



JANUARY 2024
Kitsap Audubon Society – Since 1972

THE Kingfisher

January 11th Program (6:30-8:00 p.m. via Zoom)

Birding Big Year: Elevating Women Birders

Tiffany Kersten didn't set out to do a Birding Big Year, but after a series of unanticipated and serendipitous events, she suddenly found herself amidst one. As a sexual assault survivor, she spent 2021 traveling to all corners of the Lower 48 States, tallying birds and gifting personal safety alarms to women she met along the way. Her goal was to see 700 species, and to raise awareness of women's safety in the outdoors. She ended up surpassing her goal and setting a new record, of 726 species. In her presentation, Tiffany will lead us through the fear, empowerment, struggles, and healing that all played vital roles in the personal growth she experienced on this wild adventure.

Tiffany Kersten is a Wisconsin native. She holds a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology from Northland College, and has spent over a decade as an environmental educator, teaching about bird migration with the Cape May Bird Observatory, monitoring shorebirds on Cape Cod, banding Honeycreepers in Hawaii, and finally landing in South Texas where she worked at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge and then managed the McAllen Nature Center. After completing her Lower 48 States Big Year in 2021, she founded her own company, *Nature Ninja Birding Tours*. She guides primarily in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, and offers international tours as well.



Zoom Program, Thursday, Jan. 11th at 6:30 p.m.

To join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/91811374785?pwd=Tm12VIBHWGhRYnRQUmg2RIUrMkJpdz09>

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 - Kevin Eger

Happy New Year! Just minutes before drafting this month's letter, I was holding my son up to the window so that he could see his first snowfall. Watching the excitement in his eyes, it made me think of our "Winter Birds in the Garden" issue of the *Kid's Corner* in December. It is truly remarkable how birds survive and thrive each winter in our gardens and even in some of the coldest, darkest places on earth! If you have young children in your family who are enjoying our Kid's Corner, let us know. We welcome any positive feedback or constructive criticism that will help us make it better!

We have a number of things to celebrate and look forward to in the new year. At our past board meeting, our board members voted unanimously to continue financial support for the Salish Sea Guillemot Program. The citizen science program monitors the health of cliff-dwelling Pigeon Guillemot nesting sites during the summer breeding season. Starting on Whidbey Island, it has grown to include nesting sites in a number of other areas throughout the Puget Sound region, including Bainbridge Island. The data is used by researchers with the University of Washington, the Puget Sound Marine Bird Working Group, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. We appreciate the contributions of our membership, both in their volunteer hours and their financial contributions to our chapter, that make it possible for us to continue supporting projects like this.

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee has begun surveying trails to be added to the *Birdability* map (<https://gis.audubon.org/birdability/>). The map provides accessibility information for birding trails throughout the United States. We submitted our first survey in November on the field trip to Theler Wetlands, and are excited to move forward with this work. Our Education Committee continues to deliver excellent programming both at our monthly membership meetings and at events throughout the county. Vice President Gene Bullock will deliver a presentation to the Encore retirement community in Silverdale this month and I will be working with North Kitsap high schoolers to survey the Bloedel Reserve for this January's Climate Watch Program, as well as partnering with Great Peninsula Conservancy on their wildlife camera project at Grover's Creek near North Kitsap Heritage Park.

If you are interested in volunteering with us in some capacity, find out more here: <https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/volunteer>



Audubon WA 2023 Impact Report

Trina Bayard, Interim Director, Audubon Washington

The **Fall 2023 Audubon Washington Impact Report** summarizes highlights from Audubon Washington's work and impact in Washington in 2023. This past year we collaborated with partners and chapters to pursue conservation, policy, and engagement that make a difference for birds and communities around the state and at our Seward Park Center. While we've made incredible strides, we're now lifting our sights even higher to meet the ambitious hemispheric goals laid out in Audubon's *Flight Plan*.

[Download the 2023 Impact Report.](#)

In Washington we will harness the collective energy of Audubon's powerful partner and chapter network to stabilize declining bird populations, expand community engagement in birds and nature, and protect priority places. It will be a year for working with landowners to protect and restore high-quality bird habitat, fostering inclusive conservation leadership, and empowering local communities to take climate action, all with an eye towards the hemispheric benefits for birds.

With your support, collaboration, and leadership we've accomplished incredible things on behalf of birds this past year, and I couldn't be more grateful for your partnership. Together, we can scale up our conservation, policy, and engagement work as we strive to create positive impact with every new year.

Trina Bayard, Ph.D., Interim Executive Director and Director of Bird Conservation

KID'S CORNER

Shorebirds get the best of two worlds--the land and the sea.

What's better than a day at the beach?

Besides the sun, sand, and waves, the shore has plenty of interesting and entertaining wildlife to watch! Up ahead, dozens of small leggy birds skitter back and forth like speeded-up dancers in the foamy surf.

They share the sandy stage with other shorebirds, as well as with side-walking crabs, half-buried clams, and bristly beach worms.



The coast is where the land and sea come together. Shorebirds belong to both.

They nest on land—often right on the beach—and depend on the ocean or other large body of water for their food.

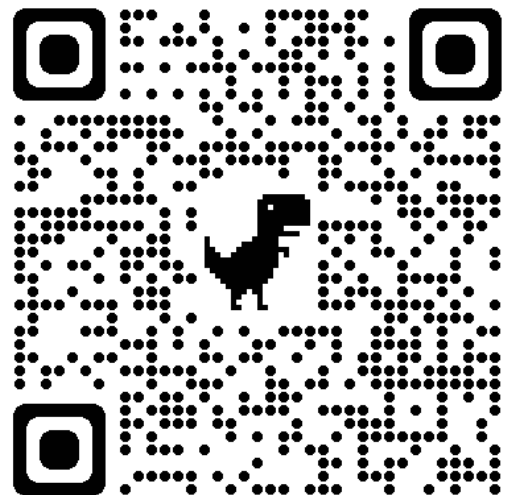
Keep reading to find out more about shorebirds and what makes a beach so much more than a wet sandbox.

Shorebirds nest on the ground, not in trees. Their nests are called scrapes—scratched out shallow places in the sand or gravel. Some shorebirds line their scrapes with dried seaweed, leaves, twigs, pebbles, or shell bits. Others lay their eggs right on the bare sand. The chicks are able to walk within hours of hatching. Camouflage helps protect the eggs and chicks. They blend in with the ground around them.

Any place where land and sea meet offers a full menu for hungry birds. Shorebirds' bills are adapted for finding and eating specific foods.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHERS eat mollusks such as limpets and mussels. These West Coast birds search the rocky shores and tide pools for their supper. The oystercatcher's strong red bill is the perfect tool for prying its prey off rocks and opening up their shells.

PHOTO BY JANINE SCHUTT



Field Trips & Festivals - Al Westphal, Field Trip Chair

Liability Waiver Policy: KAS requires field trip participants to complete a liability waiver. This simple online form from our website (<https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/fieldtrips>). Once a waiver has been 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>

Point No Point (Hansville), Saturday, January 13th. Al & Carolyn Westphal, leaders (westphal@

[aol.com](mailto:westphal@aol.com)). Let's start the new year with a visit to Kitsap County's premier birding location. The main attractions in winter are the variety and number of wintering waterfowl and seabirds.

Trip Report

Theler Wetlands, November 18th. It wasn't a gorgeous day, but the rain held off for the duration of this event as our streak of good field trip weather continued, and a big group of fourteen birding enthusiasts gathered for a leisurely walk through the Theler trails. We were fortunate to have a lot of alert and sharp-eyed participants and assembled a tally of 47 species for the morning including six raptor species. Our chapter president and immediate past president both joined in, along with several other KAS board and committee members, some of whom took the opportunity to conduct an accessibility survey on the Theler trail system.

Wildlife Sightings - Janine Schutt

Send your interesting sightings to wildlifesightings@kitsapaudubon.org.

Notable Kitsap Bird Sightings from www.eBird.org:

Nov. 15 near Port Orchard: 1 hermit thrush

Nov. 17 on Bainbridge Island: 2 northern saw-whet owls

Nov. 22 at Suquamish: 1 eared grebe

Nov. 29 near Kingston: 1 tundra swan

Dec. 2 at Restoration Point (SE Bainbridge Island): 3 cackling geese, 12 harlequin ducks, 1 ruddy turnstone, 23 surfbirds, 7 ancient murrelets, 1 peregrine falcon, 95 ruby-crowned kinglets

Dec. 3 at Port Gamble: 1 western gull

Dec. 4 at Point No Point: 1 Iceland gull, 1 white-throated sparrow

Dec. 4 at Dickerson Creek (Bremerton): 2 American dippers

Dec. 7 near Hansville: 1 Virginia rail

Dec. 8 near Hansville: 2 black

oystercatchers

Dec. 8 on Dyes Inlet: 7 long-tailed ducks

Dec. 9 near Hansville: 6 greater white-fronted geese, 2 Wilson's snipes

Dec. 9 on south Bainbridge Island: 7 black scoters

Dec. 10 at Kitsap Lake: 2 canvasbacks, 1 redhead, 1 merlin

Jay Wiggs photo of Wilson's Snipe.



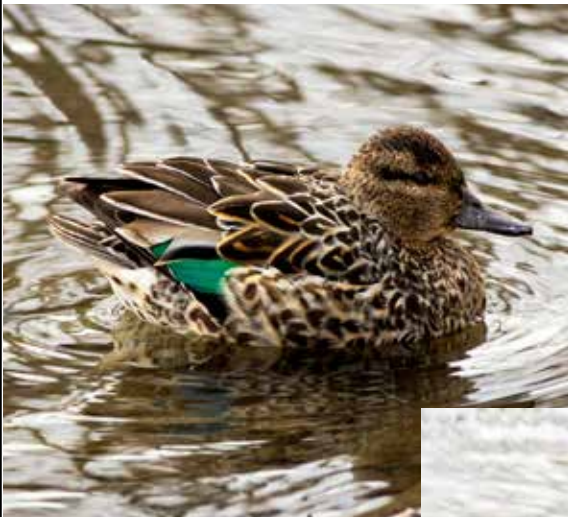
Bird of the Month: Green-winged Teal

by Janine Schutt

North America is home to three species of ducks called teals. All are present in Washington. Blue-winged and cinnamon teals pass through western Washington in migration and breed in eastern Washington. Green-winged teals are prevalent throughout Washington from fall to spring and some stay year-round. Here are some fascinating facts about the green-winged teal:

- Smallest dabbling duck in North America.
- Breeds across Canada, Alaska, and the northern U.S. Winters along the West Coast, southern US., and Mexico. Is year-round in some areas of the West.
- Wintering flocks may contain up to 50,000 individuals.
- Male is mostly gray with a cinnamon head and a striking white vertical stripe on the shoulder and an iridescent green stripe on the side of the head; female and juvenile have mottled brown plumage. All have a teal green speculum on the wings.
- Male of the Eurasian subspecies lacks the white vertical stripe and instead sports horizontal black and white striping across the upper back.
- Breeds in shallow wetlands with emergent vegetation.
- Winters on freshwater and saltwater and utilizes tidal mudflats more than any other duck.
- Eats vegetation and seeds in fall and winter. Consumes insect larvae and aquatic invertebrates in spring and summer.
- Tight, comb-like projections on the inner edge of the bill, called *lamellae*, filter tiny invertebrates from the water, which enables the capture of smaller food items than other dabbling ducks.
- Pair bonds form on wintering grounds.
- Nests on the ground in tall grass near water.
- Male abandons the female when she begins the 3-week incubation of 6-9 eggs.
- Chicks can swim and forage almost immediately upon hatching and become independent when 35 days old.

Photos of Green-winged Teal (female left, males in sun and shade) by Janine Schutt.



Remembering Nancy Ladenberger

Nancy Ladenberger was a hugely important leader and influence in shaping the legacy of Kitsap Audubon for many years. She served as President, Treasurer, and Christmas Bird Count Compiler, and was an innovative field trip leader willing to explore new areas. She had a remarkable knowledge of birds, and was a gifted teacher, mentor and leader.

Washington Audubon's 25 chapters take turns planning, organizing, and hosting the annual Audubon Conference of Washington (ACOW). These annual gatherings bring together the Washington Audubon professional staff and leaders from all 25 Washington chapters. When Kitsap Audubon's turn came in 2006, Nancy Ladenberger did a heroic job of planning, organizing and shepherding the event, down to the last detail. It was a historic event held at the Fort Worden Conference Center in Port Townsend, and set the bar high for every ACOW held since then.

Nancy pioneered many of the things we now take for granted, and deserves to be remembered for her enduring impact on Kitsap Audubon.

Photo by Gene Bullock (2005)



Gandalf By Jan Gardner

Gandalf is different from most Glaucous-winged gulls. For one thing he has a name. For another, he comes to my home every morning for breakfast. He perches on a tall power pole by the road. When he sees me in the window, he flies over to the garage roof and waits until I throw him some bread. We both like the kind with lots of grains and seeds. He makes several graceful swoops before landing in the driveway to eat. He is quiet and polite for a gull and often shares breakfast with a few crows and a squirrel. When he finishes, he circles back to the pole where he scans the sky for an hour or so, then flies off to his day job.

It has been almost two years, rain, shine or snow that Gandalf has been visiting in the morning. When I first saw him, he was likely a young bird; his feathers were mostly brownish and his bill was dark. By summer his plumage turned lighter. He always came alone. Then last spring he came with a mate. She was white like him with gray wings, yellow bill with a red dot, pink webbed feet, but petite. I called her Gullfriend. They flew together all summer. Her perch was on the next power pole down the road. When they saw me, both flew to the garage roof and waited for their bread. They started showing up at unusual times, busy with nesting responsibilities no doubt.

By September Gandalf was again coming alone. The pairs mate for life, but separate in the Fall, then find each other in the Spring. Isn't that romantic? His head became darker with gray-brown barred winter plumage. When he molted, he left me a lovely white and gray flight feather.

As the days grew shorter in December, Gandalf flew in at dawn before the crows sat in the tree waiting to steal his breakfast. One morning he wasn't on the pole waiting for me. Yes, I worry about a gull, and even buy extra loaves of seedy bread. Later that day when I came home from shopping, there he was on the pole. How did he know it was my car coming up the driveway? Well, he does have a birds-eye view.



Advocacy in Action – Justin Carrington

In the spirit of collective responsibility and environmental stewardship, members of the Kitsap Audubon Society and the Kitsap community recently met with state legislators to shape the discourse around crucial conservation issues in the upcoming legislative session. The focus? Holding oil companies accountable, fostering cleaner school transportation, and revolutionizing recycling with the WRAP Act.**

Holding Oil Companies Accountable:

Amidst the clamor of rising gas prices, Kitsap Audubon members champion the cause of transparency in the oil industry. The narrative often blames climate policies for surging gas costs, but a deeper look reveals a stark correlation with record-high profits of oil companies. Advocating for consumer protection, Kitsap Audubon calls for transparency measures to shield the public from potential price gouging.

100% Clean School Buses:

With a vision for a healthier future, Kitsap Audubon passionately advocates for 100% clean targets in school transportation. Washington students deserve a ride to school that doesn't compromise their health or contribute to climate change. This proposed policy not only sets ambitious clean energy goals for school buses but also allocates essential funds for the procurement of environmentally friendly buses and charging infrastructure.

WRAP Act:

In a bid to revolutionize waste management and curtail the environmental impact of packaging, Kitsap Audubon members are rallying behind the Washington Recycling and Packaging (WRAP) Act. This forward-thinking policy seeks to reform our recycling system by shifting the financial burden from end-users to the producers responsible for inundating our lands and waters with packaging waste. In tandem, a complementary "Bottle Bill" proposes the implementation of a container deposit system, boosting collection rates for plastics and inspiring a culture of responsibility.

The Kitsap Audubon Society, renowned for its commitment to bird conservation, extends its wingspan to encompass broader environmental concerns. By engaging in meaningful discussions with local representatives, our members exemplify the power of grassroots advocacy. As we approach the legislative session, Kitsap Audubon invites the community to stand united in championing these conservation priorities. Together, we can usher in a sustainable future—one where accountability and responsibility shape our environmental legacy.

** **The Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC)** represents more than 25 Washington State-wide environmental organizations, including Washington Audubon. Each year coalition members agree on their top environmental policy priorities for the upcoming state legislative session. Kitsap Audubon members met in December via Zoom with all three legislators from the 23rd Legislative District to discuss the EPC priorities for the 2024 legislative session, which begins January 8th.

Screen photo by Justin Carrington shows Kitsap Audubon members with 23rd Legislative District Senator Drew Hansen: Top row – Irene Bowie, Justin Carrington and Gene and Sandy Bullock. Lower row – Sen. Hansen and Judy Willott. The group also held virtual meetings with 23rd District representatives Tarra Simmons and Greg Nance.



Join the Great Backyard Bird Count

Every February, count for as little as 15 minutes in your own backyard to help expand our understanding of birds. The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot.

The 27th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) takes place Friday, February 16, through Monday, February 19. Bird and nature lovers everywhere unite in the effort to tally as many of the world's bird species as possible over these four days. Combined with other bird counts, GBBC results help create a clearer picture of how birds are faring—whether individual species are declining, increasing, or holding steady in the face of habitat loss, climate change, and other threats.

Each participant or group counts birds for any length of time (but for at least 15 minutes) and enters the birds they could identify at each site they visited, whether that be from home, at a local park, or in a wilderness area. People of all ages and skill levels are welcome. And there's another reason to count the birds: It's good for you.

An estimated 385,000 people participated during the 2022 GBBC. They reported more than 7,000 species from 192 countries. Many GBBC participants discover a new fascination with birds and enjoy exploring (and comparing) results from around the world.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint project of the National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Birds Canada and is made possible in part by founding sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

Christine Rolfes legislator of the year

Each year, **Washington Conservation Action** names a *Legislator of the Year*: a leader who has gone above and beyond as an environmental champion during the most recent legislative session. **This year we are honored to announce former Senator Christine Rolfes of the 23rd Legislative District as Washington Conservation Action's 2023 Legislator of the Year!**

"State leaders must never let up on making important policy and budget decisions to ensure current and future generations enjoy a livable planet by taking action to fight climate change and preserve and restore our lands and waters," said Rolfes. "We must make sure the legislature continues to address dangerous climate pollution and innovative forest management. I am committed to continuing this work at the local county level now, and I am so honored to be recognized as Washington Conservation Action's 2023 Legislator of the Year!"

Over a long career as one of the most passionate and dedicated environmental leaders in the Washington State Legislature, former Sen. Rolfes focused on three crucial areas: She fought for forestry policies that will ensure healthy state forestlands for future generations. She supported measures to clean up and restore Puget Sound. She was steadfast in her commitment to tackling dangerous pollution.

During the 2023 legislative session and as the Senate's lead budget writer, former Sen. Rolfes championed securing \$83 million to store carbon in older, carbon-dense, structurally complex forests. Rolfes' efforts ensured the state took a holistic approach to investing funds under the Climate Commitment Act by including credible natural resource solutions to reduce carbon in the atmosphere and improve resilience.

On top of all that, former Senator Rolfes is the first woman to win this distinguished award twice!

Rolfes has led on systemic changes needed to hold polluters accountable. She was the prime sponsor of the 2023 WRAP Act (Washington Recycling and Packaging), which would have standardized recycling statewide, using funds from manufacturers that create excess packaging. That bill is one of the Environmental Priority Coalition priorities for this year.

Rolfes was recently appointed North Kitsap County Commissioner, but her outstanding work to center the environment and people in her budget and policy work in the legislature deserves this important recognition. **Photo by Gene Bullock**



Stillwaters joins GPC

Naomi Maasberg and Joleen Palmer founded Stillwaters Environmental Center in 1999 to connect the people of Kingston and North Kitsap to the natural wonders found at the Carpenter Creek Estuary. They knew this special place needed to be protected, and they understood that community science can be a powerful tool for good when used to educate and empower citizens to make ecologically based decisions. For the past 24 years, the dedicated team of board, staff, interns, volunteers, and donors have done an amazing job protecting and stewarding this vital wildlife habitat. Stillwaters has brought people together and created a community to care for this watershed.

Great Peninsula Conservancy (GPC)—your local land trust—protects and stewards ecologically valuable lands in west Puget Sound, including the Kingston area. GPC's work conserves vital wildlife habitat and connects people to nature.

GPC Executive Director Nate Daniel and Stillwaters President Alicia Olivas have signed final documents to join Stillwaters with GPC. (see photo)

Nate Daniels explains that when GPC was approached by the Stillwaters board to see if GPC would take on their work under the umbrella of its environmental education program, Land Labs, it made immediate sense to everyone at the table. Of course, ideas require action, and over the past year Stillwaters and GPC have convened many times to ensure the Stillwaters ethic will live on, honoring the work of the past while reinvigorating the mission with fresh energy and expanded community support.

GPC's work is grounded in protecting land and water, forever. Together, GPC and Stillwaters will maintain the care and admiration the Stillwaters community has for the natural world, and will continue to connect with more people to foster a resilient future at Carpenter Creek and throughout our region.



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

Gene Bullock

Sandy Bullock

Isabella Carlson

Lauren Eyer

Don Willott

Grant Winther (emeritus)

Standing Committee Chairs:

Field Trips: Alan Westphal,

Conservation Chair:

Isabella Carlson

Education Chair: Lynn Willmott,

Live Meeting Greeters: Milly

Bellemere & Bob Schumacher

Membership Administrator:

Jennifer Szerlog

Programs: Lynn Willmott

Purple Martins: Sandy Pavey

Wildlife Sightings: Janine Schutt

Scholarship Chair: Sandy Bullock

Social Media Chair: Annie Bui

Publicity Chair: Gene Bullock

Webmaster: Michael Szerlog,

info@kitsapaudubon.org

www.kitsapaudubon.org

Kingfisher Editor: Gene Bullock,

GeneBullock@comcast.net,

360-394-5635

Follow us on Facebook and, Instagram

Facebook: <https://www.Facebook.com/KitsapAububonSociety/>

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

Follow us on Twitter at @kitsapaudubon

Watch previous recorded programs:

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

The Kingfisher is printed on recycled paper by Blue Sky Printing and mailed by Olympic Presort, both family-owned local businesses.



Kitsap Audubon Society

P.O. Box 961, Poulsbo, WA 98370

Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
SILVERDALE WA
PERMIT NO. 111

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 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.

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 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>

