

APRIL 2024

Kitsap Audubon Society – Since 1972



# THE Kingfisher

**April 11th Program (6:30-8:00 p.m. via Zoom or in person)**

## **The Rescue of Bald Eaglets Eddie & Elliott**

Keith Ross's 2019 photos and account of the rescue of eaglets Eddie and Elliot in Sequim drew worldwide attention. His pictures and interviews were published in *Scholastic Magazine*, *The Dodo*, *Bored Panda*, and around the world in media and news outlets. Keith later wrote a book in 2023: *The Rescue of Eddie & Elliot--A Bald Eaglet Adventure*. The book includes lots of images and educational information, along with plush toy replicas. His presentation will include photos from his photography tours.

After moving to Sequim in 2015, Keith discovered his passion for birds and wildlife photography. He teaches photography and photo editing and leads photography tours by bus. He also owns a business involved in printing, picture framing and the creation of furniture made with native woods.



*The Kitsap Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month from September to May. You can join via Zoom or attend in person at North Kitsap High School Library, 1780 NE Hostmark, Poulsbo, WA. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the program starts at 6:30 pm.*

To join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/91811374785?pwd=Tm12VlBHWGhRYnRQUmg2RIUrMkJPdz09>

Meeting ID: 918 1137 4785 ; Passcode: 935230



**Help us protect birds and habitat with an online donation between April 1st and midnight on Tuesday, April 16th.**

**Details page 3**

# President's Letter - Kevin Eger

The signals of spring are here! In my neighborhood the pink cherry trees and white dogwoods are filled with the chirps of robins, chickadees, and juncos. It's a visual reminder to me of how important shrubs and trees are for birds as a food source, protection, and a place to raise young. When I first came across the Kitsap Audubon Society, I had no idea what the organization did, but I had seen it pop up as involved with a number of other conservation organizations and it caught my interest. It was a surprise and delight to discover a group that advocated specifically for birds, a taxa I have a special love for. But even better, it wasn't only about birds; KAS raised money in partnership with other organizations to preserve greenspaces, and provided educational opportunities through guest speakers who presented on a range of conservation issues. In short they recognized that to preserve birds for the future, education and action should be focused on protecting the whole ecosystem. I joined KAS to be a part of that good work and find community with others who wanted to do the same.



There are many ways to help preserve and improve our ecosystems. On a large scale, KAS recently helped the Hansville Greenway acquire another 10 acres of forest and freshwater habitat. We can help on a smaller scale by planting native plants this spring. There are a number of plant sales in our area this month, many of them selling native plants that help meet specific food and habitat requirements for our specialist native fauna. If you are feeling adventurous, I encourage you to purchase a new native shrub or tree for your yard this season, or put a flowering shrub in a pot to invite hummingbirds to your patio.

We have many events coming up this month, starting with the Kitsap Great Give on April 16th (details on facing page). Our EDI Committee has been surveying trails for accessibility to add to our growing Birdability map for Kitsap County (visit [birdability.org](http://birdability.org) for more information).

## Election of Officers in April

At our April general meeting we will be holding elections for next year's officers. The Nomination Committee's recommended slate consists of Justin Carrington for Secretary, Crystal McMahon for returning Treasurer, Gene Bullock for returning Vice President, and Kevin Eyer and Lynn Willmott as co-Presidents. However any member can nominate themselves for consideration as well. Please email [info@kitsapaudubon.org](mailto:info@kitsapaudubon.org) for details.

## Educational Outreach

Our Education Committee will be exhibiting at a number of community events in April, including the Kitsap County Water Festival on April 16<sup>th</sup>, Earth Day at Poulsbo's Fish Park on April 20<sup>th</sup> from 10-2 p.m. and Earth Expo at Battle Point Park on Bainbridge Island on April 27<sup>th</sup> (same hours). You are welcome to come visit us at these events, and we are always looking for new volunteers to help out as well.

Kitsap Audubon exhibits focus especially on engaging families and the young. We hope to nurture a life-long interest in birds and nature. The more people know about birds the more they want to help protect them. We know people want to save what they know and love.



CELEBRATING

50  
Years



# Kitsap Audubon Society

P.O. Box 961, Poulsbo, WA 98370

Kitsap! GREAT  
GIVE  
April 16, 2024

**Help us protect birds and  
habitat with an online  
donation between now and  
midnight on Tuesday, April 16.**

*Early giving begins April 1st.*

**<https://www.KitsapGreatGive.org>**

**Kitsap Audubon's mission is to protect birds, wildlife habitat and the environment through education, active stewardship, public advocacy, and related programs and activities:**

- Donated \$130,000 and helped raise millions more to preserve critical forest and shoreline in Kitsap County.
- Awarded \$95,500 in scholarships to students pursuing college degrees in fields related to our mission.
- Monthly programs and field trips that are free and open to the public
- Robust advocacy for legislation and public policies that affect birds, wildlife habitat and the environment.
- Foster community engagement in environmental science and stewardship.



# KID'S CORNER

## Baby Bird Season

For many local birds, April is the beginning of nesting season. Birds big and small will build nests, lay eggs, and hatch and raise babies.

Is there anything we can do to help?

Yes! The best way to help the birds and their babies is to stay out of their way. If you start to notice birds going in and out of a bush, using a nest box, or making angry chirps when you walk under a tree, you might have found their nest. As fun as it could be to see some eggs or baby birds, poking around in their home is stressful to them. Give the birds as much space as you can.

But what if there is a baby bird on the ground?

Stop and look at the bird! If it's a fledgling, leave it alone. A fledgling is a baby bird that has feathers, and is able to hop around. Their parents are probably keeping an eye on them as they learn to do things out of the nest.

If the baby is a nestling, it may need help. A nestling is a very young baby bird that only has some fluffy feathers and can't move around well. If you know where the nest is, it is okay to pick up the bird and put it back in! The parent birds will still take care of the babies even if they were touched by a person.

What if the baby is sick, or hurt, or left alone for a whole day?

The baby might need help, but that's not a job you can do! Find a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, they will know what to do. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has a list of rehabilitators and their phone numbers.

Kitsap County residents are fortunate in being able to contact the West Sound Wildlife Shelter on Bainbridge Island (206-855-9057, Ext. 1). The shelter has a state-of-the-art wildlife hospital and rehabilitation facilities staffed by expert wildlife rehabilitators.

***Tree Swallow photos (top and bottom) and photo of Barn Swallow chicks in mud nest by Jay Wggs.***



# Field Trips & Festivals - Al Westphal, Field Trip Chair

**Liability Waiver Policy:** KAS requires field trip participants to complete a liability waiver. This is a simple online form on our website

<https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/fieldtrips>

Once signed, it will be valid for the remainder of the KAS operating year (September – June).

**HEALTH PRECAUTIONS:** We ask the following: (1) Each household must sign up by email in advance with trip leaders; (2) be prepared to adhere to directives and advice from our public health departments; and (3) Be courteous toward others: If you are not well, especially coughing, sneezing, or wheezing, please stay home.

**Birding Festivals and Events:** A complete summary of events statewide may be found at the Washington State Audubon site:

<http://wa.audubon.org/bird-festivals-0>

**April 5-8: Brant Wildlife Festival, British Columbia**

**April 11-14: Olympic Peninsula BirdFest**

**May 3-5: Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival**

**May 10-11: Wings Over Whidbey Festival**

**May 10-12: Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest**

**May 11: World Migratory Bird Day**

**May 16-19: Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest**

**May 30-June 2: Yakutat Annual Tern Festival, Yakutat, Alaska**

**May 31-June 2: Wenas Audubon Campout**

## Field Trips

**Montlake Fill (Seattle), Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> (half-day).** Al & Carolyn Westphal leaders

([westphalac@aol.com](mailto:westphalac@aol.com)). A beautiful restored and "re-naturalized" area with wooded uplands, wetlands, and lakeside waterfront adjacent to the UW campus. Excellent trails, all built on the site of an enormous Seattle "fill" that served as a dumping ground for Seattle decades ago. Especially good urban birding during this spring migration period.

**Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park Bioblitz, Saturday, April 27, 10:00 a.m.** Register for start time and location at [bit.ly/PGFHPbioblitz](http://bit.ly/PGFHPbioblitz) or email questions to [NetEcologicalGain@gmail.com](mailto:NetEcologicalGain@gmail.com)

## Trip Report

**Fort Flagler and Marrowstone Island, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Chilly, blustery, gray (but not rainy)! In other words a typical late-winter day of birding over in Jefferson County. The little brown birds did not put in much of an appearance until mid-day, but we found a terrific little hotspot at Mystery Bay State Park after a long morning's visit to Fort Flagler. Scads of shorebirds, gulls, and others there along with a decent array of seabirds and a very photogenic Bald Eagle who posed on a piling close to our vantage point on the sand spit for the entire time we were there. The eight hardy participants who turned out were rewarded with a trip list of 57 species and the terrific company of fellow bird lovers.

*Photo by Karla Bouck of Al Westphal and Kitsap Audubon birders on Marrowstone Island field trip.*



# Bird of the Month: Golden-crowned Sparrow

by Janine Schutt

A beautiful, yet understudied songbird is the golden-crowned sparrow. Common on the shrubby lowlands of its Pacific Coast wintering grounds, it disappears from view on its shrubland and tundra breeding grounds in British Columbia, the Yukon Territory, and Alaska, where little is known of its whereabouts. Here are some fascinating facts about the golden-crowned sparrow:

- A large sparrow with surprisingly little known about its summer lifestyle, making it one of North America's least known songbirds.
- Breeding adults have a bright yellow crown patch, which is dull yellow in winter.
- Gold miners of the Yukon Territory in the early 20th century called it the "no gold here" bird in reference to its melancholy song and their inability to find gold.
- Some enjoy California life, arriving in the Golden State earlier and leaving later than other migratory species.
- Preferred wintering habitat includes riparian thickets, gardens, and shrubby areas near water.
- Individuals sometimes wander in winter, going as far east as the Atlantic Coast.
- Primarily forages on the ground. Eats mostly seeds and some insects.
- Wintering flocks often forage near white-crowned sparrows and dark-eyed juncos.
- Usually nests on the ground, but may also use a shrub or small tree when there is still snow on the ground.
- Nest cup is made of twigs, bark, grass, and moss and may be lined with feathers or hair from large, hooved animals.
- Female gathers nesting material, while the male follows her and sings.
- Monogamous pairs raise one or two broods per season, with a clutch size of 3-5 eggs.
- Immature birds do not have a yellow crown patch during their first winter.

***Photo lower right of Golden-crowned Sparrow in breeding plumage, and lower left in nonbreeding plumage, by Janine Schutt.***



# Recap of 2024 Legislative Efforts

## 100% Clean School Bus bill passes

While we saw some setbacks, like the Re-WRAP Act getting bogged down by amendments on the House floor, we also had cause for celebration. Our top climate priority, **the 100% Clean School Bus bill**, successfully passed thanks to the incredible support from our dedicated members who contacted their legislators 2,240 times to support the bill.

Here's what it took this year to get our top climate priority passed in the legislature:

### By the numbers

- **4,250** emails sent to legislators at key moments throughout the session
- **50** Audubon and partner volunteers met with 17 legislators during Advocacy Days
- Targeted op-eds and letters to the editor published in newspapers.



## Vote NO on I-2117 next November

A right-wing multimillionaire hired signature gatherers to collect enough signatures to put **Initiative 2117** on the November ballot. If passed it will overturn our Climate Commitment Act, which has so far produced more than \$2 billion to fund climate change programs and efforts all over the state. We urge all Washington voters to stand up and help us defeat this initiative.

*Kitsap Audubon works closely with legislators willing to help advance our environmental priorities. 23rd Legislative District Representative Greg Nance came to our March meeting to give an update on current legislation. Here he is with long-time Kitsap Audubon members Sandy and Gene Bullock.*

# 2024 Great Backyard Bird Count results

## From Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Each year we think we've reached the ceiling in terms of the numbers of people who will spend at least 15 minutes (usually more) watching, celebrating, and reporting their birds for GBBC—and each year you surprise us! Collectively, we found **7,920** of the world's known species. Hundreds of countries and subregions came together to share bird sightings. Here is a summary of the 2024 global four-day event:

- **7,920** species of birds identified
- **210** countries or subregions
- **384,416** eBird checklists
- **313,874** Merlin Bird IDs (step-by-step, sound, or photo)
- **164,740** photos, videos, and sounds added to Macaulay Library
- **642,003** estimated global participants
- **385** reported community events

### Top Merlin Submissions

During the GBBC we noticed that Merlin Bird ID app usage jumped around the world, especially in the **United Kingdom** where **21,384** birds were identified using the app. We also witnessed heavy use in the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, India, Germany, and Mexico.

*Photo of Varied Thrush by Janine Schutt.*



# Swallows – Gene Bullock (Photos by Jay Wiggs)

Of the 12 species of swallows, the four most common in Western Washington are the Tree, Violet-green, and Barn swallows, and the Purple Martin. Swallows live almost entirely on insects, which they scoop up in flight. Swallow populations have been especially hard hit by the worldwide collapse in insect populations caused by indiscriminate use of pesticides and herbicides. The wide use of herbicides has decimated many of the native plants that insects need to survive. Cavity-nesting species such as the Tree and Violet-green swallows have also declined because of competition for the scarce supply of natural nest cavities by introduced species such as House Sparrows and European Starlings.

**How to tell a Tree from a Violet-green Swallow:** These familiar swallows often frequent the same areas. But they can be hard to distinguish in flight. Differences in color may be hard to see; but the eyes of the Violet-green are surrounded by white, which covers most of the face and curls up around the collar. The Tree Swallow's eye is well within the predominantly darker cheek, and the white is limited to the throat, breast and belly.

The colorful **Barn Swallow** is easier to identify in flight because of its orange throat and undersides and its distinctive cleft tail. The Barn Swallow is known for the familiar mud nests it builds in barns, sheds and other "outbuildings."

The **Purple Martin** is the largest swallow. It was threatened with extinction because of competition for natural nest cavities; but people have adopted and rescued the species by creating man-made colonies using specially designed nest gourds. Kitsap Audubon and its devoted volunteers have maintained five active colonies over the last 25 years.





# New Hawk's Ponds addition to Hansville Greenway completed

The new Hawk's Ponds expansion to the Hansville Greenway officially closed at the end of 2023 thanks to an outpouring of community support and matching Kitsap County Conservation Futures funds. Kitsap County Parks now owns the property and Great Peninsula Conservancy holds an easement on it. Together, they will work with the Hansville Greenway Association to collaborate on future conservation and recreational plans.

The new 10-acre expansion to the 345-acre greenspace in North Kitsap connects upper and lower Hawk's Ponds. Great Peninsula Conservancy and volunteers from the Hansville Greenway Association raised over \$100,000, which leveraged supplemental funding OK'd by Kitsap County commissioners to use Kitsap County Conservation Futures funds to purchase the parcel.

Kitsap Audubon was among the community organizations that made substantial donations to the purchase campaign.



## Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

Facebook: <https://www.Facebook.com/KitsapAububonSociety/>  
Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/kitsapaudubon/>

Watch previous recorded programs:  
<https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/video>

### *Kitsap Audubon Society*

*President: Kevin Eyer*

*Co-Vice Presidents:*

*Lynn Willmott, Gene Bullock*

*Treasurer: Crystal McMahon*

*Assistant Treasurer:*

*Shelley White*

*Secretary: Judy Willott*

*Immed. Past Pres: Lynn Willmott*

### *At-Large Board of Directors:*

*Jeff Brown*

*Sandy Bullock*

*Isabella Carlson*

*Lauren Eyer*

*Don Willott*

*Grant Winther (emeritus)*

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*Live Meeting Greeters: Milly*

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*Membership Administrator:*

*Jennifer Szerlog*

*Programs: Lynn Willmott*

*Purple Martins: Sandy Pavey*

*Wildlife Sightings: Janine Schutt*

*Scholarship Chair: Sandy Bullock*

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# Kitsap Audubon Society

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The Kingfisher is the newsletter of the Kitsap Audubon Society, P.O. Box 961, Poulsbo, WA 98370. It is published ten times a year, September to June. Submissions from readers are welcome. We reserve the right to edit for space, grammar or legal reasons. Email text or photographs to [genebullock@comcast.net](mailto:genebullock@comcast.net) or mail to Gene Bullock, 1754 NE Mesford Rd., Unit 5, Poulsbo WA 98370. Our deadline is the 15th of the preceding month.

To receive your Kingfisher via email and save us the expense of printing and mailing, send your request to [genebullock@comcast.net](mailto:genebullock@comcast.net).

## Kitsap Audubon Society - Membership Renewal

Join/Renew online at <http://www.kitsapaudubon.org/membership>

or make check payable to KAS and mail to KAS, PO Box 961, Poulsbo, WA 98370

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here to receive your Kingfisher via Email and save us the expense of printing and mailing. Members receive ten issues of the Kingfisher newsletter each year.

### Select Category Of Membership:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Annual Membership \$20   | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual LIFE Membership \$300   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Annual Membership \$30       | <input type="checkbox"/> Family LIFE Membership \$500       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Annual Membership \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Annual Membership \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Annual Membership \$75   | (Contact KAS Treasurer for LIFE Membership payment options) |

**Additional donation:** Scholarships \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Audubon Adventures \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**The Kitsap Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible.**

Your contact information is not sold, disclosed or shared with any entity outside KAS.

**The mission of Kitsap Audubon Society is to promote the understanding and appreciation of birds, wildlife habitat and the environment through education, stewardship, community science and advocacy, and to help conserve and restore the ecosystems that birds need now and in the future. Visit our website at <https://www.kitsapaudubon.org>**

