

The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



December 2009

Vol. 10 No. 9

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Meetings: PLEASE NOTE that SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library. We thank the Library for providing this space at 100 S. Bailey St.

December Potluck & Slide Fest

by Jim Bricker

Become a star for the night at our annual Slide Fest at the Cheboygan Area Public Library on Dec. 9. Bring up to 20 nature-related pictures, whether from a safari in 2009 or your back yard in 69. Also bring a dish to pass and your table service for this potluck dinner. The dinner STARTS AT 6 pm, one-half hour earlier than normal meetings. All stories and images are welcome, whether slides, digital format, or even prints to pass around.



Please note that the December Potluck starts at 6 pm.
After eating, we will share stories about our photos.

Mail or Emailed *Kettle*?

by Sheila Malleis

I just joined Straits Area Audubon Society and was excited to receive my first *Kettle* in the mail, since I did not sign up for email delivery. Unfortunately, the October issue arrived missing all but the outer page, with my address on it. I told SAAS about this and a second copy, this time with all three sheets of paper, arrived. However, they were all torn, with a note of apology from the Post Office that it was "Damaged in Handling". Has this happened to other people, I wonder?

Please let me know if you too have received mutilated *Kettles*. Also you may ask to receive your *Kettle* a different way than it currently comes. Remember that having the *Kettle* emailed gets it to you several days sooner, lets you view the pictures in full color, saves money and time for SAAS, and reduces the chance of handling damage.

Kathy Bricker

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 fieldtrips, classroom studies and field studies.

Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Bricker

Here we go again, 'What do you want for Christmas?' Each year that question stumps me. We already give away as much material stuff as possible and certainly don't need any more. Anything we want, such as the National Park film series by Ken Burns, we just buy ourselves (did you notice the clever commercial?).

This year, though, I know what to tell people: membership in Straits Area Audubon Society.

This *Kettle* reminds us that memberships are due. In fact, they are overdue, since the 'deadline' for the 2009-2010 season technically was September. We are lax on this point, pretty much extending the deadline to the end of December for your convenience.

So, if you haven't paid your \$12 or \$15 dues yet, no sweat – just ask for an SAAS membership from Santa Claus. Your friends or relatives can find membership forms online at www.straitsareaaudubon.com or by

contacting me or Rosanne Rynerson. With several family or friends, you can ask as well for your memberships in other great groups like those below, or others to your own liking. Also feel free to ask for SAAS Duck Quilt raffle tickets. That way, you can make our Christmas as well as yours.

Thank you!

Consider asking for holiday gifts of \$25 or more for your membership in the following organizations.



Treasury Update

by Rose Rynerson

Do you know that the work and expenses of our newsletter and website are donated? Also, postage expenses are low thanks to most members receiving their *Kettle* via email. As a result, our membership dues and fund-raising dollars can go toward the costs of monthly presentations and outdoor projects we enjoy together!

Your dues cover the Fall/Winter/Spring season membership. If you are not sure whether you are up-to-date for 2009/2010, call me (231-627-3741), email me (www.treesparrow@localnet.com) or ask me at the December 9th meeting. If you are unable to attend the December meeting, please use the form on the back of the *Kettle* to mail me your renewal.

Take a moment to confirm your status soon; 30 of our 76 members have not yet renewed! Please save me the work of "chirping" follow-ups in January. Thank you all!



Upcoming Field Trips

by Steve Baker

Christmas Bird Counts

Every Christmas season birders all over North America go out in the field to tally all the birds that can be found on one day. The official count period is from December 14 to January 4, 2010. The data collected has proven valuable in spotting trends in bird populations and distribution. For example, Christmas Bird Count data has shown that the range for Purple Finch has shifted 400 miles north in the last 40 years.

All birders are welcome to participate either out in the field or as a feeder counter. The count area is a circle of 7.5 mile radius and the same area is searched year after year.

The *Petoskey Christmas Bird Count* is the longest running count in northern Michigan and will be held on Monday, December 14. Please contact Ed Pike at 231-758-3319 if interested.

The *Cheboygan Christmas Bird Count* will take place on Saturday, December 19. We will meet at 7:30 am at the Cheboygan McDonalds to assign territories to cover. The SAAS is the official sponsor of this count conducted for over 20 years. The count circle is centered at the intersection of M-33 and Old 27, so if your home feeders are within 7.5 miles of this intersection, you are in the count area. If you would like to join the field birders or be a feeder counter, call Ed Pike at 231-758

-3319

The low keyed *Mackinaw Straits Christmas Bird Count* is centered on the middle of the Mackinaw Bridge. This is the only Christmas Bird Count in North America to include two Great Lakes within the count circle. The date for the count is spontaneously set when the weather is favorable, usually before Christmas. Please call Steve Baker at 231-238-8723 if you would like to help with this count.

Future Field Trips in January, 2010

Ski the Bio-Station On Jan. 14th Jim and Kathy Bricker will lead a ski of the University of Michigan Biological Station trails. We will look for animal tracks, birds, and other wildlife of the winter woods. After, an optional potluck dinner will take place at the nearby Bricker residence. Bring a dish to pass. More details to come in next Kettle.

Winter birding in the UP. The eastern UP is a premiere location for more northern bird species. Possible species are Bohemian Waxwings, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Gray Jay, Snowy Owl, Rough-legged Hawk, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Northern Hawk Owl, and Great Grey Owl. Join Steve Baker for this all day trip. Date to be set in the next Kettle.

Field Trip Ideas

If anyone has an idea for an Audubon outing or would be willing to lead a trip, please call Steve Baker at 231-238-8723.

Trips do not have to be bird related and could include any type of outdoor activity or nature study. Don't be shy or think you need to be an expert to lead a trip. This group is low key and folks just enjoy getting out and enjoying nature.

Wild turkeys at feeder in Inverness Township by Kathy Bricker

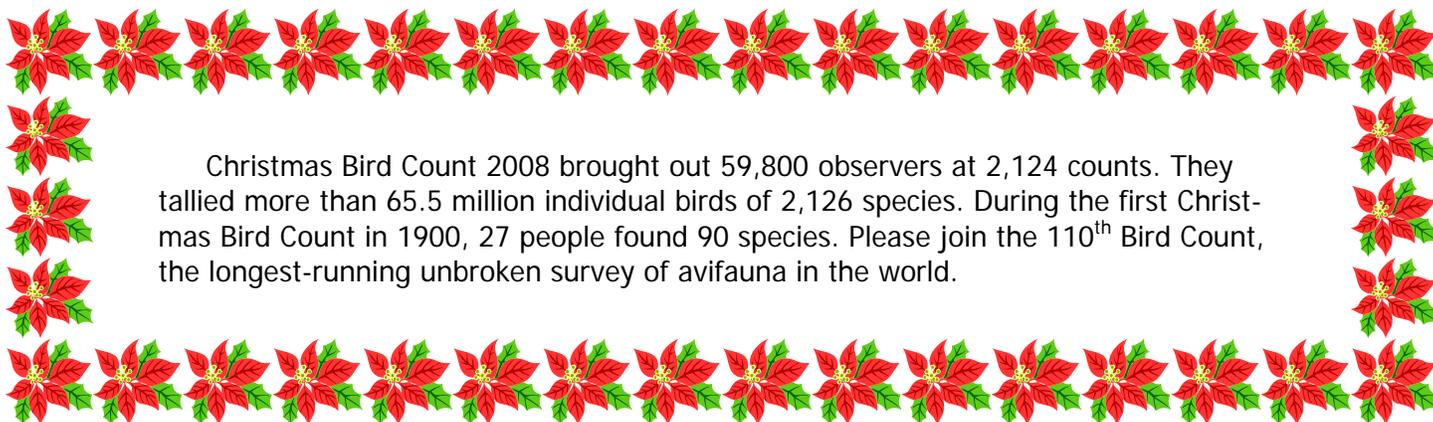


Setting and Achieving SAAS Objectives

by Kathy Bricker

Before the 2008-2009 season began, volunteers set the following objectives. THANK YOU to everyone who helped achieve them. A few people are mentioned here, and I know and YOU know who the rest of you are! (Come to the December potluck to be honored in person!)

- DONE - Have timely and informational Kettles. (Thanks, Linda Baney)
- DONE - Have attractive and educational programs, with a focus on local speakers. (7 of 8 were local. Thanks, Jim Bricker)
- DONE - Emphasize speakers who will give a field trip as a follow up to their program. (3 did so – Owls, Loons, Night Sky)
- DONE - Increase publicity to public for programs and field trips (via fliers and Local Notes announcements).
- DONE - Involve volunteers for only one position at a time, to reduce burnout and engage more people.
- ATTEMPTED - Make special outreach to science teachers to invite student participation. (fliers taken to middle school)
- DONE - Increase meeting attendance through active outreach by volunteers to prospective attendees.
- DONE - Increase the percentage of guests who provide contact information for receiving next Kettle. (Thanks to Hospitality chair Dorothy Woosley)
- DONE - Increase membership through active welcome to guests and incentives to join.
- DONE - Increase number of field trips and participants, including an overnight trip to Headlands. (Thanks to Field Trip director Steve Baker)
- DONE - Use new binoculars on field trips that were purchased through Dingman Marsh grant from MAS.
- DONE - Increase number of participants on Christmas and Spring bird counts. (Thanks to Count Coordinator Ed Pike)
- UNKNOWN - Increase membership use of website.
- PARTIALLY DONE - Use drawings and raffles to achieve other objectives besides raising money, such as offering free tickets for members who bring a guest or refreshments, or guests who join that night, etc.
- DONE - Increase conservation efforts by having a Conservation Director. (Thanks, Maureen Conklin)
- DONE - Raise more money through raffles. (Thanks, Alice MacFarland)
- DONE - Solicit proposals and award grant from our internal fundraising.
- ON HOLD BECAUSE MAS HAS SUSPENDED GRANTS - Apply for a new grant from Michigan Audubon Society.



Christmas Bird Count 2008 brought out 59,800 observers at 2,124 counts. They tallied more than 65.5 million individual birds of 2,126 species. During the first Christmas Bird Count in 1900, 27 people found 90 species. Please join the 110th Bird Count, the longest-running unbroken survey of avifauna in the world.

What You Missed at the November Meeting

by Substitute Secretary David Shotwell



Nov 09 – 005 Mary Lou Tanton (middle) displays cap for shielding a glaring light to members Mel Eno (left) and Maureen Conklin (right)

President Kathy Bricker started the meeting with the pledge of allegiance to acknowledge Veterans Day, and thanked two veterans for their service.

The featured speaker Mary Lou Tanton explained the problem of light pollution and provided examples of both good and bad lighting schemes. A fully shielded light shines downward to illuminate doorway entrances and sidewalks with an even light rather than shining sideways or up to the sky. Poor lights cause glare and high contrast between shadow and light, which is hard on the eyes and reduces visibility. Unfortunately, many people and even elected officials buy lights according to how pretty they look in the daytime and don't anticipate the glare and sky glow they cause at night. She told how Elk Rapids greatly reduced its utility bill plus won an Outdoor Lighting Award for switching its streetlights. Better lights can be purchased for new or existing buildings, or older lights can be retrofitted with sky caps.

Mary Lou gave myriad reasons for night-sky friendly lighting: to preserve our natural landscape and night sky, help wildlife and human health, save money, and promote safety and energy efficiency. She volunteers with the Outdoor Lighting Forum, a project of Scenic Michigan, a non-profit group based in Petoskey. Attendees ex-

pressed strong interest in having a night sky and stargazing field trip, and many signed up to expand SAAS work on Saving StarLight.

Before the program, Kathy presented Ed Pike with a \$150 grant for owl research, which members voted this spring as our favorite project. Ed then asked for recent bird sightings, which included bald eagles and horned grebes.

In followup to the 'Dreaming and Scheming Meeting' of SAAS volunteers, tonight's attendees reached consensus to invite cinematographer Tom Sterling to give a one-time SAAS fundraiser at the Cheboygan High School. Members will sell tickets and bring guests. Attendees also agreed for SAAS to take the lead sponsorship role for Earth Week 2010, with one goal being to involve other conservation-minded organizations. Lastly, attendees favored giving 50% of the proceeds from the Duck Quilt raffle to the Cheboygan County Schools, hopefully for use in conservation programs.

Conservation director Maureen Conklin introduced Jean Veselenak from Rogers City to explain the Wolverine Power coal plant project in Presque Isle County. Jean said there is no such thing as clean coal, there is no need for this power plant, and that we should promote true sustainable energy production. She asked all those in attendance to use email to oppose the plant, which is seeking permits from the state Department of Environmental Quality. She can be contacted via Maureen Conklin.

The meeting was attended by 28 members and 12 guests. The door-prize, the book *A Guide to Birding*, donated by Ed Pike, was won by member Ann Benter. The raffle prize of a carved walking stick donated by Darrell Schwalm was won by guest John Tanton. After the talk, attendees enjoyed refreshments provided by Jim and John Bricker and Linda Baney.

Join Straits Area Audubon Society

NAME:

Send your submissions to
saas_kettle@yahoo.com

ADDRESS:

SAAS thanks Benter Chiropractic for its in-kind donation of the printing of the monthly *Kettle* and hosting of the SAAS website.

TELEPHONE:

Coming Events

Mark your calendars now to be sure you can attend.

E-MAIL:

- 12/14/09 Petoskey Christmas Bird Count
- 12/tba/09 Straits Christmas Bird Count
- 12/19/09 Cheboygan Christmas Bird Count

Make checks payable to:
Straits Area Audubon Society

- 1/13/10 "Predators! - and our troubled relationship with them" by Glen Matthews, retired DNR wildlife chief, Gaylord office
- 1/14/10 Ski the Bio Station/Potluck dinner with Jim and Kathy Bricker
- 1/tba/10 Winter Birding in the UP with Steve Baker

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

SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library.

Single Membership: \$12

The scheduling of a meeting or program in the Cheboygan Area Public Library does not in any way constitute an endorsement by the library of the group or organization; its activities; or of the ideas and opinions expressed during the course of meetings or programs.

Family Membership: \$15

Straits Area Audubon Society
c/o Rosanne Rynerson
10490 E. U.S. 23
Cheboygan, MI 49721