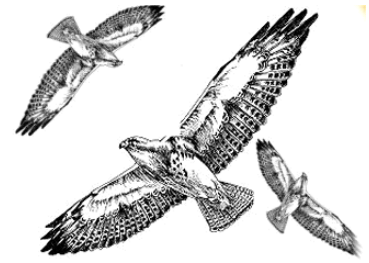


THE KETTLE



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
Mullet Lake, MI 49761

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: _____

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
Mullet Lake, MI 49761

January Program

Wednesday, January 9 [6:00 p.m.]

Helping American Kestrels Recover

Presented by Little Traverse Conservancy volunteers Jim and Wendy Bean, this talk will promote a workable solution to the precipitous decline in Kestrel populations.

Once we learn about the beauty and biology of Kestrels, we will discover what we and others can do to help rebuild their population. The Beans will explain the Kestrel Nest Box erection and monitoring program being run by the Peregrine Fund in order to promote nesting by these raptors.

American Kestrel



Photo by Rob Palmer Photography

Plans for building boxes will be provided. Please also mark your calendars for another chance to share in the wonder of Kestrels. This January Kestrel program will set the stage for a live raptor presentation that EarthWeekPlus will sponsor at the April 13, 2013 Expo at the Cheboygan High School. That afternoon, the non-profit rehabilitation center, Wings of Wonder from Traverse City, will bring some birds of prey, including a Kestrel, to show the public. Youth attending the Expo will have a chance to build a Kestrel nest box, and help from Audubon members would be appreciated. As usual at our monthly meeting, refreshments will be

provided. You may also participate in door prize and raffle drawings.

Erecting a new Kestrel nest box



Photo provided by the Bean's

February Program

Wednesday, February 13 [6:00 pm]

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.

Future SAAS Programs

Wednesday, March 13 2013

“Native Plant Garden at Cheboygan Middle School”

by Cheboygan Middle School Students

Wednesday, April 10 2013

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

by Roger Gauthier

Wednesday, May 8 2013

“Hawks in the Hand”

by Nedd Filkins

Wednesday, June 12 2013

“Hike the Cheboygan State Park and Potluck at Roger and Ann Benter's home”

Field Trip Reports

SAAS Cheboygan Area Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, Dec. 16, 2012

Submitted by Ed Pike

The Straits Area Audubon Society sponsored their 28th annual Christmas Bird Count. Thirteen people came out to help count birds even though the weather was not predicted to be very good. We also had the help of 19 people counting birds at their feeders.

The weather conditions were fair with temperatures in the high thirties and calm to light winds; however the fog settled in for the entire day and visibility was about 1/4 mile with a slight clearing for about an hour around noon when visibility was almost 1/2 mile. At the water's edge on Lake Huron

and at Mullet Lake the fog was like a wall and you could only see a few yards out from shore. With the reduced visibility sightings of hawks and waterfowl were difficult. Most of the ducks counted were on the Cheboygan River.

An average number of birds were seen with a total of 45 species and 3899 individual birds counted. Because of the poor visibility this year we missed some larger hawks and waterfowl on the large lakes.

Northern Cardinal



Photo by Jerry Borowicz

Below is a list of the birds counted and the people who counted them:

1	Canada Goose	499
2	Mute Swan	42
3	Trumpeter Swan	5
4	Am. Blk. Duck	1
5	Mallard	482
6	Bufflehead	14
7	C. Goldeneye	39
8	Hooded Merganser	4
9	C. Merganser	38
10	Red-breasted Merganser	4
11	Ruffed Grouse	6
12	Wild Turkey	17
13	Bald Eagle	2
14	Cooper's Hawk	2
	Accipiter sp.	1
15	Ring-billed Gull	12
16	Herring Gull	14
	Gull sp.	20
17	Rock Pigeon	228
18	Mourning Dove	359
19	Red-bellied Woodpecker	7
20	Downy Woodpecker	39
21	Hairy Woodpecker	19
22	Pileated Woodpecker	1
23	N. Shrike	1
24	Blue Jay	52
25	Am. Crow	40
26	C. Raven	6
27	Blk-capped Chickadee	519
28	Tufted Titmouse	24
29	R.B. Nuthatch	30

30	W.B. Nuthatch	53
31	Brown Creeper	1
32	Golden crowned Kinglet	3
33	European Starling	332
34	Bohemian Waxwing	133
35	Cedar Waxwing	24
36	Am. Tree Sparrow	31
37	Dark-eyed Junco	19
38	N. Cardinal	67
39	Pine Grosbeak	47
40	Purple Finch	2
41	House Finch	11
42	Common Redpoll	352
43	Am. Goldfinch	287
44	Evening Grosbeak	1
45	House Sparrow	9

Total birds counted 3899

Field Counters:

Joey Arbaugh; Jim & Kathy Bricker; Kate Caldwell; Dale Giddings; Darrell Lawson; Ben Lillie; Glen Matthews; Don & Donna Mittlestat; Ed Pike; Rose Rynerson; Mary Whitmore

Feeder Counters:

Pat Esther-Schmidt; Diane Morand; Karen Martin; Mark Stormzand; Jean & Lenny Blaskowski; Sedate Phillips; Jean & Al Moberly; Roxie Barrette; Elena Bishop; Faye Johnston; Pat Rintimaki; Darinda Adlam; Loraine Woodard; Doug Hunt; Maureen Conklin; Carol Tschirart; Gerald & Michelle Borowicz; Darlene Perry; Gerry VanderHart

THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED COUNT BIRDS.

Ed Pike: Count Compiler

Les Cheneaux Area Christmas Bird Count

Friday, December 28, 2012.

Submitted by Bev Kirby

Six members of the Straits Area Audubon Society helped with the Christmas Bird Count in the Les Cheneaux area of the Eastern UP under the auspices of The Nature Conservancy. Steve Baker, Ed Pike, Bev and Jack Kirby, Don and Donna Mittlestat, along with 3 birders from Marquette and one from Lansing were able to find 32 species of birds in the allotted time period on Friday morning. Negative 5 was the temperature reading when we began but it warmed up to 21 degrees by noon. We all followed designated routes within a specified 15 mile circle near Pickford, Hessel and Cedarville.

Birding was slow, but everyone enjoyed the task at hand and some good birds and beautiful hoar frost scenery was observed.

Hoar Frost Scenery



Photo by Bev Kirby

The Mackinac Straits Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, Dec. 30, 2012

Submitted by Steve Baker

Greetings birders; The Mackinac Straits Christmas Bird Count was held December 30 on a typical late December day, with cool breezes, frozen still water, and several inches of snow on the ground. As usual, the count area was a 15 mile diameter circle centered at the midpoint of the Mackinac Bridge. A dozen birders gathered at 8 am in Mackinaw City to distribute maps and tally sheets for the day. Everyone had a good day in the field and despite the late date for the count, we achieved 48 species, the second highest total ever. Each birding team had their highlights to share when all gathered again for a late lunch in St. Ignace. Ed Pike and Steve Baker were allowed to observe from the north anchor pier of the bridge which permitted a more accurate count of the huge raft of Redheads, an estimated 4200 birds! We are grateful to the Mackinac Bridge Authority for making this happen this year. After thawing out, Ed and Steve were able to find a nice assortment of waterfowl in their assigned area of St. Ignace. Bev and Jack Kirby and Don and Donna Mittlestat had perhaps the best find of the day, 2 Sharp-tailed Grouse on Point LaBarbe. They also located the Snowy Owl on the bridge. Joey Arbaugh and Marilyn Smith had great looks at a Cooper's hawk and a Sharp-shinned Hawk in their area west of Mackinaw City. Jim and Kathy Bricker had 14 Pine Grosbeaks on the east side of Mackinaw City, but their real fun was riding the afternoon ferry to Mackinac Island back and forth and viewing Long-tailed Ducks and a Surf Scoter. Thank you to Arnold Line for the complimentary passage. Trish Martin and Claire Dunnigan birded Mackinac Island by hiking and snowmobile and found the only Juncos of the day

Sharp-tailed Grouse



Photo by Jack Kirby

. The final results were 6297 individuals of 48 bird species. Each group remarked on the scarcity of many normally common birds such as Blue Jays, finches, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. Next year an attempt will be made to add feeder counters which should boost results. Thank you to all who participated again this year in the coolest count anywhere; the only count with 2 Great Lakes, the greatest bridge in the world, the most unique island, and part of each of the two Michigan peninsulas!

Canada Goose 2
 Mute Swan 81
 Gadwall 2
 American Black Duck 8
 Mallard 43
 Canvasback 1
 Redhead 4200
 Scaup species 200
 Surf Scoter 1
 White-winged Scoter 4
 Long-tailed Duck 693
 Bufflehead 20
 Common Goldeneye 540
 Hooded Merganser 1
 Common Merganser 8
 Red-breasted Merganser 84
 Sharp-tailed Grouse 2
 Bald Eagle 6
 Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
 Cooper's Hawk 1
 Goshawk 1
 Red-tailed Hawk 1
 Ring-billed Gull 2

Herring Gull 16
 gull species 15
 Rock Pigeon 47
 Mourning Dove 8
 Snowy Owl 1
 Red-bellied Woodpecker 1
 Downy Woodpecker 3
 Hairy Woodpecker 1
 Pileated Woodpecker 1
 Northern Shrike 1
 Blue Jay 2
 American Crow 41
 Common Raven 5
 Black-capped Chickadee 245
 Tufted Titmouse 2
 Red-breasted Nuthatch 2
 White-breasted Nuthatch 3
 Brown Creeper 1
 European Starling 89
 American Tree Sparrow 2
 Dark-eyed Junco 8
 Northern Cardinal 11
 Pine Grosbeak 20
 Common Redpoll 37
 American Goldfinch 14
 House sparrow 12

Total species 48
 Total individuals 6297

Spontaneous Field Trip #8

Sunday, December 30, 2012.
 Submitted by Bev Kirby

After counting birds all morning for the Mackinac Straits Area Christmas Bird Count, at 1:45 p.m. with Steve Baker as our leader, nine participants decided to go north to Riverside and 19 mile area to look for a Great Gray Owl that had been reported the day before.

Snowy Owl



Photo by Jack Kirby

Stopping off in the Rudyard and Dryburg areas, we were all pleased to find 5 Snowy Owls, 1 Northern Hawk Owl, a

Rough-Legged Hawk, 3 Northern Shrikes, as well as a Barred Owl which flew across the road in front of us and landed in a tree long enough for all of us to see. One participant got a quick look at a Northern Goshawk as it flew across overhead on I-75. While crossing a bridge on the Munuscong River, four of the group watched a Red Fox on one side of the river and a Wild Turkey on the other. In a blink of an eye, 14 Wild Turkeys ran out onto the ice and chased the fox up the bank on the other side of the river. Needless-to-say, after spending about an hour looking for the Great Gray Owl and coming up short, we left the area. Upon return home we saw on the internet that the owl was spotted ten minutes after we left ☺. Oh well. There is always another day and hopefully another Great Gray Owl to search for. We sure had fun looking for this one! ☺
Great Gray Owl Seekers.....Steve Baker, Ed Pike, Jack and Bev Kirby, Don and Donna Mittlestat, Marilyn Smith, Joey Arbaugh, and Darrell Lawson.

SAAS Chapter Notes:

SAAS meeting of 12/12/12 Notes

Submitted by Kathy Bricker

40 people came, mostly members, exceeding the number needed for a quorum to conduct official business.

Based on the recommendations of the executive committee, it was moved, seconded, and passed to give grants from the general fund for the following purposes of up to the following amounts. They will be timed between now and June 2013, at the discretion of the treasurer. The executive committee recommended keeping \$210 as a reserve fund for emergencies.

Library	\$120
Hawk count	\$335
Snakes Alive!	\$425
Field trips	\$110
Youth/Green School	\$400
EarthWeekPlus	\$18
Speakers	<u>\$350</u>
Total	2758

Based on earlier member votes, the executive committee decided to make disbursements from the Big Birding Day for the following purposes and amounts. They will be timed between now and June 2013, at the discretion of the treasurer.

Owl research	\$172
Hawk count	\$165
Youth/Green School	\$144
Snakes Alive!	\$117
EarthWeekPlus	<u>\$82</u>
Total	\$680

It was reported that Maureen Stine of Natureology educated 125 6th graders about river ecology this fall, thanks to the SAAS grant from the 2011 Big Birding Day fund.

After an outstandingly delicious dinner and a surprise visit by Santa Claus, we enjoyed photos from the following people:

- Steve Baker – November Birds of the Upper Peninsula, field trips of SAAS
- Diane Morand – 40-Mile Lake Huron Beach Walk from Cheboygan to Rogers City
- Terry Riegler – Michigan Nature including wood ducks nesting
- Glen Matthews – Michigan Nature including courting ruffed grouse
- Bobie Crongeyer – Cheboygan Middle School – Green School, project of SAAS
- Kate Caldwell – Experiences of a Naturalist Guide in Alaska and Central America
- Rose Rynerson – Vashon Island, Washington
- Dale Rieger – Katy Trail by Bike and Tent
- Don Mittlestat – Michigan Nature
- Kathy Bricker - Snakes Alive! for Cheboygan and Wolverine 5th graders, project of SAAS
- Jim Bricker – Galapagos Islands wildlife
- Bruce Benter – Nature

Ben Lillie & Santa?



Photo by Kathy Bricker

Unfortunately, we missed seeing the pictures brought by Tom Cadwalader, Maureen Conklin, and Karen Martin. We invited them to bring them to a future meeting, since they took the time to organize and were willing to share them.

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]