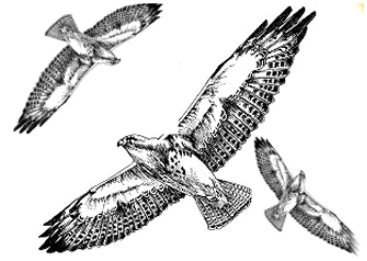


THE KETTLE



Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983

SAAS meetings are held at 6:30 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. U.S. 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: _____

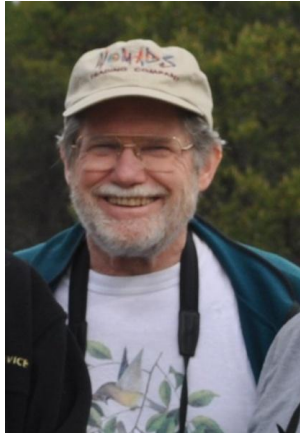
Make checks payable to: Straits Area Audubon Society:
Single Membership: \$12
Family Membership: \$15

Please mail checks to:
Rosanne Rynerson - Treasurer
10490 E. U.S. 23
Cheboygan, MI 49721

May Program

Wednesday, May 9 [6:30 pm] Vehicular Air Pollution

Tom Grahame, our May 9 speaker (6:30 pm, Cheboygan Area Public Library) is a friend of Kathy and Jim Bricker



from their years in Washington, D.C. He works as Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Fossil Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, D.C. Tom knows SAAS already, having joined our Big Birding Day in May 2010. He is returning for more northern Michigan birding and offered to time his trip to present this program on vehicular air pollution. Tom will discuss how tiny black carbon particles increase heart disease and shorten human lifespan. He will

tell about positive steps already taken to reduce air pollution from cars and new promise for improving tailpipe emissions from diesel trucks. Refreshments along with raffle and door prize drawings will follow the meeting.

June Program

Wednesday, June 13, 3 p.m. Annual Grass Bay Nature Hike and Potluck

Stroll along Lake Huron between Cheboygan State Park and the Michigan Nature Conservancy's Grass Bay Preserve, enjoying birds and plants as you go. Jim and Kathy Bricker will be among those to point out special adaptations of shore-dwelling plants. At 5 pm, following the hike, we will share the annual end-of-season Audubon potluck dinner. Meet for both events at the home of Roger and Anne Benter, 4803 Grass Bay Trail. Go to the end of the road past the entrance to Cheboygan State Park. All are welcome to the potluck, even if you cannot join the hike. Call the Benters at 231-627-3992 for directions.

Upcoming Field Trips

Saturday, May 12 - National Bird Migration Count for Emmet County

This annual nationwide bird census is always conducted on the second Saturday in May. This is an all day (before dawn to after dusk) bird count that provides valuable data on

avian population trends across the country. Ed Pike is the compiler for Emmet County and if you are an experienced birder and would like to participate, call Ed at 231-758-3319.

Wednesday, May 16 - SAAS Big Day Birdathon [6:00 am]

This fun big day of birding is our largest fundraiser for the year. Our goal is to find as many species of birds as possible in the Straits area. All Audubon members and friends are encouraged to support this effort by pledging an amount for each species seen and will have an opportunity to sign up at the May Audubon meeting. Those wishing to participate in this big day of birding will meet at the Mackinaw City Highway Rest Area/Welcome Center for a prompt 6 am departure. Pack a lunch for eating on the go. We will explore many habitats around Mackinaw City and St. Ignace areas and hope to find 100 plus species of birds. Call Steve Baker at 231-238-8723 for more information.

Monday, May 21- Birding the Pigeon River Country [8:00 am]

Join Don and Donna Mittlestat for a hike into the beautiful Pigeon River Country. We will search for interesting birds such as Eastern Towhee, Hermit Thrush, and several sparrow species. Elk are always a possibility. Meet at 8 am at Shultz's gas station just east of I-75 exit by Wolverine. Please call Don or Donna to sign up at 231-525-8169

Thursday, May 31 - Thompson's Harbor State Park, All Day Adventure

Join Steve Baker in exploring the beautiful wilderness of this undeveloped State Park located south of Rogers City. There should be an abundance of wildflowers and many breeding birds to look for. This park is known for its many orchid species such as Ram's Head and Yellow Lady's Slipper and we can usually find the white form of the Dwarf Lake Iris if still in bloom. Some areas may be wet, so boots or sloggling shoes (and a dry pair for changing) and bug protection are recommended. Lunch will be at Presque Isle Harbor. Call Steve at 231-238-8723 to sign up and learn meeting location.

Monday, June 4, 1:00 p.m. - Plants and Sands of Sturgeon Bay Dunes

What characteristics make dune plants so unique, and why are many of them threatened species? Join Jim and Kathy Bricker to explore the beautiful flowers and geological formations of Sturgeon Bay Dunes, a part of Wilderness State Park. We will meet at 1 pm at the gas station in Pellston at the corner of Riggsville Rd. and M-31 and car-

pool to the dunes on Lake Michigan. Dinner afterward at Legs Inn in Cross Village is optional.

SAAS Chapter Notes:

Audubon Bluebird Trail - Spring Cleaning and Additions

Bluebirds and tree swallows will find nice, clean houses for nesting at the Middle School this spring. Four additional units have been added and are ready for occupancy thanks to a suggestion by Laurie and Jeff Dykehouse, donation of the boxes by Darrell Schwalm and the poles by Roy & Alice MacFarland.

All 10 houses are now paired to allow one family of bluebirds and one family of swallows or chickadees per station. At only 15 feet apart, we now have integrated housing available and hope for peaceful co-existence.

A visit to Major City Park on April 2 revealed that box # 10 was occupied by an ungracious hostess who chattered away in agitation at the rude knocking on her wall. The early bird in this case got the best location.

We are hoping for a successful season and would welcome additional volunteer monitors. Contact Alice at 231-597-8173

Call for Big Birding Day Grant Ideas AND Votes

by Kathy Bricker

All SAAS members get to decide how to spend money raised at Big Birding Day. In 2011, members chose owl banding research, scholarships to nature camp (won by Madelyn Maltby, Cheboygan and Amber Bourcier, Wolverine in summer 2011), a half-day Cheboygan River environmental study for the Cheboygan Middle School (in May 2012), and establishing a more formal spring hawk watch in Mackinaw City. To recommend a project for this year, email me before May 8 at kathyhomeaccount@hotmail.com. To make a pledge or vote, attend the May meeting or call me at 231-627-4830.

Outdoor Lighting Nomination

by Kathy Bricker

SAAS is proud to nominate Silent Sport Lodge Bed and Breakfast and River Cabin for the annual lighting award from the Outdoor Lighting Forum. Located on the West Branch of the Sturgeon River near Wolverine, the Lodge enhances dark sky viewing through several low-tech methods. A solar-driven unit with an LED lamp illuminates their business sign. The parking lot uses a motion-sensor light that turns off automatically after three minutes. Stars

are visible over the lodge. The outdoor pathway is lit by small downward-directed lights to provide safe walking. Owners John and Rhonda Smit said "The stars are awesome here. We appreciate that, and think our guests do too."

What is a Kettle?

by Bev Kirby

Besides being the name of our Straits Area Audubon newsletter, or a pot you put on the stove in which to boil food or water, a kettle is a group of birds wheeling and circling to gain altitude on updrafts of air called thermals.



Photo by Steve Baker

The kettle may be composed of several different species at the same time. Red-tailed hawks, broad-winged hawks, sharp-shinned hawks, eagles and turkey vultures are some species that circle (kettle) together in the thermal currents and climb as high as possible in readiness for migration. When the air cools to a point at which it can no longer lift an object, the birds peel off and continue gliding. In this way, given a good day with lots of thermal activity, they can fly many miles without flapping their wings. Since hawks do not like to cross large bodies of water, they will cross at the most narrow point of land. In our area, the Straits of Mackinac is the perfect place to cross. On our current hawk watch in Mackinaw City, the biggest kettle we had contained about 60 birds but a kettle can contain thousands of birds.

Mackinac Straits Hawk Watch – May Update

by Jack Kirby

The count officially began March 20 but we were able to count on the 14th and 16th. Since then, through April 29th the Hawk Count crew has logged 188.25 hours. The total number of raptors counted during this time period was an amazing **7008** birds. Below is the species listing and quantity.

5	Black Vulture
1447	Turkey Vulture

- 21 Osprey
- 167 Bald Eagle
- 26 Northern Harrier
- 548 Sharp-shinned Hawk
- 18 Cooper's Hawk
- 5 Northern Goshawk
- 40 Red-shouldered Hawk
- 1966 Broad-winged Hawk
- 2558 Red-tailed Hawk
- 73 Rough-legged Hawk
- 68 Golden Eagle
- 19 American Kestrel
- 3 Merlin
- 4 Peregrine Falcon
- 7 Unknown Accipiter
- 32 Unknown Buteo
- 1 Unknown Falcon
- 0 Unknown Eagle
- 0 Unknown Raptor

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Photo by Steve Baker taken at the Mackinaw City Hawk Watch on March 29th 2012



SAAS Volunteer Staff

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <u>President:</u> | Roger Benter |
| <u>Vice President:</u> | Jim Bricker |
| <u>Treasurer:</u> | Rosanne Rynerson |
| <u>Secretary:</u> | Mary Liebner |
| <u>Past President:</u> | Kathy Bricker |
| <u>Executive Com:</u> | Bobie Crongeyer |
| <u>MAS Rep:</u> | Donna Mittlestat |
| <u>Greeter:</u> | Susan Emerson |
| <u>Greeter Assist:</u> | Dale Rieger, Connie Rieger, Alice MacFarland |
| <u>Field Trips:</u> | Steve Baker |
| <u>Bird Counts:</u> | Ed Pike, Steve Baker |
| <u>Conservation:</u> | Glen Matthews |
| <u>Raffle/Door Prize:</u> | Judy Vanderhart |
| <u>Raffle Assistants:</u> | Maureen Conklin, Roy MacFarland |
| <u>Refreshments:</u> | Molly Ferguson, Alice MacFarland, Dorothy Woosley |
| <u>Nature Sightings:</u> | Bev Kirby |
| <u>Youth Outreach:</u> | Bobie Crongeyer |
| <u>Kettle Editor:</u> | Jack Kirby |
| <u>Kettle Producer:</u> | Ann Benter |
| <u>Audiovisual / Web Master:</u> | Roy MacFarland |

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

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 [jskirby@wowway.com]

**“The Kettle” will see you in
September. Have a Great
Summer ☺**