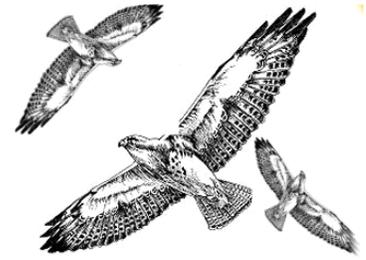


THE KETTLE



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

March Program

Fishy Adventures in the Caribbean

Wednesday, March 12th, 2014 [6:00 p.m.]

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

"Fishy Adventures in the Caribbean" will be presented by native Cheboyganite Charlie Maltby. Charlie will be accompanied by Joe Lavender and Craig Passeno, scuba divers from Northern Michigan Dive Center. They will share experiences in northern Michigan as well as during annual trips to warmer waters.

Sea turtle



Photo Supplied

Highlights will be wildlife, from fish to turtles to sponges and corals. They will stress both the wildlife viewing and the wildlife conservation aspects of diving. You will learn what's involved in scuba diving and that scuba is derived from the initials for Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus. If you have ever wanted to explore a whole new and exciting world, diving will take you there. After the program, refreshments will be served and door prizes and raffle prize awarded. Then we will share recent nature sightings and learn about upcoming field trips and activities.

Upcoming Programs

April, 9 2014

For the Birds: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Presented by: Ronnie Allen

This program is sponsored by Straits Area Audubon Society. Come learn about Seney's NWR protection of both game and non-game species, particularly its ducks and other bird life.

May, 14 2014

Orchids of Michigan

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.

June, 11 2014

Hike/Spotted Knapweed Pull and Potluck

Hosted by: Dale and Connie Rieger

Dale and Connie will host our annual June Potluck program.

March 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 this March, 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

Birding the Cheboygan River

Sunday, February 9, 2014

Submitted by Donna Mittlestat

A mostly sunny Sunday afternoon greeted this outing to the open waters of the Cheboygan River for six avid birders: Sharon Szczesny, Tom Cadwalader, Dan Welihan, Don and Donna Mittlestat and Steve Baker.

Birding



Photo by Donna Mittlestat

We had an opportunity to view 9 waterfowl in the river including: Northern Pintail, Long-tailed and White-winged Scoter.

Ducks



Photo by Steve Baker

A Bald Eagle also made an appearance perching majestically on a post. It was a great opportunity to see many of these species close to shore.

Birding the U.P

Tuesday, February 11, 2014

Submitted by Donna Mittlestat

Two "hardy souls" ventured out on a spontaneous field trip on Tuesday, Feb. 11 to the U.P. Don Mittlestat and Steve Baker braved the weather with temperatures reaching -25 F on their car thermometer. Basnau Rd. gave them about a dozen Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, and a lone female Pine Grosbeak.

Dafter Landfill



Photo by Steve Baker

No luck on the Gray Jay, even with 4 other cars of birders chumming the road with cheesy popcorn, graham crackers, bread, cheese curls, and bird seed. Cruising the fields

toward Dafter, they came across a large flock of Snow Buntings--at least 100 birds.

Dafter Dump was still home for 20 plus Bald Eagles and only 20 Herring Gulls. They did a partial Rudyard loop with no Snowy Owls found. A handsome Red-shouldered Hawk was seen near Sea Shell City on the return home making for a total of 25 species seen for the day.

SAAS Chapter Notes

Hawk Counter Hired

Submitted by Kathy Bricker

The **Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch** gratefully thanks SAAS for its grants totaling \$1,347. These and other donations have allowed MSRW to hire Kevin Georg as our first paid hawk counter. On any migration day between March 15 and May 30, Kevin will be counting hawks in Mackinaw City west of I-75. By extending the season with Kevin's help, we will gain a more complete picture of the numbers, variety, and timing of the entire hawk migration.

The Raven and the Golden Eagle



Photo by Steve Baker

SAAS members and the public are welcome to come and witness the rising kettles as well. Sometimes, this can number in the dozens of hawks, circling overhead to enormous heights. In 2013, 22,488 raptors of 17 species were tabulated by volunteer counters. To check on the likelihood of migration on any given day and for additional information, please contact MSRW president, Ed Pike at 231-758-3319 or aes05@localnet.com.

Snakes Alive! In the Schools

By Kathy Bricker

For the fourth straight year, SAAS brought Snakes Alive! by Jim McGrath from Nature Discovery to area schools. In a whirlwind two days, he presented to four Cheboygan Middle School 5th grade classes, Cornerstone Christian School's Kindergarten through 8th grade, Wolverine's 5th grade, and employees at Citizens National Bank, more than 120 people.



Jim donated a baby western fox snake to the Wolverine class, to join the black rat snake they have tended since last year's visit. Teacher Lisa Pulaski put into words the reason we feel this program is important when she said: "No student from this school will ever harm a snake again." We appreciate donations from an anonymous funder, SAAS members, Citizens National Bank, and Nancy Waldron for enabling the children of northern Michigan to experience live snakes first-hand.

By Susan Good, Northern Wildlife Rescue

"As the county's only licensed wildlife rescue and rehabilitation facility, I encounter many people concerned about animals. However, despite the importance of snakes in our ecosystem, they bear the brunt of persistent, uninformed persecution. Bugaboos passed along from family and friends who don't know any better lead even children to target these innocent, unique creatures. Education and actual hands-on experience is the best avenue to turn around negative impressions."

TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by Rose Rynerson

We currently have 93 members. This number includes our newest member, Nancy Waldron, who kindly made an extra donation earmarked toward our recent Nature Discovery programs. Thank you, Nancy, and welcome!

Nature Events

The Great Backyard Bird Count [Preliminary Facts and Figures]

Although data are still coming in, it's clear that the 2014 Great Backyard Bird Count is on track to be another record-breaker! Participants from a record **131 countries** had submitted bird checklists, eclipsing last year's 110 countries. We give a huge thanks to all who

participated! We wanted to share some of the impressive numbers we have so far and a few of the trends we see. You can continue entering checklists for February 14-17 through the [GBBC website](#). If you have lists for those dates that you need to enter after the end of the month, you can do so directly in [eBird](#).

Top 10 most frequently reported species (number of checklists reporting this species):

Species	Number of Checklists
Northern Cardinal	53,540
Dark-eyed Junco	51,186
Mourning Dove	44,278
Blue Jay	39,363
Downy Woodpecker	36,766
American Goldfinch	33,396
American Crow	32,381
House Finch	32,271
Tufted Titmouse	31,950
Black-capped Chickadee	30,822

Top 10 most numerous species (sum of the number of individuals observed across all checklists):

Species	Number of Individuals
Red-winged Blackbird	1,570,808
Snow Goose	1,223,082
Canada Goose	1,031,278
European Starling	542,477
Mallard	493,774
Ring-billed Gull	433,823
American Coot	417,504
Dark-eyed Junco	404,057
American Crow	328,601
American Goldfinch	323,672

Checklists have come from Australia, China, Argentina, Kazakhstan, Iceland, India, Kenya, and even Antarctica! In Canada, participants in British Columbia have racked up the highest provincial species total (192). Participation in the Maritime Provinces is also up with reports from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador already outstripping last year's totals even before all the data has been entered.

India is the clear superstar outside of North America with more than 3,000 checklists and the greatest number of species reported, a whopping 806!

Country	# of Species	# of Checklists
United States	643	112,281
Canada	234	12,340
India	806	3,195
Australia	492	854
Mexico	658	451

Costa Rica	554	165
United Kingdom	155	150
Puerto Rico	113	150
Portugal	177	134
Honduras	335	104

In North America, California sits atop the leader board with the most checklists and the greatest number of species so far, but New York is nipping at its heels for the checklist record. Ontario, Canada, has jumped into the top 10 for checklists, outdistancing even big birdy states such as Texas, Florida, and North Carolina.

State/Province	# of Species	# of Checklists
California	358	8,472
New York	165	7,663
Pennsylvania	136	6,945
Ontario	146	6,329
Texas	350	5,526
Florida	307	5,376
Ohio	137	5,214
Virginia	179	4,883
North Carolina	194	4,876
Michigan	127	4,000

These checklist and species numbers will continue to rise as GBBC participants enter their data for the four days of the count through the end of the month. Although much more data have yet to be recorded, here are some of the trends noted so far.

Fewer Finches

After last year's "super flight," this year's GBBC reports for 10 irruptive species (mostly finches) are down considerably. This includes reports for the White-winged and Red crossbills, Common and Hoary redpolls, Pine and Evening grosbeaks, Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Bohemian Waxwings. These are believed to be natural fluctuations in numbers because of variation in seed crops.

Snowy Owl Invasion Continues

A massive irruption of Snowy Owls into the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes States of the U.S., as well as southeastern Canada, is easily seen in GBBC numbers. Preliminary results show participants reported more than 2,500 Snowy Owls in 25 states and 7 provinces of the U.S. and Canada!

The Polar Vortex Effect

The frigid cold in many parts of North America has resulted in unusual movements of waterfowl and grebes. With the Great Lakes almost completely frozen, some species, such as the White-winged Scoter and the Long-tailed Duck, have fled the

frozen lakes and stopped at inland locations where they are not usually found at this time of year.

Do some exploring on your own with the new ["Explore a Location" tool](#). See what species are being reported and how many checklists are being turned in at the county, state/province, and country levels. And don't forget to browse some of the awesome photos being [submitted for the GBBC photo contest](#)--and enter your own!

BROWN CREEPER

Submitted by Donna Mittlestat

Brown Creeper



Photo by Jack Kirby

As winter is winding down there is still another visitor we may see at our feeders. The Brown Creeper is a year round residence to Northern Michigan. This bird is native to North America, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Saint Pierre and Miquelon. The Brown Creeper is camouflaged and has a very distinctive shape. It is often seen zigzagging going up trees looking in all the nooks around a trees bark for tidbits to eat with its slender, down curved bill. This bird seems to love the biggest trees and is considered a woodland bird. Although this bird eats mostly insects during the winter months it will often eat suet, peanut butter and seeds from a feeder giving us an opportunity to view them. This bird is often very vocal, however, its high-pitched vocalizations are easily missed. If you were ever lucky enough to see a group of these birds they are known as a "sleeze" or a "spiral" of creepers. Source: allaboutbirds.org, whatbird.com

Straits Area Audubon Society 2013 - 2014 Officers and Volunteers
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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>

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]

Poems For March

March Wind

We made a brand-new kite today
 And soon as we were through
 We came out here to fly it,
 And the wind just blew and blew.
 And now the kite's a tiny speck;
 We've used up all the string;
 I'd like to go and get some more.
 Anne's such a tiny thing
 To hold the kite all by herself;
 I wouldn't let her try,
 For fear I might look back and see
 Anne sailing through the sky.
 *** Eleanor Dennis

Kite Days

A kite, a sky, and a good firm breeze,
 And acres of ground away from trees,
 And one hundred yards of clean, strong string --
 O boy, O boy! I call that Spring!

-by Mark Sawyer