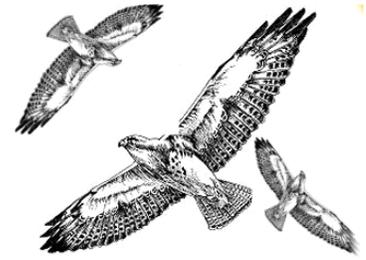


THE KETTLE



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

Happy Valentine's Day

Mission Statement - The mission of the Straits Area Audubon Society is to educate the community, including it's 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

February Program

Finding and Rearing Giant Silk Moths

Wednesday, February 12, 2014 [6:00 p.m.]
Presented by: Jim McGrath, Nature Discovery

Yes this is the same Jim McGrath you may remember who presented the highly successful programs on Michigan Snakes and Grand Slam of Michigan Turtles: All Alive. His talks inspired both awe and respect for these magnificent creatures which have succeeded in their way of making a living since before the time of the dinosaurs.



Jim will give a slide show "Finding and Rearing Giant Silk Moths." As a special treat, he will bring live moths to show their characteristics in the cocoon stage. Although these moths live around us, many people have never seen the large and sometimes colorful Cecropia, Polyphemus, Promethea, or Luna species. Learning about their life cycles

and behaviors greatly increases chances of finding these moths in any metamorphic stage. Once found, larvae can be successfully reared into giant adults in one's own house. Families with children studying life cycles, natural communities, food chains, or ecology will gain unique enrichment from this presentation. After the program and refreshments, the audience is invited to share recent nature sightings and learn about upcoming field trips and activities.

Polyphemus



Photos by Jim McGrath

Upcoming Programs

March, 12 2014

Fishy Adventures in the Caribbean

Presented by: Charlie Maltby, Craig Passeno, and Joe Lavender, Northern Michigan Dive Center

April, 9 2014

For the Birds: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Presented by: Ronnie Allen

May, 14 2014

Orchids of Michigan

Presented by: Steve Baker

June, 11 2014

Hike/Spotted Knapweed Pull and Potluck

Presented at home of Dale and Connie Rieger

February Field Trips

Steve Baker Spontaneous Outings Any Day, Any Time, Anywhere

Once again Steve Baker's Spontaneous Outing. If you are interested in participating in birding field trips this January, 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 at the ready.

Field Trip Reports

January 2014 Spontaneous Bird Outing

Friday, January 10, 2014

Submitted by Bev Kirby

Meeting at the Mackinaw City Welcome Center, we were happy to see an American Robin as our first species. When we crossed the Bridge, most of the Straits were frozen, but in a bit of open water we saw Long-tailed Ducks and Common Goldeneye.

Glaucous Gull



Photo by J Kirby

More Long-tailed Ducks were seen in St. Ignace at the Coal Docks and we moved on to the Mackinaw County

Wastewater Treatment Plant where only 2 American Black Ducks were found. At a few feeders in St. Ignace we saw Blue Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Black-capped Chickadees. On the way to Rudyard we found our first Bald Eagle along 1-75. We would eventually have a total of 28 for the day! Snow Buntings, Ravens, Bald Eagles #2 and #3 were seen along the Rudyard roads. On we went to Dafter and at another feeder found 5 Purple Finches, American Goldfinch, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker and Downy Woodpecker just before we entered the Dafter Landfill.

Bald Eagle



Photo by J Kirby

Here we had a bonanza of 25 Bald Eagles of various ages, 5 or more Glaucous Gulls, and of course lots of Ravens, Starlings and Herring Gulls. At least one Ring-Billed Gull was spotted and we also had a Red-tailed Hawk here. Leaving the landfill we went to another known feeder spot on 11 Mile Road which was conspicuously empty of birds. Our first of 4 Rough-Legged Hawks was seen on 12 Mile Road and from there we went to the feeders at Dunbar Research Station. Twenty plus Mourning Doves were about all we found, but Cedar Waxwings were seen at the entrance to Dunbar Park. Lunch at Cozy Corners across from Neebish Island was next and from there we went on to the Neebish Island Ferry where we found Red-breasted Mergansers. Near Stalwart we saw 14 American Crows having a meeting, and near 30 Mile Road we found Wild Turkeys. At a farm in Pickford a Cooper's hawk was seen in a tall pine. It was now 4:15 p.m. and the Kirbys had to head for Sault Ste. Marie for a Whitefish Point sponsored winter birding weekend, so we said good-bye and the rest of the group headed back to Mackinaw City. A total of 28 species of birds were seen for the day and we really had to work to get that many. Thanks to Steve Baker for organizing and leading this trip. Participants were Steve Baker, Jack and Bev Kirby, Don and Donna Mittlestat and Diane Morand.

beautiful Lee Grande Recreation Area on Saturday, January 18 with 11 hearty souls participating. Lee Grande Recreation Area is located on Hwy M-33 south of Cheboygan. The entrance and parking lot is 1.7 miles south of Hackleburg Rd or 3.4 miles north of the M-33 / M-68 junction. The parcel of 2,434 scenic acres is managed by the DNR for walk-in hunting and other non-motorized recreation. The property was acquired from the Harry and Madelene Peterson family in 2007 by the Little Traverse Conservancy under a conservation easement and later was purchased by the state using recreational trust fund money. The property supports elk, deer, ruffed grouse, turkeys and many other species and is a haven for birds in the warmer months.

Lee Grande Recreation Area



Photo by S. Baker

Participants included Al & Jean Moberly, Don & Donna Mittlestat, Dale & Connie Rieger, Steve & Sue Baker, Dale Landes and daughter Rachelle and Glen Matthews. Retired DNR personnel showed leadership with Don Mittlestat often in the front of the pack leading the way and Glen Matthews answering frequent questions about animal tracks, beaver dams and lodges and such. Glen and Don reported and showed tracks in the snow of white-tailed deer, coyote, snowshoe hare, gray squirrel, red squirrel, striped skunk, deer mouse, and short-tailed shrew. An extensive search for birds yielded two chickadees.

SAAS Chapter Notes

STRAITS AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY 2013 CASH FLOW STATEMENT

Checking Account Balance:	
January 1, 2013	\$2,624.55
INCOME 1/1/2013 - 12/31/2013	
Donations:	
Unrestricted:	\$ 321.00
Restricted:	
Snakes Alive 2013	\$ 800.00

Snowshoe Lee Grande Ranch

Saturday, January 18, 2014

Submitted by Al Moberly

The sun was shining, the snow was sparkling and the snowshoes were marching along! A Straits Area Audubon snowshoe hike was led by Jean and Al Moberly at the

Snakes Alive 2014	\$ 500.00
Membership Dues:	
New	\$ 978.00
Renewals	\$ 234.00
Raffle Income	\$ 267.00
Big Bird Count Pledges	\$ 1,187.80
TOTAL INCOME	\$4,287.80

EXPENSES 1/1/2013 - 12/31/2013

Speaker Fees:	\$300.00
Supplies/Printing/Postage:	\$657.88
Field Trip Leaders:	\$130.00
(\$110 was donated back to SAAS)	
Other:	
Raffle License	\$45.00
Web Site Hosting	\$60.00
Grants: Earth Week 2013	\$100.00
Earth Week Plus 2014	\$169.00
Hawk Count	\$847.00
Library	\$140.00
Owl Research	\$276.00
Snakes Alive	\$1,095.00
Youth/Green School	\$202.99
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,022.87
NET 2013 CASH FLOW	
Income	4,287.80
Expenses	- 4,022.87
	264.93
	==+\$264.93

Summary of Current Funds - 12/31/2013

Snakes Alive	\$951.00
Youth Committee	\$532.81
Unrestricted	\$1,405.67

Checking Account Balance

December 31, 2013	<u>\$2,889.48</u>
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Prepared by: Rosanne Rynerson
Treasurer January 6, 2014

SAAS 2013, By the Numbers

By Kathy Bricker

It's so much fun seeing SAAS become more effective in bringing nature education and appreciation to the Straits of Mackinac region, as 2013 marked another banner year of growth. For the first time we hosted Wildlife Room at the April 2013 EarthWeekPlus Expo, with many people volunteering their time with the 342 people who came in to learn about animals and our programs. We will long appreciate and use the three permanent photographic display boards that Bobie Crongeyer created to show off our organization's offerings.

All About SAAS panels, with their creator Bobie Crongeyer



Photo by J Bricker

Through the Snakes Alive! presentations by Jim McGrath, we reached 280 youth and adults at Cheboygan and Wolverine schools. We added a hands-on snake showing to thank the reticent yet receptive staff at Citizens National Bank for their support of this school outreach effort.

Citizens National Bank gave generously to help bring Snakes Alive! to six 5th grade classes and their own staff too



Photo by J Bricker

Diverse programs at nine evening monthly meetings lured 470 attendees, an average of 52 per night. Of these, 314 attendees were members. From 2007 to 2012, membership attendance at meetings has soared, from a low of 20 to the previous high of 31 and now this year's record of 35 per meeting.

Similarly, the 19 field trips attracted 311 attendees, zipping past the record of 274 attendees the last two years. Again, members came most often, averaging ten per trip, with six guests per trip.

Anyone attending SAAS events knows that we value great food. Thanks to the following for refreshments, some more

than once, at meetings or field trips: Maureen Conklin, Diane Morand, Jack and Bev Kirby, Don and Donna Mittlestat, Ben and Marilee Lillie, Al and Jean Moberly, Kate Caldwell, Lanny and Bobie Crongeyer, Gerry VanderHart, Joann Leal, Ron Wallin, Rose Rynerson. Janet Trudeau, Dale Giddings, Steve Baker, Marilyn Smith, Maureen and David Henkel, Ann and Roger Benter, Eloise Davis, Darst Grund, Kathy and Jim Bricker, and others at our three signature potluck events of the holiday dinner, owl banding at Headlands, and the June shore side gathering hosted for the third year by Roger and Ann Benter.

Thank you to all members and active volunteers for supporting SAAS with your time and attention to the extent you can, as well as your dues! The numbers show that our efforts are appreciated by the people of the Straits area.

Note of Thanks for SAAS Wildlife room

From Susan Page, EarthWeekPlus Committee

"Just a 'thank you' for your renewed support of \$169 for the 2014 EarthWeekPlus and fabulous room of wonders at the EarthWeekPlus Expo in April 2013. When I walked into the bustling room, I saw a little girl excitedly telling her father: 'Daddy! Look! Birds have bones! Another friend said her grandson asked for a snake for his birthday 'just like the long one at the high school.' That says it all. There's probably no other local organization more consistently involved in community education than the Audubon Society. Thanks again to SAAS members from the whole EarthWeekPlus volunteer committee."



Photo by J Bricker

Spring Bird Count Grants Decided

By Dale Giddings

Members and guests contributed a whopping \$1,188 in additional project money to SAAS this spring. Our annual fundraiser, the Big Birding Day, works through pledges made for each species of bird seen on this day in May. The 123 species (plus one record bobcat) raised a record amount of money in 2013. For comparison, income in the four previous years ranged from \$450 to \$686. In May, members voted on what percentage of this income to devote to various projects. We are pleased to report the following grants in the process of being made:

MACKINAC STRAITS RAPTOR WATCH \$347

OWL BANDING RESEARCH \$276
 SNAKES ALIVE! at area schools in 2014 \$204
 YOUTH OUTREACH \$192
 EARTHWEEKPLUS \$169

Library Grant

By Diane Morand

Members at the December potluck approved a grant of \$120 to Cheboygan Area Public Library in appreciation of making meeting space available to SAAS and other organizations.

Nature Events

February 8, 2014 10a.m.-12 Noon

Winter Wildlife Adventure Greenwood Sanctuary,
 Windswept Gate
 Wolverine, MI

Cost: **free**

Contact Little Traverse Conservancy to register for this event at their website <http://landtrust.org/>

The Greenwood Foundation is a privately owned property near Wolverine, MI protected with a conservation easement held by LTC. Greenwood welcomes the public to enjoy and explore this almost 1400-acre property for this special event. Snow groomed trails will lead you through the trail system and offer you the chance to let yourself find respite in the beauty of this winter wildlife haven. The field trip is free but skis and snowshoes are only provided for children 15 and under. Please mention that you need snowshoes when you register.

The Great Backyard Bird Count **February 14-17, 2014**

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), now in its 17th year, is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages from all over the world in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. The information gathered by tens of thousands of volunteers helps track the health of bird populations at a scale that would not otherwise be possible. The GBBC is a joint project of the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) and the [National Audubon Society](#) in partnership with [Bird Studies Canada](#).

How to participate

Last year's GBBC shattered records after going global for the first time, thanks to the integration of [eBird](#). Bird sightings were recorded from all 7 continents, including 111 countries and independent territories with more than 34.5 million birds and 3,610 species counted.

Create a GBBC Account

This applies to people who have never participated in a GBBC before, did not participate in last year's count or do not already have a eBird account. There are two options to set up a GBBC account; use eBird.org and [create an](#)

[account](#) anytime (or use a pre-existing account) or wait until February 14 and create an account on the [GBBC website](#).

Count Birds

Count birds on the designated days **for at least 15 minutes at a time**. You may count in as many places and as many times as you would like. Submit a separate checklist for each new day, for each new location, or for the same location if you counted at a different time of day. Estimate the number of individuals of each species you saw during your count period.

Submit Your Checklist(s)

Enter your results on the GBBC website or eBird.org. See the [downloadable instructions](#) for additional details on entering your checklists

A Featherless Friend, the Eastern Gray Squirrel

Although they don't have feathers squirrels are often frequent visitors to our feeders. The Eastern Gray squirrel is one of the most common squirrels in our area. You might say the black squirrel is more common. Actually the black squirrel is not a separate species; it is a variation of the gray. The black squirrel has an excess of melanin, the dark pigmentation. This makes it more advantageous to survive in colder climates with the black fur soaking up more heat than the gray. These mammals can be very entertaining with their abilities to jump distances of up to 20 feet and even fall 100 feet without injury due to their padded feet.

Eastern Gray Squirrel



Photo by J Kirby

You probably think a squirrel sure eats a lot of your bird seed. Yes you are correct. A squirrel eats in a week's time food equal to its body weight. They are omnivores eating nuts, fruits, seeds, buds, flowers and insects. Their very sharp teeth keep them going as these teeth continue to grow during their lifetime. A squirrel could live to be 10-12 years old but most die young. They are a favorite prey of many animals: hawks, foxes, opossum, wildcats, owls and man. Some days when we don't seem to be seeing the squirrels coming to our feeders they'll be in their nests conserving energy, but they do not hibernate. Worldwide there are 285 types of squirrels. Two continents, Antarctica and Australia, are not blessed with these featherless friends.

Sources: buzzle.com newsforsquirrels.blogspot.com

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
Fiddleheadfilly4@gmail.com

Secretary: **Diane Morand** - 231-627-4282
mdlmorand@aol.com

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
ddmstat@hotmail.com

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>

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]

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

.....Christina Georgina Rossetti c. 1872