

JANUARY 2018

Kitsap Audubon Society – Since 1972



THE Kingfisher

January 11, 2018, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. - Poulsbo Library

Avian Evolution: How Birds Got to Be Birds

Let master birder and author Connie Sidles take you back in time when dinosaurs roamed the Earth and Nature began to experiment with a new approach to flight: birds. Exciting new fossils of extraordinary detail are being found in huge numbers in northeast China, dating back to the cusp of time when dinosaurs had begun to evolve into birds. At the same time strange and wondrous, these creatures - and others being discovered all over the world - open our eyes to the ways that evolution has shaped the biome and its birds that we enjoy today.

Connie Sidles is a perennial favorite at Kitsap Audubon, and keeps returning with more wonderful stories about birds and birdwatching at her "favorite place on earth:" the Montlake Fill, also known as the Union Bay Natural Area. Connie led a Kitsap Audubon field trip there. Connie has authored numerous books and countless articles.



She has been managing editor of many publications, including *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *The Adventure Travel Association*, *Teleflora* and *Pacific Northwest Magazine*. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Chicago with a degree in Egyptology. Check out her popular blog at www.constancesidles.com/

This piece of amber holds the remains of a 99-million-year-old fossilized bird.

-- Ming Bai/Chinese Academy of Science.

WINTER CANCELLATIONS
If evening classes are cancelled at the Poulsbo campus of Olympic College because of hazardous driving conditions, you should assume that our meeting has also been cancelled.

**Coalition saves 4,000 acres
of Port Gamble Forest
with successful addition of
1,500 acres (details Page 5)**

Kitsap Audubon Society

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President's Letter - Diane Bachen

New Year's greetings! Hope everyone had a lovely holiday and that your year is off to a good start. Thank you to everyone who contributed articles of clothing or non-perishables to our Mitten Tree at our December meeting. Those donations were gratefully received at several food banks and were included in Christmas gift baskets at four service agencies. They certainly brought a lot of holiday cheer to folks in need.

Starting in this issue, Janine Schutt, one of our board members, and photographer extraordinaire, will be taking over the Wildlife Sightings column from Joan Carson, who has been doing such a wonderful job filling us in on what is in our area over the years. Many thanks to Joan for all her hard work in keeping the column going and to Janine for taking this on.

Kitsap Audubon conducted two Christmas Bird Counts in December; and the final results will be published in the next Kingfisher. A big thank you to everyone who participated. The Christmas Bird Count is sponsored by National Audubon and this was its 117th year. It is the longest running citizen science survey in the world! CBC results show that winter ranges are shifting as populations of birds are moving northwards in response to increasing winter temperatures. Birds that were rare in some areas are now more common in the winter. The EPA uses CBC statistics as primary indicators of climate change. Your



involvement has done much to support this effort.

There are still two other ways to be involved in projects that work toward a better understanding of bird population trends and movements. Project Feeder Watch (Feederwatch.org) started November 11 and ends on April 13. You can join anytime up to April 12. It involves a count of the birds at your feeder over a period of two consecutive days. The other project is the Great Backyard Bird Count (birdcount.org) which runs from February 16-18, 2018. NOTE: Both of these projects involve online data entry or in the case of GBBC, eBird can also be used. They no longer use a mail-in pen and paper entry system. Both are great ways to be involved in citizen science and help our feathered friends.

Photo: Diane and Sharron Ham deliver donated food and clothing to Kitsap food banks and service charities. Photo by Gene Bullock

Kitsap Audubon Society meets the 2nd Thursday of each month, September through June, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., on the lower level of the Poulsbo Library, 700 NE Lincoln Rd. Programs free, open to the public.

Now you can donate, join or renew online

Thanks to our webmaster, Michael Szerlog, and the beautiful website he has created, members and friends of Kitsap Audubon now have the option of donating, joining or renewing online using a credit card. When you visit our

website (www.kitsapaudubon.org), just click on the button that says "Take Action." You'll be transported immediately to a screen with such options as "Donate" or "Join and make a difference." Or click on

"Membership" to Join or Renew. Just follow the prompts from there, and make sure you provide all the information needed by our Treasurer, Sandy Bullock, and Membership Chair, Sara Kane.

National vs Kitsap Audubon Membership

Many are confused about whether membership in National Audubon makes them full members of Kitsap Audubon. While Kitsap Audubon is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, it is financially separate and independent, and depends entirely on chapter dues

and donations to support its programs and activities. National Audubon shares the names of its members who happen to live in Kitsap County, but the small amount of NAS dues it shares doesn't even offset the cost of printing and mailing the chapter newsletter to noncontributing

peripheral "members." If you are a member of National Audubon, please also join Kitsap Audubon and help support our outstanding programs, educational outreach, and tireless advocacy for wildlife and habitat here in Kitsap County.

Kitsap Audubon Christmas Bird Counts

Our Christmas Bird Count compilers, Janine Schutt and Jennifer Standish, are still sorting the results; but reports from our team leaders show that this year's Kitsap Audubon CBCs were exceptional by every measure. Summaries of the final results will be published in the February Kingfisher.



Photo left: Lee Robinson's Bainbridge CBC team hosted special guests: State Senator Christine Rolfes and her husband Leonard and daughter Catherine, as well as Audubon Washington Scientific Director Trina Bayard. Left to right, Leonard Rolfes, Regina Spoor, Catherine Rolfes, Sen. Christine Rolfes, Lee & Kirk Robinson, Judy Willott, Dale Spoor, Trina Bayard, Dana Ashton, Steve Patterson. Photo by Don Willott

Photo right shows Poulsbo/Liberty Bay CBC team scanning the Poulsbo waterfront and marina. The team of 11 is led by Gene and Sandy Bullock. Photo by Gene Bullock

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>

Marrowstone Island, Oak Bay, Fort Flagler, Wednesday, January 24. George Gerdts & Mary Anne Rossing, leaders. Two accomplished naturalists will lead a tour to a number of spots featuring wintering waterfowl and other birds, possibly venturing as far as Port Townsend. The group will assemble at 8 a.m. at the boat launch area of Salsbury County Park and form car pools for the day. Expect to finish at Fort Flagler or Fort Worden State Park and return by late afternoon. Pack a lunch and snacks for a FULL-DAY EVENT. Due to constricted access at several locations, this group size must be limited to two carloads, so contact George ASAP to sign up at geopandion@gmail.com or 206-842-8138 (leave a message) for a reserved spot. Also please notify George of any cancellations in order to make sure all spaces can be filled.

Skagit/Samish Flats Area: Saturday, February 10. Al & Andrew Westphal, leaders, westphalac@aol.com, 206-780-7844 (e-mail preferred). Back by popular demand! We will look for the over-wintering flocks of Snow Geese and Trumpeter Swans along with a terrific array of other waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and others. This will be a long full-day event. Group size is limited. Contact Al Westphal to register and for details.



Lion's Field/Port Washington Narrows: Saturday, February 24, 2018 (half-day). Contact Gene or Sandy Bullock to reserve a spot (360-394-5635; genebullock@comcast.net). This morning field trip to Port Washington Narrows in Bremerton is a tradition started many years ago by Ivan Summers. We customarily end it with lunch at the Boatshed Restaurant. Tens of thousands of marine birds winter in these protected waters, and well-maintained Bremerton parks provide outstanding views plus convenient parking. We'll meet at 9 a.m. at Lion's Field Park on Lebo Lane. We'll also visit Evergreen Park and stop at Lower Rota Vista Park. Kitsap Audubon has installed steps, a handrail and an interpretive sign at this charming little park at the end of Elizabeth Avenue, which offers exceptional views of a unique colony of Pelagic Cormorants and pair of Peregrine Falcons that nest on the underside of the Warren Avenue Bridge.

Circumnavigate Bainbridge Island: Saturday, March 24 (BI Parks & Rec. event). Aboard the ADMIRAL PETE with George Gerdts as leader/naturalist. AN ANNUAL HIGHLIGHT: SAVE THE DATE! Details in February.

Trip Reports

Birding Bainbridge Island, November 21. Brad Waggoner led a group of eight very committed birders on an expedition that covered numerous hot spots on the island. In spite of a truly incessant rainfall, the group was able to tally a very respectable list of seabird and waterfowl, and Brad proved to be very adept at pishing out

a good many sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, waxwings and others. The highlight for most was the opportunity to enter the gated Country Club community and overlook the Puget Sound seabirds and shorebirds from above Restoration Point.

CBC Training and Warmup at Point No Point, December 9. About 45 birders gathered at Point No Point County Park for a few hours of instruction and organization in preparation for the chapter's two upcoming Christmas Bird Count days. Weather was cooperative, if chilly and overcast. But there was no rain, and the calm sea state enabled members to practice skills with optics and gain some familiarization with Puget Sound winter seabirds, especially grebes, loons, and alcids. The highlight of the day though was the pod of Orcas that swam around the point mid-session and completely stole the show.

Wildlife Sightings - Janine Schutt

The only sighting I received this month was from Joan Carson, who said that her neighbor, Charlie Morgan, saw what appeared to be an *American three-toed woodpecker* visiting his feeders in the Poulsbo area on Nov. 26th and 27th. Unfortunately he wasn't able to get a confirmation photograph. According to eBird, there has never been a confirmed sighting of this species in Kitsap County. So don't just assume it's a hairy woodpecker at your suet feeder. Take a closer look and you may get credit for Kitsap's first confirmed sighting of an American three-toed woodpecker!

If you see something interesting, please e-mail me at jeschutt@hotmail.com. Be sure to put "Wildlife Sightings" in the subject line. If you don't have e-mail you can call me at 360-830-4446.

Notable Kitsap Bird Sightings from www.eBird.org

Nov. 10 at Kitsap Lake near Bremerton: 1 tundra swan
Nov. 13 near Silverdale: 1 turkey vulture (late migrant)
Nov. 17 near Port Orchard: 1 **blue jay (First in Kitsap County)**
Nov. 26 in Seabeck: 6 trumpeter swans flying south
Dec. 4 in Olalla: 28 band-tailed pigeons (unusually high count for this time of year)

Dec. 4 at Anderson Point County Park near Olalla: 1 tundra swan
Dec. 6 at NBK Bangor: 1 evening grosbeak
Dec. 9 at Restoration Point on Bainbridge Island: 8 redheads, 49 harlequin ducks, 30 ancient murrelets
Dec. 15 near Seabeck: 1 mountain quail
Dec. 16 in Keyport area: 1 snow goose, 2 surfbirds, 1 hermit thrush
Dec. 16 at Port Madison area (North Kitsap): 6 black scoters, 13 long-tailed ducks
Dec. 16 near Kitsap Lake: 1 swamp sparrow
Dec. 18 at Kitsap Lake: 1 canvasback

How to Submit Data to eBird - Janine Schutt

When submitting your checklist to www.ebird.org, first click on the "Submit Observations" tab at the top of the page. If your posting is from a previously used location you can find it under "Choose From Your Locations." If it is the first time you are using that location, click "Find it on a Map". You are now on the "Where did you bird?" page where you must specify the county or state where you were birding, which will then bring up a map. Zoom in close and find your location. You can then mark the spot or click on the hotspot for that location if there is one. Hotspots are "public birding locations created by eBird users" which allow multiple birders to enter data into a shared location. We'll explore the benefits of using hotspots in a future column.

Once you have chosen your location, hit "Continue". You are now on the "date and effort" page where you will



select the date of your sightings. Then determine the type of observation for the list you are submitting. Were you traveling or stationary? Was this an incidental sighting, such as a barred owl seen on a post while you were driving? Or is this a historical list--you know where you were and which species you saw, but can't recall any specific details about time of day or distance traveled? Once you make your selection, note the time of day that you started, the duration of your time in the field, distance traveled (if applicable) and party size. You may also submit any useful comments about your posting. Once this page is complete hit "Continue".

Finally, you are on the

"What did you see or hear" page where you can specify which birds you found. In the box next to the species name, type the appropriate number of individual birds observed. If you are unsure and cannot estimate the numbers, type "X". But only use the "dreaded X" (as it is often called) when absolutely necessary. Review your numbers, then click "yes" if your checklist is complete or "no" if you are only posting certain species. You are now ready to hit "Submit". Welcome to the world of eBird and congratulations on your contribution to citizen science!

Next month we'll look at how to explore eBird data. Happy eBirding!

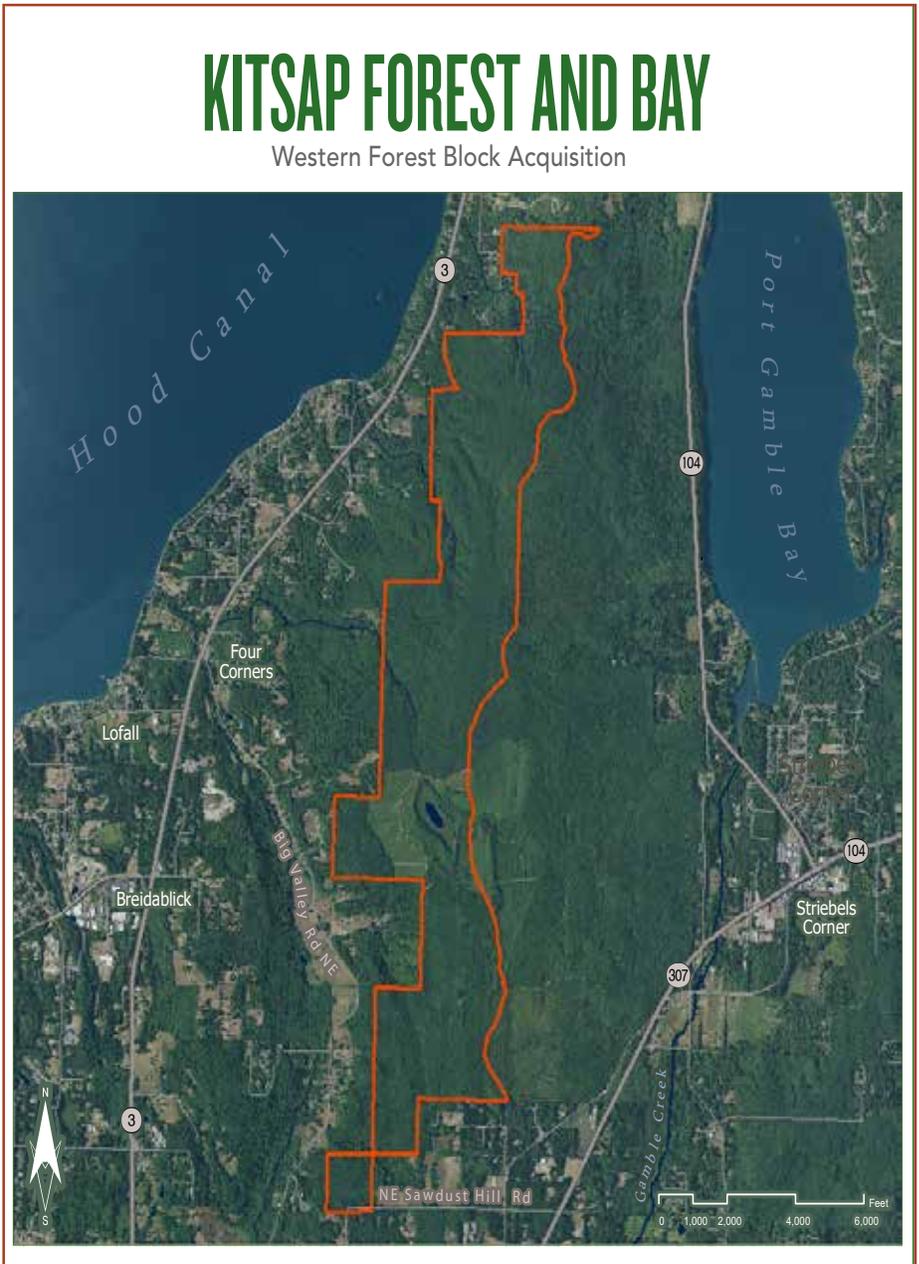
Coalition conserves additional 1,500 acres

The Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition, including Kitsap Audubon, has succeeded in conserving more than 1500 additional acres of forest adjoining the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, bringing the total conserved to 4,000 acres. The recent SavePG Campaign raised \$4 million dollars from grants and donations. The transaction was managed by Forterra on behalf of the coalition, and the land will be owned and administered by Kitsap County for recreation, restoration, cultural heritage and habitat.

This final phase of the decade-long project was fueled by donations from over 1,200 community members, as well as many local partners, foundations and champions, who came together to raise \$3.5 million. Inspired by the community effort, matching grants were provided by Kitsap County (\$200,000) and Washington State (\$500,000) for a total of \$4.0 million in this final phase of the project.

The Port Gamble Forest property includes 65 miles of trails where already more than 20,000 hikers, birders, mountain bikers, equestrians, cyclists and runners recreate each year. At the north end of the property is a future recreational area for mountain biking. The property will be added to the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.

"Saving this keystone place is a gift to our region. A gift to future generations. A gift to the ecosystems we all rely on," said Michelle Connor, Forterra's Executive Vice President. "And, it's a place everyone can visit and enjoy—less than an hour from Seattle, and close to Tacoma, Olympia and Port Townsend."



"As communities around Puget Sound continue to grow, the need for accessible open space is growing, too, as a vital component of our quality of life," said Kitsap County Commissioner Rob Gelder. "The scale of this project surpasses major parks in cities around the world. With 4,000 acres conserved, this park provides a refuge that will be enjoyed for many generations to come. And it helps a growing recreational economy."

The successful conclusion of this acquisition will ensure public access to this vast green treasure, over six times the size Seattle's Discovery Park. The oldest, largest trees and the most sensitive areas on the property are now protected. The rest of the property, which has been managed for timber production for over 160 years, will move to restoration forestry over the next 25 years to

introduce a more diverse range of trees, increasing the health and resiliency of the land for future generations.

The community prioritized securing the land and the most valuable ecological features of the property, while strategically allowing for one additional

harvest to restore the property to native forest and bring the price within reach. Forterra has additionally retained a one-time option to purchase more trees on the property in the future, if sufficient resources can be raised.

The land is of great cultural significance. For more than 1,400 years, the lands and waters of Port Gamble Bay have provided fundamental cultural, spiritual and subsistence resources to the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Suquamish Tribes.

"I envision all the families from the Tribes that lived and gathered here since time immemorial, and how their ancient hand and footprints remain on this landscape," said Suquamish Tribe Chairman Leonard Forsman. "This expanse of open space will sustain natural systems under threat and give our people the opportunity to harvest natural foods, traditional medicines and materials for our art and textile traditions."

Lynn Shorn, a biker, hiker and community leader who lives near the Port Gamble Forest, was pivotal in supporting the community campaign to save the forest. She said, "This special place has allowed me, and so many others, to explore trails amongst trees, meadows, ponds and streams. Volunteers from all the community user groups shared the dream and Forterra led our successful effort to buy the land for the public and to build a sustainable Northwest forest. We are so grateful to

Forterra and all the partners who came together with the community to make this dream come true to conserve this place where people can get lost and found again."

Bears, coyotes, deer and birds such as the hairy woodpecker and red-breasted sapsucker live in the Port Gamble Forest, one of the largest lowland forests in the Hood Canal watershed. The forest is part of a critical watershed for Port Gamble Bay. Its marine ecosystem lays the foundation for healthy habitats for forage fish and salmon, as well as interconnected food chains throughout Port Gamble, Hood Canal and Central Puget Sound watersheds.

Jeromy Sullivan, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Chairman, said, "Saving this land means that my children's children and generations beyond will be able to practice the ways of our culture, harvesting from the surrounding waters, and continuing to act as stewards to the same forest, land, and sea that connects them to their ancestors."

Support for this project included funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation granted through The Nature Conservancy to identify and protect Pacific Northwest lands that will provide resiliency in the face of climate change. Additionally, Kitsap County, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, Great Peninsula Conservancy, North Kitsap Trails Association, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance West Sound Chapter, Kitsap Audubon Society, the State Department of Ecology and a coalition of 30 local and state agencies, businesses and community groups worked in partnership to help secure this

vast expanse of land that will help sustain our region's quality of life, environmental health and economic vitality.

In 2011, Forterra was asked by Kitsap County constituents and Tribes to negotiate on their behalf with Pope Resources to conserve up to 6,700 acres of land called the Kitsap Forest and Bay—including the Port Gamble Forest. This led to Kitsap County's purchase of 535 forested acres and 1.5 miles of shoreline along Port Gamble Bay in early 2014, followed in quick succession at the end of that year by a 366-acre expansion of North Kitsap Heritage Park. Great Peninsula Conservancy championed the protection of 175 acres at Grover's Creek Preserve in April 2015, protecting the headwaters to Miller Bay and providing further connections between trail routes in North Kitsap. In late December 2016, Forterra assisted the county in securing an additional 1,356 acres of the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, making it the largest county park in Kitsap County. Together, these acquisitions leveraged federal, state, tribal, and local funds—showcasing the broad support for protecting these lands for public use, sustainable timber management, trail corridors, and wildlife habitat.

Brodifacoum, a death sentence for rodents, raptors, wildlife and pets - Jamie Acker

On July 1, 2016, I banded a recently fledged female barred owl (*Strix varia*). She was one of two nestlings from a well-established pair near Port Madison, on Bainbridge Island, and was part of my ongoing 20+ year study of barred owls. I research their breeding success, mate fidelity, territory size, diet, longevity, and dispersion. Young owls have a high mortality rate, so after I band them I rarely hear of them again, and if I do, it is because one has been reported dead, usually from a vehicular collision. This bird proved no exception, except that the cause of death was a new one for me: Brodifacoum. Because the bird was banded, I was contacted by the USDA Forest Service in Corvallis, OR, where a necropsy had been performed at Oregon State University. Exposure to the rodenticide Brodifacoum was identified, and appeared to be the cause of death; hemorrhage was observed in several major organs. The owl was otherwise in good condition, and there were no significant injuries or trauma apparent that might have resulted in mortality.

Young barred owls typically disperse from their natal area in August, and this bird was no different. However, what was unusual was the distance she flew. Her body was discovered in Mapleton, Oregon, on November 9, 2017, some 250+ miles from where I had banded her. She was 16 months old, and would have nested this spring.

Brodifacoum (d-CON is an example) is highly lethal to mammals and birds, and extremely lethal to fish. It is



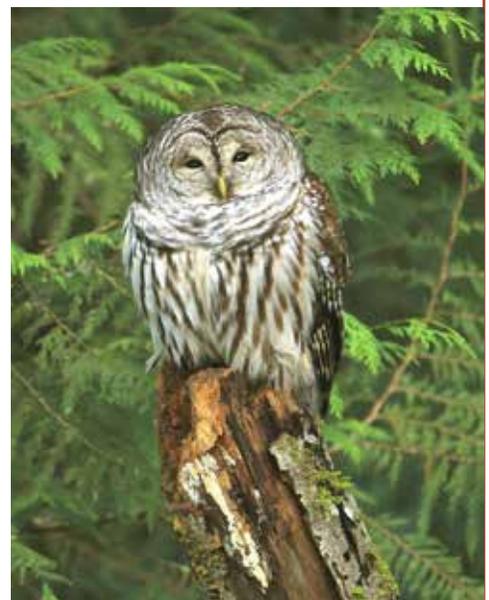
commonly sold and purchased by home owners, businesses and farmers who are concerned with rodent problems. It is a cumulative poison, due to its high lipophilicity (stored in the fat cells). A poisoned animal will suffer progressively worsening internal bleeding, leading to shock, loss of consciousness, and eventually death. Because it is a second generation poison, the predators that prey on rodents are at risk, as are pets such as dogs and cats.

Please, help put out the word that rodenticides kill more than rodents. Safe alternatives include single- and multiple-entrance snap traps and electrocuting traps. For more information about safer alternatives to rodenticides google "Raptors Are the Solution" and "The Hungry Owl Project." Also see Audubon's online magazine article "Poisons Used to Kill Rodents Have Safer Alternatives, a second

generation of ultra-potent rodenticides creates a first-class crisis for people, pets, and wildlife." (Jan.-Feb. 2013)

Above: Jamie Acker banding Barred Owl later killed by lethal dose of rodenticide. Photo by David Ansley

Below: Barred Owl photographed by Nancy



Ordinary/Extraordinary Junco* by Gene Bullock

Ordinary/Extraordinary

Junco*– Gene Bullock

Dark-eyed juncos are one of our most common and abundant birds. They flock to backyard feeders all over North America in nearly a dozen distinctive color variations. Juncos earned the nickname “snowbirds” because that’s when they are most often seen. But in the Pacific Northwest, our “Oregon” subspecies is a year-round resident. Its slate-colored head, brown mantle and flashing white tail fringes are easy to spot as they boldly feed on and under our sunflower and millet feeders. These adaptable sparrow-sized birds can nest almost anywhere – on the ground or in bushes, planter boxes and flower pots.

Dark-eyed juncos are found only in North America. The Mexican species are more closely related to the yellow-eyed junco, a near relative of the dark-eyed junco.

Ornithologists have long puzzled over the fact that the various junco subspecies freely interbreed wherever ranges overlap. You would think their color patterns would become more blended in time. But regional patterns remain strikingly different.

Dr. Jonathan Atwell, a research scientist at Indiana University, wrote an extensive profile on the *Dark-eyed Junco*, featured in the January/February 2018 issue of *Bird Watcher’s*



Digest. In it he describes 1930s research by pioneering ornithologist Alden Miller. Using the traditional shotgun method, Alden collected an astounding 11,774 specimens and sorted them into 15 categories based on differences in appearance. The American Ornithological Union (now the American Ornithological Society) has waffled on classification, changing the dark-eyed junco five times between 1886 and 1998. First there were five species, then seven, then three, then six, then five; and in 1983 they settled on a single species.

Dr. Borja Mila, a research scientist with Spain’s National Museum of Natural Sciences, sequenced 142 DNA samples representing 23 different U.S. junco populations. The results,

published in 2013, were so similar, he concluded that any differences were comparatively recent, and have occurred almost entirely within the last 10,000 years as juncos expanded their breeding ranges northward from Mexico into the forests of the U.S. and Canada following the retreat of the most recent Ice Age. So, despite their striking differences in color, dark-eyed juncos share a relatively recent common ancestor (10,000 years is a blink of an eye in geologic time).

*** Dr. Atwell and his colleagues at Indiana University produced an award-winning film: *Ordinary/Extraordinary Junco*, which can be viewed online at www.junopruejct.org**

Photo by Jay Wiggs

The Wild Bird store (next to Elmer’s Restaurant in Poulsbo) will donate to Kitsap Audubon 5% of the proceeds of sales to Kitsap Audubon members. Let Owner Karen Dieter know you are a Kitsap Audubon member at the time of your purchase. She will deliver larger bags of bird seed anywhere in North Kitsap, Keyport or Bainbridge Island, as well as to our monthly meetings. Call her at 360-598-4141 or email karenthewildbird@gmail.com



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 or mail to Gene Bullock, 1968 NE Lind Ct., 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

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

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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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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 www.kitsapaudubon.org

