Well known Kitsap filmmaker John Williams returns to Kitsap Audubon to talk about his newest publishing adventure, an online magazine about the natural wonders of the Salish Sea, where everything is connected.

Birds really stand out among our life forms as expert exploiters of all three dimensions of our world. They interact with things on the ground, in the forest canopy, and carry nutrients and other life forms above the trees and across long distances. As such, they are a key part of the diversity in our ecosystems.

This presentation will show how Salish Magazine has been drawing connections between our marine, forest, and aerial ecosystem pieces, some of the challenges in doing so, and some of the future directions.

John F. Williams spent about 20 years mapping the ocean floor all over the world, from the deepest of the deep, the Mariana Trench, to some of our planet’s newest real-estate on the flanks of Surtsey, Iceland. At the beginning of this century, he embarked on a new adventure: using imagery and technology to bring stories of hidden parts of our local natural world to the public. Over the last 18 months, John has been publishing Salish Magazine, an online repository of stories about things that people can see when they explore our Salish Sea region.

Photo of sunning Great Blue Heron and both Pelagic and Double-crested Cormorants by John Williams.

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

Christmas Bird Counts

Sign up for either or both of our annual Christmas Bird Counts (details on page 5):
• Kitsap County CBC - Saturday, December 14.
• North Kitsap-Port Gamble CBC - Saturday, December 21.
As this year comes to an end, we want you to know how grateful we are for your continued support.

Birds are in nothing short of a full-blown crisis. We've lost more than a quarter of North American birds in the last fifty years, with steep declines even in traditionally abundant birds. Hundreds of vulnerable species are on a dangerous path to extinction — and they are running out of time.

The situation for birds is dire. But with the energy, passion, and extraordinary support of Kitsap Audubon members like you, we can help save them.

That's why I'm urging you to take immediate action by making a special donation. (https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/take-action) By giving a special year-end contribution, you can make a difference at a time when birds have never needed you more.

Simply put, by making a gift to Kitsap Audubon right now, your donation will go far to protect the birds we love!

There is no more important time than now to reaffirm your commitment to Audubon. Right now, birds are telling us something is dangerously wrong—and it is at our own peril if we ignore their warnings.

According to an alarming study published in Science magazine, North America has lost 3 billion birds in the past half-century.

National Audubon’s recent climate report warns that an alarming two-thirds of all North American birds risk extinction as the impacts of climate change continue to escalate.

If global temperatures keep rising unchecked, virtually every place birds need could be in danger, with multiple climate-related threats expected to affect 98% of the continental United States. The impact on birds could be catastrophic.

Our seabird populations have decreased 70% since 1950. As rising ocean temperatures push the high-quality forage fish seabirds need into deeper water and further from land, their nesting success continues to plummet.

We're also up against an administration that's been a disaster for birds and the places they need since day one: fighting proven efforts to curb the emissions that accelerate climate change, stripping vital safeguards from the Endangered Species Act, opening the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge — North America’s most prolific bird nursery — to oil and gas drilling, and repealing essential protections that keep our air and water clean.

If that weren't bad enough, the president has appointed lobbyists for industry to top posts in the EPA and Interior Department, where they've systematically pursued policies that benefit their friends in big business — not birds or the environment. The question is, “Who is going to act in the interest of birds?”

The answer is you! The facts are stark. But with the collective dedication and energy of Audubon members we know we can win.

Nationally, Audubon has consistently opposed reckless environmental policies that put birds and their homes in danger.

In Kitsap County, Kitsap Audubon has helped raise millions of dollars to save forests and shoreline habitat. We’ve awarded more than $50,000 in grants and scholarships to students pursuing degrees related to our mission. And our speakers have championed birds and the environment in dozens of presentations to Kitsap community organizations. Our monthly programs and expertly led field trips are free and open to the public. And our citizen science projects have engaged countless volunteers all over the County. We’ve also partnered with Audubon Washington and its two dozen other chapters to push for legislation that protects birds and the environment.

We know that you do everything you can around your own home to make sure birds are welcome and cared for. It is the personal commitment by members like you that inspires all of us to take on the threats that endanger birds and our planet.

All of our important work is made possible through your support. And with so many vulnerable birds counting on us to survive, we need you now more than ever. So please, as this challenging year comes to a close, reaffirm your commitment to birds with a special, tax-deductible contribution today—and know your gift is going far for the birds you love.

https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/take-action

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.
Remembering Connie - Gene Bullock

Birds, wildlife – and especially her beloved orca whales – lost a fiercely devoted friend and ally when Connie Bickerton passed away on October 30th. Her long-time dedication to organizations like Kitsap Audubon, Sound Action and the Orca Network was driven by her passion for protecting and photographing the birds, whales and other wildlife she loved. She was also an avid birder and Kitsap Audubon field trip leader.

Connie served on the Board of Directors for Sound Action, a nonprofit that works to protect near-shore forage fish habitat by making sure the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife is following the permitting laws for bulkheads and docks.

“She was a dedicated environmentalist and an ace photographer with a fierce passion for orcas,” said Amy Carey, Executive Director of Sound Action. “She used her voice and her actions to support the salmon and habitat protections the whales need to survive. And her photos helped share the beauty of the orcas and their plight in the world.”

Although many in her family were already bird watchers, Connie said she got started identifying birds as an orca whale watch observer because it filled the long intervals between sightings. But she soon became a serious birder and joined Kitsap Audubon. In September 2014 she offered to create and maintain a Facebook page for Kitsap Audubon, and was invited to join the Board. She has been a very active member of the Board ever since, serving as both secretary and social media chair. In addition, she worked closely with the conservation chair, and even represented Kitsap Audubon at the latest meeting of the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee.

Connie was instrumental in reviving the North Kitsap-Port Gamble Christmas Bird Count circle, which had been dormant for 16 years; and, with Jennifer Standish, has co-led the Port Ludlow field team. In 2017 she was also a member of a team of local birders that won Alaska Audubon’s Great American Arctic Birding Challenge. For the past three years she has been counting birds in Suquamish for the Puget Sound Seabird Survey sponsored by Seattle Audubon. She was also a Salish Sea Marine Naturalist, a member of Kitsap Beach Watchers, and a Salmon Docent.

Connie was known for her exceptional skills and talent as a wildlife photographer. Her photographs have been widely published. She photographed 256 species of birds in 2017.

Connie loved to use her camera to document wild animals interacting with the environment. “I love this place we call home,” she said. “The beauty of the land, sea and the creatures we share it with never cease to inspire and move me.”

Photo of Connie by Marilyn Ambruster.

Photos of ospreys and whales by Connie Bickerton.
Field Trips & Festivals - Al and Andrew Westphal

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

Christmas Bird Count: KAS birding opportunities on December 14, and 21. See the CBC entry in this issue for details and POCs.

Field Trip Reports

Billy Frank – Nisqually NWR, October 26th. Six of us gathered for an outing that was re-scheduled from the previous weekend because of the bad weather forecast. We enjoyed quite a pleasant fall day and were rewarded with a solid list of 48 species for the morning. Highlights included the many little-brown-birds in the orchard area, including bunches of kinglets, Bushtits, sparrows, and chickadees, along with four woodpecker species. Out on the flats we had great observations of several groups of Cackling Geese and other waterfowl and were able to study several cackler subspecies. We also got some distant looks at a fair number of shorebirds and raptors, including a distant pair of Northern Harriers.

BI Owl Prowl, October 27th. Here’s the report provided by our local owling expert Jamie Acker: “I was joined by 11 owlers on a particularly beautiful morning for owling – cold, clear, little moon, and very slight wind from the north. At our first stop, I was outcompeted in my calling for a Northern Saw-whet, who while very vocal, refused to become a visual, despite our efforts. The third stop produced a reliable Barred Owl that proved to be the only barred owl of the morning. The following stop got a loud chirp from an overhead flying saw-whet, but again, no visual. At our next stop on the south end of the Island, we were finally treated to an excellent visual of a Northern Saw-whet Owl, and later heard another male tooting away in response to my calling. On the drive out, a Barn Owl flushed from the side of the road for a quick visual for a very few. In all, four Northern Saw-whets were detected, one Barred Owl, and one Barn Owl.” Many thanks as always to Jaime for leading this ever popular event!

Wildlife Sightings - Janine Schutt

On Nov. 10, Gene Bullock reported 15 band-tailed pigeons visiting his yard in Poulsbo. He has also seen 2 Eurasian-collared doves, 8 mourning doves, 2 California scrub-jays, and 6 Steller’s jays.

Send me your interesting sightings at jeschutt@hotmail.com. Please put “Wildlife Sightings” in the subject line.

Notable Kitsap Bird Sightings from www.eBird.org:

Oct. 12 at the Kingston Ferry Terminal: 1 short-eared owl flying over
Oct. 13 at Skiff Point (Bainbridge Island): 18 snow geese flying over
Oct. 15 at Foulweather Bluff (near Hansville): 1 Townsend’s solitaire
Oct. 24 at Restoration Point (Bainbridge Island): 6 black scoters, 1 black oystercatcher, 2 western meadowlarks
Oct. 26 near Hansville: 1 Lewis’s woodpecker
Oct. 27 near Hansville: 9 cackling geese flying over, 2 evening grosbeaks
Oct. 29 at Kitsap Lake (Bremerton): 7 ruddy ducks, 160 American coots
Nov. 1 at Gazzam Lake Park (Bainbridge Island): 1 trumpeter swan
Nov. 2 at Sinclair Inlet (near Port Orchard): 45 brant
Nov. 2 at Restoration Point: 35 harlequin ducks, 3 surfbirds
Nov. 4 in Poulsbo: 7 greater white-fronted geese flying over
Nov. 4 on Bainbridge Island: 1 white-throated sparrow
Nov. 5 in Hansville: 1 northern shrike
Nov. 8 in Port Gamble: 3 long-tailed ducks, 1 merlin
Nov. 8 near Poulsbo: 1 hermit thrush
Nov. 11 at Point No Point (near Hansville): 2 ancient murrelets
Nov. 11 near Hansville: 2 barn owls
Nov. 12 at Square Lake State Park (near Port Orchard): 55 Wilson’s snipes
Nov. 13 at Point No Point: 1 Cassin’s auklet
**2019 Christmas Bird Counts**

The annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) started in 1900 as an alternative to the traditional Christmas “side hunt,” when “sportsmen” competed to see who could kill the most birds and small game in a single day. It has grown into the largest and longest-running bird census in the world, with more than 75,000 participants in more than 2,500 count circles across the Western Hemisphere. Kitsap Audubon has been conducting annual CBCs in Kitsap County for 46 years.

Those who volunteer are participating in valuable citizen science, as well as joining with other birders in a great wintertime activity that is both fun and informative.

**Our traditional Kitsap County CBC will be held on Saturday, December 14th.**

**Two years ago, we revived a second count circle in North Kitsap that had been dormant for 16 years. The North Kitsap-Port Gamble-Hansville CBC will be on Saturday, December 21st.**

You can sign up for either or both CBCs by contacting the team leader for the group you would like to join. All skill levels are welcome.

Instead of joining a field team, you can choose to spend that day counting birds in your own backyard; but backyard counters must live in the count area. To sign up for the backyard count, contact Janine Schutt: jeschutt@hotmail.com or call her at 360-830-4446.

For other questions about either CBC, contact our designated Compilers (see list):
- **Kitsap CBC** - Janine Schutt
- **North Kitsap CBC** - Jennifer Standish

Each CBC circle is 15 miles in diameter, with teams counting birds in defined segments. Following each CBC, the Compiler collects results from all teams, as well as backyard counters, and submits the final tallies to National Audubon. Results from Christmas Bird Counts are used by ornithologists and others to monitor bird population trends and the impact of climate change on winter ranges.

### 2019 Kitsap Audubon Christmas Bird Count

**Saturday, December 14, 2019 -- To sign up, contact area leader directly**

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<td>1</td>
<td>Port Orchard</td>
<td>Chazz Hesselein</td>
<td>360-633-0486</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chazz@hesselein.com">chazz@hesselein.com</a></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>West Bremerton</td>
<td>Brad Waggoner</td>
<td>206-780-9581</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wagtail24@gmail.com">wagtail24@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Chico/Seabeck</td>
<td>Lisa Pedersen</td>
<td>360-830-4768</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lisa_mp52@yahoo.com">lisa_mp52@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>East Bremerton</td>
<td>Jessica Klinkert</td>
<td>360-551-2647</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jklinkert.2000@yahoo.com">jklinkert.2000@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>South Bl</td>
<td>Lee &amp; Kirk Robinson</td>
<td>206-842-0774</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leerob9672@gmail.com">leerob9672@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>North Bl</td>
<td>George Gerdts</td>
<td>206-842-8138</td>
<td><a href="mailto:geopandion@gmail.com">geopandion@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>Silverdale/Keyport</td>
<td>Al &amp; Andrew Westphal</td>
<td>206-780-7844</td>
<td><a href="mailto:westphalac@aol.com">westphalac@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>7B</td>
<td>Poulsbo</td>
<td>Gene &amp; Sandy Bullock</td>
<td>360-394-5635</td>
<td><a href="mailto:genebullock@comcast.net">genebullock@comcast.net</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Owls</td>
<td>Jamie Acker</td>
<td>206-499-7121</td>
<td><a href="mailto:owler@sounddsl.com">owler@sounddsl.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Backyard Count</td>
<td>Janine Schutt</td>
<td>360-830-4446</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeschutt@hotmail.com">jeschutt@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBC Compiler</td>
<td>Jennifer Standish</td>
<td>360-293-9320</td>
<td><a href="mailto:magma1306@gmail.com">magma1306@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owling</td>
<td>Jamie Acker</td>
<td>206-499-7121</td>
<td><a href="mailto:owler@sounddsl.com">owler@sounddsl.com</a></td>
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<td>Janine Schutt</td>
<td>360-830-4446</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeschutt@hotmail.com">jeschutt@hotmail.com</a></td>
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### NK-Port Gamble Christmas Bird Count

**Saturday, December 21, - To sign up, contact leader directly**

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<td>1</td>
<td>Hansville</td>
<td>Al &amp; Andrew Westphal</td>
<td>206-780-7844</td>
<td><a href="mailto:westphalac@aol.com">westphalac@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>Stillwaters - Joleen Palmer</td>
<td>360-297-1226</td>
<td>stillwatersenvironmentalcenter.org</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Port Gamble</td>
<td>Judy &amp; Don Willott</td>
<td>206-842-6939</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jdwillott@mac.com">jdwillott@mac.com</a></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Port Ludlow/Shine</td>
<td>Jennifer Standish</td>
<td>206-293-9320</td>
<td><a href="mailto:magma1306@gmail.com">magma1306@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Poulsbo</td>
<td>Gene &amp; Sandy Bullock</td>
<td>360-394-5635</td>
<td><a href="mailto:genebullock@comcast.net">genebullock@comcast.net</a></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Miller Bay</td>
<td>Nancy D’Archangel</td>
<td>360-271-6565</td>
<td><a href="mailto:darchangel@embarqmail.com">darchangel@embarqmail.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>CBC Compiler</td>
<td>Jennifer Standish</td>
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Bird of Month: Sanderling - Janine Schutt

A common shorebird that winters in Kitsap County is the sanderling. Among the smallest shorebirds, this member of the sandpiper family is fun to watch as it hurries along the beach. Locally, it is most often seen on shorelines surrounding the northern and eastern sides of the Kitsap Peninsula. Here are some fascinating facts about the sanderling:

- Mostly white in non-breeding plumage and has rufous tones in breeding plumage.
- Sometimes mixes with flocks of western and least sandpipers and the much larger black-bellied plovers.
- Only sandpiper without a hind toe, which helps it run fast.
- Probes in wet sand and feeds on stranded aquatic invertebrates at the water’s edge, then quickly retreats up the beach to avoid an incoming wave.
- Picks insects off of the sand while running along the beach.
- Long-distance migrant that breeds the farthest north of any shorebird in Washington.
- Some individuals travel 6,000 miles during migration.
- Nests on rocky, dry tundra in northern Canada, often near a lake or pond.
- Winters all along both the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines, from British Columbia and New England to South America.
- Prefers to winter on broad, sandy beaches with light colored sand, but can sometimes be found on gravelly beaches and mudflats.
- Non-breeders spend the summer months on wintering grounds to avoid an unnecessary trip to the Arctic.
- When a peregrine falcon or other avian predator threatens, a flock forms a tight ball and flies erratically over the water.
- Although common in many parts of the world, populations are declining. Listed as “Early Warning” on the Audubon Washington Vulnerable Birds List.

Photos by Janine Schutt

Climate Watch call for volunteers - Janine Schutt

On Thursday, December 12, Climate Watch volunteers, Jennifer Standish and Janine Schutt, will conduct an informational presentation at 6:15pm in the Poulsbo Library before the general meeting. Those interested in learning more about Audubon’s Climate Watch are encouraged to attend.

Volunteers conduct 5-minute stationary surveys in 12 carefully selected, publicly accessible locations within a 10 x 10 km square. While all species detected within 100 meters are counted, the survey specifically targets red-breasted nuthatch, American goldfinch, and spotted towhee as indicator species of the effects of climate change. The winter survey window is from January 15 to February 15, and the breeding season survey window is from May 15 to June 15. The survey may be conducted on any single day during the count window.

Jennifer and Janine will outline the purpose of this citizen science survey, how to participate, and which areas of Kitsap County need coverage.

Photo of Spotted Towhee by Janine Schutt.
**Bring mitten tree donations to December meeting**

Remember to bring your mitten tree donations to our December meeting. In addition to hats, gloves and scarves, we welcome canned goods and other nonperishables food items, as well as full size toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, soap/body wash) and both adult and children’s socks. We also collect yarn for our wonderful volunteers at the Women’s Prison in Purdy, who knit hats, scarves and other items for our mitten tree.

*Diane Bachen poses next to Kitsap Audubon’s holiday mitten tree, festooned with donated hats, gloves and scarves. The base is surrounded with donated food and other items. Diane and Sharron Ham distribute all donations to Kitsap agencies that serve the needy.*

**Diane Bachen speaks to pre-schoolers about birds**

Diane Bachen explained to a group of pre-school children how birds stay warm in winter during the Barnacles and Bees outdoor pre-school program at Illahee State Park. They looked at two different kinds of feathers and made simple bird feeders. Diane will return in the spring with a program about nests and bird songs.

**Nancy Sefton bird art note cards sets on sale**

At our Dec. 12th meeting, we’ll be displaying and selling special greeting cards with envelopes, featuring beautiful NW bird art by noted local artist Nancy Sefton. The cards are blank on the inside and make nice holiday gifts. A package of five cards, featuring five different birds, sells for $20, and Nancy Sefton (member of both KAS and the Poulsbo Artist League) donates all proceeds to Kitsap Audubon.
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