

The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



December 2007

Vol. 8 No. 12

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: open position

Past President and Michigan Audubon Society Rep.

Ben Lillie 627-5128
lilliepad@nmo.net

Executive Committee At-Large Member:

open position
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. Please note that if school is closed due to snow, the meeting is cancelled. Snowline: 231-627-4141.

Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Bricker

A funny thing happened just before the December potluck. I read the SAAS bylaws. What an eye-opener! Though some updating is necessary, this blueprint created at our launch in 1983 remains excellent guidance for our group. I learned that we cannot just skip the office of Secretary, a key person who "records business conducted at regular membership and executive committee meetings, and acts as official correspondent." Likewise, we need an At-Large member of the Executive Committee to help "administer the real property of the organization, advise the President, and make recommendations of policy to the membership." Please let me know if you can volunteer as either of these between January and June, or help with publicity, field trips, bird reports, conservation alerts, membership recruitment, or in any other way. SAAS depends on a growing handful

of people, and we would love your help! Many hands make light work, my mother always said.

Meanwhile, I want to know who has the most birds at their feeder. The Michigan Audubon Society Winter Feeder Survey is a chance for everyone to help track the movements of our winged winter friends. Besides filing your report with MAS, please join our local contest by telling me what you see each month. Your results will appear in each SAAS Kettle and winners will receive a prize at the next meeting. You can obtain the easy forms at the January meeting or by calling me. In November 2007:

Bev and Jack Kirby counted 85 individuals of 12 species--the WINNER

Kathy and Jim Bricker counted 13 birds of 7 species

January Meeting

by Kathy Bricker

Come enjoy the talk, "Birding on and around Mackinac Island" by Jeff Dyke-house, Curator of Natural History, Mackinac State Historic Parks. This popular program offers a lot for veteran birdwatchers as well as for beginners.

Jeff, former SAAS President, will tell why Mackinac Island is a great place to watch birds and why it attracts so many species, especially hawks. He will describe when, where, and how to find the rare birds, enlivening his talk with specimens and props from the Mackinac State Historic

Park collections. Bring a friend!

Special offering: Raffle of "The Little Drifter." This framed 12" by 16" photograph of a white-breasted nuthatch in winter was donated to SAAS by artist Jonathan Morgan, www.friendofbirds.com from Kalamazoo. Tickets will sell at 50 cents, or 3 for a dollar. Refreshments will be provided by Ann and Roger Benter, with the drawing afterwards.



Christmas Bird Count

Ed Pike, Coordinator, reports that the 2007 bird count was a success, with ten watchers tallying 3,183 birds of 44 species on December 15. Thanks to Ed and other volunteers Dale Giddings, Ben and Marilee Lillie, Jim and Kathy Bricker, Erika, Faye Johnston Schwartzfisher, Junita Brown, Eugene Elsenheimer.



Big Bend Through the Eyes of SAAS Members

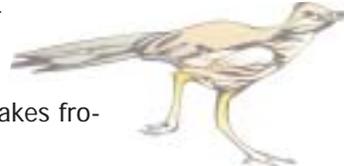
by Alice and Roy MacFarland

You might be from Michigan if you go to Texas are mesmerized by the road-runners. Our first day at camp on the outskirts of Big Bend National Park, a roadrunner visited during lunchtime. He wandered around, drawing closer and closer to our husky, Lady, who was dozing under a picnic table. Finally, she noticed him and froze waiting for her chance. But the wily roadrunner stayed just out of reach and continued his noontime foray, ruffing his topknot and fanning his horizontal tail. Quite the show for us Michigan amateur birdwatchers. We were so entranced we didn't think to snap any pictures.

Amateurs we are! We've seen hawks with large creamy chests (who

knows what type?), medium-sized black, slender birds flying which might be falcons, olive-colored birds which we cannot find in the Western US Stokes Bird Book, small flitty birds with absolutely no field marks visible to us, and on and on. But, lo we did watch a covey of scaled quail. Again they were making their way through one of our campsites. There were upwards of 50 together, all parading down the road early one morning.

We wish you snowy owls this winter, cold weather keeping the snow on the ground and the lakes frozen until spring.



Wolverine Afterschool Makes Bird Feeders

by Linda Baney

In my work as a 4-H Afterschool VISTA Volunteer I develop and run afterschool programs in Cheboygan County. This quarter the afterschool topic is Wildlife Habitat and Maintenance. As a community service the Wolverine afterschool group made bottle bird feeders to be distributed to homebound elderly in the area.

The kids had a blast making the feeders, and you can tell that they were proud of their work. The bird seed was donated by Cheboygan Co-op.

In January we'll visit the new SEE-North Education Center in Harbor Springs. There the kids will see raptors up close and learn about raptor behavior and habitat.



Join a Winter Birding Weekend

by Jack and Bev Kirby



On January 19-20, 2008, we will go birding in the Soo again for the 6th year. This trip is sponsored by the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, and is led by members of WPBO. It is always a fun trip, and you see lots of birds. We stay in motels at the Soo on Friday and Saturday nights, and the trip usually ends Sunday around noon, as most of the people have to head back down state. Last year, on the Saturday morning, while we were out at 8 a.m. it was minus 21 degrees. After you reach minus anything, the weather doesn't matter as long as you are dressed warmly! Some of the places we go are Dunbar Research Station to watch feeders there, Rudyard, Dafter, Brimley, Hulbert bog, Sugar Island, Barbeau, and the Edison Soo power plant. The location is up to the leaders, and each year can be different. The leaders scout out the areas the

week before the trip. The birds are great! Some of the life birds we have seen on this trip are great gray owl, snowy owl, northern hawk owl, gyrfalcon, short-eared owl, and sharp-tailed grouse. We still have yet to see a boreal chickadee, but keep trying. Other birds usually seen are northern shrikes, snow buntings, common redpoll, pine siskin, white-winged crossbill, red crossbill, gray jay, rough-legged hawk, evening grosbeak, pine grosbeak, and sometimes Bohemian waxwings and cedar waxwings. On January 11, 2003, we saw a Carolina wren at the feeders at Dunbar, and on the January 20, 2007 trip horned larks, golden-crowned kinglet and hoary redpoll were seen. There are 2 winter Soo trips. Saturday and Sunday January 19-20 and Saturday and Sunday February 16-17. For more information please contact Jerry Ziarno at gziarno@aol.com or 989-832-5936.

What You Missed in the December Meeting

by Kathy Bricker

Ten SAAS members gathered for a terrific potluck. Kathy Bricker convened a brief meeting, first thanking Ann Benter for volunteering to handle Hospitality, and Ben Lillie for offering to recommend changes to the SAAS Bylaws. She noted that the bylaws require a chapter Secretary (anyone interested?). Many people took the Winter Bird Feeder packets to begin doing this easy monthly survey and participate in the chapter's contest. Will Mandrick told of doing this for many years and said it is a good experience.

Two weekend-long winter bird trips will be held at Sault Ste. Marie by Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. Judy VanderHart shared her super experience at their Shiawassee Wildlife Refuge trip near Saginaw Bay, and urged people to attend.

Kathy then showed items donated to SAAS by Torrey Wenger: a Kalamazoo Nature Center T-shirt and framed print of a white-breasted nuthatch, "The Little Drifter." After discussion, we reached consensus to donate the T-shirt to a worthy individual, and to raffle the photograph at a coming meeting.

We enjoyed photos by Ed Pike (springtime owl banding, winter birds, and a U.P. bog with ripe cranberries), Kathy Bricker (birds from Yukon Territories), Jim Bricker (beaver family preparing for winter), Will Mandrick (turkeys and deer at his feeders) and Steve Baker (in absentia, of Upper Peninsula fall birding trip). Roger Benter said that his neighbor recently photographed a bald eagle chase and kill a gull on the shore of Lake Huron.

Bird News



Bev and Jack Kirby report from Mackinac Straits: On November 28, we saw a flotilla of redheads, thousands and thousands of them!!! They were on the east side of Mackinac Bridge, near the St. Ignace side. There were high winds, so we were going

slow, and there was only a truck way behind us which had to go 20 mph, so we were able to slow down almost to a stop so that I could get my bins on them. Wow!!! What a sight!!!!

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

Couple Membership:
\$15.00

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Thank you

**Cheboygan Middle
School** generously
provides our meeting
space.

Roger Benter Chiro-
practic donates print-
ing of the Kettle.

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

Address