At Kitsap Audubon, we’re passionate about protecting birds, wildlife and their habitat. Our environmental education and advocacy programs include monthly guest speakers and field trips that are free and open to the public. Our annual Christmas Bird Counts engage scores of volunteers in valuable citizen science. And working with other like-minded community organizations, we have helped preserve thousands of acres of Kitsap forest and shoreline.

Kitsap Audubon has awarded more than $53,000 in scholarships to Kitsap area students; and donated more than $90,000 for land conservation in North Kitsap, Bainbridge Island and the Illahee Preserve.

We couldn’t do any of this without our dedicated volunteers and the generous support of our nearly 1,000 members and countless friends.

**No meetings in June, July or August. See you in September.**
Hard to believe that May was our last general membership meeting of the year and the last time that I will be hosting one as President. On July 1, I will be turning things over to the very capable hands of Gene Bullock. It has been quite an honor to serve in this position and I have been very fortunate to have such a hard working and extremely competent board. I will continue to serve on the board as Past President.

Our May meeting is always a special treat because of the scholarship awards to our high school seniors and college students. It is exciting to see that so many of the young people who applied are interested in studying environmental issues, wildlife, forestry and marine biology.

Our board work is winding up and we will put the finishing touches on our board handbooks and going over next year's budget at our June board meeting. KAS will be receiving $200 from Seattle Audubon to purchase a hand held GPS unit for our Climate Action Program, a National Audubon program.

We have also signed a letter of commitment to pledge at least $500 to Great Peninsula Conservancy for the purchase of 20 acres of beautiful property at Misery Point in Seabeck. This letter was in support of a grant that GPC was applying for from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Program. Hopefully, GPC will be successful in their acquisition of this special property and we will keep you posted.

At this time, the Board would like to express thanks 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 from members and friends on Bainbridge Island who each year designate a portion of their ONE CALL FOR ALL donations. We also receive donations from George Gerds of Pandeon Tours who leads birding trips in the area. Our members have also been very supportive of our Mitten Tree event with donations of nonperishables, warm clothing and yarn for our program with the women's prison. In addition, nearly half our members make donations above and beyond their membership dues each time they renew. What a very generous community we live in!

Without the time, talent and commitment that our standing committee members, board members and general members contribute, we would not have the great organization that KAS is.

Thank you for another great year and have a wonderful summer!
Kitsap Audubon Scholarship Chair Sandy Bullock (pictured far right) announced the recipients of seven 2019 scholarships totalling $11,000.

Ann Sleight Memorial scholarships of $3,000 each were awarded to Natasha Hunter, who is majoring in marine biology at Florida Atlantic University; and Tatiana Tubberville, who is majoring in environmental science at University of Idaho.

Scholarships of $1,000 each were awarded to the five graduating high school seniors pictured above (from left): Katheiren Ellsworth, Kingston High School, plans to major in wildlife biology and genetics at Cornell University; Katherine Hunter, Kingston High School, plans to study marine biology and biochemistry at Western Washington University; Tor Sather, Kingston High School, plans to major in environmental science at Montana State University; Tyler Moravec, Eagle Harbor High School, plans to major in environmental science at Montana State University; and Lily Kinyon, North Kitsap High School, plans to major in environmental science at University of Washington.

Kitsap Audubon has awarded 54 scholarships, totalling $53,500, since 2006 to Kitsap area students planning to pursue academic degrees in fields related to Kitsap Audubon’s mission of protecting birds, wildlife and the environment.

Diane Bachen receives 2019 Kingfisher Award

Diane Bachen (pictured right) was presented with the 2019 Kingfisher Award by Janine Schutt at the Kitsap Audubon May meeting. The Kingfisher Award is Kitsap Audubon’s highest honor, and is given in recognition of outstanding service to Kitsap Audubon for a period of at least five years.

Awardees are selected by the three most recent recipients, and presented by one of them each year at the May meeting.

The most recent three recipients of the Kingfisher Award are Al Westphal, Michael Szerlog and Janine Schutt.

Diane has served on the Kitsap Audubon Board since 2013, including two terms as President, one as Vice President, and two terms as Secretary.
Field Trips & Festivals - Al and 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 8 (long half-day). Al & Andrew Westphal, leaders, westphalac@aol.com to register. 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. Meet at the parking lot by the visitor center at 8:30 a.m.

**Protection Island Sunset Cruise:** Saturday, June 22, 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. 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 $90.00/participant plus additional $5.00 charge for non-Bainbridge Island residents. KAS members will have 20% ($18.00) 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.

**Field Trip Reports**

**Montlake Fill, April 20.** Seven of us (supplemented by several passers by who tagged along) walked the trails at this fabulous urban natural area. Weather was decent for mid-April and birds were accommodating. We tallied over fifty species with notables like a couple of close fly-bys from the local Merlin, lots of Savannah Sparrows, American Pipits, a Bushtit nest, and others, and the recently returned Osprey pair working on a nest. We were gratified to learn later in the day that other birders had confirmed the ID of one of our observations as a Sage Thrasher, apparently only the second record on this bird at the Fill.

**Theler Wetlands, May 11.** Thirteen birders assembled on a fabulous summery morning for a fun outing on the trails. Among the 43 species observed, members got good looks at many of our spring arrivals including four swallow species, Wilson’s and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, and Warbling Vireos. A few folks in the right place at the right time were able to lay eyes on a non-cooperative Swainson’s Thrush as well. The “bird of the day” seems to have been a single Cackling Goose among several Canadas, which turns out to be a “rare” bird at Theler this time of year.

*Photos by Jay Wiggs*

**compaire Tree, Violet-green and Barn swallows.**
On April 17, Mark Oberle reported a flock of 450 Bonaparte’s gulls flying through Rich Passage, north of Blake Island. On May 1, Joan Carson of Poulsbo, heard her first purple martin of the year. She also has a Pacific-slope flycatcher and a yard full of baby birds, including juncos, song sparrows, and spotted towhees. She also said that Charlotte Blytmann, who lives north of Poulsbo, had her first black-headed grosbeak of the year. On May 2, Mary Klein spotted 3 male western tanagers in spectacular breeding plumage near Fairgrounds Rd. and Hwy. 303. In mid-May, John McDonald of Lake Symington (near Seabeck), reported having Wilson’s, orange-crowned, and black-throated gray warblers in his yard. He also observed the return of the Swainson’s thrushes. In August, be sure to send your interesting summer sightings to me at jeschutt@hotmail.com.

Notable Kitsap Bird Sightings from www.eBird.org:
April 18 near Hansville: 2 cinnamon teals
April 18 on Bainbridge Island: 1 Vesper sparrow
April 19 near Seabeck: flyover of 62 tundra swans
April 23 at Foulweather Bluff (Hansville): 3 black scoters
April 24 on Bainbridge Island: 1 lesser goldfinch
April 24 at Driftwood Key (Hansville): 2 short-billed dowitchers
April 24 at Point No Point (Hansville): flyover of 5 American white pelicans
April 25 at Point No Point: 1 Swainson’s hawk, 1 bank swallow, 1 Townsend’s solitaire
April 26 on Green Mountain: 2 mountain quails, 2 western bluebirds
April 27 at Point No Point: 120 Vaux’s swifts, 1 solitary sandpiper, 9 western kingbirds
April 28 on Bainbridge Island: 1 white-throated sparrow
April 30 at Foulweather Bluff: 1 yellow-headed blackbird
May 1 at Driftwood Key: 2 black oystercatchers, 7 whimbrels
May 7 at Point No Point: 1 Lazuli bunting
May 8 on Bainbridge Island: 1 chipping sparrow, 2 Lincoln’s sparrows
May 10 at Norwegian Point (Hansville): 1 horned lark

**Wildlife Sightings - Janine Schutt**

The last breeder to arrive in Kitsap is the common nighthawk. This long-distance migrant is only here in June, July, and August. Although widespread, it is considered a species in steep decline. In Kitsap it is usually seen flying above clear-cuts and other open areas. The clear-cuts around Wildcat Lake and Green Mountain are reliable places to find them.

Here are some fascinating facts about the common nighthawk:
• Breeds across the United States and the lower half of Canada. Winters in South America.
• Common in eastern Washington and uncommon in western Washington.
• Most active at dawn and dusk, when it forages for flying insects.
• Has a tiny beak and a large gape for catching insects in flight.
• Easily identified by its erratic flight and white wingbar across the pointed wings.
• Lays its clutch of two well-camouflaged eggs in open gravel areas.
• Known for its loud, buzzy “peent” call, given in flight.
• Males perform spectacular displays, by diving for the ground and pulling up at the last second. As they change direction, the air rushes across the wingtips and makes a booming sound.
• Often roosts on tree branches where they resemble a knot of wood.
• According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, the species has declined by 61% from 1966 to 2014. Steep decline is likely due to pesticides reducing the number of mosquitoes and other flying insects. Predation by gulls and crows may also be a factor.
Go birding and make a difference!

Are seabirds in the southern Salish Sea increasing or decreasing in numbers? Which species are changing their range? Help us find out. The Puget Sound Seabird Survey (PSSS) is a community and citizen science project managed by Seattle Audubon that empowers volunteer birdwatchers to gather valuable data on wintering seabird populations across the southern Salish Sea.

You can contribute to this vital seabird science by joining the thirteenth season of this exciting project. We are now recruiting enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to help us monitor the status of our local wintering seabirds. Training on survey methodology will be provided at a location near you in September and early October. Volunteers should ideally be able to identify Puget Sound’s seabird species and be available on the first Saturday of each month, October through April, to conduct a 30-minute survey. But, if determining between Lesser and Greater Scaup is a challenge, we’ll team you up with more knowledgeable surveyors.

To help us determine each volunteer’s seabird identification skills, visit www.seabirdsurvey.com to take our quick, fun Seabird ID quiz.

Learn more, including training locations, at www.seabirdsurvey.org and email Toby Ross, Senior Science Manager tobyr@seattleaudubon.org if you would like more information or to take part.

Jennifer Lang (she/her) Conservation Science Coordinator Seattle Audubon Society (206) 523-8243 ext. 103 jenniferl@seattleaudubon.org www.seattleaudubon.org

Photos by Kathy Dobson show male Yellow Warbler (left) and sock-like nest built by Bushtits in Poulsbo’s Fish Park. Kathy watched the Bushtits construct their remarkable nest, with an opening near the top. Slightly smaller than a chickadee, these mouse-colored birds travel in busy flocks in their quest for small insects.
Birds have been around for 125 million years. Over the millennia they have become marvelously adapted to survive in a natural habitat or environmental niche. But humans have introduced a multitude of hazards that are foreign to their natural habitat. Domestic cats and pesticides are among the leading causes of bird mortality. Free-ranging cats kill up to three billion birds a year in the North America. Pesticides deliver a double whammy, poisoning their primary food, while decimating the insect populations that are their major source of food.

Window glass is another. Birds see foliage reflected and think they have a safe avenue of escape, only to kill themselves with head-on collisions. They also see themselves reflected and don’t know it’s not another bird -- a rival or intruder in their territorial nesting area. Every year, Kitsap Audubon gets numerous reports of woodpeckers and other species of birds flinging themselves against window panes.

The obvious way to help protect birds from cats and pesticides is to keep your cat indoors and avoid using pesticides in your yard or garden. You can minimize window collisions and attacks with closely spaced UV-reflecting decals that interrupt reflections. These special decals can be purchased online from suppliers of bird feeders and related equipment. You can also minimize lethal collisions by placing feeders three feet or less from the window or at least 30 feet away. Moving them closer prevents birds from reaching lethal speeds before impact. Moving feeders further away reduces the likelihood of collisions from panicky birds fleeing perceived threats such as predators.

Photo of Chestnut-backed Chickadee by Carrie Griffis.

Our Supporting Business Partners
The Wild Bird Center of Silverdale (360-613-4481; email: silverdale@wildbird.com) and Wild Birds Unlimited in Gig Harbor (253-851-2575; wbugigharbor@gmail.com) both donate to Kitsap Audubon 5% of their sales to Kitsap Audubon members. Be sure to let them know your are member of Kitsap Audubon at the time of your purchase.
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