In 2018, Kitsap Audubon donated $500 to the Patrick Sullivan Young Birder’s Fund (PSYBF), administered by the Washington Ornithological Society. Will Brooks was their 2018 grant recipient. The following article is by Tom Mansfield, PSYBF Chair and Seattle birder:

High in the remote Cascades, where the boundaries of King/Pierce/Yakima counties blur, two distinct populations of White-crowned Sparrow also overlap: the pugetensis subspecies, common on the Westside, and the gambelli subspecies, common on the Eastside.

Many of us who have been fortunate to bird the alpine slopes along the Pacific Crest Trail have been “in the zone” and heard the two, distinct, often non-stop calls of these familiar sparrows with their trademark white and black striped crowns.

Will Brooks, an evolutionary biology student at University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, hopes to document for the first time an answer to the question: What is the role of song in reproductive isolation? While they are known to coexist, do the subspecies hybridize in their montane isolation?

The PSYBF was proud to award its 2018 grant to Will during the WOS Conference at Hood River on June 9.

Born and raised in Stanford, CA where his father is a urology professor and his mother an artist, Will, 20, came to the Pacific Northwest specifically for the opportunities University of Puget Sound offered and the natural richness of our region. During his short time in Tacoma, Will has already made a significant contribution to Washington birding by finding/reporting a string of rare birds for Pierce County including Long-billed Curlew, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Lewis’ Woodpecker and, most recently, Black-headed Gull.

Photo: White-crowned Sparrow by Jay Wiggs.

The Kingfisher is printed on recycled paper by Blue Sky Printing and mailed by Olympic Presort, both family-owned local businesses.
The Kitsap Library has been Kitsap Audubon’s home for 18 years. Sandy and I attended our first Kitsap Audubon program more than 19 years ago when meetings were still being held at St. Charles Episcopal Church in Poulsbo. In the years since then we’ve seen many wonderfully dedicated chapter leaders come and go. Some moved away or moved on to other pursuits; and many succumbed to the ravages of age. Memories of them have faded; but we are no less indebted to them -- and to all the leaders who came before them -- for what we have today.

Kitsap Audubon’s current Board is strong but shrinking. And we’re an aging resource very much in need of new blood. We have great fun dreaming up ways to make our chapter better. We’d love to share the fun with anyone who would like to give it a try.

Sandy Bullock has spent an intensive summer preparing Kitsap Audubon for her retirement as Treasurer. A retired accounting professional, she has served as Kitsap Audubon’s de facto volunteer bookkeeper for all but two of the last 14 years. Judy Willott filled the role for two years. The Board concluded that it’s unrealistic to expect other volunteers with Sandy’s professional background to step forward; so Kitsap Audubon has hired an experienced professional full-charge bookkeeper. Jennifer Standish bravely volunteered to serve as our official Treasurer and coordinate the bookkeeper’s services. For Sandy, making sure the transition is smooth and problem free has occupied most of her summer. But it means she’ll eventually be able to truly retire. You’ll find her parting “Annual Financial Report” on page 11 in this issue.

We talk about connecting with Nature – as if it’s a separate place. Our sense of separation may arise from confusing our public and professional personas with what and who we really are. Birds can be a joyful reminder of how good it is to be part of the natural world. That may be why we love watching, feeding and listening to them – and sharing our delight with family and friends.

As eyesight and hearing dull with age, I turn more and more to the vicarious pleasures of reading, and the nature writers who come closest to capturing the joy of first-hand experiences with birds and Nature. I’ll be reviewing some of my favorites in future issues.

I’m starting with “Flight Maps – Adventures with Nature in Modern America,” by Jennifer Price. In it, she shows how the “women’s movement” became the driving force behind the formation of the National Audubon Society. With humor and insight, she traces the evolution of our cultural perception of Nature as something detached and disconnected from our lives.
Kitsap Audubon donates $5,000 for Miller Bay Preserve

Great Peninsula Conservancy’s Miller Bay Preserve will conserve 13 acres of pristine shoreline and upland forest on north Miller Bay. The Miller Bay Preserve lies adjacent to GPC’s Kawahara Preserve and a 40-acre forest property owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The 13-acre preserve links these three properties, and together they protect 56 acres of forest and 1,575 continuous feet of shoreline. Half a mile upstream lies GPC’s Durham Preserve, which protects a significant stretch of Grovers Creek and associated wetlands. Together, the conserved lands provide a wildlife corridor for deer, river otter, and black bear, and critical habitat for endangered chinook salmon and steelhead trout, as well as chum and coho salmon, and cutthroat trout, and connecting protected areas in the Grovers Creek watershed.

Miller Bay Preserve Campaign

In order to purchase the Miller Bay Preserve, Great Peninsula Conservancy received $150,000 from the Estuary and Salmon Recovery Program and contributed $105,000 from the Grovers Creek Campaign. In the summer of 2019, Friends of Miller Bay partnered with GPC to raise the remaining $150,000 needed to purchase the land. Thanks to many generous local community members, the funds were secured and the preserve will be protected forever!

Project Partners:
Friends of Miller Bay
The Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation

Map credits: Brenna Thompson
Aerial shots: Contributed by Bonnie Chandler, Windermere

Point No Point (Hansville): Saturday, September 14. Al & Andrew Westphal, leaders: 206-780-7844 or westphalac@aol.com (e-mail preferred) to register. One the very richest birding locations in Kitsap County, we should see some interesting fall migrants plus the usual exciting birds of this designated Important Bird Area. Time permitting, we will also bird Norwegian Point Park in “downtown” Hansville. Bring a scope if you have one. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the lighthouse parking lot. Note the earlier-than-usual start time. The early/mid-morning period that day coincides with a rapidly falling tide that could enhance our seabirding conditions.

Birdfest and Bluegrass (Ridgefield, WA): October 5. Check the website for details and schedule of events: https://ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest-bluegrass/

Billy Frank - Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge: Saturday, October 19. Al Westphal, leader: westphalac@aol.com, 206-780-7844 (e-mail preferred). One of the best locations in our area to observe an array of migrating and over-wintering waterfowl along with many other birds. 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.

Other Birding Festivals: A more complete summary of events statewide may be found at the Washington State Audubon site: http://wa.audubon.org/birdfestivals-0

Field Trip Reports

Billy Frank – Nisqually NWR, June 8. We closed out the season with our annual spring visit to this terrific federal refuge and stumbled into especially good fortune by obtaining the guide services of long-time refuge volunteer Rob Chrisler. The 50 species we observed is a very respectable number, and we were fortunate with several of them, notably the many good looks at Swainson’s Thrushes, Black-headed Grosbeaks, the Wood Duck family, Yellow and Wilson’s Warblers, and a number of others. As always, the spring visit was a great opportunity to practice birding by ear. I especially appreciate the help that more experienced birders offered to less experienced members of the group. I hope that is always a hallmark of KAS field trips.

Wildlife Sightings - Janine Schutt

On May 22, Lisa deFaria of Poulsbo was thrilled to see a “showstopper” male western tanager visiting her yard. In June and July she was delighted to occasionally see a young barred owl in the trees near her garden. On June 9, Janine Schutt was “attacked” by a territorial male sooty grouse on a dirt road up Green Mountain near Seabeck. The same bird was also chasing cars, a motorcycle, and other birders who encountered it later that day. Send your interesting sightings to jeschutt@hotmail.com. Please put “Wildlife Sightings” in the subject line. Notable Kitsap Bird Sightings from www.eBird.org:

May 14 at Point No Point (Hansville): 2 yellow-headed blackbirds, 1 Lazuli bunting
May 25 at Point No Point: 1 black swift, 12 American white pelicans
June 9 at Green Mountain (Seabeck): 4 Canada jays
June 11 near Southworth: 1 lark sparrow
June 20 at Point No Point: 1 eastern kingbird
July 11 at Clear Creek trails (Silverdale): 1 green heron
July 12 at Point No Point: 1 tufted puffin

July 19 at Rockaway Beach (Bainbridge Island): 1 wandering tattler, 1 brown pelican
July 22 at Foulweather Bluff (Hansville): 1 semipalmated sandpiper
July 31 at Battle Point Park (Bainbridge Island): 2 Vaux’s swifts
Aug. 9 in Gorst: 2 lesser yellowlegs
Aug. 10 at Foulweather Bluff: 5 semipalmated plovers, 1 ruddy turnstone, 1 Baird’s sandpiper, 1 pectoral sandpiper, 1 solitary sandpiper
The Bonaparte's gull forces a second look from those who think “seagulls” are all the same. Its diminutive size and black head in breeding season make it stand out from other gulls. Migrating and non-breeding Bonaparte's gulls can be observed in the Puget Sound area throughout the year with the greatest concentration around Hansville in late summer and early fall. Here are some fascinating facts about the Bonaparte's gull:

- Named for ornithologist Charles Lucien Bonaparte (nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte)
- One of North America’s smallest gulls
- Takes two years to reach maturity
- Migrates in large flocks
- Breeds in small colonies in the boreal forests of Canada and Alaska
- Only gull species to regularly nest in trees
- Catches insects on the wing during breeding season
- Feeds on small fish caught near the surface of the water
- Often harassed by parasitic jaegers who chase them until their latest meal is regurgitated, which the jaeger then feasts on (and people think bird watching is boring)!

These two photos by Janine Schutt show Bonaparte’s Gulls in breeding (black head) and nonbreeding plumage.

Below is what she describes as “a crazed Sooty Grouse” she photographed on Green Mountain in June.
This spring, four volunteers from Kitsap Audubon Society participated in National Audubon's Climate Watch program: Jennifer Standish, Janine Schutt, Michelle Amicucci and Renee Amicucci.

Climate Watch is a new citizen science project that was started in response to Audubon’s Bird and Climate Report (http://climate.audubon.org). The report predicts that many North American bird species will lose over 50% of their current climatic range by 2080. The Climate Watch program’s goal is to collect data to test this prediction and assess how different species respond to climate change.

Kitsap Audubon Society was assigned 13 specific 10 km x 10 km squares as its territory. Participants had to identify 12 survey locations within each square. The requirements for survey locations are simple; they must be 200 m apart, located on publicly accessible property, and contain habitat which is likely to support the target species. Participants in Kitsap County were asked to focus on Red-breasted Nuthatches as their target species, but Western Bluebirds are another target species that can be found in some parts of the county.

Surveys are conducted twice a year, once between May 15 and June 15, and once between January 15 and February 15. All 12 survey locations within an individual square must be surveyed on the same day, but squares can be surveyed on any day within the survey period. Surveys should be completed in the morning or evening when birds are likely to be more active. Depending on the distance between survey locations, it usually takes 3-4 hours to survey each square.

The survey protocol consists of a 5 minute point count at each of the 12 survey locations. GPS coordinates are recorded at each site, and then a timer is set. All birds seen or heard during the 5 minutes are entered on an eBird checklist, and the checklists are emailed to National Audubon.

Participants this spring were able to survey 5 of Kitsap Audubon’s assigned squares, for a total of 60 individual survey locations. Red-breasted Nuthatches were found in 4 of the 5 squares, at a total of 14 sites.

More volunteers are needed so that Kitsap Audubon can survey additional squares in the future. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jennifer Standish at magma1306@gmail.com.

Photos of Red-breasted Nuthatch and Western Bluebird by Janine Schutt.

Book review by Gene Bullock

Chapter 2: When Men Were Men, Women Were Women, and Birds Were Hats

In *Flight Plans*, Price uses vignettes from history to show how our culture has come to define nature. She grapples with the deep disconnect between our urban lifestyles and how we connect with nature; asking the question: “If “nature” is “out there” in remote places infrequently visited, how do we make it meaningful “in here” where we actually live?

In Chapter 2, she highlights the pivotal role of the women’s movement in creating the National Audubon Society and setting the cornerstone of today’s conservation movement. Boycotting the use of wild bird feathers and body parts in women’s hats became a galvanizing issue for women in the 1890s. Women’s club members were outraged when they read how commercial market hunters were slaughtering whole colonies of mother egrets and mother herons, and leaving their young to starve, in order to supply feathers for women’s hats. As the “hands that rock the cradle,” women saw themselves as the keepers of the moral fabric of society. Hats decorated with wild bird feathers and body parts came to symbolize vain and shallow woman who were slaves to fashion. These Victorian concepts of “motherhood” resonated with middle and upper-class women around the world. Images of the mutilated corpses of mother birds in the service of the millenary trade turned women by the thousands into crusading activists. The effect was far more powerful than the arguments of naturalists and ornithologists about the threat of extinctions, or the protection of birds for their beauty or environmental value.

In 1896, Boston philanthropist Harriet Hemmenway and her cousin Minna Hall searched the Boston social register and persuaded some 900 prominent women to sign on to a boycott of the use of wild bird feather in women’s hats. Harriet proceeded to found the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The movement quickly spread among women’s clubs. By 1898, state-level Audubon Societies had been established in Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, Illinois, Maine, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Minnesota, Texas, and California. Even Queen Victoria announced that she would no longer wear clothing with bird feathers or animal parts. In 1905, state Audubon organizations merged to form the National Association of Audubon Societies, which was shortened in the mid-1940s to the National Audubon Society.

Audubon organizations soon shed their image as “women’s clubs” by recruiting prominent male scientists and ornithologists into positions of leadership; and broadening their membership to include men, as well as women. The National Audubon Society has become a nationwide movement of some 1.2 million men and women whose commitment to protecting birds and wildlife transcends both gender and partisan politics.

With wit and insight, Price uses her considerable talents and skills as a historian and storyteller to trace the evolution of concepts of nature in our culture. She shows how their disconnect with nature allowed people to dine on passenger pigeon in posh restaurants while shooting clubs used them for target practice, oblivious to any connection with their ultimate extinction.

In “A Brief History of the Pink Flamingo,” she maps the evolution of our changing concepts of aesthetic taste. She traces our attitudes toward nature as reflected in television and shopping malls.

Her book is a witty and well-researched deep dive into the ways we delude ourselves and how clever marketers cash in on our denial.
Homemade Nature-friendly herbicides

It’s not just wildlife advocates who see the value of replacing manicured lawns with native plants and shrubs. Gardeners are learning that, in addition to providing food and cover for birds and wildlife, native plants are more resilient and easier to maintain. Native plants don’t need as much water or fertilizer, and are far more forgiving.

The negative side is that some tend to crop up where they are not welcome, and are stubbornly prolific. These are the ones we relabel as “weeds.”

The overuse of toxic herbicides and pesticides is devastating wildlife and insect life all over the globe. These man-made chemicals destroy essential wild plants and insects as well as those viewed as trouble makers. As a result, we’re seeing worldwide declines in both insects and the birds and other species that depend on insects for survival.

The pervasive global use of toxic chemicals for lawn, garden and agriculture, is also polluting our drinking water, groundwater and surface water, as well as poisoning the foods we eat and feed our children.

Of course, the most environmentally friendly way to get rid of weeds is to pull them up by hand and dig up the roots. However, that can take quite a bit of time, so if you’re looking for a quicker way to effectively get rid of weeds, one of these homemade herbicides might be the way to go:

**Drench weeds with boiling water.** It’s an effective way to get rid of weeds in sidewalk or driveway cracks, and doesn’t leave a harmful residue or have any harmful long-term effects. Be careful, of course, not to scald yourself or the plants you want to keep.

**Kill weeds selectively with a propane torch.** However, flame weeders require extreme caution in fire-prone areas or near flammable brush and buildings.

**Common table salt is an effective herbicide.** Because salt can have a detrimental effect in the soil, it’s important to only apply it directly to the leaves of the weeds, and to not soak the soil, especially in garden beds with other, more desirable, plants. Dissolve 1 part salt in 8 parts hot water (it can be made stronger, up to 1 part salt to 3 parts water), add a small amount of liquid dish soap (to help it adhere to the leaf surfaces), and pour into a spray bottle. To apply, cover or tie back any nearby plants you don’t want to kill, then spray the leaves of the weeds with the solution. Be careful to not soak the soil, and keep this mixture away from cement sidewalks or driveways (it may discolor them). Multiple applications may be necessary.

**Vinegar spray:** The white vinegar sold in grocery stores is about 5% acetic acid, which is usually strong enough for most weeds, although a more industrial strength version (up to 20% acetic acid, which can be harmful to skin, eyes, or lungs) is available in many garden supply stores. The vinegar can be applied by spraying full strength onto the leaves of the weeds, being careful to minimize any overspray on garden plants and nearby soil. Repeated applications may be necessary, and the addition of a little liquid dish detergent may improve the effectiveness of this homemade herbicide.

**Table salt and vinegar can be combined** (1 cup salt to 1 gallon vinegar). Adding liquid soap is said to help the efficacy of this weedkiller, as is the addition of certain oils, such as citrus or clove oil.

**Borax,** which is sold as a laundry and cleaning product in grocery stores, can also serve as an herbicide. Add 10 ounces of powdered borax to 2.5 gallons of water, mix thoroughly, and use a sprayer to coat the leaves of unwanted weeds in your yard. Keep overspray off of any plants you want to keep, avoid saturating the soil with the solution, and avoid contact with bare skin.

Adapted from “8 natural & homemade insecticides: Save your garden without killing the earth;” by Derek Markham, July 7, 2016, TreeHugger Weekly News.

Rewilding your backyard and avoiding the use of toxic chemicals can help knit together our fragmented wildlife habitat. Photo by Gene Bullock
Harper Park & Harper Estuary need stewards and volunteers

As restoration at Harper Park and the Harper Estuary move forward, the park needs stewards and volunteers. For more information, please contact Kitsap County Parks Dept. at 360.337.5350 or parks@co.kitsap.wa.us; or visit their website: https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/

Harper Estuary is a small but significant estuary on Kitsap County’s south-eastern shore. The estuary has important value for fish and wildlife, recreation and local history. The Harper Estuary Restoration Project aims to re-establish tidal influence and estuarine habitat.
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

Kitsap Audubon Society - Membership Renewal
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