

Treasure of Port Susan Bay

'Let nature be your teacher.' – William Wordsworth

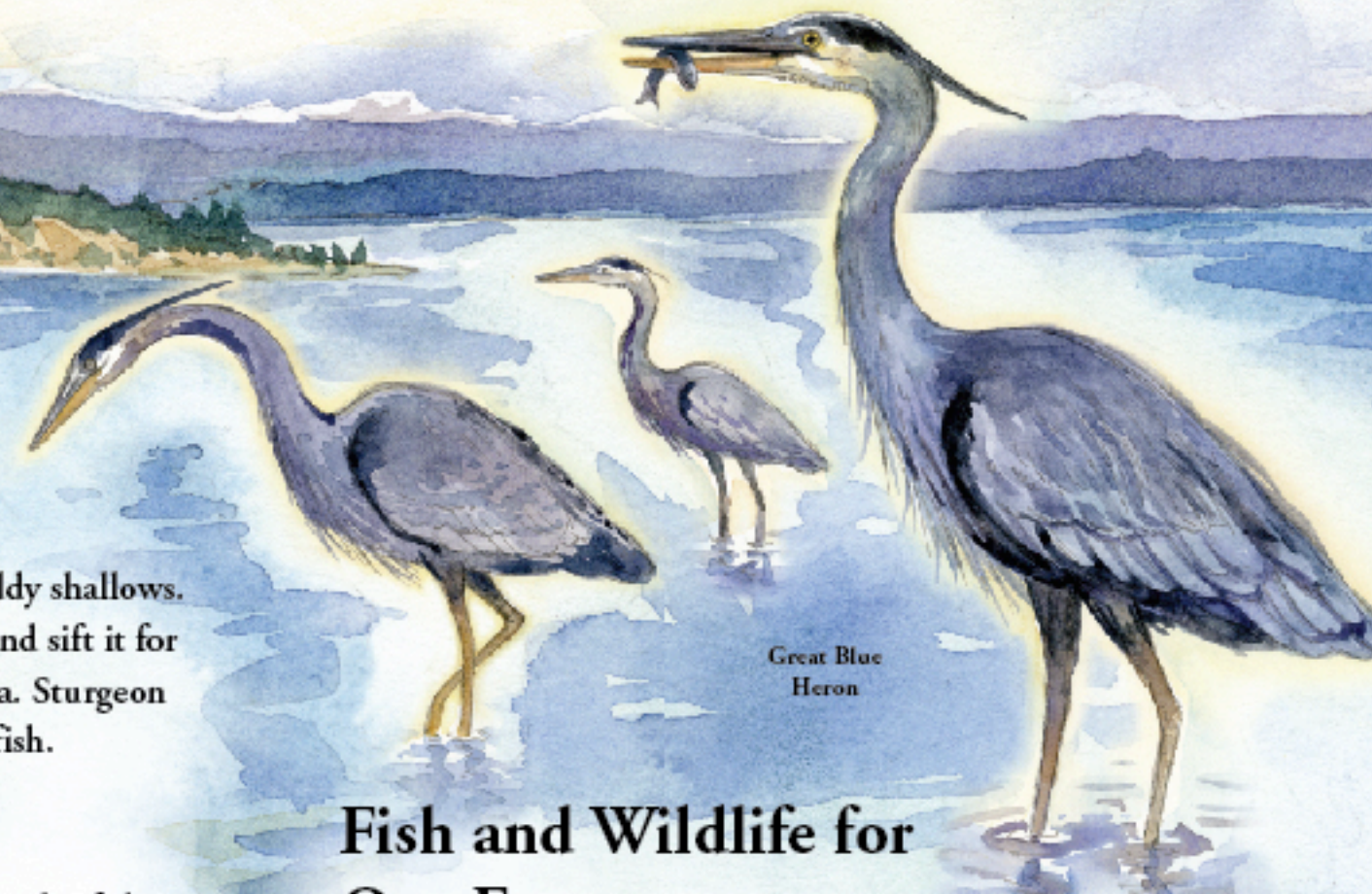
Teeming with Life

You are looking at Port Susan Bay, where nature lays a banquet for Salmon, Sturgeon, Gray Whales, Clams, Crabs, migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. Our fish and shellfish are harvested both commercially and recreationally. Surf Smelt lay their eggs on our sandy beaches and Ghost Shrimp burrow in the muddy shallows. Salmon and birds feed on the Smelt. Gray Whales scoop mouthfuls of bottom and sift it for Ghost Shrimp, stopping here on their springtime journey from Mexico to Alaska. Sturgeon visit our bay from the Columbia and Fraser rivers to forage for worms and shellfish.

A Salmon Nursery

Did you know Iverson Spit is also a salmon nursery? The tidal channels of the Stillaguamish River carry thousands of young salmon down to this park's sandy shore and lagoon habitat. Hillside drainage, overland runoff and shoreline ground water seep into the marsh and estuary here, diluting the saline waters of the bay to give young salmon a chance to adjust their metabolism. The small fish find refuge in tidal channels from predators that lurk in the deeper waters. Here they feed, rest, hide and grow before venturing into deeper waters of Puget Sound.

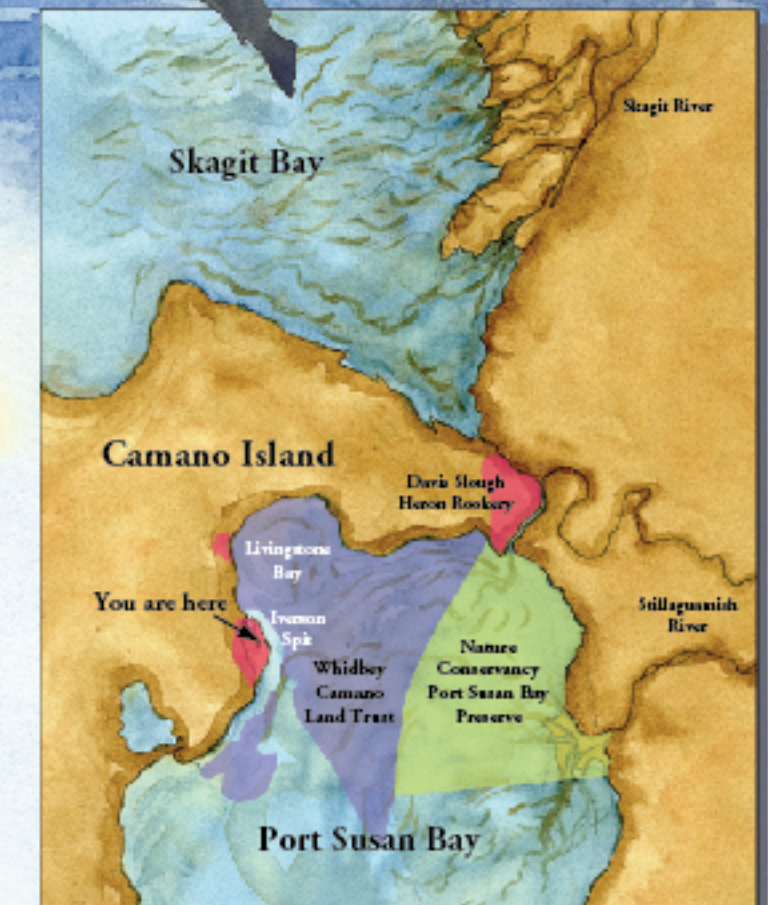
Juvenile Salmon



Great Blue Heron

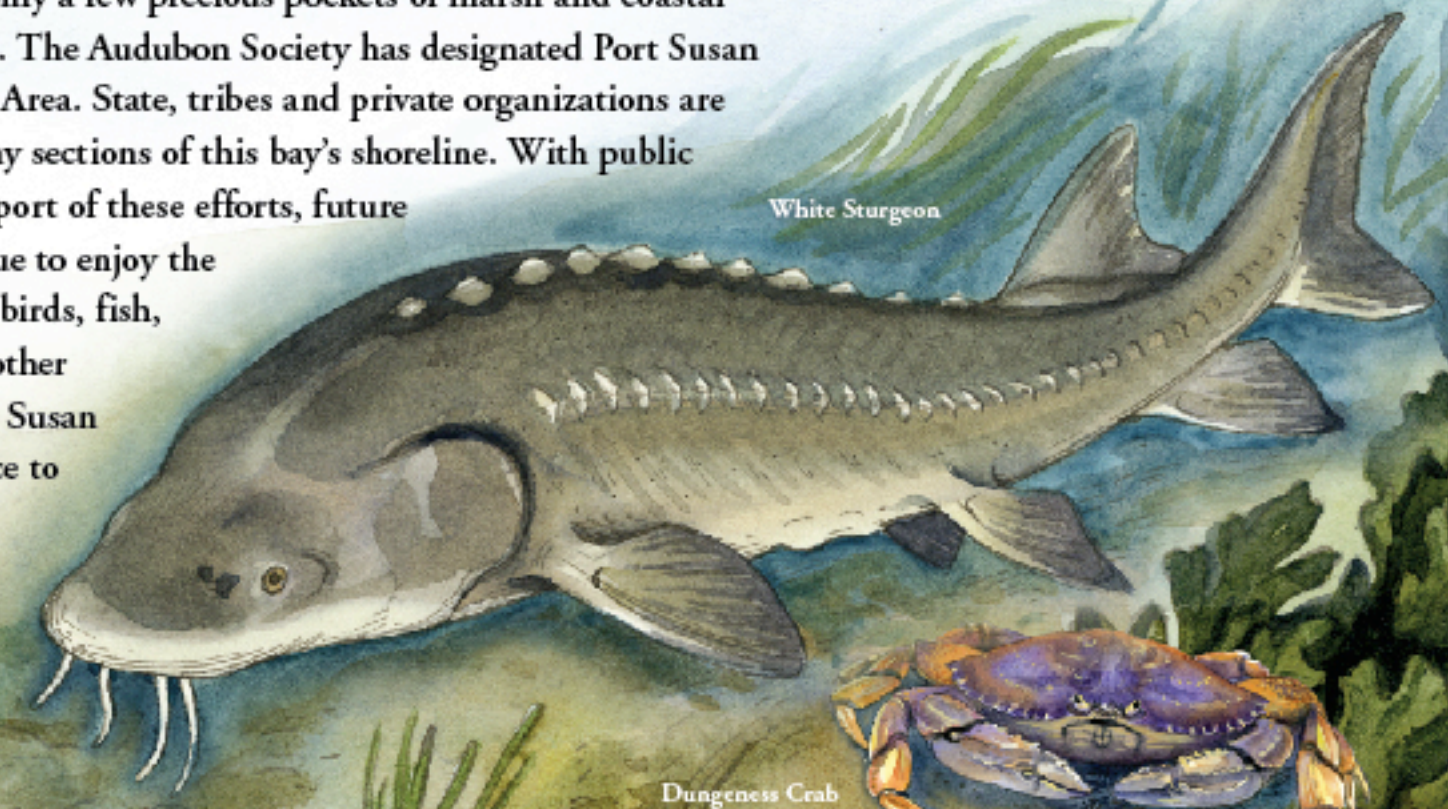


Osprey



Fish and Wildlife for Our Future

Only recently have we really understood how valuable estuaries and salt marshes are to the entire marine food chain. Decades of logging, farming and home-building altered much of our shoreline. Today, only a few precious pockets of marsh and coastal wetland habitat remain. The Audubon Society has designated Port Susan Bay an Important Bird Area. State, tribes and private organizations are working to protect many sections of this bay's shoreline. With public understanding and support of these efforts, future generations will continue to enjoy the beauty and diversity of birds, fish, marine mammals and other wildlife that make Port Susan Bay such a magical place to live and visit.



White Sturgeon

Dungeness Crab

www.islandcountymrc.org



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