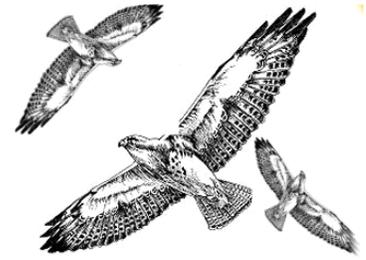


THE KETTLE



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 Gerry VanderHart
7004 N. Straits Hwy., Box88
Mullett Lake, MI 49761

Happy Valentine's Day

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:
Gerry VanderHart – Treasurer
7004 N. Straits Hwy., Box88
Mullett Lake, MI 49761

February Program

Wednesday, February 13 [6:00 p.m.]

SNAKES ALIVE!

This special program by Jim McGrath returns to Cheboygan and will again feature the founder of Nature Discovery, a Lansing-based nature education company. Jim's presentation will inspire both awe and respect for these maligned creatures that have succeeded in their way of making a living since before the time of the dinosaurs. He will discuss their role in the environment and specialized adaptations. Jim will bring many species of snakes that live in Michigan and make these gentle creatures available for program attendees to closely inspect and handle.

Jim McGrath



In addition, we are again delighted to be able to offer the "Snakes Alive!" program to every 5th grade student at Wolverine Elementary School and at Cheboygan Middle School this year. This partnership will help both schools reach their community support requirement from their recent Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative grants. We could use a couple volunteers to help Jim show the snakes in Wolverine on the afternoon of April 11; anyone willing to do so, please contact Jim Bricker at 627-4830. Refreshments along with raffle and door prize drawings will follow the meeting.

March Program

Wednesday, March 13 [6:00 p.m.]

Native Plant Garden

Native Plant Garden at Cheboygan Middle School is our program this month, presented by Middle School students. For many years, SAAS has collaborated closely with

Cheboygan and Wolverine middle schools and Cheboygan's After School youth program. We have provided outdoor experiential nature education, in-school programs, and grants for science equipment purchase and to pay for their recycling.



Green School Project Group

SAAS is the lead partner with Cheboygan's Green School Project, funded in part by the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative. This month, Cheboygan Middle School students working on the Green School, coordinated by science teacher Patti Dobias, will give our Audubon program, sharing the progress they have made in the past two years. Refreshments along with raffle and door prize drawings will follow the meeting.

Future SAAS Programs

Friday, April 5 [6:30 p.m.]

FOURTH ANNUAL Headlands Park Potluck, Owl banding and Stargazing

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 on-site. Ed targets saw-whet owls, 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, photographed, and released. Ed will demonstrate techniques that biologists use to learn more about these nocturnal hunters and describe his findings during decades of banding. In between checking the nets, we will learn about the stars and constellations either inside or outdoors if weather permits. Stay as late as you like. The Emmet County Headlands Park is located just west of Mackinaw City. From the entrance, follow the signs to the Guest House. This trip is co-sponsored by the Headlands Dark Sky Park.

Wednesday, April 10 [6:00 p.m.]

Will the Water Come Back? Climate Effects on the Great Lakes

Presented by Roger Gauthier

Wednesday, May 8 [6:00]

Hawks in the Hand

Presented by Nedd Filkins

Wednesday, June 12 [6:00]

Cheboygan State Park Hike and Potluck Dinner

Hosted by Roger and Ann Benter

Nature Reports

Leucistic Black-capped Chickadee

Submitted by Bev Kirby

On January 15, 2013 we were fortunate enough to see a leucistic Black-capped Chickadee at a feeder in the U. P. The preferred spelling leucistic (also leukistic or leucystic) is pronounced with a hard "k" as in leukemia. This is an abnormal plumage condition caused by a genetic mutation that prevents pigment, particularly melanin, from being properly deposited on a bird's feathers. As a result, the birds do not have the normal, classic plumage colors listed in field guides and instead the plumage has several color changes.

Leucistic and Normal Black-capped Chickadee



Photo by Jack Kirby

For Your Information

Leucism (or leukism) is not the same as albinism, which prevents the production of melanin but not necessarily other pigments. It is often difficult to tell them apart in wild animals, but leucistic animals—including birds—have normal dark eyes while albino birds have red or pink eyes. Leucism is more common than albinism and the two are often confused.

Leucistic Black-capped Chickadee



Photo by Jack Kirby

The following four websites deal with leucism and leucistic birds more fully:

http://www.pbase.com/ol_coot/leucistic_birds

<http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/leucism.html#cr>

<http://birding.about.com/od/identifyingbirds/a/leucism.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leucism>

Another SAAS Member's Rare Sighting

Today, January 31, 2013 I was informed by Steve Baker, that there was an Eastern Screech-Owl at the home of SAAS member Darinda Adlam. This bird is a rare find in the Cheboygan area...see accompanying photos.

Eastern Screech-Owl



Photo by Steve Baker

Eastern Screech-Owl



Photo by Steve Baker

smear in the crevices of a dead birch tree stump outside the kitchen window. This affords us close-up views of various bird species as they come to eat. Pileated, Hairy, Downy and Red-bellied woodpeckers, along with Black-capped Chickadees, Blue Jays, Brown Creepers, Tufted Titmice and White-breasted Nuthatches enjoy this treat. Commercial feeders for this purpose are available or you may make your own feeder by drilling holes in any section of limb, log, or heavy stick which can then be hung. I found that the squirrels totally destroyed my store bought feeder by gnawing through the wood to get to the grease. So the old dead birch works best for us.

Want to see a Snowy Owl?

Submitted by Donna Mittlestat

Get in your car and head north across the Mackinac Bridge. Your destination is the area around Rudyard in particular Hantz and Centerline Roads. Watch for Snowy Owls on top of utility poles, peaks of buildings and fence posts. You get the idea. They are often perched high to have a great view of an open area. Around Rudyard they are hunting over fields pursuing mainly rodents and small mammals. The Snowy Owl comes to Michigan sporadically during the winter months in search of food. Its home is the Arctic tundra where its main food source is lemmings. For the most part the owls seen in Michigan are the youngsters who are not all that good of a hunter yet.

The Snowy Owl's breeding range is circumpolar, ranging across the northern regions of Greenland, Scandinavia, Russia, Alaska and Canada. These owls are considered to be diurnal, hunting and being active both during the day and night. The legs and toes on these owls are heavily

A WINTER TREAT FOR THE BIRDS

Submitted by Bev Kirby

Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers



Photo by Bev Kirby

Throughout the year, after cooking bacon, I pour the cooled pan drippings into 5 oz. kitchen paper cups, seal in a small plastic bag and place the cups in the freezer. When the very cold winter days arrive, I take one or two cups out of the freezer and let the mixture warm up to a hard, but spreadable consistency. Using a knife the grease is then

Snowy Owl



Photo by Jack Kirby

feathered to protect them from the extreme cold. Their feathers are white and have no pigment leaving more space for air to keep them warmer. This owl is also known as the

Arctic Owl or Great White Owl. If you happen to see a group of owls then you can say you've seen a "blizzard" of owls. So, take a break and venture out to try and see these magnificent birds.

SAAS Members in the News

Submitted by Bev Kirby

After a good birding trip to the UP, we were going into a restaurant in St. Ignace for dinner and I noticed the paper box at the entryway. There I saw the Thursday, January 10th, 2013 edition of the St. Ignace News with a front page article featuring members Steve Baker and Ed Pike. They were counting birds for the Mackinac Straits Area Christmas Bird count. I said to Jack, "Isn't it nice when you can see two of your friends looking out at you from a paper box?"

SAAS Makes The News



Photo by Bev Kirby

St Ignace News Headline: "Bird Watchers Canvass Straits Area"



Photo by Bev Kirby

SAAS Chapter Notes:

From The President

By Dale Giddings

At the December 2012 meeting of the executive committee, we decided to shorten the monthly business meetings in order to give the program presenter more time. We voted to have only Bird Sightings and Field Trips on a regular basis. HOWEVER, if you have prepared anything to share and it is timely and relatively brief, we certainly welcome you to present it. Please alert me before the meeting to call on you, or be ready to speak up when I solicit additional agenda items. In addition, please send as much information as you like to Editor Jack Kirby in time for publication in the monthly *Kettles*. He also can send separate email alerts for you, with material that you deem important to get to the membership. Keep in mind that these extra alerts only go to members with email addresses. Thank you all for your excellent work. Many people come together to make our Audubon successful, and I appreciate all that you do.

The Conservation Chair

By Glen Matthews

Karen Martin was planning on but unable to attend the January 9 meeting of the SAAS to inform us of an initiative that she and Joanne Cromley are spearheading to reduce the use of plastic bags in our area, modeled on initiatives that have been undertaken elsewhere in the country, and even in other countries. Karen is welcoming assistance from anyone interested in promoting this cause. An organizational meeting is planned for 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 25. Contact Karen at karen4peace@yahoo.com or Joanne at heronsway@mich.com for additional information.

A proposed RV park off Duncan Street and close to Lake Huron was denied a wetland permit in 2010. The Michigan DEQ posted a proposed settlement based on plan amendments that are deemed acceptable. (See this link: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/wrd-cheboygan-waterfront-settlement-summary_404251_7.pdf) Despite the reduction to less than one third of the original proposed fill, this development will significantly reduce the habitat values and wetland functions of this site. The Tip of the Mit Watershed Council wrote a strong objection to the proposed settlement. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has yet to review this application, since it was previously denied by the MDEQ. It is possible that public comment can be made during the Corps' process that will be weighed in their decision, but it is unlikely that the MDEQ position will change, at this point.

2012 Treasurer's Report

Straits Area Audubon Society
2012 Cash Flow Statement

Account Balance [1/1/12] \$2958.48

Income:

Donations:	
CNB [Nature/Snakes]	360.00
Anonymous [Nature/Snakes]	400.00
Speaker Fees	150.00
Field Trip Leaders	130.00
Members/Friends	224.00
Total Donations	\$1264.00
Membership Dues:	
New [22]	308.00
Renewals [82]	1235.00
Total Dues	\$1543.00
Total Raffle Income	\$231.11
Bird Count:	
2011	25.00
2012	685.75
Total Bird Count	\$710.75
TOTAL INCOME	\$3748.86

Expenses:

Operations:	
Speakers Fees	350.00
Field Trip Leaders	260.00
Supplies	558.29
Library	100.00
Total Operations	\$1268.29
Projects:	
Earth Week	300.00
Headlands	112.50
Hawk Watch	500.00
Nature Discovery	1100.00
Owl Banding	172.00
Recycling	160.00
Total Projects	\$2814.50
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4082.79

NET 2012 CASH FLOW \$(333.93)

Account Balance [12/31/12] \$2624.55

Summary of Funds:

Restricted:	
Hawk Watch	165.00
Middle School Grants	144.00
Snakes Alive	117.00
Earth Week	82.00
Misc.	5.75
2012 Bird Count Fund	\$513.75
2012 General Fund	\$2110.80
Total Cash in Bank	\$2624.55

Report Submitted By:
Gerry VanderHart – Treasurer
January 9, 2013

Straits Area Audubon Society 2012-2013 Officers

Executive Committee

President: **Dale Giddings** - 231-525-8874
[No email]
Vice President: **Jim Bricker** - 231-627-4830
pivot777777@hotmail.com
Treasurer: **Gerry VanderHart** - 231-627-6249
[No email]
Secretary: **Kate Caldwell** - 231-627-2780
katecaldwell10@yahoo.com
Past President: **Roger Benter** - 231-290-4345
rogerbenter@gmail.com
Exe.Com. At-Large: **Gloria Cadwalader** 231-290-0436
gcadwalader@gmail.com
MAS Representative: **Donna Mittlestat** - 231-525-8169
ddmstat@hotmail.com

Nature Links

Michigan Audubon Society



www.michiganaudubon.org

MNA (Michigan Nature Association)

www.michigannature.org

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>

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]

Wise Geek-Did You Know?

Wild crows can remember individual human faces for years after an encounter. Research has shown that wild crows, ravens and pigeons can remember human faces. In some cases, the birds can actually remember a face years after just one encounter. Studies also have shown that some birds respond differently to calls from unfamiliar humans than they do to calls from humans with whom they are acquainted.