

# THE KETTLE



## Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983

SAAS meetings are held at **6:00 pm.** on the **2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

To reach us by mail - **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

### Michigan's North Country Trail Wednesday, April 8 [6:00 p.m.]

Presented by **Jean and Al Moberly**



Photo by Jim Bricker

"North Country Trail" is co-sponsored by Straits Area Audubon Society and EarthWeekPlus. We will hear Cheboygan residents, Al and Jean Moberly tell about hiking most of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The entire North Country Trail covers 4,600 miles through America's rugged northern heartlands, stretching across seven states. In the U.P., the North Country Trail heads north to Tahquamenon Bay before turning west. The Moberly's ventured onto it in day hikes over nine years with up to 14 friends. They will share images and reminiscences of getting to intimately know Michigan's beautiful Upper Peninsula on foot. After the program, nature sightings, upcoming field trips, and other announcements, refreshments will be served. Door and raffle prizes will be available to all attendees.

## Upcoming Programs

**May 13 "Six-legged Obsession: Why I look down"**  
By **Mike Grant**

**June 10 SAAS Summer Potluck Dinner at the Benter Home on Lake Huron**  
Hosted by **Roger and Ann Benter**

## April Field Trips

### Owls and Stars

Saturday, April 11, [6:00 p.m. to whenever]

Join Ed Pike and Mary Stewart Adams for our sixth annual owl banding demonstration and star gazing experience at the Guest House at Emmet County's Headlands Park near Mackinaw City. Co-sponsored by the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch and the Headlands Dark Sky Park, it starts at 6 pm with a potluck dinner for SAAS members and guests only. Please bring a dish to pass and your own drink and table service.

At 8 pm, other people invited by the Dark Sky Park will join us to observe Ed set up mist nests and an owl calling station. Ed targets saw-whet owls, with other species also possible. After a brief indoor talk, the first net check will be about 8:40 and then every half hour. Any captured owls will be measured, aged, sexed, banded, photographed, and released. Ed will demonstrate techniques used to learn more about these nocturnal hunters and describe his findings during 20 years of banding 2,000 owls of nine species. Between net checks, Mary Adams will talk about stars. Orion the Hunter will set early tonight, followed by the planet Venus in Taurus the Bull. Venus will be near the star cluster of the Pleiades, which is fitting, since the Pleiades cluster is often regarded as a flock of birds. The moon will not rise until about 2 am, providing super viewing of spring ecliptic constellations of Gemini the Twins, Cancer the Crab, Leo the Lion, and Virgo the Virgin. A special treat will be viewing Jupiter, bright against the background of Cancer. The later you stay, the better chance of seeing owls, as often they do not fly until near midnight. The Emmet County Headlands Park is located just west of Mackinaw City. From the entrance, follow the signs to the Guest House.

## Raptors Above at Mackinac Straits Hawk Watch

Sunday, April 12, [10:00 a.m.]

MSHW Sign



Photo by Steve Baker

Steve Baker will lead this introduction to migrating raptors, with the chance of watching them circle overhead in large

kettles. Meet behind 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 Saturday, April 25.

We will spend the morning around St. Ignace searching for migrating waterfowl and then after lunch, visit the Hawk Watch site in Mackinaw.

We hope to find at least 15 species of waterfowl including Long-tailed Duck, White-winged Scoter, Green-winged Teal, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, and many other ducks in their breeding plumages.

Horned Grebe



Photo by Steve Baker

If the weather is sunny, there will be an optional visit to the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch site after lunch, where there should be scores of kettling hawks, especially Broad-winged Hawks. Please contact Steve Baker to sign up. [Steveandsuebaker@gmail.com](mailto:Steveandsuebaker@gmail.com). 231-238-8723

## Owl Banding with Ed Pike and MSRW banding team at Cheboygan State Park

Wednesday, April 15 [7:00 p.m.]

Ed Pike's long standing owl banding project continues this spring with the support of the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch.

Northern Saw-whet Owl



Photo by Jack Kirby

Ed has added two banding biologists to his team this year which will allow for an increase in banding effort. Saw-whet Owls are the main focus of this research but several other owl species are possible, especially Long-eared Owls. Meet at the gate to Lighthouse Point Cabin at 7:00 p.m. Bring a snack or desert to share and there will be a bonfire if you would like to roast something. Dress warm, take a lawn chair and flashlight and hopefully we will see owls up close. This field trip will be cancelled for foul weather. Limited to 15 guests so you must register by contacting Ed Pike at 231-758-3319 or [edandanne6750@gmail.com](mailto:edandanne6750@gmail.com)

## Ducks and Hawks around the Straits

Friday, April 24, [7:30 a.m.]

Meet at the Mackinaw City state welcome center/rest area.

## Field Trip Reports

### Birding the Eastern UP

Submitted by Donna Mittlestat

Nine of us, Kevin, Bill, Sharon, Dale, Jean, Al, Steve, Don, and Donna crossed over the frozen Straits of Mackinaw to bird the eastern U.P. On March 6<sup>th</sup> we were rewarded with seeing 25 Snowy Owls and probable close to 500 Snow Buntings in multiple flocks. Other highlights of the day included 17 Bald Eagles at the Dafter Dump and seeing Evening Grosbeaks in Pickford.

Cold Day in the UP



Photo by Donna Mittlestat

We had to be bundled up but we certainly enjoyed our day out together.

## Field Report

### SAAS Conservation Work

Submitted by **Glen Matthews**

March 10, **Jim Bricker, Steve Baker, Don Middlestat, Al Moberly** and **Glen Matthews** worked on a project at Gordon Turner Park to make the osprey nest platform visible from the observation tower. Trees and brush growing on a strip of higher ground in the marsh had obscured the view. The crew removed enough material to make a good "window". Some larger stems were girdled and left as perch snags. Now the birds just need to cooperate. Steve Baker, Jeff Dykehouse and Jim Johnston erected this platform in the mid 80's and it is still sound.

Gordon Turner Park Project



Photo by Steve Baker

### 2015 Raptor Watch Plans

by **Kathy Bricker**

Look to the skies always, especially during the coming raptor migration. In expectation of raising enough funds this month, the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch has re-hired Kevin Georg from Jonestown, Pennsylvania to count hawks at Mackinaw City. Kevin will be observing hawks from the recreational field from March 8 through May 30, weather permitting. The public is invited to attend any time. Since hawks do not soar in the rain, before you go, watch the weather forecast or check [www.MackinacRaptorWatch.org](http://www.MackinacRaptorWatch.org), then look for the directional hawk watch sign on Central Avenue near the school. We thank Emmet County for donating the McGulpin Point Lighthouse keeper's apartment to defray costs.

Owl research at Cheboygan State Park will also be undertaken by professionals this spring, paid by MSRW.

Laura Makielski of Empire, Michigan and Loren Taylor of Lebanon, Kentucky will share duties every night from March 25 to May 15, trained and aided by MSRW committee chair, Ed Pike. We thank Cheboygan State Park for a partial donation of the Lighthouse Point Cabin. One person will need off-site housing from May 4 to 9. To offer this, to donate or volunteer in another way, please contact me at 231-627-4830.

## SAAS Chapter Notes

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by **Rose Rynerson - Treasurer**

Please join me in welcoming this month's new member:

**Bruce Seeger**

It is a pleasure to welcome him, just in time for a busy spring season!

I followed up for membership dues this past month and it has been a pleasure to receive quick responses, many with nice cards and words of appreciation! The dues fund our programs and newsletter.

### GENERAL MEETING MINUTES STRAITS AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Submitted by: **Diane Morand - Secretary**

Date: March 11, 2015

Program: Owls of the North Woods

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Cheboygan Area Public Library

Attendance: 40 members, 42 guests for a total of 82

As there was a delay in setting up the program, President Dale Giddings began the meeting by asking Judi Chimner to speak about Earth Week Expo taking place April 18th. This year there will be animals from the Garland Zoo, sturgeon fingerlings, eels and many other stations to explore. A limited number of spaces will be available for boat tours.

Members who haven't paid their dues for this year are encouraged to do so.

Kevin Georg has begun the count for the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch and among others saw a bald eagle on the first day and eleven golden eagles today.

Steve Baker displayed one of the signs marking the Sunrise Coast Birding Trail along US 23. There will be five signs in Cheboygan County: Gordon Turner Park, Cheboygan State

Park, Dingman Marsh, Mill Creek State Historic Park and at the Hawk Watch. There will be a free program May 2nd at Millcreek.

Then, Dale introduced our speaker Mary Trout who works closely with Little Traverse Conservancy. The topic was Owls of the North Woods, and in addition to her slides, Mary brought some owl artifacts belonging to LTC. She spoke about the ten owl species (barred, great horned, short eared, long eared, eastern screech, northern saw whet, northern hawk owl, boreal, great gray and snowy) found in the upper peninsula and upper lower portion of Michigan and had slides and sounds of each. She suggested the mnemonic HIPPO (Habitat destruction, Introduced species, Pollution, Population growth, and Overconsumption) as a way to remember the conservation issues concerning owls. Good news for owls is the owl banding programs by MSRW and Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. You can follow these at:

[www.mackinacraptorwatch.org](http://www.mackinacraptorwatch.org) and [www.wpbo.org](http://www.wpbo.org).

More announcements followed the presentation. Kathy Bricker requested help for the SAAS Discovery Room at Earth Week Expo and announced there will be a live owl program at the Headlands April 11 and 12. Al and Jean Moberly will present our April Program on their hiking experiences on the North Country Trail in the U.P. Steve Baker reported nine people attended last Friday's field trip to the U.P which spotted all good winter birds including twenty-four snowy owls. He encouraged everyone to visit the hawk watch any day, especially 10a.m. to 4p.m. on sunny days.

Nature sightings included a mud-puppy by Polish Line Rd., and several bald eagles including one, near the Big Boy, trying to pick up a Canada goose from the river.

The nominating committee will be composed of Jim Bricker, Diane Morand, and Dale Giddings.

The raffle prize of a hiking stick was won by Kathy Bricker. Door prizes were a bird book won by Mac McDanel, and a jar of honey donated by Dale Giddings and won by Jock Talk.

Everyone enjoyed refreshments provided by Steve and Sue Baker, Bev and Jack Kirby, Sheila Malleis, and Ed Pike and Ann Sowers.

## Nominating Committee announced

by **Jim Bricker**

If you feel it's time to do more for SAAS than be a member, now is your chance. Dale Giddings, Diane Morand, Chris Grant, and I will meet soon to discuss the new executive committee and roster of other volunteers. We will review all positions, so you can change if you wish. In particular we need a volunteer to be President (term limits prevent Dale from serving for life), another to take over the website from Roy MacFarland, and another to improve the visibility and

income from the monthly raffles. Please let us know if you can help improve SAAS in 2015-2016.

Have questions or want to volunteer, talk to Jim at 231-627-4830 or [pivot777777@hotmail.com](mailto:pivot777777@hotmail.com)

## High Single Day Count for Golden Eagles

by **Kathy Bricker**

In its first two weeks this spring, the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch reports that professional counter Kevin Georg has recorded eight species of hawks, 113 bald eagles and 224 golden eagles. The count of 70 golden eagles on March 17 and 85 golden eagles on March 21 may be records for all hawk observation sites east of the Mississippi River. The eagles powered through in a steady stream all day into a strong wind, not waiting to glide on thermals. Up to six were visible in the sky at one time, a real show for those who watched.

Golden Eagle

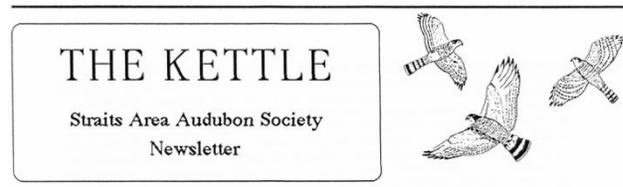


Photo by Steve Baker

## Does SAAS have a Logo?

By Jack Kirby

The latest need for a SAAS logo came about when we were asked to supply our society's logo for the Sunrise Coast Birding Trail signage. Yes we have an "official" logo composed of kettling hawks, which was quickly incorporated into the Kettle newsletter heading. This logo was designed and skillfully drawn by Cindy Speeter in 1987 and is the perfect logo for **The Kettle**.



The problem comes about when we try to use this logo for other applications. **This logo just does not have high enough definition to show up well in documents or on signs or letterhead or the website and does not fully represent who we are and who we serve.** For years, we have talked about the need and maybe it's time to do something about it! Let's make this a topic of discussion for this month's meeting!

## Dedication and Ribbon Cutting for the Sunrise Coast Birding Trail

Saturday, May 2, 1:00 p.m.

Location: Mill Creek State Historic Park

The Sunrise Coast Birding Trail is a new trail that highlights the great birding spots from Oscoda to the Mackinac Bridge along US-23. Signs are being erected all along this driving route to direct visiting birders to local birding hot spots. Cheboygan County sites are Cheboygan State Park, Mill Creek State Historic Park, Dingman Marsh, Gordon Turner Park, and the Mackinac Straits Hawk Watch. Printed guides and maps are available at many locations.

Trail Signage



Photo by Steve Baker

The dedication will be at Mill Creek State Historic Park and we are hoping for nice weather to have the brief ceremony outside, possibly on the canopy tower deck. Mill Creek will not officially be open at this date, so there will be no admission fee and we can enjoy this special park in solitude. It would be great to see many Audubon members come out and support this Eco-tourism project. After the ceremony, attendees may hike the trails or visit the Hawk Watch in Mackinaw City.

Questions, please call Steve Baker, 231-238-8723

## For Your Information

Names & Numbers

## Straits Area Audubon Society 2014 - 2015 Officers

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

[No email]

Vice President: **Connie Rieger** - 231-818-9065

[conniereger@yahoo.com](mailto:conniereger@yahoo.com)

Treasurer: **Rosanne Rynerson** - 231-597-9788

[fiddleheadfilly4@gmail.com](mailto:fiddleheadfilly4@gmail.com)

Secretary: **Diane Morand** - 231-627-4282

[mdlmorand@aol.com](mailto:mdlmorand@aol.com)

Past President: **Roger Benter** - 231-627-3992

[rogerbenter@gmail.com](mailto:rogerbenter@gmail.com)

Exe.Com. At-Large: **Chris Grant** - 231-238-8216

[chrisgrant723@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisgrant723@yahoo.com)

MAS Representative: **Donna Mittlestat** - 906-201-0285

[ddmstat@hotmail.com](mailto:ddmstat@hotmail.com)

## Nature Links

**Michigan Audubon Society**

[www.michiganaudubon.org](http://www.michiganaudubon.org)

**MNA [Michigan Nature Association]**

[www.michigannature.org](http://www.michigannature.org)

**The Nature Conservancy**

<http://nature.org/greatlakes>

**Little Traverse Conservancy**

[www.landtrust.org](http://www.landtrust.org)

**Whitefish Point Bird Observatory**

[www.wpbo.org](http://www.wpbo.org)

**HMANA Mackinaw Straits Raptor Watch**

[http://hawkcount.org/month\\_summary.php?rsite=613](http://hawkcount.org/month_summary.php?rsite=613)

**Mackinaw Straits Raptor Watch**

[www.MackinacRaptorWatch.org](http://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 4<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

Thank you. **Jack Kirby** [[saaskettle2011@gmail.com](mailto:saaskettle2011@gmail.com)]

SAAS thanks **Williams Office Equipment** for donating printing costs for **The Kettle**.

**Please consider them for all your Computer, Copier, Printer and Fax needs.**

312 West Elm Street, Cheboygan, MI 49721

Phone: 231-627-7020 -- Fax: 231-627-7477

"The sun was warm but the wind was chill.

You know how it is with an April day.

When the sun is out and the wind is still,  
You're one month on in the middle of May.

But if you so much as dare to speak,  
a cloud come over the sunlit arch,

And wind comes off a frozen peak,

And you're two months back in the middle of March."

- Robert Frost, *Two Tramps in Mud Time*, 1926