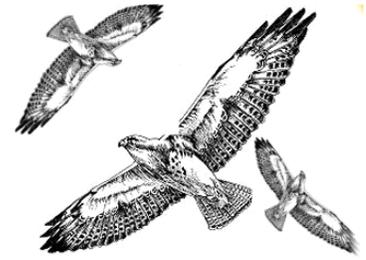


THE KETTLE



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983

SAAS meetings are held at **6:00 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 **Williams Office Equipment** for donating printing costs for **The Kettle**.

Straits Area Audubon Society
c/o Rosanne Rynerson
10490 E. US 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: _____

CITY & STATE: _____ NEWS LETTER: [E-Mail] – or – [US-Mail]

Make checks payable to: **Straits Area Audubon Society**
Single Membership: \$12
Family Membership: \$15

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

April Program

For the Birds: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

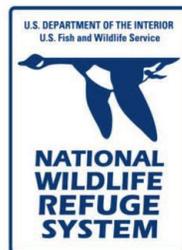
Wednesday, April 9, 2014 [6:00 p.m.]

Presented by Mark Vaniman



Seney National Wildlife Refuge, close by and special to all nature lovers, will be presented by Mark Vaniman. Although Mark just retired as Refuge Manager in late March, he agreed to make Audubon his first volunteer undertaking, lucky for us. Mark will present a short program on wildlife refuges in Michigan, with a focus on Seney National Wildlife Refuge, where he has lived the past four years. He will give ample time at the end of

the talk for questions about the Refuge, its management, and its wildlife. Mark completes a stellar 31 year career in seven states and more than a dozen National Wildlife Refuges. He has lived in Minnesota, North Dakota, Kansas, Arizona, Texas, Utah and Illinois. After the program, door and raffle prizes will be awarded and refreshments will be served, thanks to Maureen Conklin and Jean Moberly. At a brief organizational meeting, we will share recent nature sightings and learn about upcoming field trips and other activities



Upcoming Programs

Orchids of Michigan

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

Presented by: Steve Baker

This illustrated talk will be given by SAAS member Steve Baker about some of our showiest and most specialized flowers and when and where to find them.

Hike/Spotted Knapweed Pull and Potluck

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Hosted by: Dale and Connie Rieger

Mark your calendar for this annual event on Lake Huron. This year the traditional field trip will be expanded into eradicating an exotic species. You may come for the hike/pull or only for the potluck.

April Field Trips

Steve Baker Spontaneous Outings Any Day! Any Time! Anywhere!

Once again Steve Baker's Spontaneous Outings will happen. If you are interested in participating in birding field trips in May e-mail Steve Baker at steveandsuebaker@gmail.com to be added to a contact list. When the birds, weather and day look to be promising the trip will happen and hopefully obtain the best results. There will be a short trip announcement lead time, so keep your gear handy. There will likely be a WATERFOWL TRIP included in this Spontaneous Outings later in April.

Owl Banding at the Headlands

Friday, April 4, 2014 [7:30 p.m.]

Ed Pike will set up mist nets and an owl calling station on-site at the Headlands. Ed targets Saw-whet Owls, with Boreal and Long-eared Owls also possible. The first net check will be about 30 minutes after sunset. Captured owls will be measured, aged, sexed, banded, photographed and released. Come on out to the Headlands and dress warmly. Bad weather alternate date is Saturday, April 5.

Mackinaw Straits Hawk Watch

Saturday, April 5, 2014 [10:00 a.m.]

Steve Baker will lead this introduction to migrating raptors, with the chance of watching them circle overhead in large kettles. Meet at the Mackinaw City Recreation Center on Central Avenue near the school and ball field, marked by the Hawk Watch sign. Dress very warmly and bring a lawn chair and binoculars. Bad weather alternate date is Sunday, April 6.

Spring Waterfowl of the Mackinac Straits

Thursday, April 17, 2014 [7:30 a.m.]

Join Steve Baker and Ed Pike exploring the Mackinac Straits for migrating waterfowl. We will meet in Mackinaw City at the State Welcome Center/rest area. We will search the waters [it better be water, not Ice!] for up to 20 species of waterfowl including Long-tailed Ducks, Scoters, Redheads, and others while keeping an eye to the sky for north bound raptors. If there is a significant hawk movement we could join the hawk watch in the afternoon. Cancelled if rain or snow.

Along the way, we stopped at several known areas for spying birds and checked out the Wood Island Landfill. Bird sightings were sparse but we did manage to spot evening grosbeaks, blue jays, purple finches, goldfinches, black-capped chickadees, crows, ravens, downy woodpeckers, pine siskins, a red-breasted nuthatch, starlings, rock pigeons and two eagles.

Ice Hikers



Photo by S. Baker

It was a truly glorious day enjoyed by Steve Baker, Don Mittlestat, Al and Jean Moberly and Diane Morand.

Field Trip Reports

Spontaneous Field Trip to the U P

Monday, March 3rd, 2014

Submitted By Diane Morand

On a very cold (-25 when we set out) and sunny (once the sun rose near Moran) day, we set out to view ice formations in the Munising area and look for birds along the way.

Munising Falls were beautiful and we were able to climb up and under the falls. Then it was on to Sand Point where the views of Grand Island were spectacular. If only we had more time we could have walked out to the island where we saw others walking. We did scramble up to the base of the cliffs overlooking Lake Superior to view the ice curtains up close. After lunch at the Snack Bar in Eben we went to the ice caves near Rock River. This was the highlight of everyone's day. The formations were beautiful, extensive and colorful. If you have never seen them it is well worth the trip. As it was very slippery, we were all glad to be wearing Yak-Trax or cleats.

Ice Caves



Photo by S. Baker

SAAS Chapter Notes

March Meeting Minutes

Submitted By Diane Morand

Jim Bricker and Alice MacFarland were named to the nominating committee for next year's officers with a third person to be drafted. (Gloria Cadwalader has accepted the third position.)

Kathy Bricker moved and Roger Benter seconded that SAAS spend \$30 for an ad in the Cheboygan Tribune Supplement. Vote passed.

Refreshments were provided by Kathy and Jim Bricker, Alice and Roy MacFarland, Eileen Bur and Dale Giddings.

Tyler Parks won the door prize of a thistle feeder provided by the Cheboygan Co-op. Nancy Waldron won the raffle of a wind chime donated by Spray's Landscaping.

Submit your ideas for Grant voting

Submitted by Kathy Bricker

In early May, the main fundraiser for SAAS will take place, **Big Birding Day**. People pledge either a set amount or per species seen amount. In 2013, SAAS raised \$1,188, which members voted to give to owl banding research, Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch, Snakes Alive! Schools program, Youth Outreach, and EarthWeekPlus. You may suggest a project and pledge at the April meeting or contact me at kathyhomeaccount@hotmail.com, 231-627-4830.

Nominating Committee Appointed

Submitted by Alice MacFarland

On March 12, Dale Giddings appointed Jim Bricker, Alice MacFarland, and Gloria Cadwalader as the nominating committee to search for candidates for the 2014 to 2015 season. Volunteering with SAAS connects you with fun or interesting people (or both!) and a super cause. Remember too that "Many hands make light work." You do not have to be present at every meeting and you can use existing skills or develop new ones. Members wanting to help again or for the first time, please let me know. Alice MacFarland at 231-597-8173 or macfarlands@charter.net or Jim Bricker pivot777777@hotmail.com or Gloria Cadwalader gcadwalader@gmail.com

TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by Rose Rynerson

There are no new members to welcome this month, but we do have several projects underway. Our For-the-Birds Quilt raffle tickets are available now through October and pledges will soon be collected and calculated by the number of species found in May's Big Bird Count. It is rewarding to see the programs SAAS can provide when we all pitch in a little through these various ways. Your donations are greatly appreciated, as are the wonderful volunteers who cheerfully coordinate the fundraisers.

Nature Events

Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch

The Eagle Has Landed

Submitted by Kathy Bricker

Not quite, although 22 golden eagles and several bald eagles tipped their wings from on high to the hawk counter at Mackinaw City on March 15. Kevin George began work

that day with Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch. An outgrowth of an ad hoc committee within SAAS, this new group surveys migrating raptors and encourages the public to enjoy them. Thanks to Rivertown Patchworkers, SAAS is raffling a special For the Birds quilt to benefit the raptor watch.

MSRW Counter



Kevin Georg

Kevin comes from Johnston, Pennsylvania with an impressive resume of 15+ years tallying diurnal birds of prey. He learned to identify hawks in flight along the Allegheny Front in Pennsylvania and has applied those skills at hawk watch assignments in Bedford, Pennsylvania; Kiptopeke, Virginia; Smith Point, Texas; and Corpus Christi, Texas.

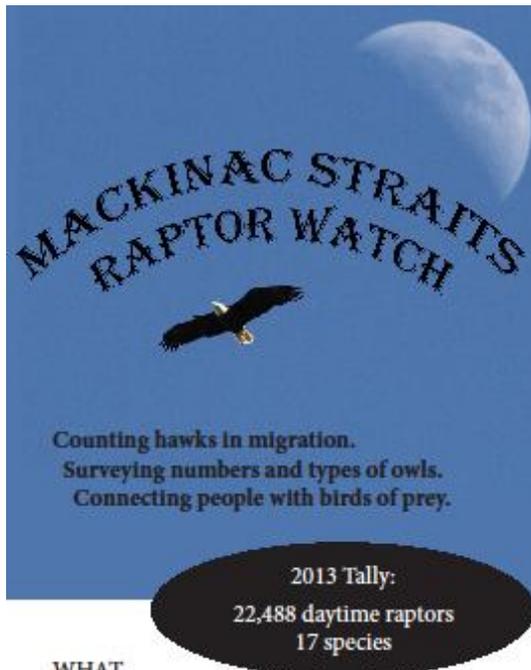
As this is written, 105 raptors were counted and reported to www.hmana.org, the website of the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Kevin constantly scans the sky with high-power binoculars, up and down and back and forth in a systematic fashion. "I like to spot the birds from far away first. I have been doing this for so long that it's easier for me to identify hawks while flying far away than when perched."

Larger than other raptors in this region are golden eagles, named for the golden feathers on the head and neck of adults. Only a thousand or two live in the eastern U.S. They winter in southern Appalachia, with adults returning north to Canada quite early to begin nesting. Immature may wait until early May. Their wingspan can reach 7.5 feet, helping them to soar in winds up to 100 mph. Golden eagles are valuable indicator species for lead contamination, habitat disturbance, and dwindling prey availability due to fragmentation and overgrazing. Both bald and golden eagles have been federally protected since 1962, with a fine of \$100,000 and up to one year in prison for the first offense. Golden eagles have been counted every spring migrating through the Straits:

In 2004, most golden eagles flew over March 11 to 20 (season total of 30)

In 2012, most golden eagles flew over April 11 to 20 (season total of 74)

In 2013, most golden eagles flew over March 24 to 29 and April 14 to 17 (season total of 75).



WHAT

Migrating raptors funnel through the Straits of Mackinac. Every spring the hawks rise on updrafts of air in a circular fashion, called kettling. This helps them gain altitude before crossing the open water to the Upper Peninsula and makes them easy to view.



WHERE

Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch invites the public to visit the hawk-watch and counting site in Mackinaw City between March 15 and May 30 by joining scheduled field trips or coming separately.

www.MackinacRaptorWatch.org

Photo - hawk by Robert H. Morris, eagle by Steve Baker

Kevin Georg and MSRW volunteers welcome visitors and groups at the hawk site until May 31. Watching the hawks is free and fun. Follow the hawk site signs out West Central Avenue in Mackinaw City and visit the Hawk Migration Association of North America's website, hmana.org, to check the counts so far.

MSRW thanks many people and organizations, especially Emmet County, Katie Darrow, Darrow Excavating, and Mackinaw City. If fundraising continues successfully, we will expand the Raptor Watch to owl surveys this fall. To buy raffle tickets or donate, contact Secretary-treasurer Kathy

Bricker at 231-627-4830 or kathynaturelover@gmail.com. Visit www.MackinacRaptorWatch for more information.

Red-tailed Hawk



Photo by J Kirby

Submitted by Donna Mittlestat

Keep an eye out as you are scanning the skies for hawks, in particular the Red-tailed Hawk. This seems to be a signature hawk for us at this time of the year. To pick this hawk out, look for the buteo shape (broad, rounded wings, short tail), then look for field marks like the dark bars on the leading edge of the wing. They also have a reddish tail with a thin black band near the tip of the tail. The Red-tailed Hawk has a trilling, raspy scream. Whenever a hawk or eagle appears onscreen for Hollywood, no matter what species the shrill cry on the soundtrack is almost always a Red-tailed Hawk. The Red-tailed Hawk is a bird of open country. They will nest in our area but many continue north to disperse over their breeding grounds. Look for them along fields perched on telephone poles, fence posts or trees standing alone. These birds have also been known as buzzard hawks and red hawks. The term chicken hawk was a common name applied to both the Red-tailed and Cooper's Hawks. Farmers believed they stole chickens, but based on their size all but the smallest chicken is probably too big for a Red-tailed Hawk. So, keep on looking up and you just might see the Red-tailed Hawk!

Source: www.allaboutbirds.org

Straits Area Audubon Society 2013 - 2014 Officers and Volunteers

Executive Committee

President: **Dale Giddings** - 231-525-8874

[No email]

Vice President: **Jim Bricker** - 231-627-4830

pivot777777@hotmail.com

Treasurer: **Rosanne Rynerson** - 231-597-9788
Fiddleheadilly4@gmail.com
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 Past President: **Roger Benter** - 231-627-3992
rogerbenter@gmail.com
 Exe.Com. At-Large: **Ben Lillie** - 231-627-5128
lilliepad@hughes.net
 MAS Representative: **Donna Mittlestat** – 906-201-0285
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 Gerry VanderHart – 231-627-6249
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 Web Site Sponsor: **Roger Benter** - 231-627-3992
rogerbenter@gmail.com
 Meeting Space Provider:
Cheboygan Area Public Library - 231-627-2381
eno.melanie@cheboyganlibrary.org

Nature Links

Michigan Audubon Society



www.michiganaudubon.org

MNA (Michigan Nature Association)

www.michigannature.org

The Nature Conservancy

<http://nature.org/greatlakes>

Little Traverse Conservancy

www.landtrust.org

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

www.wpbo.org

Upper Peninsula Bird Listing

www.upbird.org

Northern Michigan Conservation Network

<http://nmconservationnetwork.org>

HMANA Mackinaw Straits Raptor Watch

http://hawkcount.org/month_summary.php?rsite=613

Mackinaw Straits Raptor Watch

www.MackinacRaptorWatch.org

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** [saaskettle2011@gmail.com]

For Your Birding Information

Anatomy of a Pileated Woodpecker

The top of a bird's head from bill to the rear base of the skull is the pileum, emphasized on the first syllable (as in apple pie), giving PIE-leeum. Retaining this root pronunciation makes the woodpecker's name PIE-lee-ayed rather than PILLY-ay-ted.

Birds cause on average \$1.2 billion of damage to commercial aircraft worldwide. Within the US that figure is estimated to be as much as \$715 million per year. The largest perpetrators are gulls and geese that tend to get sucked into jet engines and crash into windscreens. The collision between a bird and an aircraft is called a bird strike.