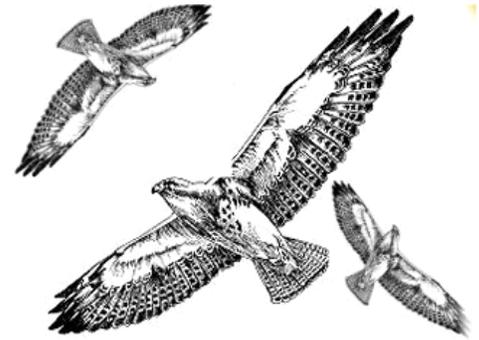


# The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



April 2008

Vol. 9 No. 4.

## SAAS Officers

### President:

Kathy Bricker 627-4830  
kathyhomeaccount@hotmail.com

### Vice President:

Jim Bricker 627-4830  
pivot777777@hotmail.com

### Co-Treasurers:

Kittie Kramer and Ed Pike 758-3319  
aes05@localnet.com

### Secretary:

Susan Hansen 627-8658  
sueh@triton.net

### Past President and Michigan Audubon Society Rep.

Ben Lillie 627-5128  
lilliepad@nmo.net

### Executive Committee At-Large

#### Member:

Steve Baker 238-8723  
2sjb@sbcglobal.net

### Kettle Editor:

Linda Baney 627-8815  
baneyl@msu.edu

### Hospitality:

Ann Benter 627-3992

### Web Master:

Roy MacFarland  
macfarlands@straitsarea.com

**Website:** straitsareaaudubon.org

## 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.

## Meetings

Straits Area Audubon Society meets the second Wednesday of each month, September through May, 7:00 pm at the Cheboygan Area Middle School Library, unless otherwise advised. ✈

## Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Bricker

Wow, is this the final *Kettle* of the 2007-2008 season already?! It's been fun serving as president of Straits Area Audubon Society this year, especially getting to know so many great, enthusiastic people who love the outdoors and want to protect it for future generations. I thank the officers and everyone who volunteered, and also those who attended our events. Everyone deserves credit for our chapter's continued success in educating Straits Area citizens about nature.

For about a month now, Jim and I have been happily immersed in nature, with a vacation in Bonaire followed by Lake Superior's hawk migration at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. While scuba-diving one night, we met "Charlie," a 7-foot-long fish with a jaw full of long teeth, called a tarpon, who followed us like a wolfhound. As our flashlights lit up fish, it surged forward to catch dinner. If we had not been warned in advance about this learned behavior, I would have been frightened out of my wetsuit!

At Whitefish Point, I once counted seven raptors spiraling overhead at differ-

ent heights inside a single kettle. To see the bird at the lowest altitude, I laid down on my back on a sand dune and looked right overhead at a golden eagle.

We enjoyed a close encounter with a spruce grouse and many clay-colored sparrows, which we last recorded in 1979...at Whitefish Point.

How refreshing to get re-acquainted with all these birds after a long separation!

SAAS offers several outings in the coming months, for residents of the Straits area. Nature is our greatest resource yet too often we take it for granted. So carve a few hours out of your hectic lives to treat yourself by letting our expert guides show you some unexpected wonders. ✈



Spruce grouse by Jim Bricker

## Things You Missed in the April Meeting

by Susan Hansen

The April 9, 2008 meeting of the SAAS was attended by 60 people, including adults and children. Following the business meeting, Ed Pike, introduced our speaker, Mike Superanult, naturalist for the City of Lapeer who delighted us all with his lively presentation on "Owls and Pizza". Using the children and boxes of natural "props", he visually and actively brought home the

importance of Interrelationship in our universe which, he reminded us is One Eco-system. He and the children demonstrated how every single thing is connected to every other thing, including the relationship between owls and pizza. One of the statistics that I found most disturbing is that the average elementary child spends

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## May Meeting Announcement

by Jim Bricker

Title: "Wild and Edible? Mushrooms of Northern Michigan" by Marilyn Smith of Douglas Lake and Petoskey

Come learn about mushrooms from Marilyn Smith, a recognized expert in their study (called mycology) and an instructor at the University of Michigan Biological Station. May is Morel Month in Michigan, but how can you tell for sure which kinds are edible? Marilyn will share tips on 'to eat or not to eat' from her long association with the Poison Control Center, telling how to identify the tastiest and saf-

est mushrooms. Besides eating, what good are mushrooms? From this program you will gain greater respect and appreciation for mushrooms and other related fungi. Since there are more varieties to find in the fall, Marilyn will lead a mushroom nature hike on September 14 as a follow-up to this presentation.

Refreshments in May will be provided by Sharin Clairmont and Juanita Brown. ✈



## Avian Botulism Talk on June 19

by Marilyn Smith and Connie Vorenkamp

On behalf of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, we invite SAAS members to hear a speaker on avian botulism, which causes massive die-offs of loons, long-tailed ducks, and other water birds along Lakes Michigan and Huron. The eve-

ning reception will be at a private residence on Burt Lake. The program and light refreshments are free. Please RSVP to [smiths4u@thenlm.com](mailto:smiths4u@thenlm.com) or 539-0962. ✈

## Nature Adventures

by Jim Bricker

Mark your calendars and register for these upcoming hikes:

### ORCHID TRIP with Steve Baker

May 29, 9 am

Steve's recent SAAS program was so popular that we are thrilled he will share orchids with us in the wild. On this trip to Headlands sanctuary near Mackinaw City, Steve hopes to show us blossoms of pink and yellow Ladyslippers, Striped and Early Coralroots, Calypso and Ram's Head orchids.



Those who attended his program also

learned that birds and bears tend to hang out wherever Steve is with his camera! This three to four hour leisurely trip will end with an optional lunch in Mackinaw City afterwards. Limit 12 people. Register at [2sjb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:2sjb@sbcglobal.net) or 238-8723.

### GRASS BAY TRIP

June 11, 3pm for hike, 6pm for pot luck

Field trip at Grass Bay Nature Sanctuary (Michigan Nature Conservancy) followed by potluck lunch at Cordwood Shores. Co-hosted by Linda Baney and Alice and Roy MacFarland. Call Linda Baney at 627-8815 for more information.

### MUSHROOM TRIP with Marilyn Smith

September 14, 1 pm

Marilyn's program this May will be so popular that we are thrilled she will share mushrooms with us in the wild too. Watch the first fall Kettle for further details or register at [smiths4u@thenlm.com](mailto:smiths4u@thenlm.com) or 539-0962. ✈

## May 17 Spring Bird Count for Straits Area Audubon Society

by Kathy Bricker

Spring Bird Count participants will gather at 6 am at the Highway Info Center/rest area on the south edge of Mackinaw City. Even if you cannot come, please consider sponsoring the Count at X number of cents per species. For instance, if you sponsor 40 cents per species and we see the expected 100 species, you are agreeing to give \$40 to SAAS beyond your dues.

Members will vote at the May meeting whether to give the extra money raised to

owl research in our area, expanding the Cheboygan County Recycling Program, or the After School VISTA program where students volunteer at nature preserves. Those interested can pledge at the May 14 meeting. If you cannot make the May meeting and would like to pledge some money, please send your pledge information to Ed Pike at [aes05@localnet.com](mailto:aes05@localnet.com) or 758-3319. You will be sent a list of the species of birds seen on the count day. ✈



Photo by Kathy Bricker

### Quilt Raffle

by Kathy Bricker

The Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, run by Michigan Audubon Society, is offering a hummingbird quilt, artfully crafted with fifteen matching pairs of humming-

birds. Come to the May meeting or contact Ben Lillie at 627-5128 or [lilliepad@nmo.net](mailto:lilliepad@nmo.net) to buy tickets. ✈

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only 30 minutes a week in unsupervised outside activities. He encouraged us to send our children outside with a zip-lock bag, a plastic bottle, and an old pair of binoculars to explore and collect. So, adults and children, get outside, learn something new about our planet regularly, feel the earth beneath your feet, walk in the rain, chase snakes, pick up frogs, collect rocks. Ecology is not about out there, but is about us and our lives. Thank you, Mike!

Prior to the program, Ben Lillie led a short business meeting. He announced the annual White Fish Point raffle. First prize is a beautiful hand-made hummingbird quilt. The minutes are printed in *The Kettle* and can be received over the internet or by mail. Ed Pike gave the treasurer's report which includes \$515.74 in the treasury plus the \$1000 grant money designated to this spring's Dingman's Marsh project. Ben gave a short description to the visitors of the project during which teacher Laurie Dykehouse will take 155 children/students on field trips to the Dingman Marsh over a five-day period in May, to explore, research, and learn first hand some of the delights of the natural world. Ed Pike, a licensed bird bander gave a short description of his owl-banding project. The nominating committee was announced and in-

cludes Jim Bricker, Will Mandrick, and Susan Hansen. Members please contact one of these people with nominations for office positions. Announcement was made of the Earth Day Program at the Cheboygan Public Library on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Brochures were available. Ed announced the spring bird count to take place on May 17. Meet at 6 a.m. at the Mackinaw City Travel Center. Stay as long as you like. A "Bird-athon" fundraiser will again be held. This is an opportunity for anyone to pledge 5 or 10 cents per species seen. Money to be donated. Possible recipients of the money are: Research on owls, aid to Cheboygan recycling program, and the after school Vista students.

Bird sightings from the past month included a flock of sand hill cranes, common mergansers, hooded mergansers, kingfisher, male harrier, golden eye, bufflehead, three eagles fishing on Lake Huron, an eagle's nest, and others. Steve Baker and Ed Pike saw 1000 ducks, and 19 species of waterfowl on a recent local birding "expedition."

Winner of this month's door prize, another unique birdhouse donated by Will Mandrick, was guest Bobbi Keylor.

A big thank you to Ann and Bruce Benter, Ben and Marilee Lillie for providing the pizza and cookies for this evening's meeting. ✈



Sandhill crane by Tom Yankoviak

**Membership Application  
For  
Straits Area Audubon Society**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

Please make checks payable to: Straits Area Audubon Society

Please mail checks to:

Mr. Ed Pike,  
6750 Island View Road,  
Harbor Springs, MI  
49740

Single Membership:  
\$12.00

Family Membership:  
\$15.00 ✂

**May 12 to 16  
Dingman Marsh Student  
Outings**

If you want to help junior high school students on any of these mornings, they still need you. Thanks to the grant of \$1,000 from Straits Area Audubon Society, 150 students will learn first-hand about the importance of marshes during field trips. You may call 627-6931 for more information.

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Have you had an unusual sighting, or maybe a sighting of a bird you've never seen before? Do you have a photo you want to share? Send your stories or photos to [baneyl@msu.com](mailto:baneyl@msu.com) and we'll publish it in the newsletter. ✂

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**Thank you**

- Cheboygan Middle School generously provides meeting space for our meetings.
- Roger Benter of Benter Chiropractic donates printing for this newsletter. ✂

Straits Area Audubon Society  
c/o Ed Pike  
6750 Island View Road  
Harbor Springs, MI 49740