

# The Kettle



Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983

October 2009

Vol. 10 No. 7

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**Meetings:** PLEASE NOTE that SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, **starting at 6:30 pm.** We thank the Library for providing this space at 100 S. Bailey St.

## October Meeting

*by Jim Bricker*

Join us on October 14, 2009, 6:30 pm at the Cheboygan Public Library. Robert Redford narrates a colorful slide presentation on southern Utah's Red Rock Canyon, a pending wilderness area. This spectacular journey through Utah's canyons will motivate citizens to help protect these unique lands through the National Wilderness Preservation System. Legislation currently before congress needs support from citizens across the country. Mr. Clayton Daughenbaugh, Midwest coordinator for the Southern Utah Alliance, will present the program and explain this grass-roots movement. Clayton will also remind us why wilderness -- road less areas barely touched by humans -- is vital to our civilization. He will explain that wilderness shaped the growth of our nation and the character of its people, and offers spiritual and biological renewal. Contrast our Michigan wild places such as the Pigeon River Country with those in Utah and elsewhere in the nation. Door prize and raffle drawings will be held immediately after the meeting, thanks to Judy Vanderhart. Refreshments will follow, thanks to Alice MacFarland.



Did you guess what this chick is? See page 2 for the answer.



**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.



*The mystery chick was a Sandhill crane. Here it is with it's family.*

## Wilderness State Park Field Trip

*by Bev Kirby*

Wed. Sept. 23, 2009. A very breezy morning turned into a lovely fall day as 14 hikers led by Steve Baker walked out to Waugoshance Point to search for American golden-plovers. Although unable to find the American golden-plovers, we did see many semi-palmated plovers, least sandpipers, and a pectoral sandpiper braving the winds on the beach.



*Photo of green darner by Steve Baker*

Other birding highlights included 2 red-shouldered hawks, and a northern harrier, along with American pipits, a white-throated sparrow, song sparrow, and many migrating blue jays. Along the trails we saw a painted turtle, 2 garter snakes, many leopard frogs, a toad, a green darner dragonfly, and a praying mantis eating a cricket. Steve showed

us Pitcher's thistle, Houghton's goldenrod, Huron tansy, camas, and we saw fringed gentians, nodding ladies'-tresses, small-



*Photo of pectoral sandpipers by Steve Baker*

flowered gerardia, Indian paintbrush, pearly everlasting, brook lobelia, butterwort, and many other fall-blooming flowers and plants. A great time was had by all, and there is always next year for those elusive American golden-plovers.



*Photo of Waugoshance Point hikers by Steve Baker*

## Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Baker

"In the U.S. and elsewhere, the past 100 years saw the balance shift from a predominantly natural world with islands of human development to a primarily human-modified environment with pockets of natural areas remaining. This is cause for a number of concerns, one of the foremost being that from an evolutionary standpoint, humans have virtually no experience as the dominant force on the landscape. Our ability to manage living systems as well as Mother Nature is completely untested." - Tom Bailey, Little Traverse Conservancy Summer 2009 Newsletter

For seven weeks this summer, Jim and I experienced the treeless tundra, camping alone near the Arctic Circle. There we followed caribou trails instead of highways and came face to face with grizzly bears roaming wild rather than caged in a zoo.

The grand open tundra, extending endless miles in all directions, humbled us. Far from society's conveniences, we reconnected with the challenge and satisfaction of securing the basic needs of food and shelter. Out photographing a wolf one day, we got drenched and chilled by a storm whose approach we had ignored. The dangers are real: not long ago, native peoples who hunted on this land often faced starvation or freezing to death.

Such wilderness teaches that Man is not supreme. Even today, even in Cheboygan, humans are not in such control as we would like to think. Nature holds the trump card. Wilderness puts us in our place, teaching respect for the planet that nurtures our lives. Wilderness teaches focus on what's important and how to let go of petty annoyances. Wilderness teaches that each day is a gift to treasure, to greet with

joy and gratitude. Wilderness teaches appreciation for the companions who share our journey through life. Wilderness teaches intentness on what's happening right now. If pleasurable, it will be over all too soon; and if daunting, that too will pass.

Participating even in a small way in the cycle of life in the wilderness brings an inexplicable inner peace. When savannah sparrows began perching on our tent, I felt like we had been accepted. We observed the patterns of the tundra: lemmings fall prey to Arctic fox, willows to caribou, Lapland longspurs to parasitic jaegers, Arctic ground squirrels to grizzly bears, and Arctic grayling to summer campers.

This cycle, basically unchanged for 10,000 years, will endure much the same for another 10,000 years if we let it. That's the big IF, both for life on the tundra and for other rare and special places. I hope you will join us in October to learn about the wilderness values of Utah's Red Rock Canyon and how you can help turn the IF into YES.

## October Field Trips

by Steve Baker

### Owl Banding with Ed Pike

Saturday, October 10 7 pm

Join Ed Pike in his ongoing research of Saw-whet Owl migration through the Straits of Mackinaw. This is a great opportunity to see how Ed captures the owls in his mist nets and then collects data and bands the birds before release. In the fall, the banding is done on the north side of the straits, so meet Ed on the St. Ignace side of the bridge. Dress warm and gather at 7 pm at the Bridge View Park and Ed will lead us to his banding site. The Bridge View Park is reached by turning west on US-2 for just a short ways, then turn south (left) across from the Shell Station and continue on down the hill to the park. If it is raining, this trip is cancelled.

### Waterfowl trip with Steve Baker and Ed Pike

Friday, October 30 8:30 am

Meet Steve and Ed in Mackinaw City

and we will travel about the shoreline areas of the Straits of Mackinaw in search of migrating waterfowl.

Most of the time we will be in the UP as the larger flocks gather along the north shore. We hope to see many less common species such as Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Red-necked Grebes, and 1000's of Redheads. This will be an all day trip. Meet at 8:30 am in the Mackinaw City Highway Rest Area and we will carpool to the UP. Call Steve Baker with any questions.



Photo of a saw-whet owl by Steve Baker

## Caving Trip to Fiborn Karst

by Steve Baker

On September 19, a hardy group of 15 toured the Fiborn Karst Preserve. The weather was perfect as we were guided about the preserve by Aubrey Golden, president of the Michigan Karst Conservancy. The geologic and human history of this area of the Niagran Escarpment were highlighted as we toured the preserve. We learned about limestone and dolomite, sinks and sinkholes, fissures, karst windows, and caves.

As we hiked through the the quarry we were treated to a large kettle of Sandhill Cranes riding the thermal overhead. After hiking throughout the preserve, most of the group went spelunking into the largest cave in Michigan. Everyone agreed it was a very unique experience and a pass of the hat raised \$79 for the Conservancy! Next year we are invited back for the full cave tour of several hours which requires more squirming and squeezing than this day's tour. After a late lunch at the Bayview



Photo by Steve Baker  
The caving group all geared up for adventure

Restaurant with its wonderful deck views, we had a quick hike around the cobble beach of Epuofette Bay. There we found many beautiful Fringed Gentians and Nodding Ladies-tresses. A few of an albinistic white form of the normally deep blue Gentians were found. On the return trip south, some of the group found a small flock of Black-bellied Plovers on the Lake Michigan beaches along US 2. A great time was had by everyone and we are very grateful to Aubrey Golden for sharing his time and knowledge with us.

## What You Missed at the September Meeting

by Rosanne Rynerson (Substitute Secretary)

President, Kathy Bricker, opened our first Fall meeting at 6:30 p.m., welcoming 62 guests (30 members and 32 guests). Guests were invited to provide their email or home address to receive complimentary issues of The Kettle for the next two months.

Darrell Schwalm provided notes and pictures outlining May-September activities of our club's clean-up hikes along the Mullett Lake portion of the Gaylord to Mackinaw Trail. Another session will be scheduled for this month.

Maureen Conklin, Conservation Chair, invited attendees to participate in the International Coastal Clean-up. This event is held on September 19<sup>th</sup> in 102 countries and includes all the US states. Our local effort, along the beach in the Cheboygan State Park, will begin at 9:00 am. Meet at the park headquarters and the park entrance fee will be waived for all volunteers.

Steven Baker presented upcoming field trips: September 19<sup>th</sup> in the Michigan Conservation Preserve for a hike with caving

opportunities; September 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Wilderness State Park to Waugoshance Point; and September 25<sup>th</sup> in the Hiawatha National Park highlighting Rare Ferns. A tentative date of October 10<sup>th</sup> is scheduled for an owl banding night trip. Call Steve for information and to register.

Kathy Bricker extended a thank you to Linda Baney for her work on The Kettle newsletter. Contributions are welcomed, and our next deadline is September 25<sup>th</sup>. Kathy also thanked Rosanne Rynerson for taking these minutes and explained the need for a Secretary, as Vickie Lyon will not be available on Wednesday evenings.

Vice President, Jim Bricker, described the topic of October's meeting – a video entitled Wild Utah prepared in-part by Robert Redford. He called up Nanette Johnston to help wish happy birthday to Kathy. Jim then introduced the evening's speaker, Scott Sandel.

The Buzz About Bees presentation provided informative, amusing discussions and

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Clean-up ant Cheboygan State Park

by Vickie Lyon

On September 19, 4 SAAS members and 2 guests participated in the Inter-coastal Clean-up at Cheboygan State Park. Four miles of the park beach were cleaned

up in about 2 hours on a beautiful, sunny day. Interesting items collected included 3 shoes, an iron pipe, and wood from a fish shanty. Thanks to all who participated!!

## Rare Fern Field Trip

by Steve Baker

On Friday, September 25, 14 of us enjoyed a very special day exploring the Niagara Escarpment near East Lake in the UP. We were led by Sara Huebner, botanist for the Hiawatha National Forest, in our search for the rare ferns unique to this area. Sara guided us to some spectacular habitats of mossy boulders, fissures, and cliffs and generously shared her knowledge of the ferns. We viewed 14 species of ferns, highlighted by the Walking Fern,

Hart's Tongue Fern, and the miniscule Green Spleenwort. We can't thank Sara enough for leading us to these beautiful and seldom visited locations. After a late lunch in Trout Lake, most of group birded our way back along the Lake Michigan shoreline. We saw many waterfowl species and were all delighted to have close looks at Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs along Pte. La Barbe.



Photo of the rare fern field trip group by Steve Baker

(Continued from page 4)

demonstrations of equipment (brood boxes with frames, clothing, smokers, etc.). Scott shared interesting experiences he has had over the past 36 years with mites, bears, swarms, harvesting and processing honey. He answered questions about starting hives, moving hives, seasonal considerations, raw versus processed honey, transporting bees, avoiding and treating bee stings, pollen-providing flowers, beeswax and propolis (antimicrobials). Interest continued and may result in an upcoming field trip. Kathy Bricker presented Scott with an appropriate t-shirt as a thank you gift.

Following the presentation, attendees enjoyed Scott's thick, golden honey over biscuits (thanks to Scott, Alice MacFarland,

Ann Benter, Nancy Nowitzke and others for coordinating this apropos refreshment portion of the program).

The door prize was a ceramic bee hive honey pot donated by Alice & Roy MacFarland which was won by Barb Kowalczyk. A Diamond Willow walking stick (donated by Pat Grogan) was raffled; won by Janet Trudeau.

Before the meeting ended, Kittie Kramer (retired Treasurer) was very pleased to announce that \$564.16 was raised through our May Bird Count fundraiser and will be used toward the owl-banding project, night-sky friendly lighting, trail and beach clean-up supplies, and honoraria to field trip leaders, as voted by SAAS members at the May annual meeting.

**Membership Application**  
**For**  
**Straits Area Audubon Society**

NAME:

10/27/09 1/26/10 11/26/09  
2/24/10 12/25/09 3/26/10  
4/26/10

ADDRESS:

Send your submissions to  
saas\_kettle@yahoo.com

TELEPHONE:

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

E-MAIL:

Make checks payable to:  
Straits Area Audubon Society

**Coming Events**

Mark your calendars now to be sure you can attend.

Please mail checks to:

Nancy Nowitzke  
10086 Munro Lake Dr.  
Levering, MI 49755

10/10/09 Owl Banding Trip  
10/30/09 Migrating Ducks Trip  
11/11/09 Saving Starlight,  
Preserving the Night Sky  
Program by Mary Lou

Single Membership:

\$12.00

Family Membership:

\$15.00

**Kettle Contribution**  
**Due Dates**

In order to deliver The Kettle in a timely matter, please submit your photos and articles by the following due dates:

SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library. 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.

Straits Area Audubon Society  
c/o Nancy Nowitzke  
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Levering, MI 49755