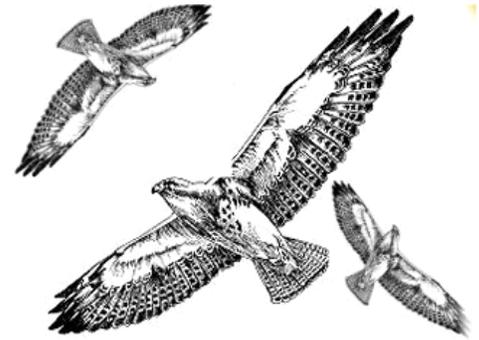


The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



February 2008

Vol. 9 No. 2.

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

Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Bricker

Down Riggsville Road from Cheboygan, halfway to Pellston, is an enclave that few residents know about, much less have driven inside. Yet its 10,000 acre-plus property, trails, and many of its educational talks are available to the public for free, all year round. The University of Michigan Biological Station, founded in 1908 to train forestry students, now holds summer classes to teach both college students and area residents about the nature surrounding us.

When Jim and I worked at UMBS in the 1970s to research the water quality of area lakes, community residents often said they wished they could take a course there but couldn't afford the time or the tuition. To meet this public demand, UMBS now offers shorter classes by the same sort of high-quality professors who teach graduate level courses the rest of the summer. Elsewhere

in the Kettle you will see the announcement of four classes available in 2008.

I can personally attest to the Flora class, having had a great deal of fun taking it in 2006. Besides learning about orchids and other fascinating flowers (like those that grow on trees and grasses!), it provided fascinating interaction with one of the greatest botanists and most interesting people of our nation, Dr. Edward Voss. Ditto for the Mushroom class, which Jim and I enjoyed taking together, with its daily collecting trips in the woods. Several of our friends have raved about each of the other classes being offered again this year. We all agree that the high-quality interaction with expert instructors provides the thrill of outdoor discovery at a high educational level, without the pressure of tests and grades. Hope to see you at UMBS this June, or anytime just skiing or hiking! ✈

What You Missed in the February Meeting

by Susan Hansen

Twenty two people attended the February 13 meeting at the Cheboygan Middle School. Following a brief business meeting and announcements, led by President, Kathy Bricker, Vice President Jim Bricker introduced Murray Kilgour and his program, "on sailing ships and ceiling wax: Adventures in Scuba Diving". (I wish I had had the forethought to ask him the significance of the title). The pictures taken in the Coral Triangle (bordered by Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, Fiji) were truly amazing. The colors were spectacular. The many varieties of fish and other

living things that live deep in the sea were surprising in their appearance and numbers, even humorous at times: Murray gave us a small, entertaining glimpse of life lived in a habitat most of us will never see, as well as relaying the importance of biodiversity and the idea of the sea, rather than space, as the final frontier. Thank you, Murray, for your reminder to learn to go slow, whether in water or in the woods. You can see so much more when you go slow. Your love of the sea, its creatures and beauty is truly contagious.

(Continued on page 3)

Bird Watching in Winter

by Bev Kirby

Jack and I, with Jim and Kathy Bricker, joined the January 19-20 trip to Sault Ste. Marie sponsored by the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. Despite seeing few species, we were treated to a very special highlight during the official trip, of watching several sharp-tailed grouse bury themselves in deep snow in a field. They did this, in full view, shortly after eating at a feeder, presumably going undercover for a cozy mid-day nap.

The fun continued the following day when the four of us continued birding on our own, thanks to a lead from other bird-watchers. They sent us to Soo, Ontario, where we located a particular feeder with a particular bird. The coup was a boreal chickadee, attracted to peanuts of all things! It looked as precious as a painting, and totally ignored the black-capped chickadees which far out-numbered it.

Then Jack and I returned to the American Soo power plant in time to spy a



Photo by Kirk Zufelt

peregrine falcon in the top windowsill. Near the Sugar Island ferry, we almost immediately ran into a group of Bohemian waxwings in berry bushes along the golf course. Back in Grosse Ile, we saw thousands of swans, redheads, canvasback, scaup, coots, gadwall, ruddy ducks, and mergansers. Unbelievable amounts of waterfowl there! ✂

UMBS Mini-Course Announcement

by Kathy Bricker

Local residents are encouraged to attend the Mini-Courses at the University of Michigan Biological Station. Offered from June 11 to June 15, the intriguing 2008 titles include Birds of Northern Michigan, Flora of Northern Michigan, Digital Photography in Nature, and Bio-Explorers: Science Adventures for Kids. There are no prerequisites, so anyone can attend.

These special offerings enable northern Michigan residents to fully immerse in natural history from 8 am to 5 pm for nearly a week. Along the way, you also will make great friends. For more information on the mini-courses, please contact Lisa Readmond at 231-539-8408 or lisaumbs@umich.edu. ✂

Ruffed Grouse Tales

by Linda Baney

This past Sunday I was driving home from a training in Ecosystems and Biodiversity at the Kettunen Center in Tustin, Michigan. I had traveled over 350 miles through snow and ice storms without incident only to get stuck in a snow bank less than a mile from home.

I have an excuse. There, on the corner of Long Lake and Little Canada, were five ruffed grouse perched in young grey birch trees, eating spring buds. I pulled over to get some pictures and did not realize I was stuck until I got back to the car.

While waiting for my neighbor to show up with his truck to pull me out, I walked

through deep snow into the woods. There I found what only could be ruffed grouse tracks. Tracks in deep powder were so obscured by the tail dragging behind that I couldn't see the foot prints. Further on where the wind had blown the snow the tracks were clear. Reminded me of turkey tracks, only with a shorter stride and narrower straddle. Then deeper in the woods the stride doubled in length, probably as they fluttered away at my approach.

Then my neighbor's truck wheezed up and we freed the car from the snow. Not a scratch on the car. Nice guy, my neighbor. ✂



Photo by Michigan 'DNR

March Meeting Announcement

by Jim Bricker



B B Wolf Fine Art Photography

Photo by B B Wolf

Come join the Straits Area Audubon Society for a program about the native orchids of the Cheboygan Straits area. Nature enthusiast Steve Baker of Indian River will share photos and tips for finding and enjoying orchids in our woods, fields, and bogs. Orchids are the largest plant family in the world yet little is known about this amazing group. There are more than 30 orchids in our area. They vary from the bold and beautiful Lady's-slippers to humble greenbog orchids. After

the program, Steve will announce an orchid-searching field trip later in the Spring so SAAS members can actually see some orchids first-hand.

Refreshments in March will be provided by Susan Hansen.

Program Title:

" Wild Orchids of the Cheboygan Region – Dragon's Mouth, Fairy Slippers, and Ram's-head and More!"

Place: Cheboygan Middle School

Date March 12

Time: 7:00 pm ✂

(Continued from page 1)

Other news:

Susan Hansen has agreed to fill the position of Secretary. Lynne Nissley made the motion to elect Susan as Secretary, seconded by Bob Nissley. The election was unanimous.

Treasurer Ed Pike reported \$461 in the Treasury of general funds, with another \$1--- restricted to the Dingmans Marsh educational project.

Announcement was made of The Great Backyard Bird Count to be held February 15 to 18. Jeanie Kilgour, who has participated in the past, told us how to participate. It was announced that barn owl, Belfry, would be shown by the staff of SEE-North at the Cheboygan Library February 14. Kathy called for volunteers who want to help bring a full-fledged Earth Day day-long workshop even to the Cheboygan Library on Saturday, April 19. Definitely mark your calendars to attend that day, and if you want to help arrange sessions on water quality, global warming, or anything else related to our planet, please

contact Kathy Bricker for how to be in touch with the Earth Day event organizers. Also, Kathy announced that the SAAS Executive Committee has nominated Jeff Dykehouse to the Cheboygan Chamber of Commerce as Educator of the Year, to recognize his outreach about nature to our community. He may not be a traditional candidate, but he is certainly an important and deserving educator who reaches adults and children alike.

Unusual bird and other sights seen recently: Will Mandrick reported seeing ravens and bald eagles. Jeanie Kilgour and Lynne Nissley saw coyotes. Marilee Lillie brought photographs of a flying squirrel from their back yard and bald eagles seen in Alaska.

An architecturally unique birdhouse was donated by Will Mandrick for the evening's door prize. Congratulations to the winner, Cheboygan Middle School student, Taura Lillie, for having the lucky red ribbon pinned to her chair.

A big thank you to Lynne Nissley and B. D. Gillig for providing refreshments. ✂

Photo by Mary Dillon, Cheboygan County MSU Extension. Taken While driving to work from Harbor Springs.



**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 ✂



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 and we'll publish it in the newsletter. ✂

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