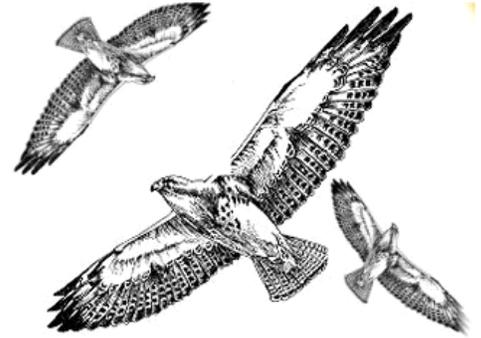


The Kettle



Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983

March 2009

Vol. 10 No. 3

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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.

March Meeting Announcement—the Uncommon Loon

by Jim Bricker

At 7:00pm on Wednesday March 11at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, Jeff Lange will present a talk and video footage of Michigan loons. Learn about these elegant birds and how the Michigan Loon Watch program studies them on lakes in Cheboygan and Emmet Counties. Jeff is the area coordinator for the Loon Watch program and has been studying and filming loons on area lakes for 18 years. Much of this film was shot on Round Lake in Petoskey. Jeff will treat

SAAS members by leading a field trip for us to see loons firsthand at Roberts Lake, Cheboygan County on May 16.

Refreshments will be provided by Anne Benter and Dorothy Woosley. You may also participate in door prize and raffle drawings.



Field Trip Report

by Kathy Bricker

More than 25 people attended the February 14 Valentine's Day ski/snowshoe/hike, using their favorite method to reach the 14-Mile-Shoal cabin at Cheboygan State Park. Members Roger and Anne Benter and Bob and Lynne Nissley helped with this partnership event with the State Park, lighting lanterns along the trail and arranging cookies and hot chocolate. The sky cooperated nicely, clearing completely to show the planet Venus at its half-lit phase. How appropriate to have the goddess of love shine on us this special night.

With spotting scope and binoculars, star books and red-colored flashlights, we explored the brightest stars and constellations of the winter night sky. The shore of Lake Michigan proved to be well away from light pollution, with only Mackinac Bridge shining in the distance. It was good star-gazing, plus good exercise to boot.

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.

Living Together with Wildlife

by Susan Good

It's that time of year again when many of you will encounter visits from our furry friends. Sometimes these visits are not always welcomed and I would like to offer some humane solutions in keeping animals in their own homes and not yours.

For those of you living in rural settings, let's not forget that these areas are where wildlife live and have every right to be. This should be considered when starting a garden, putting up out buildings, stacking wood piles and keeping domestic or farm animals on your property.

Vegetable gardens should be well contained either by erecting proper fencing that is not climbable or penetrable or by putting up electric fencing with the wires situated in such a way as to keep woodland mammals from climbing over or under the wires; lower to the ground for small mammals such as raccoons, porcupines, rabbits and higher up for deer.

Houses and outbuildings should be inspected around foundations for gaps or holes in exterior walls. Keeping trees trimmed so that branches are not directly hanging over buildings helps to keep climbing mammals from entering through roofs in search of nesting sites. Preventing easy access to garages and outbuildings by keeping doors and windows closed in spring and fall will also help to discourage animals from seeking out nesting sites in your buildings. Outdoor porches and stairs that are not enclosed underneath with

wooden grid or something similar to prevent access, makes a very inviting nest site for many woodland creatures.

If you have domestic pets such as dogs and cats, leaving food outside for them is an invitation to wildlife to visit and eventually become a nuisance. Keep pet food indoors.

Garbage that is kept in containers and the lids secured with bunji cords will keep wildlife from dining on your leftovers. A small amount of bleach or ammonia dribbled on top of garbage cans will also deter most raiders from inspecting your trash.

Bird feeders and the seed that drops from them is also an invitation to wildlife. Raking under bird feeders or putting seed trays a few feet under the feeders helps to capture errant seeds from collecting on the ground. Keeping bird feeders a good distance from your house will also help to deter animals from getting too close to your back porch.

Wildlife live in the great outdoors, it's their home and where they belong. As we take up residence in more and more rural

(Continued on page 3)



Photo of raccoons by Susan Good

Susan Good is an R.N. and Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator at Northern Wildlife Rescue. You can contact her at:

231-597-9662, www.northernwildliferescue.org

Whitefish Point Opportunity

The Whitefish Point Bird Observatory is seeking persons who might wish to serve on the Board. There are generally about four meetings per year held at various locations in the state. If anyone is interested, please send a letter of interest and brief resume to me prior to April 1st, and I will forward the information to the membership person. My address is:

Dr. Arthur Frock
1908 W. Sugnet Rd.
Midland, MI 48640

Adult Volunteers Needed to Guide Junior Birders of Northern Michigan

by Kathy Bricker

Attendees at February's meeting learned about the possibility of a joint effort between Straits Area Audubon Society, SEE-North, Little Traverse Conservancy, and Petoskey Regional Audubon Society. We voted unanimously to participate in this ONLY IF we can find volunteers to attend quarterly planning meetings (1 person) and lead two field trips (1 to 2 people). Please let me know by March 30 if you can help so that we can finalize the partnership.

The new club's goals are:

to introduce and expose children (ages 8 - 16) to birds;

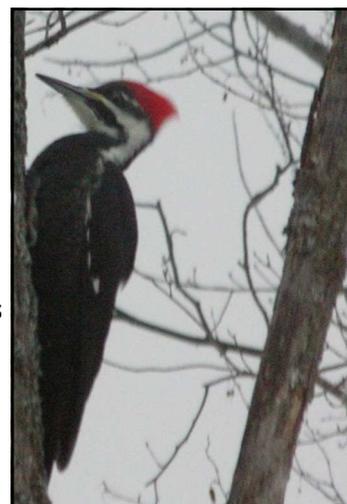
- encourage young people to spend time outdoors, exploring Northern

Michigan's diverse landscape while identifying birds;

- foster an interest in natural history;
- connect young birders with adult mentors who are willing to share their time and knowledge; and
- create a community of young birders.

Affordable memberships in "Junior Birders of Northern Michigan" will include name badge, membership card, and access to binoculars and field guides,

Michigan bird check list, journal or binder for keeping records and other items. Youth will meet monthly for 2 hours, starting in May, at Northern Michigan's best bird-watching areas.



SAAS website has been updated with bird sightings, binocular comparisons, announcements of events, and other information. Remember to visit and tell us all about your bird sightings, at www.straitsaudubon.org. Thanks to Roger Benter for hosting the website and to Roy MacFarland for being webmaster.

What You Missed at the February Meeting

by Susan Hansen

President, Kathy Bricker, welcomed a total of 110 members and guests to tonight's meeting. A short business meeting was held. Kathy thanked the many places and media that advertise our meetings. Assistant Treasurer Nancy Nowitzke was introduced visitors were invited to consider becoming a member of SAAS. The *Kettle* is free for two months after guests attend a meeting, if we have your address or email. Kathy also announced that everyone who signed in gets entered for the door prize. Raffle tickets are 50 cents each or three for a dollar.

Happy birthday was sung to Eloise Davis and she received three free raffle tickets. Two other guests with birthdays were also recognized with free raffle tickets. Ed Pike was introduced to talk about and elicit bird sightings from members and guests. Some of the sightings were Goshawk, Pileated woodpeckers, flocks of Pine Siskins, Northern Shrike, an Old Squaw on Lake Huron, Snowy owls, Hawk owls, Bald Eagles, and many others.

Announcement: Steve Baker is leading a birding trip to the Upper Peninsula on February 19th.

Kathy reported on the report coming out of a small group meeting on conservation topics for our chapter for the next year and a half. The meeting was headed by Maureen Conklin. More information will come, either in the *Kettle* or at meetings, about the topics as opportunities arise where we can make a difference.

A vote by the membership passed on a request to help Cheboygan County Recycling by awarding a free 2009 membership in SAAS as part of the raffle prize offered at the Recycling table at the coming Taste of the Straits Cheboygan County Chamber

of Commerce dinner.

A request to send a letter or testify supporting the Pigeon River Country State Forest in its efforts to be quiet by closing its Cheboygan County roads to ORV traffic was presented. A motion was made, seconded, and passed by voice vote that we submit testimony in support of closing these roads.

A Junior Birders of Northern Michigan club is forming. It's goals are to introduce children to birds, encourage them to be outdoors, foster an interest in natural history, connect youngsters with adults willing to share their knowledge and create a community of young birders. A vote was made, seconded and passed with voice vote that SAAS participate with others in this project. SAAS is looking for volunteers willing to be on the steering committee and to lead field trips.

Jim introduced tonight's speaker, Archie Reeves who presented us with a rare look at the Bobcats of Northern Michigan. Archie grew up thinking Bobcats were bad and needed to be hunted and killed. Over the years, what he learned changed his thinking. With the help of his camera, he took us on a hunt (with camera, not gun) in the snow-covered Pigeon River area. We watched the Cats run, climb trees, get shaken down so that they could be banded. How do they get up to the very top branches of those trees? I was amazed by their beauty, their agility, and thank Archie for this special peek into the life of the Bobcat, along with a bonus peek at, and the story of, the three bear cubs that were stumbled on by a friend of Archie's.

The door prize winner of the Elk Clock was guest Dee Sinclair, and the raffle winner of a Fir Tree tote bag was guest Bill Thompson.



Watch for Venus

By Mary Stewart Adams

Starting March 19, brilliant Venus can be seen in the west as the evening star as well as in the east as the morning star at sunrise. With binoculars or spotting scopes, you can watch Venus go through phases, like the moon. "In the black pool of midnight, Lu has slung the Morning Star; and its foam in rippling silver whitens into day afar"

— George Russell

(Continued from page 2)

areas, we need to respect the territory of wildlife without destroying them or their habitat. With just a few simple steps and a bit of ingenuity, living with wildlife can be

done to the satisfaction of both home owner and wildlife. I hope that some of these suggestions will be of assistance in allowing you, and Michigan's wildlife, to live together in peace!



Recycling is Easy! To learn how you can recycle in Cheboygan County, visit <http://www.cheboygancounty.net>, call 231-627-7051, or pick up *Let's Go Beyond Recycling* and other recycling information at your library or Chamber of Commerce.

**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

**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

Send your submissions to
lbaney@ncmich.edu

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

Coming Programs

Mark your calanders now to be sure you can attend.

Mar. 11— Uncommon Loon by Jeff Lange

Apr. 8— Living with Bears in Michigan by Brian Mastenbrook

May 13— Hawks Alive! by Glen McCune

Jun. 10— Member Potluck

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.

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