will present "The Amazing Amazon." Joey has explored the Brazil's Amazon region on more than a dozen trips. She will share her experiences and photographs from trekking, bird-watching, and nature discovery in this jungle paradise.

Upcoming Field Trips

Field Trip/ Work day # 2

Saturday, November 5th

The Michigan Nature Association [MNA] would welcome any help in the 2nd work day at the Fred Dye Preserve north of Moran. This is better known as the Prairie Coneflower Preserve and is one of only a handful of sites where this beautiful plant occurs in Michigan.



Photo by J Kirby

Work will consist of cutting woody brush and pulling invasives. Come and learn the fascinating history of this unique preserve and find out the story of "the baby rock". Much can be accomplished in just a few hours with many willing hands. Wear gloves and boots and bring water and snacks. Contact Steve Baker for details. 231-238-8723

Inspiration Point / Pigeon River Country

Tuesday, November 8th

Explore the Inspiration Point area of the Pigeon River Country. This former CCC location offers scenic views and abundant wildlife. The many fruiting trees and bushes of the camp area attract many birds as well as Elk and Deer. Bring your binoculars, boots, and camera and enjoy a day in the beautiful PRC! Please call Don and Donna Mittlestat to sign up and learn the meeting location. 231-525-8169

Upcoming Field Trips [cont.]

Late fall birds of the eastern UP

Friday, November 11th

Come join us for an exploration of the eastern UP. We will visit the St. Ignace waterfront for Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks, the Rudyard flats for Rough-legged Hawks (and maybe an early Snowy Owl), the Dafter Dump for Eagles and unusual gulls, and Dunbar for migrating Tundra Swans. Interesting and rare birds often show up at all of these areas. Call Steve Baker to sign up and learn the meeting location. 231-238-8723

Coming In December

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS!

Field Trip Reports

Owl Banding with Ed Pike

October 1, 2011

by Bev Kirby

On Saturday evening, October 1, 2011, 10 members and 9 guests of the Straits Area Audubon Society met in St. Ignace in anticipation of capturing and banding northern saw-whet owls with Ed Pike. These small owls migrate through the straits at this time of year. Although Ed



has been banding owls in the Straits area for 20 years, he has been setting up his nets at this particular area in the forest for the past 6 years. After the nets are set up, they are checked every ½ hour to see if an owl has been captured or not. When an owl is captured, it is then weighed, measurements of the tail and wing are taken, and age determined by molt of feathers in the wings. A numbered band is placed on its right leg and the bird is then released into the woods. Until the next net check, all participants sit around the bonfire and eat donut holes and drink apple cider. © A spotting scope was also set up on Jupiter and its four moons and everyone had a chance to see this wonderful sight. At the time we left around 11:30, Ed had captured and banded 5 northern saw-whet owls. He stayed until 3:30 a.m. and captured 11 more, for a nightly total of 16 owls. Everyone marveled at the size of these owls, which are about 8" tall and weigh approximately 3 ounces, and how docile they are while being handled. Thanks to Ed and his research, we are learning more about these small nocturnal owls.

Field Trip Reports [cont]

**Fall Color and Bird Tour:
Pigeon River State Forest**

October 11, 2011

by Bev Kirby

Don and Donna Mittlestat led us on a tour of one of their favorite spots in Pigeon River country. Crossing a big meadow we first heard calling and then saw a red-shouldered hawk. On the same path we saw a horned lark, and vesper sparrows were eating weed seeds along the grassy edges. An American kestrel and a sharp-shinned hawk were also seen flying over the forest edge. Walking into the woods, we saw 100's of robins eating the ample supply of berries found on the bushes there.



Photo by B Kirby

White-crowned sparrows were everywhere, and northern flickers, common raven, dark-eyed juncos, white-throated sparrow, yellow-bellied sapsucker, black-capped chickadees, white-breasted nuthatch and 5 eastern bluebirds were observed. We also saw a hermit thrush in a Siberian crab tree, and a group of 35-40 American pipits flocked to a big leafless ash tree. Dandelions were still blooming, and a monarch butterfly and a cabbage butterfly were spotted. It was a lovely sunny morning to be out in the woods. Thanks Don and Donna for sharing this place with us.

Fred Dye Nature Sanctuary: Work Day

October 12, 2011

by Bev Kirby

At a request from the Michigan Nature Association, 5 SAAS members assisted two MNA staffers, Adrienne Bozic and Andy Bacon in a sanctuary cleanup project. For four hours we cut down black cherry saplings, cedar and tamarack that are encroaching on the coneflowers that grow here in this clearing surrounded by the Hiawatha National Forest.

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Field Trip Reports [cont]



Photo by S. Baker

This preserve is on the site of the old ghost town of Kenneth, about halfway between Moran and Trout Lake on M-123. No foot trails cross the meadow and bedrock juts out of the ground throughout the preserve where the thin layer of topsoil has eroded away. Cracks and crevasses as large as a foot wide and four feet deep run through the stone. From late summer to first frost this meadow is covered by purple coneflowers and it was our job to help keep this preserve in its prairie state with no trees or invasives present. They say many hands make light work, and we could see where our work mattered. We were tired but happy that we had made a small but important difference at this preserve.



Photo by J Kirby

A Taste of Cave Exploration

October 15, 2011

by Bev Kirby

On Saturday, October 15, 2011, twelve members and guests of the SAAS travelled to the Fiborn Karst Preserve near Trout Lake in the eastern U.P. Aubrey Golden, from the

[Cont Col 1 P4]

Field Trip Reports [cont]

Michigan Karst Conservancy, took us on the Sinkhole Trail which is a short loop past many shallow sinkholes and swallow holes with a creek disappearing below ground. Most of the trees seemed to have lost their leaves in the previous 2 nights, and the floor of the forest was covered with yellow and red leaves with rich green ferns and club moss interspersed. Winds were high and it sprinkled now and then but it did not dampen our enthusiasm. Along the trail Aubrey told us about the geology of this 480 acre preserve which was the site of a limestone quarry from 1905 to 1936. This quarry supplied high-calcium limestone to Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. In 1987 the Michigan Karst Conservancy purchased the property from Algoma Steel.



Photo by J Kirby

Our destination was the major feature of the preserve which is the Hendrie River Water Cave, Michigan's longest known cave, with about 1,500 feet of a mostly high, narrow passage with a stream running along the floor. This cave was carved in the past 7,000-10,000 years. Wearing hard hats, Aubrey led those so inclined, into the cave, while the others watched from above. Some little brown bats were seen and at a certain spot Aubrey asked everyone to turn off their head lamps to experience how dark the 'dark' really was. All participants came out of the cave with smiles on their faces for the experience they had just encountered. Thanks again to Steve Baker for arranging this trip.

Fall Waterfowl of the St. Ignace Area

Friday, October 28, 2011

by Bev Kirby

A fall day producing wind, sleet, snow and rain proved very productive in the birding department for 7 birders led by Steve Baker and Ed Pike at 31 different stops in the Straits area both above and below the bridge. 51 species of birds were spotted including 6 bald eagles and 2 loons. 4 species of gulls were seen with great black-backed gull and Bonaparte's gull being 2 of the best. Red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawk, and rough-legged hawks gave us 3 raptor species, while black-bellied plovers and greater yellowlegs were our 2 shorebird species



Photo by S Baker

. Pipits, snow buntings, white-winged scoters, long-tailed ducks, all 3 merganser species, greater and lesser scaup, green-winged teal, American black ducks, ring-necked ducks, horned grebes, red-necked grebes, pied-billed grebes, coots, redheads, gadwalls and bufflehead kept us on our toes. Time to rest up for the next trip. Thanks again Steve and Ed. We would be lost without you.

SAAS CHAPTER NOTES

TREASURER'S NOTE

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership for this season (through May, 2012). Many of the thank you letters I am preparing will double as receipts for the generous 2011 Big Bird Count Day event donations, too.

Rosanne Rynerson

Website Links

White nose bat syndrome update

<http://www.livescience.com/16738-fungus-killing-bats-study-proves.html>

2011 State of the Birds Report

[State of the Birds website](#)

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]