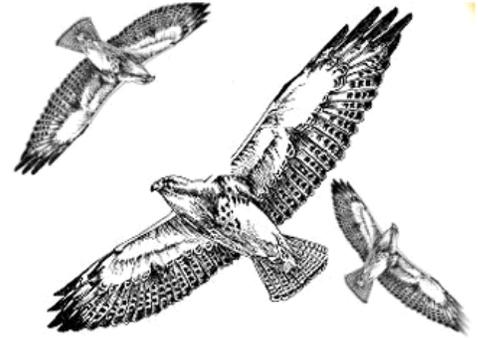


# The Kettle



Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983

April 2009

Vol. 10 No. 4

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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.

## April Meeting Announcement—Living with Bears in Michigan

*by Jim Bricker*

Our April 8 program features an illustrated talk about black bears by Department of Natural Resources biologist Brian Mastenbrook. Join us at the Cheboygan Area Public Library at 7 p.m. to learn about the shelter and food needs of bears in all seasons and how to stay safe around bears. Biologist Mastenbrook states that we should respect, not fear, black bears. "My program will help people learn about bears and what to do to get along with them. It is well known that bears will visit bee hives for honey and take down an occasional bird feeder. How can we safeguard against these?"

Come and share both your experiences and possible solutions. Mr. Mastenbrook will also discuss habitat needs and other management issues for bears, so together we can help ensure that bears will be in our forests for years to come.



**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.

## What You Missed at the March Meeting

by Susan Hansen

Ed Pike conducted tonight's meeting in the absence of President, Kathy Bricker. He welcomed approximately 25 members and guests to tonight's meeting. Ed asked for recent bird sightings. Some bald eagles have been seen, including immature. Also, osprey, snowy owls, snow buntings, birds at feeders such as morning doves, a variety of finches pine siskins, common redpolls and some robins. Ed also reported he and Steve had seen three horned larks, snowy owls, and Snow Buntings on a trip to the UP. Ed announced the meeting of the Michigan Ornithological Conference April 3 to 5. Very interesting programs are presented, and the Sunday morning meeting is free.

Next month's program on "Living With Bears in Michigan" was announced. Other business, including nominating committee, was carried forward to next month.

Ed introduced our speaker for this evening, Jeff Lange who is with the Michigan Loon Watch. Jeff has been studying and filming Loons for many years and presented his DVD that was filmed on Round Lake near Petoskey. It was filmed without the loons knowing he was in their vicinity. The DVD was beautifully filmed and provided a close up look at loons, their habitat, breeding, and life on a Northern Michigan Lake. His DVD is for sale at [theuncommonloon.com](http://theuncommonloon.com). Jeff graciously answered questions following the film. Jeff will be leading a "tour" on Robert's Lake near Indian River on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Ed Pike won the raffle drawing; a walking stick.

The meeting was adjourned for refreshments provided by Anne Benter and Dorothy Woosley.

*Red-tailed hawks, light and dark morph*  
by Steve Baker

## Audubon Nominating Committee

by Roger Benter (627-3992)

Judy Frock (627-8128), Steve Baker (238-8723), and I have agreed to serve on to the Audubon Nominating Committee. We will recommend nominations for the 2009-2010 positions of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer at the May annual meeting. Please let us know

by April 12 if you would like to nominate anyone or volunteer yourself for either of these or for any other volunteer role listed on the front of the *Kettle*. It's rewarding when we each do part of the work that we enjoy, making Audubon more fun for everyone.

*Photo by Cory Gildersleeve.*

## SAAS is a Winner

By Kathy Bricker

At the Michigan Audubon Society's annual conference on March 7, they gave Straits Area Audubon Society the Research Award for Exemplary Youth Education Project. We received the award in recognition of the initiative shown by our organization in educating the Cheboygan Middle School about Dingman Marsh in May 2008. Rich Adams, past editor of the *Cheboygan Daily Tribune*, receives the award for us from Jonathon Lutz, MAS Executive Director.



## Say No to Off Road Vehicle Use in the Pigeon River Country

by Jim Veller

The Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners is in the process of rewriting an ordinance to allow Off Road Vehicle (ORV) use on county roads, including the roads contained within the Pigeon River County State Forest (PRC). At the February meeting of the Straits Area Audubon Society (SAAS), a motion was passed to submit a letter to the Board of Commissioners expressing the membership's desire to exclude opening those county roads contained within the PRC to ORV use.

The following is an excerpt from the letter that was submitted by the SAAS on behalf of the membership:

The SAAS urges you to take a moment and consider the special status of this unique and important resource to the citizens of Cheboygan County and indeed the State of Michigan. Since 1974, the Pigeon River Country (PRC) has held the attention and deserved the protection of the citizenry as a rarity among the state forest systems. The PRC is the most contiguous and among the wildest parcels left in the Michigan land mass. Home to the largest elk herd east of the Mississippi, this fact lends national significance to the area resulting in tourism dollars and attention. Also home to myriad wildlife species, the PRC is a place for human observers to go to get away from the industrial tourism so prevalent elsewhere. Wild places of this magnitude are no longer being produced and should be protected for the

unique values which they were set aside for in the first place. As state forests go, the PRC was to be managed differently, so as to "maintain its wild character." Allowing ORV traffic into the PRC promises to change this in a number of ways.

Quiet places are becoming rare and valuable in an increasingly crowded world. The PRC is seeing more and more use. The only way to maintain some semblance of wild is to scale back motorized recreation to a reasonable level. Allowing ORV traffic into the PRC will only increase noise intrusion, negatively affecting those looking for a more serene experience. Again, it is a matter of balance. It has become harder and harder to find that quiet place.

According to the Board of Commissioners, a public hearing is to be held on this matter. The hearing date and time have yet to be set. Members are encouraged to write a personal letter and/or attend the public hearing to express their concerns and desire to keep the county roads contained within the PRC closed to ORV use. Letters should be sent to the following address:

Board of Commissioners  
Cheboygan County  
870 S. Main Street  
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721



*Displaying Sandhill Crane  
by Steve Baker*

## Conservation Decisions

by Maureen Conklin

Thanks to input from Audubon members and careful review of it by me, Roger Benter, Kathy and Jim Bricker, and Sue Hansen, the following three conservation projects have been adopted for SAAS for 2009-2010:

- 1) caring for a 7-mile stretch of the North Central State Trail (from Gaylord to Mackinaw City) along Mullett Lake north of Topinabee

- 2) educating the public about dark-sky-friendly lighting and reducing light pollution
- 3) cleaning trash and collecting data at the September 19 International Coastal Cleanup, coordinated by the Ocean Conservancy and Cheboygan State Park

Please let me know how you would like to help with each or all of these three projects.

## Field Trips

by Steve Baker

### Friday, April 10 Potluck, Owl Banding, and Star Gazing at the Headlands

Meet at the Guest House in the Headlands at 6:30 pm for potluck. After dinner we will help Ed Pike set up the mist nets and owl calling station. After sunset, the nets are periodically checked for any captured owls, which will then be measured, aged and sexed, banded and released. Saw-whet owls will be the main target, but boreal and long-eared owls are possible. The first net check will be about 30 minutes after dark. Star-gazing and constellation identification will take place between checking the nets. Stay as long as you like (you can stay all night if you like as we have permission to sleep in the dormitory-style Guest House) or just come for the potluck. The Headlands is an Emmet County park located just west of Mackinaw City. From the entrance, follow the signs to the Guest House. Contact Steve Baker with any questions. 231-238-8723 <https://smtp.ncmich.edu/owa/redirect.aspx?C=8a3c36b3a3c647bc8c16673fc0869e26&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.wpbo.org%2f>

### Saturday, April 11 Trail pick-up at the Headlands

For use of the Headlands facilities, we will clean up the trails in the park. The Headlands has a beautiful trail system through mature hardwoods and giant cedars, providing a great nature experience. We will be clearing the trail of windfalls and debris. Anyone who wishes may stay overnight again and help Ed with owl banding and do more star gazing.

### Wednesdays, April 8, 15, and 22 Hawk Watching at Mackinaw City

Come help survey the hawk migration as they pass over the tip-of-the-mitt. Dress warmly, bring a lawn chair and binoculars, and enjoy the spectacle of hawks ketteling overhead. Cancelled if weather is inclement. Contact Steve Baker for times and location 231-238-8723

<https://smtp.ncmich.edu/owa/redirect.aspx?C=8a3c36b3a3c647bc8c16673fc0869e26&URL=mailto%3asteveandsuebaker%40gmail.com>

### Saturday, Sunday April 24-26 Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

Spring Fling. Join birders from all over the country as they come to Paradise, Michigan to enjoy birds, great speakers and programs, all in support of the Bird Observatory. Program details can be found at <https://smtp.ncmich.edu/owa/redirect.aspx?C=8a3c36b3a3c647bc8c16673fc0869e26&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.wpbo.org%2f>

### Saturday, May 9 Emmet County Spring Migration Count

The second Saturday in May is when birders all over North America participate in an all day birding marathon to tally bird numbers by county. Collected data is important in documenting changes in bird populations and is a great example of the value of citizen science. Ed Pike, the compiler, can be contacted at 231-758-3319.

### Saturday, May 16 Loon trip with Jeff Lange

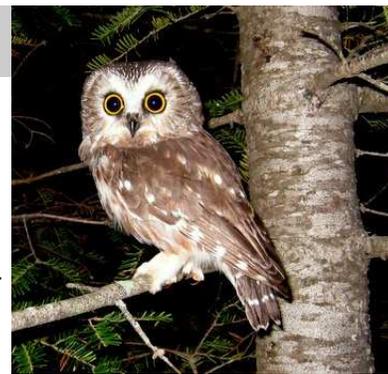
Following his acclaimed film The Uncommon Loon, viewed at our March meeting, Jeff Lange will lead SAAS members to see loons first-hand at Robert's Lake near Indian River. Please hold the date: trip details to follow. Call Jim Bricker, 627-4830 to register.

### Sunday, May 17 SAAS Big Birding Day

This is our annual big day of birding for fun and fund-raising. More details to follow in the May Kettle.

### Wednesday, June 10 Field trip, 3 pm Grass Bay Nature Sanctuary (Michigan Nature Conservancy), meeting at Cordwood Shores

Field trip will be followed by potluck meal at 6 pm at Cordwood Shores, and a viewing of Uncommon Loon film. Call Alice and Roy MacFarland at 597-8173 for directions and more information.



Swa-whet Owl  
by Steve Baker

Displaying Sandhill Crane  
by Steve Baker



## Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Bricker



Greuleg Goose  
by Jim Bricker

Biologists Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen were my college heroes; I devoured their popular books and scientific papers on animal behavior which earned them the Nobel Prize in 1973. So imagine my thrill in Munich, Germany this March when we identified one of the bird species that enabled their ground-breaking research -- the greylag goose. An ancestor of domesticated geese, greylags taught Lorenz and Tinbergen about individual and social behavior, including the phenomenon of imprinting where hatchling geese identify with whatever they first see. There were some goofs -- like geese which imprinted on baby buggies and then as adults

tried to mate with similar-looking objects.

Overall their research succeeded, paving the way for modern-day conservationists to entice whooping cranes to follow an ultralight to wintering grounds (the movie *Fly Away Home* shows how this can happen). Lorenz and Tinbergen translated their knowledge to humans, making recommendations on selecting marriage partners, avoiding economic collapse, and constructively handling aggression -- all still pertinent today. So when you marvel at migrating sandhill cranes this spring, give thanks to the greylag goose and the early research that helped us better understand complex animal behavior.

## Spring Ducklings

by Susan Good

Every year the local feed stores sell cute little balls of fluff; domestic baby ducks. Although it's very tempting to purchase a few, they do grow up, become ducks and end up being way more trouble than what most people bargained for!

Domestic ducks are not like wild ducks, they cannot fly like wild ducks and they cannot survive in the wild for long. It seems that many folks don't realize this and will dump grown ducks onto local ponds when they've decided that caring for them has become too much trouble. Once ponds freeze over in the winter, these ducks are left stranded with no food or water and they die a most unpleasant death. I too often get calls for these forgotten ducks needing a home and it's just not possible to accommodate all of them.

Watching and feeding ducks on ponds is a pleasurable pastime, feeding bread or crackers to domestic or wild ducks is not a good practice. There is no nutritional value from these foods which often get stuck in

their crops causing an infection. If you'd like the pleasure of feeding wild ducks, purchasing duck feed from your feed store is a much better idea. Even dry cat food is good. The feed store will appreciate your business and the ducks will appreciate the good nutrition!

Keeping domestic ducks is messy business and requires a lot of maintenance and care so please be mindful of this before making a purchase. This spring season when you're tempted to take one of those cute, little balls of fluff home, instead go to your local humane society and adopt a puppy, kitten, dog or cat. They are much friendlier, more grateful and not near as much work as ducks!

Susan Good, R.N.  
Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator  
Northernnaire Wildlife Rescue  
Northernnairewildliferescue.org  
231-597-9662,  
[www.northernnairewildliferescue.org](http://www.northernnairewildliferescue.org)

### In Memory of Bob Spencer

Our condolences to Ginny Spencer on the loss of her husband, Bob. An avid bird lover and long-time member of SAAS, Bob passed away on 3/23/09. Donations in his memory are being accepted at Hospice of the Straits.

**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:

Mrs. Kittie Kramer, Tre.  
10260 Munro Lake Dr.  
Levering, MI 49755

Single Membership:  
\$12.00

Family Membership:  
\$15.00

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**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:

4/22/09

8/27/09

Send your submissions to  
lbaney@ncmich.edu

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

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**Coming Programs**

Mark your calanders now to be sure you can attend.

May 13— Hawks Alive! by Glen McCune

Jun. 10— Member Potluck

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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.

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Straits Area Audubon Society  
c/o Mrs. Kittie Kramer, Treasurer  
10260 Munro Lake Dr.  
Levering, MI 49755