

JUNE 2017

Kitsap Audubon Society – Since 1972



THE Kingfisher

June 8, 2017, Program



Live Birds of Prey!

Special family program

Meet Cedar, the Red-tailed Hawk, and Ranger, the Peregrine Falcon, two of the most popular wildlife ambassadors from West Sound Wildlife Shelter.

The shelter rescues, rehabilitates and releases thousands of injured birds and mammals each year. But sometimes the bird or mammal is too badly injured to fully recover and survive on its own in the wild. These special birds may become live ambassadors whose educational mission is to help audiences understand wildlife and learn how

to become better stewards of wildlife and nature.

Trained volunteers visit schools and community organizations to present these birds and their special stories.

Kids can sit up front

Kitsap Audubon saves room on the floor up front so younger children can get closer to the birds and presenters, and have their questions answered.

Photos by Gene Bullock

Special Thanks

Kitsap Audubon is especially grateful to our many friends and members who make special contributions during the year. Some designate Kitsap Audubon for a portion of their annual **Bainbridge One Call For All** donation. Others donate during the annual **Kitsap Great Give**. Many members routinely donate amounts over and above their annual chapter dues. We're able to accomplish far more because of your generous support.

Family Potluck Dinner

Instead of a picnic, we will once again host an old-fashioned family potluck dinner, followed by our family-oriented June 8th live birds program. Bring the kids and grandkids; but please RSVP with the number in your group so we're prepared. RSVP to GeneBullock@Comcast.net or call 360-394-5635.

Bring a dessert, salad or your favorite dish to share - enough for your group and about six others. Kitsap Audubon will provide a main dish, beverages and cups, plates, utensils, etc.

4:00 p.m. - Dinner set up

5:00 p.m. - Dinner

6:30 p.m. - Program setup

7:00 p.m. - Start program

This will be our final program until fall. Kitsap Audubon does not meet in July or August.

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

Kitsap Audubon Society

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Kitsap Audubon Major Contributors

Major sources of funding for Kitsap Audubon, apart from membership dues, are the annual Bainbridge One Call For All Campaign and the annual Kitsap Great Give. Wild Birds Unlimited (Jim Ulrich) and Pandion Nature Tours (George Gerdts) also make generous donations during each year to Kitsap Audubon.

In addition, many of our members make generous donations over and above their annual dues each year, sometimes designating them for scholarships, conservation land acquisition or Audubon Adventures curriculum kits for 4th grade classrooms.

Yarn Donations

Diane Bachen and Sharron Ham have been coordinating the year-round collection of donated yarn, which is used by volunteers at the Purdy Women's Prison to knit clothing items for our Christmas Mitten Tree and subsequently delivered to shelters and other agencies serving those in need.

Diane, Sharron and all of us in Kitsap Audubon deeply appreciate those who so generously donate yard and volunteer their time for this long-continuing program.

Kitsap Audubon 2017 Kingfisher Award presented to Michael Szerlog

The 2017 Kingfisher Award was presented at our May 11 meeting to Michael Szerlog by last year's recipient, Janine Schutt.

Kitsap Audubon's highest award, it is given each year to an individual or couple in recognition of outstanding service over a period of five or more years.

Michael has served as our webmaster since 2003, working behind the scenes to maintain the virtual face of Kitsap Audubon. He has been involved with KAS since 1995.

Michael has maintained the site for 14 yrs, adding photos from members; updating links to area birding locations; and providing online access to the Kingfisher newsletter. In 2016, when our internet provider discontinued free hosting, he recreated the entire Kitsap Audubon website using Squarespace for our website hosting, which allows for a more professional looking site with many additional design features.

Photo by Don Willott.



Kitsap Audubon presents \$1,000 scholarships to three Kitsap High School seniors



Kitsap Audubon's Scholarship Chair, Sandy Bullock, presented \$1,000 Scholarship Award Certificates to three Kitsap high school graduating seniors (left to right): Elizabeth Rolfs, Bainbridge High School; Nolan Platz, Kingston High School; and Natasha Hunter, Olympic High School. The awards are given annually to Kitsap graduating high school seniors who plan to pursue academic degrees in fields related to Kitsap Audubon's mission of protecting wildlife, habitat and the environment. Photo by Don Willott

Field Trips & Festivals - Al & Andrew Westphal

Birding Festivals: A summary of events statewide may be found at the Washington State Audubon site: <http://wa.audubon.org/bird-festivals-0>

Ruby Creek Marsh (Port Orchard): Saturday, June 10.

Bob Wiltermood, host and leader: Ruby Creek Marsh is a 23-acre preserve just southwest of Port Orchard. It is located at 1015 SW Harper Road, Port Orchard, WA. 140 species have been identified in Ruby Creek Marsh, and 66 species of birds have been found nesting there. Audubon members are welcome at any time, but Bob Wiltermood will make a special appearance to host a KAS group. Meeting time is 9 a.m. on June 10th. Call or text Bob for directions at 360-731-8975 or email: bob@wiltermood.com

Billy Frank-Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge: Tuesday, June 13. Al Westphal, Leader, westphalac@aol.com, 206-780-7844 (e-mail preferred). A long half-day trip, but there are few places in the region better for observing a great variety of nesting bird species, and they should all be here by mid-June. We will walk the forest and barn trails and as far out on the boardwalk as we care to go. There is a good option for lunch after birding at Norma's just outside the refuge. Meet at the parking lot by the visitor center at 8:30. a.m.

Protection Island Sunset Cruise: Saturday, June 17, 5:15 – 8:30 p.m. from the City Dock in Port Townsend led by noted naturalist George Gerdts. Protection Island is a 400 acre National Wildlife Refuge at the entrance



to Discovery Bay. Over 70% of the marine birds which nest in Puget Sound make Protection Island their breeding ground. Some 6000 pairs of Glaucous-winged Gulls, 22,000 pairs of Rhinoceros Auks, thousands of Pigeon Guillemots, Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorants and sometimes, Brandt's Cormorants, too; and a few pairs of Black Oystercatchers nest on the island. One of the main attractions is the nesting colony of the outrageous TUFTED PUFFIN. Some 20-30 pairs nest in the bluffs. To sign up: Call Bainbridge Island Parks and Recreation at 206-842-2306 ext.118 and ask for "Protection Island Sunset Cruise" #431851-01. Cost is \$85.00/participant plus additional \$5.00 charge for non-Bainbridge Island residents. KAS members will have 20% (\$17.00) of the fare DONATED to Kitsap Audubon Society by informing BI Parks that they are KAS members when they sign up. The "Glacier Spirit" is a comfortable, diesel-powered yacht with excellent viewing from inside the craft and ample viewing space outside on the front deck. The Glacier Spirit leaves from Port Townsend at 5:30 p.m. sharp and returns between 8:30 and 9:00

p.m. Boarding will start at 5:15 p.m. Soft drinks, and snacks will be provided, but feel free to bring your own light dinner; and dress in appropriate layers.

Trip Report

Theler Wetlands, May 13, led by Al and Andrew Westphal.

Twelve members observed a gray but dry International Migratory Bird Day with our annual spring visit to Theler. Although the species count was only 36, it seemed higher. With many birds high in treetops or deep in foliage, the group had to work hard for observations, but was rewarded with sightings of four warbler species, four species of swallows and nice looks at Warbling Vireos. With sightings of only two waterfowl species, one gull, and no shorebirds (other than Killdeer), it was obvious that the migration at Theler is just about over. The notable exception to this was a "kettle" of Turkey Vultures that hovered most of the morning as they migrate north.

Photo of Al and Andrew Westphal by Don Willott.

The Marsh Wren can be an obstreperous scold. - Photo by Jay Wiggs.





Volunteer cleanup and installation crew for Brownsburg Purple Martin colony, left to right: Sandy Pavey, Lisa Pedersen, Shawn Taylor, Larry and Yvonne Harper, and Barbara Hager.



The four species of swallows seen regularly in the Theler Wetlands area are easy to tell apart if they sit still. Both the Tree Swallow (upper left) and Violet-green Swallow (upper right) have white cheeks; but the white of the Violet Green includes the eye and curls up around the neck. The Barn Swallow (lower left) has a cleft tail and the Cliff Swallow (lower right) does not. The Cliff also has a white patch on its forehead. Photos by Jay Wiggs, except for National Audubon photo of Cliff Swallow.



Save Port Gamble Forest Campaign

Coming into home stretch

The Kitsap Forest and Bay Community Campaign is coming into the home stretch. To date the community has raised \$2.1 million, with \$1.4 million more needed to reach our goal of \$3.5 million. Every dollar counts! So please help us continue to spread the word about this incredible community opportunity to save the entire 3,500 acre Port Gamble Forest! We have until July 31st to raise funds to save the remaining 1,645 acres. If we don't reach our goal, we will direct funds raised toward as many acres as possible; but let's do all we can to push through to the finish line!

Donate online at www.savepg.org

Photo: Lila Trowbridge and Susannah Hale of Forterra show their appreciation for Kitsap Audubon's December 2016 donation of \$20,000 to the SavePG Campaign. That donation brings to \$50,000 the total of Kitsap Audubon's donations for land acquisitions in the Port Gamble Forest.



Volunteers Needed for New Christmas Bird Count Circle in North Kitsap/Port Gamble

Saturday, December 30, is the tentative launch date for the new Kitsap Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) circle in North Kitsap-Port Gamble. The date selected will not conflict with the traditional Kitsap County (KC) CBC on Saturday, December 16, so volunteers can participate in both CBCs.

Details still need to be worked out, such as the number and boundaries of count areas within the 15-mile diameter circle. The new circle will include all of North Kitsap that is not already included in our traditional circle, which is centered at the junction of Fairgournds Road and Stampede Boulevard.

The North Kitsap CBC circle has been dormant for more than a decade. It includes some of Kitsap County's major biridng hotspots, such as Point No Point County Park in Hansville, the Port Gamble area, Salsbury Point County Park, Poulsbo's Fish Park, Kitsap Memorial State Park, and tribal lands belonging to the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Suquamish Tribes.

Kitsap Audubon's traditional Kitsap County (KC) CBC has continued without interruption for 43 years, and currently involves up to 80 volunteers. Janine Schutt is the official compiler for the KC CBC Circle. Gene Bullock has been the lead organizer of the KC CBC for the past 11 years. The KC CBC Circle stretches from Manchester to Poulsbo and from Seabeck to Bainbridge Island.

Gene Bulloc is currently leading efforts to get the new NK-Port Gamble CBC Circle up and running. Contact him at genebullock@comcast.net; or 360-394-5635, if you are interested participating in the new NK-Port Gamble CBC or helping with the organization and planning.

Birdscaping Your Backyard - Gene Bullock

Our love-affair with lawns goes back to the middle ages, when expansive, well-tended lawns were a status symbol for wealthy aristocrats. It's a cultural fixation that the makers of lawn chemicals and lawn maintenance equipment are happy to promote. They would like us to believe that we risk becoming outcasts if our lawns are not close cropped and free of weeds.

But maintaining a perpetually green, weed-free lawn requires prodigious quantities of municipally treated, drinking quality water, manufactured fertilizers, and herbicides and pesticides. Homeowners put 66 million tons of these toxic chemicals on their lawns every year. These toxic chemicals poison our groundwater, streams and Puget Sound fish and shell fish. In one study, traces of these toxic chemicals were found in 99% of the children tested. These chemicals kill friend and foe alike, including some seven million birds every year, along with countless bees and garden-friendly insects.

By raising your mower blade just a few inches, you can make your lawns harder and more able to crowd out weeds. Making your lawn more of a mowed meadow may also give your weeds a new identity as wildflowers. If you stop using toxic chemicals, you also enable your "good guy" insects and birds to help control the bad guys in your gardens.

While robins may find a worm or two there, lawns offer birds little in the way of food or shelter. The best way to "birdscape" your yard is to replace some or all of your grass with wildlife-friendly native plants and shrubs of varying heights. You might also want to preserve those dead trees by simply pruning branches

that may be hazardous. Wildlife will thank you; because the neighborhood woodpeckers will gladly excavate cavities in your dead or decaying trees, creating natural nest cavities for dozens of species of birds and other wildlife.

People have the mistaken notion that the deep forest is the best place to find birds. Actually, most birds prefer "edge habitat," the brushy fringes of forests,



meadows, fence lines, country ditches, and the perimeters of wetlands and waterways. Edge habitat is a pretty good model for a wildlife friendly yard. Sparrows love tickets where they can hide from predators. Including a mix of flowering plants and shrubs, rock gardens and orderly paths can make your yard attractive, as well as a welcoming haven for wildlife.

However, it's not enough to make your yard attractive to wildlife. You'll also want to make it safe for wildlife. Besides avoiding toxic chemicals, you'll want to make birds less vulnerable to predators, and make them less vulnerable to the spread of disease.

Let's face it. We feed birds mainly because we enjoy watching them. They can easily survive without our handouts. But, it can be a wonderful way

to connect your family – and especially children – with wildlife and nature. But encouraging birds to congregate around feeders makes them more vulnerable to diseases carried by other birds. So, if you feed them, you must make sure the food is fresh and spoiled seed is carefully removed, including the spillage underneath your feeders. Moldy seed is toxic.

You must also clean and sanitize feeding surfaces several times a month; and flush and replace the water in your bird baths. It helps to locate them close to a faucet or garden hose.

Also locate bird feeders and bird baths close to cover, so birds can quickly dart to safety when a predator shows up – but not so close a stealthy cat can leap on them from hiding. Domestic cats kill an estimated three billion birds every year – more than the next three biggest bird hazards combined!

Minimize window collisions by using UV reflective decals to break up the image. Frightened birds see trees and shrubs reflected in your windows and mistake it for an escape route.

Local garden shops can help you choose wildlife friendly plants and shrubs that are native to our area and provide food for birds. They can also advise on what not to plant, such as invasive plants like nandia, also known as "heavenly bamboo," whose berries are toxic to birds, and have been known to kill flocks of Cedar Waxwings. **[Next issue: Living With Wildfie]**

Photo shows backyard left semi-wild to accommodate nesting birds. - Gene Bullock



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.

Kitsap Audubon Society - Membership Renewal

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

Name _____ Phone _____

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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.

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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 www.kitsapaudubon.org

