Kitsap Audubon Society - Since 1972



December 8th Program (7:00 p.m. via Zoom)

# Using remote acoustic monitoring to study bird response to habitat improvements

A goal of Great Peninsula Conservancy's (GPC) stewardship program is to maintain and/or improve the ecological integrity of GPC's forestlands by increasing forest structure and species diversity. Implementing practices to improve forest health seems appropriate given the dramatic decline in populations of many North American landbirds. GPC stewardship manager, Adrian Wolf, will present a project that uses AudioMoth acoustic devices to capture avian community response to three forest conservation practices: 1) creation of snags, den trees, and coarse woody debris, 2) creating structural diversity with patch openings, and 3) replanting with a diversity of conifers and shrubs. The project, supported by a grant from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will also facilitate a comparison between the acoustic data,



traditional point count and area search data, pre- and post-intervention.

Adrian Wolf joined GPC as the stewardship manager in March 2021 and is committed to maintaining and improving the ecological integrity of natural ecosystems. He has over 25 years of professional experience working with threatened and endangered habitats and the species that depend on them. Adrian obtained his Master's Degree from The Evergreen State College where his research work focused on bird use of epiphytes in an old-growth coniferous forest. He has extensive experience with handling birds through ecological research studies.

The project is a collaborative effort between Great Peninsula Conservancy, Daniel Froehlich (Ornithologistics), Dr. Alison Styring, and graduate student Kayleigh Kueffner (The Evergreen State College), and Northwest Natural Resource Group.

Photo by Adrian Wolf: Ben Wymer, stewardship assoicate at GPC, girdles a tree to create a standing snap and improve wildlife habitat at the Burly Creek Preserve.

Zoom Program, Thursday, Dec. 8th at 7:00 p.m.

To join Zoom Meeting:

https://zoom.us/j/91811374785?pwd=Tm12VlBHWGhRYnRQUmg2RlUrMkJpdz09

Meeting ID: 918 1137 4785 ; Passcode: 935230 To join by telephone: 1 253 215 8782

Meeting ID: 918 1137 4785; Passcode: 935230

## President's Letter - Lgnn Willmott

I hope everyone has been enjoying the winter birds that have settled in our waters. I had the pleasure of taking a moment to bird at my local Brownsville Marina and was delighted to see so many goldeneyes, hooded and common mergansers, along with the usual gulls and a few busy kingfishers. Just as I was leaving a pair of pigeon guillemots landed, always great to see them.

Our committees are very busy planning new programs for the coming year. The Conservation Committee has two new members, Jeff Brown and Dan Froehlich, long-time KAS members who are now going to be involved with programs such as bird monitoring and climate change.

The Education Committee hosted an informational booth during the Salmon Days Tours at Poulsbo's Fish Park. Many families came out and we were happy to learn that many of the young folks who visited were enthusiastic bird watchers. The committee is looking at developing a program just for kids and we would love to have help from anyone who likes to work with children to encourage their love for birds and conservation. This could be a very exciting new direction for KAS.

Members of the Conservation Committee met for a virtual training for Audubon Washington's December 5-6 Advocacy Day. Kitsap Audubon members plan to arrange virtual meetings with 23<sup>rd</sup> District state legislators to review Audubon Washington's top environmental priorities for the upcoming legislative session (see article pages 6-7).

Don't hesitate to contact me at tuvmott@ gmail.com if you would like to explore any of these opportunities.

Kitsap Audubon is working on resuming meetings in person. We hope to hold hybrid meetings so folks who want to continue joining via zoom can continue to do so. In the meantime, Happy Holidays to all of our members and thank you for your continued support.

Kitsap Audubon volunteers staffed an information booth at Poulsbo's Fish Park during the annual Kitsap Salmonn Tours. Families came hoping to catch a glimpse of salmon returning to spawn. Pictured left to right are North Kitsap High School student Talon Grant, Kitsap Audubon Vice President Kevin Eyer, Kitsap Audubon **Newsletter Editor Gene Bullock, and Kitsap Audubon** President Lynn Willmott. Photo by Kitsap Audubon/Lions Club member Karl Oestheller.





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

#### **COVID PRECAUTIONS:** We ask the following:

(1) Each household must sign up by email in advance with trip leaders; (2) Carpooling is discouraged except among family or social pods. If you are not well, especially coughing, sneezing, or wheezing, or have recently been exposed to some who is Covid positive, please stay home.

**Birding Festivals and Events:** A complete summary of events statewide may be found at the Washington State Audubon site: <a href="http://wa.audubon.org/bird-festivals-0">http://wa.audubon.org/bird-festivals-0</a>

**No December Field Trip.** See facing page for Christmas Bird Count details.

Port Washington Narrows: Saturday, January 28th. (Half-day, morning). John & Karla Bouck, leaders email john@creeksideplc.com for questions, signup, and starting time and location. Thousands of marine birds winter in these protected waters. We will explore Washington Narrows from Lions Park, Evergreen Park and

Lower Rota Vista Park with perhaps a doughnut stop along the way. Kitsap Audubon has improved access to Lower Rota Vista Park at the end of Elizabeth Avenue. This charming park offers exceptional views of a unique colony of Pelagic cormorants and often a pair of Peregrine Falcons that nest on the underside of the Warren Avenue bridge.

**Trip Reports** 

Theler Wetlands and Trails. November 12. A group size of twelve birders can be a bit too much, but it worked out great with everybody contributing to the observations and IDs, including the enthusiastic 10-year old Rowdy! We compiled a very respectable tally of 39 species and had great looks at a lot of raptors, waterfowl, and little brown birds. The bonus prize was the sighting of the "rare" Pectoral Sandpiper. It was almost too easy. And it didn't hurt that the weather was fabulous!

## Wildlife Sightings - Janine Schutt

On October 23rd, Ray Schreiber observed an estimated 1500 gulls in Hansville between Norwegian Point and Point No Point Lighthouse, including short-billed, Heermann's, Bonaparte's, and western gulls. He also saw a dozen common loons and two parasitic jaegers harassing the Bonaparte's gulls. On the same day, Ray noticed a female black scoter near a flock of surf scoters in Port Gamble. On Oct. 26th, Ray saw 10 black turnstones by Yukon Harbor.

Send your interesting sightings to wildlifesightings@kitsapaudubon.org.

#### Notable Kitsap Sightings from www.eBird.org:

Oct. 15 at Point No Point: 2 snow geese, 1 Leach's storm-petrel

Oct. 15 at Foulweather Bluff: 1 Lapland longspur

Oct. 16 near Kingston: 1 Townsend's solitaire

Oct. 16 in Port Gamble: 3 American pipits

Oct. 21 from Bainbridge-Seattle ferry: 1 blacklegged kittiwake

Oct. 22 east of Bainbridge Island: 1 pomarine jaeger

Oct. 29 north of Poulsbo: 1 northern shrike Nov. 1 at Restoration Point (SE Bainbridge Island): 23 cackling geese, 118 tundra swans, 65 Harlequin ducks, 12 black scoters, 4 surfbirds, 6 ancient murrelets, 1 Iceland gull, 1 hermit thrush, 1 whitethroated sparrow

Nov. 1 at Point No Point: 1 parasitic jaeger, 35 American white pelicans

Nov. 2 near Indianola: 1 American dipper

Nov. 3 north of Poulsbo: 1 northern pygmy-owl Nov. 3 at Foulweather Bluff Preserve: 3 long-tailed

ducks, 1 Virginia rail, 6 Wilson's snipe

Nov. 5 south of Port Orchard: 1 barn owl

Nov. 11 south of Port Orchard: 2 evening grosbeaks

Nov. 11 at Foulweather Bluff: 1 eared grebe

Nov. 12 at Point No Point: 1 western meadowlark

Nov. 12 at Kitsap Lake: 1 canvasback, 2 ruddy ducks

Nov. 12 on Dyes Inlet in Tracyton: 1 trumpeter swan

Nov. 13 near Hansville: 3 black oystercatchers

Jay Wiggs photo of American Wigeons at 3-Crabs in Sequim.



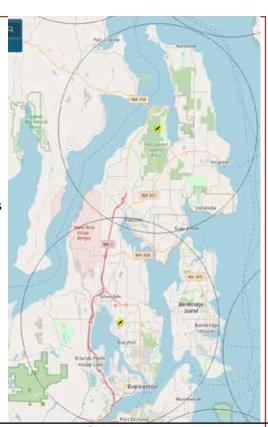
## **Christmas Bird Count**

Kitsap Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count is just around the corner! Please sign up by directly contacting the area leader for the area you would like to help survey. Sign up early because some teams fill up quickly. If you live in one of our count circles, you can also sign up to do a backyard count that day. Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome.

The Kitsap circle count is Saturday, December 17, and the deadline to sign up is December 10. The North Kitsap/Port Gamble circle count is Saturday, December 31, and the deadline to sign up is December 24.

Although many COVID restrictions have been lifted, National Audubon is still asking participants to avoid carpooling with anyone outside of their family or social pod. In addition to the carpooling restriction, Kitsap Audubon encourages volunteers to be aware of the continued risk of COVID transmission and use their own judgement when participating in Christmas Bird Counts. If you are sick, or have recently been exposed to someone who is, please stay home.

Each circle is 15 miles in diameter and is divided into segments assignd to designated field teams led by experienced birders.



### <u> 2022 Kitsap Audubon Christmas Bird Count</u>

Saturday, December 17, 2022 -- To sign up, contact area leader directly

AREA	WHERE	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL
1	Port Orchard	Chazz Hesselein	360-633-0486	chazz@hesselein.com
2	West Bremerton	Brad Waggoner	206-780-9581	wagtail24@gmail.com
3	Chico/Seabeck	Lisa Pedersen	360-830-4768	lisa_mp52@yahoo.com
4	East Bremerton	Vic Ulsh	360-373-4824	viculsh13@hotmail.com
5	South BI	Lee & Kirk Robinson	206-842-0774	leerob9672@gmail.com
6	North BI	George Gerdts	206-842-8138	geopandion@gmail.com
7A	Silverdale/Keyport	Al & Andrew Westphal	206-780-7844	westphalac@aol.com
7B	Poulsbo	Gene & Sandy Bullock	360-394-5635	genebullock@comcast.net
	Owls	Jamie Acker	206-499-7121	owler@sounddsl.com
	Backyard Count	Janine Schutt	360-830-4446	jeschutt@hotmail.com
	CBC Data Compiler	Janine Schutt	360-830-4446	jeschutt@hotmail.com

## **NK-Port Gamble Christmas Bird Count**

Saturday, December 31 - To sign up, contact leader directly

AREA	WHERE	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL
1	Hansville	Al & Andrew Westphal	206-780-7844	westphalac@aol.com
2	Kingston	Stillwaters - Cindi Nevins	360-620-4895	tenevins@earthlink.net
3	Port Gamble	Judy & Don Willott	206-842-6939	jdwillott@mac.com
4	Port Ludlow/Shine	Jennifer Standish	206-293-9320	magma1306@gmail.com
5	Poulsbo	Gene & Sandy Bullock	360-394-5635	genebullock@comcast.net
6	Miller Bay	Nancy D'Archangel	360-271-6565	darchangel@embarqmail.com
	CBC Compiler	Jennifer Standish	206-293-9320	magma1306@gmail.com
	Owling	Jamie Acker	206-499-7121	owler@sounddsl.com
	Backyard Count	Janine Schutt	360-830-4446	jeschutt@hotmail.com

## Bird of the Month: Northern Shrike

#### by Janine Schutt

A winter visitor to Kitsap, which in recent years has been spotted more frequently, is the northern shrike. This predatory songbird is slightly smaller than a robin and with its unique feeding habits, is unlike any other local species. Reliable places to look for it include Point No Point County Park in Hansville, Clear Creek Trail north of Silverdale and Theler Wetlands Nature Trails in Belfair. Here are some fascinating facts about the northern shrike:

- Cousin of the Loggerhead shrike, a summer breeder of eastern WA.
- Breeds in the boreal forests of northern Canada and Alaska.
- Open areas with scattered trees are preferred habitat.
- Often referred to as the "butcher bird".
- Feeds on large insects, small birds and mammals, and lizards and frogs.
- Capable of grabbing and carrying prey nearly twice its size.
- Sometimes kills prey by vigorously shaking its head back and forth to break the victim's neck, enduring up to 6 G-forces in the process
- Impales smaller prey items on a thorn or barbed wire, which kills the victim and also stores it for later consumption.
- Has a hawklike curved beak, which is used as a utensil when tearing into flesh.
- Highly territorial, patrolling a hunting area of 360 or more acres, a huge territory for a songbird.
- Female selects the nest site, usually about 8 feet high in a tree or large shrub.
- Female builds a deep nest cup of twigs, feathers, moss and grass, with construction materials supplied by the male.
- When settled into the nest to incubate the clutch of four to nine eggs, only the tip of the female's tail is visible.
- Males and females both sing throughout the year. Males sing the most in late winter and early spring.

Photos of surveying (left) and subtle (right) Northern Shrikes by Janine Schutt.



# Audubon Washington **2023** legislative priorities

Our top priorities this session will advance climate-smart land-use planning, Puget Sound recovery and resilience, and shrub-steppe protection and stewardship. We're also supporting an ambitious funding request by the Washington Department of Wildlife for biodiversity conservation.

#### **CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY**

Audubon's climate and clean energy priorities call on Washington legislators to enact policies that drive smart planning for climate change, invest in comprehensive climate solutions, and promote responsible siting of clean energy.

Top priority: Updating the Growth Management Act (GMA) and Shoreline Master Plans (SMPs) to include climate resilience. The GMA is a key policy tool that local Audubon chapters use to advocate for wise land-use. It does not currently require planning for climate change. An updated GMA under a proposed bill would require counties to plan for emission reduction, affordable housing, and climate resilience. A key provision in the bill would require future SMPs of cities and counties to address sea level <u>rise</u>. This would also help protect the Puget Sound nearshore ecosystem, another of our top priorities. The Legislature stopped short of passing this bill last year; they must finish the job this session. Top Priority: Ensure that Climate Commitment Act revenue goes towards climate solutions. The Climate Commitment Act (CCA) sets a price on carbon emissions, provides a mechanism to reduce climate pollution, and generates revenue to invest in comprehensive climate solutions and local communities. The first round of spending from the CCA will be in the 2023-25 budget and revenue projections continue to grow. With a looming recession, an influx of federal money, and CCA Accounts flush with cash, there is a significant risk that the legislature may reappropriate funds to other purposes - weakening the ability of the law to address climate change. The CCA budget is a priority for Audubon and the Environmental Priorities Coalition and is truly an "all hands-on deck" moment to get ahead of a rush to claim dollars, guard against weakening the law under the guise of inflation, and (most importantly) increase visibility about how the CCA benefits people and communities directly.

Top Priority: Support responsible clean energy development and siting. In 2022, we helped support passage of HB 1814, which included precedent-setting language defining 'preferred sites' for solar energy development in state law. HB 1814 brings the benefits of solar energy to vulnerable communities and protects birds from solar development by guiding projects towards buildings, parking lots, and other locations that don't displace wildlife habitat or prime farmland. Today, we are working to advance a proposed bill that would include a policy solution known as Planned Clean Energy Actions, that support the rapid and responsible deployment of clean energy at 'preferred sites', and other least conflict lands, and foster collaboration between state and local government. We are also seeking state financial support for the assessment of environmental and tribal cultural resources at priority sites and staffing for the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC), the newly designated state agency that provides a "one-stop" siting process for major energy facilities in Washington.

#### **COASTAL CONSERVATION**

Top Priority: A shoreline assessment program using on-the-water photos. The Puget Sound shoreline and nearshore are critical habitat for forage fish and the salmon, orca and marine birds that rely on them for food. Decades of development and hard armoring has severely degraded habitat conditions, yet there is no comprehensive inventory of the extent and location of shoreline armoring and other structures in the nearshore. This should be addressed by passing legislation creating a program for assessment of shoreline conditions, providing the information to agencies, businesses and the public. This data, with updates every 2 years, would identify the amount and location of shoreline armor, natural shorelines, and other nearshore conditions and enable tracking of changes over time. It is crucial for assessing progress on Puget Sound recovery goals, assisting in permitting compliance and informing selection of mitigation and restoration sites. The bill creating this shoreline assessment program had bipartisan support last session and the legislature should pass it this year.

**Top Priority: Creation of a revolving loan fund for shoreline restoration.** The Shore Friendly program provides advice and technical assistance to shoreline property owners around the Sound. There are many property owners who would like to remove armoring and restore their shorelines, to the benefit of all, but it can be expensive. A revolving loan fund would provide resources to some of these shoreline owners allowing them to restore their shoreline, providing improved habitat to forage fish and better functioning nearshore ecosystems.

Top Priority: Fund key capital budget programs supporting conservation and outdoor recreation. Programs like the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund (PSAR), Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP), and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) are critical to the long-term success of Puget Sound recovery. The legislature funded these programs at near-record levels in 2021. Investing in nature is good for birds and people, let's keep the momentum going by fully funding these programs in the next biennium.

#### PROTECTING THE SHRUB-STEPPE

Audubon's shrub-steppe conservation priorities call on Washington legislators to fund programs that support private landowners' ability to steward healthy landscapes

Top Priority: Funding wildlife-friendly fences through the Washington Shrub-steppe Restoration Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI). The shrub-steppe is an arid ecosystem that once covered over 10 million acres in Eastern Washington. Today, 80% of historic shrub-steppe has been lost or degraded. In 2020 alone, 600,000 acres of this imperiled landscaped burned, further threatening the critically endangered Greater Sage-grouse and the Columbia basin pygmy rabbit. The 2021 Washington State Legislature appropriated \$2.35 million for the creation of the Washington Shrub-steppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI), which is aimed at improving fire resilience and resistance. WSRRI is led by an agency coalition consisting of WDFW, the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The legislature also appropriated an additional \$1.5 million of capital funds to rebuild wildlife-friendly fences. Audubon has worked with WSRRI partners to create a suite of goals and associated actions to promote ecosystem resistance and resilience to fire and landowner preparedness and response, which will be finalized in June 2023. In the meantime, the Washington State Conservation Commission has requested \$1.5 M of capital funding to continue funding wildlife friendly fencing projects, a high priority need identified by the WSRRI and one that Audubon supports.

Top Priority: Funding to conservation districts to assist in protecting shrub-steppe. Conservation districts are trusted, non-regulatory, community-based entities, uniquely positioned to develop relationships with private landowners and provide appropriate site-specific conservation expertise. As human population pressure increases on our public lands, there is an urgent need for habitat protection, stewardship and restoration on private lands across the state. For every dollar of Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) funding that conservation districts receive, they bring \$3.41 of local, state and federal dollars to the table. The SCC has requested an increase of \$10 M in operating funds for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) to build capacity for voluntary stewardship of natural resources on private lands. We think this is a wise investment in private land stewardship and urge the legislature to support their request.

#### INVESTING IN WASHINGTON'S BIODIVERSITY

Top Priority: Supporting the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's biodiversity and budget request. Washington state is experiencing unprecedented losses of biodiversity, and habitat loss, degradation, climate change, pollution, and many other pressures are increasingly threatening fish and wildlife across our state. WDFW has identified 268 Species of Greatest Conservation Need that would benefit from increased management and monitoring. Although WDFW has a comprehensive plan known as the State Wildlife Action Plan to address these needs, the Department lacks the resources to implement conservation actions for 95% of these species. Without adequate funding to support nongame wildlife conservation, we can expect to see increased federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) listings with additional regulatory burdens for communities, a devastating loss of biodiversity, and irreversible impacts to Washington's economy and public health. We support the Department's \$48.8 M request for biodiversity conservation and \$3.8 M request for climate resilience and urge the legislature to do the same.

## Timber rights campaign reaches goal

Forterra, Our Forest Fund, and the Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition successfully hit goal to raise \$500,000 to purchase all 756 acres of timber rights in Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.

As of November 15, the campaign has closed on two of three transactions of \$3.925 million in county, state, and anonymous donor funds, transferring 687 acres of mature forest stands to Kitsap County. Phase three will close by December 15 on the remaining 69 acres of timber rights. The campaign launched on August 15 and closed on October 31, raising the full funding amount in just 11 weeks. Nearly 450 donors and dozens of volunteers are to credit for the success of this campaign.

Forterra and Kitsap County entered into a purchase and sale agreement with Pope Resources, now part of Rayonier, to acquire up to 756 acres of high-priority timber rights, featuring important cultural, ecological, and recreational values.

When Kitsap County acquired the final half of the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park in 2017, the community raised necessary funds to acquire the land, but not the timber rights on the 2,690-acre "Upland Forest." Rayonier retained timber rights through 2042 in the park where harvesting of trees could be accomplished safely and sustainably while allowing recreation and other public benefits to coexist. To date, Rayonier has harvested about 650 acres under the terms of the original agreement.

Upon closing of Phase 3, 38 percent of remaining timber rights will be transferred to Kitsap County. The campaign targeted critical forest areas around valuable wetland habitat, older mature forest, existing trails, and the envisioned Sound-to-Olympics Trail.

## Paper Wasp Sculpture

"Once we discovered them we left them alone all summer in our field. In exchange, the wasps ate insects and left us this beautiful, abandoned sculpture," explains State Senator Christine Rolfes.



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

# Climate Watch - South Kitsap Area Volunteer Opportunity

Kitsap Audubon is still looking for volunteers to survey 2 squares in our Climate Watch program. Surveys are conducted twice a year, once between January 15 and February 15, and once between May 15 and June 15. There is still time to volunteer for this winter's survey period if you are interested. The available squares are in the Port Orchard area. Please visit our website at <a href="https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/climate-watch">https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/climate-watch</a> for a map showing all of Kitsap Audubon's squares.

The available squares have not been surveyed before, so volunteers will have the opportunity to select their own survey sites. Each square will need to have 12 sites, and the sites must be 200 meters or more apart. They must be located on public land, and contain habitat likely to support our target species, the Red-breasted Nuthatch. Once the sites are selected, they will remain the same for each survey.

The survey protocol consists of a 5-minute point count (recording all the birds you see and hear) at each of the 12 sites. Depending on how far apart the sites are, it usually takes 3-4 hours to survey a single square. All 12 sites must be surveyed on the same day, and surveys should be conducted in the morning or late afternoon when bird activity is at its highest. Data is submitted using eBird checklists and the Climate Watch data portal.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Jennifer Standish at *magma1306@gmail.com*. You can also find more information on National Audubon's Climate Watch website: *https://www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-watch* 

#### Photo of Red-breasted Nuthatch by Janine Schutt.



### Kitsap Audubon Society

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To receive your Kingfisher via email and save us the expense of printing and mailing, send your request to genebullock@comcast.net.

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The mission of the Kitsap Audubon Society is to preserve the natural world through education, environmental study and habitat protection, and to promote awareness and enjoyment of local and regional natural areas.

Visit our website at https://www.kitsapaudubon.org

