Kitsap Audubon News

- **NO JUNE PROGRAM - See you in September**
- Kitsap Audubon awards $13,000 in scholarships to Kitsap students.
- Al Westphal receives 2018 Kingfisher Award
- Kitsap Audubon hosts regional Audubon meeting.
- Kitsap Great Give raises $2,620+ for Kitsap Audubon
- Beginning class on Backyard Bird Watching well attended.
- 2018: Year of the Bird presentation to seven Kitsap community organizations
- Field Trips and Festivals
- Wildlife sightings
- Meet Board member Sandy Bullock
- Making backyards friendlier and safer for birds, bees and wildlife.

Kitsap Great Give
Kitsap Audubon’s members and friends have once again responded generously to the annual Kitsap Great Give, raising $2,620+ including three $500 donations and several of $100 to $200 or more.
We had quite a celebration at our May meeting, and not only for the lovely Spring weather we were having. Our Kingfisher Award, is our highest award, and is given each year to an individual or couple in recognition of outstanding service over a period of five years. This year the award was presented to Al Westphal, who organizes our great KAS field trips. Not only does Al plan most of the field trips, but he also helps to lead them with his son, Andrew, and is a patient and knowledgeable teacher.

We also presented scholarships to the four outstanding high school seniors that will be pursuing degrees in fields related to Kitsap Audubon’s mission of protecting wildlife, habitat and the environment. The Ann Sleight Memorial Scholarship went to three excellent college students who have completed at least one academic year of study leading to a four-year degree in Environmental studies, Forestry, Marine or Wildlife Biology or related studies.

There will be no June meeting this year. Instead, the board will have a retreat and be using that time to review and update our bylaws and policies, and to look at our strategic plan and future activities. If you think that you might want to be part of this process in the future and help guide Kitsap Audubon, we would love to have you on our board. Please feel free to talk with any of the current board members or attend a board meeting. We get together the first Tuesday of the month at Elmer’s in Poulsbo at 5:30 and enjoy dinner while we meet. The Board’s last meeting before our summer recess will be on Tuesday, June 5.

As our 2017-18 KAS program year winds down, the Board would like to express appreciation for all the generous contributions that so many people and organizations have made to Kitsap Audubon. In addition to the donations that we will receive from the recent Kitsap Great Give Campaign, we also receive substantial donations members and friends on Bainbridge Island who each year designate a portion of their ONE CALL FOR ALL donations to Kitsap Audubon. We have also received donations from George Gerds of Panderon Tours and The Wild Bird Store in Poulsbo. In addition, nearly half of our members make additional donations above and beyond their membership dues each time they renew.

Without the time, talent and commitment that our standing committee chairs, board members and general members contribute, we would not have the tremendous organization that KAS is now. Thank you for another great year! Have a wonderful summer!

See you in September.
Kitsap Audubon Awards $13,000 in 2018 Scholarships

Kitsap Audubon has awarded $42,000 in scholarships since 2006 to Kitsap County students pursuing or planning to pursue academic degrees in fields related to its mission of protecting wildlife and the environment.

**Ann Sleight Memorial Scholarships ($3,000 each)** awarded to:
- Natasha Hunter of Bremerton, majoring in Marine Biology at Florida Atlantic University
- Nolan Platz of Kingston, majoring in Bioengineering at Santa Clara University in California
- Tasha Smith of Bremerton, majoring in Environmental Science at Western Washington University /Olympic College

**$1,000 Scholarships awarded to graduating high school seniors:**
- Cristina La of Bremerton, Bremerton High School
- Denali Sanders of Bremerton, Central Kitsap High School
- Tatiana Tubberville of Bremerton, Central Kitsap High School
- Nolan Winn of Port Orchard, South Kitsap High School

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**Al Westphal Receives 2018 Kingfisher Award**

The 2018 Kingfisher Award was presented to Al Westphal at the May membership meeting by previous recipient Janine Schutt. It is Kitsap Audubon’s highest honor, and is given annually to an individual or couple who have given outstanding service to Kitsap Audubon for five years or more.

Al has been Field Trip Chair since September 2012 and a member of the KAS Board since February 2013. He has been a Christmas Bird Count leader since November 2015. During the recent launch of the Port Gamble/North Kitsap CBC circle, Al organized multiple teams to accommodate a flood of Hansville first-time CBC volunteers. He and his son Andrew are known for their exceptional birding skills and ability to mentor and encourage beginning birders. Not surprisingly, they are very popular leaders. Al and Andrew became fascinated with birds following Al’s retirement as a Naval officer after serving as commander on several warships. His skills as a leader have been invaluable to the Kitsap Audubon Board. His wisdom and patience have been a powerful influence on Board decisions. He often takes the lead in the detailed analysis that underlies good decision making, and has written the drafts of a number of important KAS policies, including our “Endowment Spending” policy.

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*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

Billy Frank – Nisqually NWR (near Olympia): Saturday, June 9 (long half-day). Al & Andrew Westphal, leaders, 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 23, 5:15 – 8:30 p.m. From the City Dock in Port Townsend led by noted naturalist George Gerdts. (NOTE: June 23 is correct date; BI Parks catalog contains error.) Protection Island is a 400 acre National Wildlife Refuge at the entrance to Discovery Bay. Expected birds include Glaucous-winged Gulls, Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots, Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorants and sometimes, Brandt’s Cormorants. A main attraction is the nesting colony of TUFTED PUFFINS. To sign up: Call Bainbridge Island Parks and Recreation at 206-842-2306 ext. 118 and ask for “Protection Island Sunset Cruise” #131851-01. 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.

Trip Reports

Sequim Birding Trip, April 21, led by Gene & Sandy Bullock. Our group of nine birders had a phenomenal trip bird count of 78 species, thanks to Al Westphal’s exceptional skills and diligence. The day started pleasantly sunny; but cold onshore winds made afternoon stops less agreeable. Light rains bracketed the day, occurring before and after the trip. A 7:30 a.m. high tide favored us in the morning; but tidal flats were mostly exposed mud by afternoon. Many of our wintering marine birds have already left for their northern breeding grounds; but we still had a good variety. However, numbers were diminished by strong wind and low tide. Trip highlights included two Black Oystercatchers at John Wayne Marina, four Marbled Murrelets at Salsbury Beach County Park, a bobbing Spotted Sandpiper at Shine, numerous Caspian Terns, and a sprinkling of just about everything else. Feeders near the Gardner Wild Bird Store and Dungeness River Audubon Center provided close looks at least a dozen species.

Seattle’s Montlake Fill, April 28, led by Al & Andrew Westphal. With an unpleasant weather forecast, the cancellations started coming in on Thursday night, and on Saturday morning, only five devoted bird lovers assembled for a chilly, rainy, and wonderful bird walk through Seattle’s Montlake Fill. The Fill’s greatest advocate, Connie Sidles, greeted and treated us to a tutorial on the history of the natural area as she started us out on the walk. After a morning stroll through ever-improving weather conditions, the group garnered an impressive tally of 48 bird species. Highlights included witnessing a territorial confrontation between two male Downy Woodpeckers and sighting of a Solitary Sandpiper which was first detected by an impressive teen birder named Alex who was kind enough to share the bird with us.

Theler Wetlands, May 12, led by Al & Andrew Westphal. Fourteen of us gathered on a beautiful spring morning for this annual walk. Highlights included good looks at Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Swainson’s Thrush, and a single Whimbrel, among the tally of 40 species observed. Top grades to Connie, Elizabeth, and Cindy for especially good spots, plus Sandy for getting a scope on that Black-throated Gray Warbler from the parking area!
It was an exciting spring migration through Kitsap County this year. As usual, Point No Point was the hottest hotspot for viewing uncommon migrants passing through Kitsap’s lane of the Pacific Flyway. Some of the most interesting Point No Point sightings reported to eBird.org from mid-April to mid-May include: mountain bluebird, Ross’s goose, northern goshawk, black phoebe, lesser yellowlegs, cinnamon teal, yellow-headed blackbird, Townsend’s Solitaire, Lewis’s woodpecker, solitary sandpiper, lesser goldfinch, western kingbird, Bullock’s oriole, whimbrel, American white pelican, and Swainson’s hawk. Many of those species were seen multiple times. So if you missed the spring migration this year at Point No Point, mark your calendar for next year!

On April 23, in my yard near Wildcat Lake, a slate-colored dark-eyed junco dropped in to snack on millet seed before continuing his journey. On April 24, Joan Carson of Poulsoe reported seeing her first purple martins of the year as they were flying over. Later that week she also enjoyed an orange-crowned warbler and a Lincoln’s sparrow in her yard. Also in the last week of April, John McDonald of Lake Symington observed his first Wilson’s and black-throated gray warblers of the year.

Other Notable Kitsap Bird Sightings from www.eBird.org:
April 14: 1 long-billed curlew at Driftwood Key (Hansville)
April 17: 1 hermit thrush at Driftwood Key
April 18: 1 western meadowlark in Eglon
April 19: 1 short-billed dowitcher at Driftwood Key
April 19: 2 gray jays at Green Mountain
April 22: western bluebird pair in the clearcut by Wildcat Lake
April 24: 1 loggerhead shrike on Bainbridge Island
April 25: 1 sandhill crane flying over the water near Brownsville
May 3: 1 chipping sparrow at Battle Point Park (Bainbridge Island)
May 3: 1 lesser goldfinch on Bainbridge Island
May 4: 1 mountain quail at Green Mountain
May 6: 1 Lazuli bunting at Fay Bainbridge Park
May 6: 1 sooty grouse and 1 ruffed grouse on Gold Mountain
May 8: 1 northern pygmy owl in Eglon
May 9: 28 Vaux’s swifts at Fay Bainbridge Park
May 9: 35 evening grosbeaks on Bainbridge Island
May 13: 1 sora along the Clear Creek Trail near Silverdale

Western Kingbird and Slate-colored subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco by Janine Schutt.
Special thanks to our contributors

Kitsap Audubon’s educational programs, community outreach and active leadership are well recognized and valued in the Kitsap community. Evidence of this is continued growth and the overwhelming generosity of our members and friends.

- Some 200 Bainbridge Island members and friends annually designate Kitsap Audubon for a portion of the ONE CALL FOR ALL contribution.
- Our members and friends give additional donations during the annual Kitsap Great Give.

Meet Board Member Sandy Bullock

Sandy Bullock has been an avid bird watcher for 40 years, and an active member of Kitsap Audubon for 14 years. “Active” and “avid” may not be strong enough words to describe the intensity of her involvement. Over the last 14 years, Sandy has served three terms as President of Kitsap Audubon, and is about to begin her fifth term as Treasurer. She has also served as Chair of the Scholarship Committee since she and Sara Kane started the program seven years ago. Sandy and Gene were the 2009 recipients of Kitsap Audubon’s highest honor, the Kingfisher Award.

After retirement, She and Gene traveled almost full time in their motorhome for six years, from Belize to the Arctic Circle, planning every year around bird watching. Their North American (U.S. and Canada) “Life List” now numbers 620 bird species.

Sandy and Gene have led many Audubon field trips, and have co-led the Poulsbo Liberty Bay Christmas Bird Count team for nearly 14 years. They have also participated in Christmas Bird Counts in Massachusetts and Texas, as well as bird banding in several states.

For many years, Sandy and Gene co-led wilderness whitewater canoe trips for the Appalachian Mountain Club, including week-long trips in Maine, Ontario and Quebec. But Gene’s employer transferred them to El Paso, Texas, in 1979. There was little demand for whitewater canoeing leaders there; but they soon discovered that the bird watching in El Paso was spectacular. This soon rekindled their passion for birds. They have since birded extensively throughout North America, Canada, Mexico, Belize and Costa Rica.

Sandy raised five children before going back to school to earn a bachelor’s degree in Accounting from Bentley College. She retired in 1999 as Corporate Accounting Manager for a $20 million pharmaceutical research company in Massachusetts. Sandy was born in Flint, Michigan. She has seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Photos by Don Willott
Creating wildlife-friendly backyards is a way to knit together our fragmented landscape and add more habitat for birds and wildlife. Replacing high-maintenance lawns with native, wildlife-friendly plants and shrubs provides birds and wildlife with both food and shelter. Homeowners can also help birds, bees and butterflies survive by choosing safer alternatives to toxic chemicals.

Manicured, weed-free lawns seem to be one of the imperatives of respectability in our suburban culture. In a previous age, only the very wealthy could afford large expanses of decorative lawn and gardens. Others had to put every arable patch to work producing food. Well-groomed lawns and gardens were a symbol of wealth and status that persists even today.

But today’s ever-green, weed-free lawns require enormous volumes of municipally treated water, plus prodigious quantities of chemicals. Homeowners apply an estimated 66 million pounds of herbicides and pesticides to their lawns and gardens every year. Swayed by agribusiness advertising, homeowners are using 50% more herbicides than they did 20 years ago.

In one major metropolitan area, toxic garden chemicals were found in the tissues of 99% of the children tested. According to estimates, lawn pesticides kill seven million birds each year. They also kill an appalling number of bees, butterflies and beneficial insects. Pesticides are a major contributor to the widespread die-off of bees and other pollinators.

Toxic garden chemicals also permeate ground and surface water, and storm-water runoff carries them into Puget Sound. Traces are found in the fish and shellfish we consume. Concerns about the health of Puget Sound are causing some thoughtful homeowners to rethink the hours and dollars they spend maintaining their lawns.

Our health and well-being, and the health of the plants and wildlife that share our environment, depend on having a clean, healthy and sustainable place to live. The loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat is one of the leading causes of the worldwide decline in songbirds. The widespread use of pesticides is decimating insects, an essential food source for many birds.

Homeowners can also find safer alternatives to toxic chemicals.

Your local nursery can help you choose the best native plants and shrubs for our area. Native plants are often hardier and require less maintenance because they are better suited to local soil and weather conditions. Too often, exotic ornamental plants are favored that require special care. Ironically, local plants are often considered less valuable or desirable because they are so prolific and forgiving. But they also need less water, fertilizer and maintenance, making them much better choices for birds, wildlife and you.

Jonathan White at Eagle Harbor Bookstore, June 14, 7:00 p.m.

Jonathan White, nature writer and marine conservationist, will present his award winning non-fiction book, TIDES: The Science and Spirit Of The Ocean at Eagle Harbor Bookstore on Bainbridge Island, Thursday June 14, at 7 p.m. TIDES won the 2018 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award for Best Book in addition to the National Outdoor Book Award in the Natural History; the IBPA Benjamin Franklin Award (Silver); Nautilus Book Award (Silver). TIDES is being considered by the BBC for a documentary film.
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