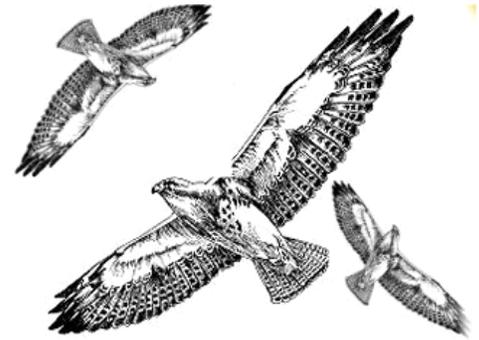


The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



March 2008

Vol. 9 No. 3.

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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

By the time you read this, Jim and I will be scuba diving, birdwatching, and botanizing on Bonaire, a Caribbean island off the coast of Venezuela. Yes, those programs on ocean biodiversity by Murray Kilgour and flowers and wildlife by Steve Baker inspired us!

Even now, we often cite one aspect of Bonaire to grocery store tellers -- that the entire island has banned plastic grocery bags. Besides the wasteful use of petroleum to make the bags, Bonaire citizens acted out of concern that the Plastic Bag had become the national flower, decorating fences and cacti. So now the stores sell re-usable bags, or visitors bring their own. In the U.S., San Francisco has become the first city to ban plastic shopping bags. There, tellers ask 'Paper, or did you bring your own?'

Speaking of which, congratulations to Glen's of Cheboygan, which recently began stocking re-usable grocery bags, for \$.99. For some time now, Wal-Mart of Cheboygan has sold such bags for \$1.00. Asking

"Paper or Plastic? Neither!", it consists of 85% recycled plastic soda bottles, using approximately four per bag. Made in China, each bag can carry the weight of two to three shopping bags. Likewise, Ken's Market of Indian River sells reusable bags. Glen's goes one step further to encourage customers to use such bags, offering 5 cents back for every bag you bring yourself. In Petoskey, the Grain Train Natural Foods Market gives a bean for every bag you bring. Drop the bean in the charity jar of your choice; after awhile they count the beans and give 3 cents for each to the named charity.

Every little bit helps, and it's up to us to make caring for our planet a part of everyday life. Please feel free to send the Kettle your own favorite tips for conservation. Also, please attend the April 19 Earth Day celebration at the Cheboygan Public Library, where you will learn more about conserving energy, choosing food wisely, protecting water quality, and other planet-friendly topics. Hope to see you there! ✎

Orchids and Other Things You Missed in the March Meeting

by Susan Hansen

Kathy Bricker opened the meeting welcoming 22 members and 21 non-members. Following a short business meeting, Jim Bricker introduced our speaker, Steve Baker who charmed us all with his beautifully illustrated presentation of "Wild Orchids of the Cheboygan Region". Steve led us through the seasons, showing us which orchids we might discover each month, as well as making us laugh as he snuck in

often humorous slides of bears, frogs, birds, snakes, and more. Steve told us there are 57 species of orchids in Michigan and 40 species in the straits area, including several lady's slippers, a fairy slipper, calypso, and others; some as tiny as 3 inches high while others grow to two feet and more. We learned that orchids need fungus to germinate and grow. Could it be true

(Continued on page 5)

April Meeting Announcement

by Jim Bricker

Title: "Owls and Pizza" by Mike Superanult, naturalist for the City of Lapeer, and Indian River part-time resident

This unique hands-on and minds-on presentation will excite both children and adults about the natural world. Discussion, with demonstrations, might include what dandelions have for breakfast; why pine trees usually make their kids leave home; how muskrats allow ponds to live longer; why snapping turtles help us catch big fish; that we drink swamp water; why ice cream depends on star light; that McDonald's needs worms, moles and voles for their hamburgers; and how screaming can cause the flu in your children or grandchildren. Sounds intriguing, doesn't it?

Refreshments in April will be provided by Doris Buxton, Ann Benter, and Marilee Lillie.

The rumor is true -- they will bring PIZZA, in keeping with the theme of the program!

In keeping with the theme of con-



Photo by Steve Baker

necting with young people, please bring a young person of your choice to this meeting. As an incentive, both you and your guest(s) will receive an EXTRA entry in the night's door prize, donated by Wilfred Mandrick. ✂

Proposed Bylaw Changes

by Kathy Bricker

SAAS owes a debt of gratitude to Alice MacFarland and Ben Lillie for spearheading the review of our bylaws. The Executive Committee has reviewed their recommendations and made additional suggestions, and proposed changes were introduced at the March meeting.

They are enclosed with this Kettle so that you can look them over carefully and raise any additional points before we vote on them in April.

Most suggestions are formatting changes and minor corrections. The four major changes are:

Section I. Meetings. We propose moving the annual meeting/last meeting of the season from June to May. In recent years, we have either skipped or had poor attendance in June, and have often delayed the election of officers until the fall. We propose making the official end of the SAAS season to be in May. This allows the past season's officers to wrap up loose ends and 'close up shop' before summer. It gives the new officers time to think and plan during the summer, as well as secure programs for the coming season.

Section II. Dues. We recommend that the amount of Dues be set by majority vote of members at an annual meeting rather than stated dollar amounts, since any stated amount does not keep up with inflation.

Section III.D.2. We suggest authorizing the Treasurer to make routine payments without club members having to vote on them.

Section VII. Both the specification about nonprofit intent and change to Cheboygan County receiving any leftover assets if SAAS ceases to exist are required in order to apply for a license to hold raffles at our monthly meetings. The Executive Committee has voted to apply for such a license, estimating that SAAS can net at least \$150 during the year with raffles, which can be used to further our mission.

By the way, SAAS also has an excellently-written Constitution, which does not need any changes at this point. Also, since we are not an incorporated organization, neither dues nor donations are tax-deductible. ✂

Straits Area Audubon Society Needs You

by Kathy Bricker

Jim Bricker, Susan Hansen, and Wilfred Mandrick have agreed to serve as the Nominating Committee to recruit and recommend SAAS officers for the 2008-2009 season. If you would like to join this committee, or nominate anyone for any position, please contact any of these people

before April 21. Also, feel free to volunteer for other positions shown in the *Kettle*, or to run things we currently do not have a person assigned to, such as Conservation, Field Trips, or Bird Reports. "Many hands make light work!" ✈

Spring Fling at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

by Kathy Bricker

Ever wonder why the SAAS newsletter is called the Kettle? When liquid in a kettle boils, it rises upward in a spiral fashion. This also typifies the flight formation of birds catching updrafts of wind. Whether cranes, vultures, or hawks, birds that have wings with large surface areas can save energy by gliding up currents of air, like they are riding high-winding escalators. These invisible currents swirl high above mountains or land/water boundaries; we can sometimes see a version of them known as dust devils. Since Audubon cares about the vital role that hawks play in the food web as predators, SAAS named our newsletter after the kettling behavior of hawks. It also signifies our desire to dis-

tribute information far and wide.

On April 25 to 27, you can explain this to others and see kettling firsthand at an amazing spot in the Upper Peninsula. The Whitefish Point Bird Observatory just north of Paradise offers its Spring Fling to anyone interested. Their guides will help people watch and identify hawks and owls and other migrating birds. The indoors presentations include Keeping a Nature Journal, Northern Owls, Learning Bird Song, and Michigan Snakes Alive. All this and dinner for only \$35! For more information or to register, visit www.wpbo.org or call Jerry Sadowski at 313-386-8063. Also let me know, so we can consider car-pooling from Cheboygan. ✈

Straits Area Spring Bird Count

by Ed Pike and Kathy Bricker

We are having our spring bird count for the Straits Area on May 17, 2008. We will meet at 6 am at the Highway Info Center/rest area on the south edge of Mackinaw City. We will bird first on the south side of the bridge; Dingman, French Farm Lake areas and then cross to the north side and bird the St. Ignace, Brevort, Moran areas.

Depending on attendance we will bird in one or two groups. We will probably be

able to stop in St. Ignace for lunch or you can bring your own lunch along.

As in the past, the Spring Bird Count is our major fundraiser for SAAS. You can sign up to sponsor either the whole bird-watching group or a specific bird watcher, at X number of cents per species seen. If you sponsor a person who sees 100 species that day with 30 cents per species, you agree to give \$30 to SAAS this spring. Watch the April meeting and April Kettle for the form itself. ✈

Earth Day in Cheboygan

by Karen Martin

Mark Saturday, April 19 on your calendars and come celebrate Earth Day with your fellow citizens. Meet at the Cheboygan Public Library from 10 am to 4 pm. This community workshop is offered free of charge. Some of the topics offered are

Global Warming, Water Quality, Recycling, Food and our Future, and Alternative Energy.

Karen Martin is the founder of the Straits Area Concerned Citizens for Peace and Justice. ✈

For avid birders, please note that the Emmet County Spring Bird Count is scheduled for May 10. Contact Ed for additional information.

Giving Away Money is Fun

by Kathy Bricker

This year the Executive Committee has decided to dedicate the money raised via the Spring Bird Count on May 17 for a special purpose to be decided by our members. So far, ten grant making ideas have been suggested by members attending the March meeting and by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has decided to narrow the field by emphasizing local use of the money rather than sending it to mainstream organizations that fund-raise throughout the state and beyond.

So, three to five options will be considered by members who attend the April meeting. So far, we have:

- a. Research on owls that migrate through northern Michigan
- b. Aid for a specific aspect of the Cheboygan Recycling Program
- c. Nature education materials for Grass Bay Youth Stewardship program

To add your idea for giving away money to this list, please attend the meeting or contact Ben Lillie by April 4. ✂

SAAS joins Cheboygan Middle School at Dingman Marsh

by Laurie Dykehouse

About a year ago, what you're about to read was just a dream, a vision in the minds of me and Alice MacFarland, SAAS Secretary. Thanks to the grant of \$1,000 that Alice wrote and obtained from Michigan Audubon Society, this spring I will be able to offer five morning field trips to the 6th grade science students at Cheboygan Middle School. About 150 students (30 each day) will visit Dingman Marsh, May 12 to 16.

After some preparatory classroom studies, the youth will experience first-hand the magic and mystery, the food webs and inter-dependency of life, and the special nursery and feeding habitats present in this man-made marsh. We aim to help students better understand the functioning and importance of wetlands. In a classroom simulation afterwards, students will assume various roles to debate the pros and cons of a hypothetical plan to mine the area for peat (this was once proposed, and denied).

Depending on the volunteers, we will cover Birds, Marsh Invertebrates, Fish, Reptiles and Amphibians, Food web game, Plants. Each day will be different, depending on the availability of volunteers. This special collaboration with SAAS allows your members to directly connect with today's young people. You can help whether or not you have nature expertise. Some students will be picking up litter or doing other activities where volunteers need not be experts.

Already, nine Audubon members and public volunteers have stepped forward. Please consider joining us for at least one of the days. You may present your specialty for about 20 minutes, take pictures for a slide show about the experience, or help keep children safe around spotting scope tripods. Most importantly, your presence will share your appreciation and respect for nature with the next generation. You may volunteer at the April meeting, or contact me at 627-6931. ✂

Photo by Linda Baney





Photo by Linda Baney

(Continued from page 1)

that Steve sorted through 18,000 pictures he had taken since getting his digital camera two years ago? Thank you, Steve, for a beautiful, entertaining, and educational program, and for donating your speakers' fee to SAAS.

Back to business: Proposed changes to the By-laws were handed out for members to review. The minutes were printed in the Newsletter and can be received over the Internet. Treasurer Ed Pike gave the treasurer's report. Laurie Dykehouse talked about her work educating her students about ecosystems, including their field trips to Dingman Marsh. Cheboygan Audubon received a \$1000 grant from the MAS, which is to go to this project. Laurie invited adults to volunteer either in the school or on the coming field trips. Anyone interested, please contact Laurie. Dates for the field trips are May 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Steve Baker reported on the Annual MAS Meeting. Ed Pike announced the spring bird count to be held May 17th. Linda Baney announced the summer program she will be holding for young people at Grass Bay. There was a short discussion

on the lack of young people interested in the outdoors... some referred to it as Nature Deficit Disorder. Suggested reading: *Last Child in the Woods*. Kathy reported the Executive Committee suggested we again give \$100 to the Middle School Library. A motion was made and seconded, and passed unanimously. There was a short discussion on a possible fundraiser again this year with people sponsoring certain individuals at X cents per bird counted in the May bird count. A short discussion was held as to what causes our SAAS might give money to. Some ideas generated were: Grant to Ed Pike to assist with his research on migrating owls, Cheboygan's recycling program, The Loon Preservation Fund, Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, membership fees (Audubon, Nature Conservancy and 4H) for Grass Bay Youth Stewards. Kathy announced the recycling meeting to be held Monday, March 17 at 5 o'clock, at the Doris Reed Center.

Bird sightings reported this past month included more than 200 swans at the fork of the Cheboygan and Black rivers, canada jay, common redpolls, goldfinch, turkeys, pine grosbeaks, brown creeper, white-winged crossbills, red-bellied woodpecker, bald eagle, northern shrike, snow buntings, great gray owl, saw-whet owl, pileated woodpecker.

The executive committee voted to apply for an official Raffle License so we can hold regular raffles, probably starting in September. Tonight Susan Hansen won the Door prize of a unique birdhouse donated by Will Mandrick.

Thank you to Roger Benter for printing the newsletter and to Ann Benter for her role as Hospitality Director, and also for contributing cookies for refreshments following the meeting. ✂



Photo by Linda Baney

**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 ✂

Jack and Bev Kirby
spied a rare bananaquit in Florida,
and were interviewed
by the Sun Sentinel.
Watch it at [http://
www.straitsareaaudubon.org/](http://www.straitsareaaudubon.org/), then click
"[The Kirbys, local
Audubon members,
discover a rare bird](#)"

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. ✂

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