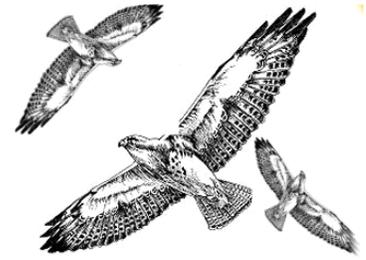


# THE KETTLE



## Straits Area Audubon Society Newsletter - Est. 1983

SAAS meetings are held at **6:00 pm.** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

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**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

## October Program

**Wednesday, October 10 [6:00 p.m.]**

### What's The Point?

This program will be presented by Tony Janisch who is the Executive Director of the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory at Paradise Michigan. Tony has nearly 20 years of experience working for and managing environmental education and interpretive facilities. Tony comes to WPBO



from Illinois, where he worked as an Instructor for the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (WI), teaching adult basic photovoltaic's (solar electric) workshops and youth renewable energy programs. Besides bird and wildlife conservation and education, Tony has a passion for backpacking. In 2006, Tony and his wife thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail, completing the 2,000+ mile journey in 6 1/2 months.

Tony has a Masters in Recreation Administration from Aurora University (IL) and Bachelors in Natural Resource Management from the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point. Migrating from Illinois with Tony are his wife Tara and their two small daughters

## November Program

**Wednesday, November 14 [6:00 p.m.]**

### Swamp Rattler: Michigan's Eastern Massasauga



Aaron Veselenak will share his concern for the future of the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. As explained in his recently-published book *Swamp Rattler: Facts, History and Status of Michigan's Sole Venomous Serpent*, "my mission is to convince citizens of the values of preserving this endangered species, especially here in Michigan, its last stand."

Everyone attending is bound to learn many things about rattlesnakes, including how to live in their vicinity safely and with greater respect and appreciation for this slice of nature. Refreshments will be provided. You may also participate in door prize and raffle drawings.

## Upcoming Field Trips

**Friday, October 5 [7:00 p.m. until?]  
Owl Banding with Ed Pike**

Ed has studied the owl migration through the Mackinaw Straits for over 20 years and is a veteran bird bander. We will help Ed with the setup of mist nets at dusk and then



eagerly wait till dark when the Saw-whet Owl migration commences. If owls are captured, we will watch as Ed collects data on each bird, bands the bird, and then releases. This is a special opportunity to view owls up close.

Dress warmly and bring a lawn chair.

Rain date will be Saturday, October 6. Directions: Meet at the Bridge View Park at the northwest end of the Mackinaw Bridge at 7 PM and Ed will guide us to his banding station. To reach the park, cross the bridge, exit US 2 west and immediately turn left (south) onto Boulevard Dr and follow down to park on the lake shore. Boulevard Drive is directly across from the Shell Station. Questions, Call Ed Pike 231-758-3319.

**Friday, October 12 [1:00 p.m.]**

### Fall Mushrooms with Marilynn Smith

Mycologist Marilynn Smith will lead us in search of fall mushrooms at the Little Traverse Conservancy's Andrae Preserve near Indian River. Marilynn is a fungi expert and an excellent teacher and always willing to share her



knowledge and passion for mushrooms. The Andrae Preserve has beautiful hiking trails along the Pigeon River and fall colors should be peak.

Directions to the Andrae Preserve: From Indian River(Exit 310 on I-75) take M-68 East 4.5 miles. Turn left onto Old Onaway Rd. Go North on Old Onaway Rd. for 1.7 miles to Riverwood Rd. and turn right. At the T intersection with Big Sky Trail, the Preserve sign will be straight ahead of you. Park in front of the split rail fence and this is where we will gather before entering the preserve.

**Wednesday, October 24 [8:30 a.m.]**

**Fall Waterfowl of the Saint Ignace area with Steve Baker and Ed Pike**

Every fall thousands of diving ducks gather offshore and in protected bays of the Mackinaw Straits. We will check out several shoreline areas as well as some inland lakes in search of waterfowl. We hope to see up to 20 species of waterfowl as well as migrating raptors and maybe some early Snow Buntings. Meet Ed and Steve at the Bridge View Park at the northwest end of the Mackinaw Bridge. From there we will drive to a variety of sites. Bring a lunch, but we may be able to stop for a quick snack somewhere. There will be an option to continue birding in the afternoon. Question? Call Steve Baker at 231-238-8723



**Field Trip Reports**

**The Amazing Life of Honey Bees**

Saturday September 15, 2012.  
Submitted by Bev Kirby

On a beautiful late summer afternoon, interested Straits Area Audubon Society members visited beekeeper Dale Giddings' Wolverine farm to learn more about honey bees. In one of his barns, Dale shared his extensive knowledge



Photo by Steve Baker

with us on colonies, queen bees, drones, worker bees, and how the whole system of their social life works. Along with Dale, three of our group donned bee suits and we all visited



Photo by Bev Kirby

the active hives under the apple trees. The first line of defense in beekeeping is knowledge, the second is protective clothing and the third is a smoker. We watched while they used a smoker down by the hive entrance. Since bees do not like smoke, they dispersed or became docile. Dale was then able to pull out the frames to check to see if the bees had enough food. He told us that he had split the colony earlier, and he wanted to make sure that the remaining bees were producing enough food to keep the hive active. He collects honey once a year and before we left we were able to sample the delicious honey he has extracted from these hives. Mmmmmmm! Dale also maintained 46 bluebird houses this year. Ten of these houses had nesting bluebirds, seven of which had two broods. Twenty-three of the houses had tree swallows, and 1 house contained chickadees. Thanks Dale for sharing all of your knowledge with us and giving us an opportunity to learn more about the natural world.

**Pigeon River Country Hike**

Thursday September 20, 2012.  
Submitted by Bev Kirby

Undeterred by impending weather, seven members of the Straits Area Audubon Society spent a morning hiking along the Michigan Central Railroad grade in the Pigeon River State forest. Led by Don and Don Mittlestat, we had some



Photo by Sue Baker

exciting bird finds along the trail. Nashville, palm, magnolia, yellow-rumped and orange-crowned warblers were seen, along with a catbird, olive-sided flycatcher, rose-breasted

grosbeak, 4 eastern bluebirds, an eastern meadowlark and 6 to 10 eastern phoebes. Approaching a very large beaver dam, we saw a great blue heron, swamp sparrow, and wood ducks. A kingfisher rattled his way across the water and northern flicker, red-bellied woodpecker, red-tailed hawk, and two bald eagles were seen. Elk tracks were noted along the edge of the trail. Two turkey vultures were seen in a kettle with 11 common ravens. Leaving this area and driving to Cook's orchard, we walked across the meadow while watching vesper and savannah sparrows fly up out of the grass. A vesper sparrow and a savannah sparrow perched together on a stump, giving us all good looks at the differences between the two species. Don showed us red fescue, big bluestem and little bluestem grasses here. Leaving the meadow, we walked a trail back through the woods. Here, Steve Baker identified leathery grape fern, this was the first time he had ever



Photo by Steve Baker

seen it growing in the Lower Peninsula. A northern harrier and American pipits were seen as we walked back to our starting point. A total of 39 species were seen for our day count. Hikers were Don and Donna Mittlestat, Bev and Jack Kirby, Steve and Sue Baker, and Karen Busch. Thanks to Don and Donna for sharing these favorite spots with us.

## Eastern U.P. Rare Fern Trip

Saturday, September 22, 2012 - First day of Autumn  
Submitted by Bev Kirby

Think of a temperature of 45 degrees and the most amount of rainfall you have seen falling from the sky. Now picture 15 people in raincoats and using walking sticks following Steve Baker into the woods to look for different species of ferns. That's how our celebration of the Autumnal Equinox began. ☺ The ferns of most interest were those that favor the limestone habitats of the Niagara Escarpment. Hart's-tongue Fern, Common Polypody, Northern Holly Fern, Braun's Holly Fern, Fragile Fern, and Walking Fern were all seen, and in the rain they were green, green, green and shiny, and really beautiful. Maidenhair Fern, Sensitive Fern, Beech Fern, Lady Fern, Evergreen Wood Fern and Bracken Fern were also found. There was a plethora of

mushrooms, fungi, and earthstars on downed trees, tree trunks and on the forest floor. Luckily we had our fungi

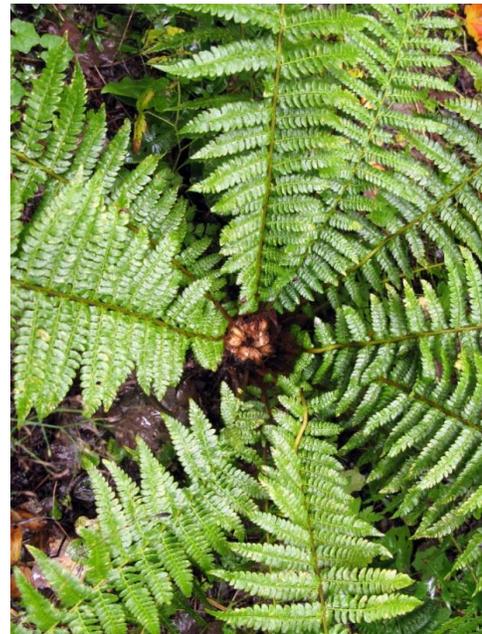


Photo by Jack Kirby

expert Marilyn Smith along to identify these. After two hours of admiring all of the ferns, moss, boulders, and miscellaneous plants, we went to the Round Lake Wildlife Refuge, where we were welcomed to a lakeside home of friends who made us tea and let us eat under their patio umbrellas while the rain poured down. Finally the rain let up and the sun came out. We walked to a sinkhole on their property and then on to see Walking Fern and also Indian



Photo by Steve Baker

Cucumber Root in its fall color. Participants were Steve and Sue Baker, Jack and Bev Kirby, Don and Donna Mittlestat, Darrell Schwalm, Carl Linhart, Joey Arbaugh, Marilyn Smith, Gerry and Barb Hoganson, Sally and Kenyon Stebbins, Anne Koontz, and Sharon Szczeny. This was a combined group from the Straits Area Audubon and the Petoskey Audubon. Thanks to Steve Baker for another interesting and knowledgeable adventure in the U.P.

## University of Michigan Biological Station Walking Tour

Wednesday, September 26, 2012.  
Submitted by Bev Kirby

Led by resident biologist Bob VandeKopple, the Straits Area Audubon Society learned about many areas of this world-renowned scientific and environmental facility. Bob told us



Photo by Jack Kirby

that for more than 35 years, each day he has taken temperatures, wind speed and direction, and precipitation samples for acid rain here at the Station. He took us into one of the student cabins where we saw many of their names written on the walls over the years. Two of these students became Nobel prize winners...one for discovery of the polio virus, and the other for discovering the structure of DNA. It was also here at the station that swimmer's itch was first noted. Bob led us to cache pits in the forest where native Americans stored their food and belongings over the winter for safekeeping. They believe these pits were dug somewhere around 700 to 1400 AD and they have just been discovered in the past few years. We went on to the bird study building where we saw cabinets filled with bird specimens lined up in rows, all preserved and labeled with dates and area of collection. In an underground building we saw where the walls had been cut away and covered with glass so that students were able to view and study soil, root systems and insects. Portable covers were then placed back on the wall to cover the glass to keep out the light. Thanks to Steve Baker for arranging this trip and to Bob VandeKopple for a very informative morning leaving us with a thirst for more knowledge about our natural world. Participants....Jack and Bev Kirby, Kathy, Jim and John Bricker, Esther Summers, and Trevor Herm.

## SAAS Chapter Notes:

### In Loving Memory

Judy Vanderhart, long-time SAAS member and volunteer, passed away on September 22, 2012. For the last four

years, since September 2009, Judy headed our monthly raffle, earning hundreds of dollars toward our mission. She also has served on the Nominating Committee, bringing a sense of humor combined with dedication. Our sincere condolences go to her husband Gerry, their son Peter, and other family members.

### Indian Summer

Along the line of smoky hills  
The crimson forest stands,  
And all the day the blue-jay calls  
Throughout the autumn lands.

Now by the brook the maple leans  
With all his glory spread,  
And all the sumachs on the hills  
Have turned their green to red.

Now by great marshes wrapt in mist,  
Or past some river's mouth,  
Throughout the long, still autumn day  
Wild birds are flying south.

By William Wilfred Campbell - 1860-1919  
Born at Kitchener, Ontario  
Was known as the Poet of the Great Lakes

## Straits Area Audubon Society 2012-2013 Officers and Volunteers

VOTED BY MEMBERS at May 2012 annual meeting

### Executive Committee

President: Dale Giddings  
231-525-8874 [No Email](#)  
Vice President: Jim Bricker  
231-627-4830 [pivot777777@hotmail.com](mailto:pivot777777@hotmail.com)  
Treasurer: Gerry Vanderhart  
231-627-6249 [vantagegvh@charter.net](mailto:vantagegvh@charter.net)  
Secretary: Kate Caldwell  
231-627-2780 [katecaldwell10@yahoo.com](mailto:katecaldwell10@yahoo.com)  
Past President: Roger Benter  
231-627-3992 [rogerbenter@gmail.com](mailto:rogerbenter@gmail.com)  
Executive Com. At-Large: Gloria Cadwalader  
231-290-0436 [gcadwalader@gmail.com](mailto:gcadwalader@gmail.com)  
MAS Representative: Donna Mittlestat  
231-525-8169 [ddmstat@hotmail.com](mailto:ddmstat@hotmail.com)

### Other Volunteers

Treasurer's Assistant: [Vacant]  
Greeter: Susan Emerson  
231-625-9302 [No email](#)  
Greeter Assistants:

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Bird Counts: Ed Pike  
 231-758-3319 [aes05@localnet.com](mailto:aes05@localnet.com)

Conservation Chair: Glen Matthews  
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Raffle/Door Prize: [Vacant]  
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*Kettle* Printer: Williams Office Supply  
 Meeting Space Provider: Cheboygan Area Public Library

## Snow Buntings

by Donna Mittlestat

These are not the snowbirds on their way to the southern climates with their luggage in hand. These birds often arrive in the northern U.S. at the same time as the first major snowstorm on their migration south. This has given them the name "snowbirds". Snow buntings can be spotted flying low over fields flashing their white wing patches as they swoop in their search for food. If their plant sources happen to become covered with snow they



Photo by Jack Kirby

are known to even visit bird feeders. They can be seen in flocks with horned larks and lapland longspurs. The snow bunting usually stops for the winter as far north as conditions will allow. For a few short months we have these buffy colored birds to enjoy. Very early in the spring they return to their breeding grounds in the Arctic.

## Thanks for Trail Cleanup

When SAAS members voted in 2009 to undertake a twice-annual trail cleanup, Vickie Lyon and Darrell Schwalm stepped forward to co-lead the effort. For four years, they handled our adoption of the 6.5-mile Mullett Lake segment of the North Central State Trail, which runs from Gaylord to Mackinaw City. In early and late summer, Darrell and Vickie organized volunteers to clear the path of brush and low-hanging branches, checking for erosion and other needed repairs or hazards. Thankfully, they found that little trash accumulates along the trail. Having wound down this project over the summer, SAAS extends sincere appreciation to Vickie and Darrell, and all members and guests who helped with the trail cleanup.

### Thanks to:

Williams Office Supply for donation of the *Kettle* and meeting posters printing.  
 Cheboygan Area Public Library for donation of meeting space.  
 Cheboygan Co-op for donation of raffle prizes.

## Nature Links

### Michigan Audubon Society



[www.michiganaudubon.org](http://www.michiganaudubon.org)

### MNA (Michigan Nature Association)

[www.michigannature.org](http://www.michigannature.org)

### Little Traverse Conservancy

[www.landtrust.org](http://www.landtrust.org)

### Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

[www.wpbo.org](http://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 4<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

Thank you. Jack Kirby [[saaskettle2011@gmail.com](mailto:saaskettle2011@gmail.com)]