

The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



November 2007 Vol. 8 No. 11

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THANK YOU!

Cheboygan Middle School generously provides meeting space for our meetings.

Roger Benter of Benter-Chiropractic donates printing for this newsletter.

Presidential Chirpings

Thank you to SAAS members at the November meeting for electing me as President. Since Jim and I recently moved back to Cheboygan after 20 years of living in Washington, D.C., we have a lot of catching up to do with former friends as well as getting to know 'new' members.

My goal for myself AND our chapter this year is to have fun while we learn about and experience the natural world. To help do so, how about a contest!

Our November speaker, Torrey Wenger, told about the Michigan Audubon Winter Feeder Survey, which allows anyone to participate for free. I think almost all of us feed the birds and can identify them. Survey volunteers watch

their bird feeders off and on for a single day a month and write down how many birds of what species came that day. Torrey inspired me to do my first Survey, during which I counted 13 birds of 7 species. Can you do better than that???

If you think HAH, EASY! then I challenge you to a contest. Join the Winter Feeder Survey and let me know what you've seen each month. Your results will appear in each SAAS Kettle, with a prize at the next meeting to the winners. You can obtain the easy forms at the December meeting or by calling me. Torrey lamented that very few people participate from northern lower Michigan; we should be able to help with that!

December 12 Potluck and Photo Sharing

This is our most fun meeting, traditionally, with lots of yuletide cheer. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Remember to come at 6 pm to the Cheboygan Middle School Life Skills Room (across from the Library). Please bring up to ten images of wildlife or outdoor scenery to share, even if it's of your back yard 25 years ago. To simplify the showing of either prints or disks with digi-

tal images, you may leave them, with your name, at the Middle School by December 10 for Ms. Penny Wright, Librarian. She will assemble them into a computerized slide show, more likely to function and easier to view than if everyone brings separate disks. There will also be a slide projector for old-style slides. The more people who share photos, the more fun we will have!

Membership Dues

It's that time of year again when membership renewal is due. You may use the form on the reverse side to send your checks.

Please try to get your annual dues in before the end of the year.

What you missed in the November Meeting

Ben Lillie welcomed everyone and ran the election for 2008 officers. Nominations were as follows. For treasurer- Ed Pike was nominated by Marilee Lillie to be co-treasurer with Kitty Kramer. Seconded by Pat Bray. Unanimous. For president- Kathy Bricker was nominated by Will Mandrich and seconded by Dorothy Woosley. Unanimous.

Kathy Bricker thanked the outgoing officers Ben Lillie, Alice MacFarland, and Gary Kramer (in memoriam), and ongoing volunteers Kitty Kramer, Roy MacFarland, Ed Pike, and Steve Baker. They have helped SAAS succeed during the past several years, tripling the organization's size from 20 to 60 members! Kathy also welcomed Linda Baney and Jim Bricker to their positions.

Bill and Pat Bray told of finding and photographing a northern oriole nest. Various members reported common redpolls, pine grosbeaks, and American goldfinch at their feeders, with interesting sightings of snow buntings and bald eagles. Steve Baker has discovered dozens of dead loons and other diving ducks in the Straits of Mackinac, probably due to botulism poisoning. He has worked closely with the Department of Natural Resources to report and remove these birds to prevent the poison from moving further up the food chain.

Ms. Torrey Wenger from Kalamazoo Nature Center then explained the many surveys done in Michigan on birds. Several of these efforts rely on citizen volunteers. Anyone who enjoys birds can participate in the Christmas Bird Count

(see later for the three counts near Cheboygan) or the Winter Feeder Survey.

Information from the Winter Feeder Survey helps biologists document the numbers and distribution of our feathered friends. For example, in the early 1970s, volunteers reported huge numbers of evening grosbeaks. Yet in 2006, Winter Feeder Survey volunteers reported evening grosbeaks at only one in ten feeders. Torrey led impromptu speculation whether their actual populations are lower, or whether they are staying farther north. If the latter, why? Is it because of milder weather or greater seed production in Canada, or because the spruce budworms were more abundant in the 1970s. Do grosbeaks need them to feed their young? What do you think?

Torrey also explained several banding and nesting surveys that are mostly done by professionals or highly-trained volunteers. She told how special habitats that boast many species or rare birds can gain distinction as official Important Bird Areas. Her colorful presentation was highlighted by photographs of fall warblers and other amusing stumpers. Between us, we identified them! You are encouraged to join Michigan Audubon Society to receive its newsletter with ongoing information about these studies and other fascinating articles (www.michiganaudubon.org, or call 517-886-9144).

After the program, treats were provided by Kathy Bricker and by the 4-H young entrepreneur's club, *Fresh Ideas*.

For the Birds

You can receive an email update whenever a rare bird is sighted nearby, by joining the free Mich-listers mailing list at:

<http://lists.envirolink.org/mailman/listinfo/mich-listers>.

Meetings

Straits Area Audubon Society meets the second Wednesday of each month, September through May, at 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.

Call To Action

Greetings Friends,

Time for me to advocate for our waters. One of our staff is intimately involved with current legislation efforts and reports that this 'protection plan' was introduced while she and a working group were developing more effective legislation. This plan from the senate is bad news and would undermine all the work that Grenetta has done as well as spell disaster for protecting Michigan's water. If you have a moment please use the link below to take action.

<http://MAP.e-ActionMax.com/r.asp?aacwc=3744170193298159312966100>

Sincerely,

Kevin Cronk,
Monitoring and Research Coordinator,
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Problem:

The Michigan Senate has recently introduced a 'protection' plan for Michigan's water that falls far short of providing serious protection for the state's water. Loopholes in the plan would allow for excessive stream flow reductions in stretches of rivers including the AuSable (22 percent) and Boardman (25 percent). The Senate legislation relies on a newly developed water withdrawal assessment tool, which has never been used before and entirely discounts input from local communities and other sources, including experts in the field.

Action Needed:

Send an email to your State Senator to tell them that you oppose SB 212, 858-860 as they are currently drafted. Tell our State's lawmakers that we must pass legislation that protects all Michigan's waters and brings Michigan into compliance with the Great Lakes Compact.

Deadline for responding is December 31, 2007.

Thank You

Pam

Christmas Bird Count

Do you want a different kind of nature experience? The Cheboygan Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 15, is ideally timed this year for those who work during the week. This early-winter bird census tallies every bird seen or heard all day, with resulting data going to the Michigan Audubon Society (as explained by Torrey Wenger in November). Please plan to participate in this annual treasure hunt for winter birds. It's a free way to get outdoors to neat areas with fun people, and to be a citizen scientist for a day. You don't need to be an expert yourself; in fact, this is a great way to learn more about birds from others. Meet at Cheboygan McDonalds at 7:30 am for either a half day or full day. We will regroup for lunch to tally totals. Mostly we search for birds by driving to

likely locations. Those who can't attend, can do a feeder count at home that day. For about 10 minutes off and on, watch your feeder and count the highest number of each species you see at any one time. With your help, we will beat last year's totals. When 11 watchers tallied 2,152 birds of 41 species. Contact coordinator Ed Pike at 231-758-3319 for more information about either the Cheboygan or Petoskey (December 14) counts.

Another Christmas Bird Count nearby is coordinated by Steve Baker, with its 15-mile diameter in the center of the Mackinac Bridge. Although tentatively set for Thursday, December 20, please contact Steve at 238-8723 if you would like to attend, as the date may change to get the best weather.

Straits Area Audubon Society 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.

Straits Area Audubon Society Officers

President:	Kathy Briker	231-627-4830	kathyhomeaccount@hotmail.com
Co-Treasurers:	Ed Pike	231-758-3319	aes05@localnet.com
	Kitty Kramer	231-537-2084	kitbkramer@yahoo.com
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Newsletter:	Linda Baney	231-627-8815	baneyl@msu.edu

Website: straitsareaaububon.org

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

Straits Area Audubon Society is a not-for-profit society.

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