



Los Gatos Birdwatcher

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Photo Presentations

Bodie—The Original Mining Town of the Late 1880'S and Mono Lake

Thursday, May 21, 6:30 – 7:30 PM at the Terraces



Join Lisa Myers as she takes us on a photographic journey throughout the old California mining town of Bodie. Once a thriving town with nearly 10,000 people, there is interesting history surrounding the town. What remains of Bodie today is maintained by the California State Park system and is open for all to visit. Not far from Bodie, and located in the Eastern Sierras, is Mono Lake. For over 30 years people have been working hard to protect this salt water lake and we'll learn about its history and how the lake is vital to millions of migratory and nesting birds.

No charge but call to reserve your seat.

Acterra's Habitat Restoration Project at McClellan Ranch Preserve

Thursday, June 18, 6:30 – 7:30 PM at the Terraces



Acterra is an environmental non-profit serving the Silicon Valley and headquartered in Palo Alto. Their mission is to provide people with, "tangible, hands-on activities they can do to improve the environment". Acterra does this by providing several thousand volunteer opportunities each year for adults and youth. The Acterra's Stewardship Program works to restore habitat that is considered "degraded" meaning it no longer has the necessary components to sustain a healthy ecosystem. Currently they are working at 18 different sites throughout Silicon Valley, including McClellan Ranch Preserve in Cupertino where the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is headquartered. We invite you to come meet Project Director Sara Witt as she shares with us the connections between habitat restoration, insects and birds. We will also discuss the important role native plants play in supporting wildlife biodiversity.

No charge but call to reserve your seat.

20% off all Pentax Binoculars

– We are discontinuing this line. So if you've been eyeing a pair for better birding... now's the time!

Not to be combined with other discounts.
Limited to stock on hand.



Transition Update

Computers & technology

When John and I offered Lisa the opportunity to take over the store we let her know that our current computer system and "Point of Sale" software needed to be replaced. Although we love our DOS program, it too needs to retire and has performed way beyond its life expectancy, as have the windows 95 & 98 equipment on which it all runs.

So Lisa has been busy looking for a new software program that could handle the unique type of inventory we carry in the store – birdseed. Believe it or not, not many programs can take a 20 lb. bag of seed and break it down into #4-5lb. bags of seed and keep the inventory on track. However, Lisa has found a program out of Minnesota that we feel will do a great job. For the next several months we will be transitioning out of the old computer system and into the new.

This will not impact our customers, but you may come in and find the staff fumbling around with the new computers and software! Please bear with us.



How DNA Is Changing the Bird World as We Know It

by Dr. John Harshman

We recently had a DNA workshop in the store by Dr. John Harshman. He shared how DNA is being used to understand the true relationships of birds. The workshop was so well received we asked Dr. Harshman to provide an article for the newsletter.



If you've been birding a long time (I have) and if you've been through several generations of field guides (I have), then you have probably noticed that the Latin names of the species change from time to time. Sometimes one species is determined to actually be two different species and it is "split", or research decides what was considered two species is actually only one and they get "lumped". You may also have noticed that more radical changes — genus names disappearing, the taxonomic order of species and families are changing, and so on — have also happened. You may even have noticed that such changes are becoming more frequent.

A case in point: the newest Sibley guide (2014) differs from my old Peterson guide (1980) and from most previous guides in a host of ways. Ducks have been moved to the front of the guide instead of loons. Falcons and hawks have been separated, and the falcons and parrots now appear right before the passerines. Vireos have moved next to the crows instead of the warblers. North American tanagers have been taken away from the tanagers and stuffed in with the cardinals. And the entire warbler genus Dendroica has disappeared, replaced by a grossly enlarged genus called Setophaga.

You may wonder why they can't just leave things alone. Well, you need to blame the biologists, or perhaps DNA, or maybe just evolution. All these changes have happened because we are finding, mostly thanks to DNA research, that we were wrong about a lot of bird relationships, and the field guides are merely changing to reflect this new knowledge. Ducks were moved because they (along with the game fowl) are the most distant relatives of the other birds. Falcons really are more closely related to parrots and passerines than to hawks. Vireos and crows are fellow migrants from Australia, and North American tanagers really are not tanagers. True tanagers are a mostly South American family. Even Sibley only goes half way. Grebes should go with flamingos, not loons, and both families should be near the beginning of the book, along with pigeons and tropicbirds (which are not at all close to pelicans). Pelicans and herons should be closer to each other than to cormorants or storks, respectively.

Why sort by relationships at all? Well, you can learn a lot about a person by meeting the rest of their family. Similarly, I would argue that if you want to really know a bird, you should also know its relatives. What could be more fascinating than knowing that a tiny grebe and a lanky flamingo are cousins? It helps us appreciate just how strange evolution can be.

Swainson's Hawk Are Back!

By Lisa Myers

Hawks and eagles are the group of birds known as "raptors". From all the teaching I have done over the years I can tell you that "raptors" are a favorite group of birds even for folks that do not consider themselves "birders".

Raptors are beautiful, powerful birds, and because of their size, they are usually easy to find out in a landscape. They are also the hunters of the bird world and most people find that very impressive. They make their living dining on mammals, reptiles, fish, insects and even other birds. So for this newsletter we wanted to focus on the Swainson's Hawk. There are several birds named after the English ornithologist, William John Swainson. Back in the day they would "collect" birds in order to study them and thus, the Swainson's Hawk was named after him. While Red-tailed Hawks are a common raptor we can find all year long throughout the Bay Area and



Swainson's Hawk
Tom Grey

North America, Swainson's Hawks are a long-distance migrant that arrive in California each spring. Some migrate as far north as Alaska while some spend the summer in the mid-west. They come to North America for the breeding season and afterward, nearly the entire population of Swainson's Hawks then travel to Argentina where they will remain through the winter. For those that go all the way up to Alaska, that is a 12,000 mile round trip journey for the Swainson's Hawks!

That is just one of the reasons I admire this species. They are built a little differently than our more common Red-tailed Hawk. Their wings are narrower and longer which helps them with their long migration and they do not have a red tail. While they will dine on rodents, they also take advantage of insect populations. They do very well living in and around agricultural fields and you can sometimes find flocks of Swainson's Hawks circling over agricultural fields while they are being plowed. As the farmer tills earth, the hawks are there to quickly snatch a meal. In the last several years we have been fortunate to have Swainson's Hawks breeding in south Santa Clara County around Calero Reservoir. You can also look for them when you are driving throughout California's Central Valley. They will be here until the fall when they will start their migration back to South America.

Belize Raptor Tour | August 10 – 19, 2015

Here's an opportunity to bird Central America with the Belize Raptor Research Institute. Along with observing new species, and exploring habitats throughout Belize, you will also enjoy educational enrichment through a series of lectures, as well as participate in field research and the Annual Raptor-a-thon fundraising event. The trip will be focused on raptors (Birds of Prey), but will look for and appreciate all wildlife. This trip will be co-led by Lisa Myers of Let's Go Birding, Ryan Phillips, Founding Director of the Belize Raptor Research Institute (BRRI), and Roni Martinez the Belize Raptor Research Institute President, as well as local guides at each site. Contact lisa@letsgobirding.com for details.



The Art of the Nest: Identifying Birds by What They Build

Presented by Freddy Howell & Toby Goldberg (SCVAS Education Committee)

Class: Tuesday May 26, 6:30-8:00PM, Field: Saturday May 30, 8:30-11:00AM

Locations: McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino

The way a bird builds its nest can tell you where it lives, what it eats and much more. This information can be a valuable tool in learning how to identify birds in the field. We'll discuss the different ways birds nest, examine many of their creations, and learn what we need to look for when birding. Our field trip will follow up with a visit to the nest boxes at McClellan Ranch to see nesting in action.

Fee: \$30 SCVAS members/\$45 non-members. Note: ALL ages welcome (with adult supervision)



Los Gatos Birdwatcher's Summer Nature Series



2015

Reservations Required Space is limited. \$8/child for each class
Call (408) 358-9453 to register.

Super Shredders

Thursday, June 18

For ages 3 to 5: 10:30-11:30 am

For ages 6 to 12: 1-2 pm

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher

to find out about all sorts of creatures that shed. Examine a variety of shed skins and exoskeletons, and discover how other creatures may use them. Watch a silly puppet show, and create your own magic trick.



Feathered Friends – *This class fills fast, so call now.*

Thursday, June 25

For ages 3 to 5: 11 am to 12 noon

For ages 6 to 12: 12:15 to 1:15 pm

or 1:30 to 2:30 pm

Come to Belgatos Park to meet some special, live birds visiting from Sulphur Creek Nature Center. Get a rare, up close look at a beautiful owl, pet a dove, and feed a duck. Experiment with feathers, and dissect a pellet to discover what an owl ate.



Teddy Bear Picnic

Thursday, July 9, 11-12:30

For ages 2 - 9

Bring your favorite stuffed friend, lunch, and a blanket to sit on to Belgatos Park to discover why animals love the trees. Hear a story, make a fun bat to play with, and investigate the trees in search of animals and clues that they may have left behind.



Kids' Photography Hike

Thursday, July 9

For ages 6 to 12: 1:30 to 2:30 pm

Meet us at Vasona Lake to go adventuring on the trails taking nature photos. Our trip there last year was such fun, we will return and explore other trails this time. Bring any camera that you like and learn some simple tips to help you get great pictures. Make a frame for one of your favorite photos



Radical Reptiles

Thursday, July 16

For ages 3 to 5: 11 am to 12 noon

For ages 6 to 12: 12:15 to 1:15 pm

or 1:30 to 2:30 pm

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher



to visit some live reptiles visiting from Sulphur Creek Nature Center. Come see and touch a lizard, snake and turtle too. Discover why they love a hot, summer day, and create your own clever lizard.

Unbeatible Beaks

Thursday, July 23

For ages 3 to 5: 10:30-11:30 am

For ages 6 to 12: 1-2 pm

Come to Vasona Lake to investigate all sorts of beaks. Participate in activities to discover what they are designed for. Make a duck bill visor to shade your eyes as we explore the trails in search of beaks of all sizes and shapes.



Tool Time**Thursday, July 30****For ages 3 to 5: 10:30-11:30 am****For ages 6 to 12: 1-2 pm**

Come to Belgatos Park to discover the tools that different animals have. Use some tools yourself as we investigate their work. Go exploring on the trails in search of the animals projects, and make your own bee siper.

**Animal Instant Messaging****Thursday, August 6****For ages 3 to 5: 10:30-11:30 am****For ages 6 to 12: 1-2 pm**

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher to discover different ways that animals communicate. Watch a silly puppet show and participate in fun activities to find out about all sorts of different animal messages including pee-mail, woodpecker drumming, rabbit thumping, and the poop scoop.



Call for Artists and Photographers

Calling all artists!

- Show off your work at our sixth Annual Artist Exhibition on **Sunday, August 2**.

Join other talented artists for our sixth annual Artist Exhibition. The artist's work in pastels, watercolors, pen & ink, and oils. If you have a talent for painting birds and would like other people to see your work, mark your calendars for **Sunday, August 2 from 12 – 4pm**. The

deadline to enter your artwork is **Friday, July 24** and is **limited to the first 30 artists**. Please call the store



California Quail by: Robin Lazzara

to get your name on the list. Details will be emailed. Refreshments will be served. We hope you will be able to be a part of this fun event.

Calling all Photographers!

- Here's your chance to shine! Enter our tenth Annual Photo Exhibition on **Sunday, August 23**.

Many of our customers are very talented nature photographers. For the tenth year we will be hosting an exhibition of their work. Have you taken a nature photo that transports you back to when you took it? Now is the chance to share it with everyone. Our participants have varied and grown over the years. The photographs are amazing! We are soliciting photographs of birds that you would like to exhibit. We are *limiting the number of photographers to 30* and are asking you to submit only one entry. First

**Summer Series Directions****Belgatos Park**

Belgatos Park is located at the south end of BelGatos Road. From the store go east on Blossom Hill Road. Just past Leigh Avenue, turn right on BelGatos Road and follow it to the parking lot at the end. Since the BelGatos Road sign is small, look for the more noticeable green Mulberry School sign directly below it.

Vasona Lake

We will meet at the gate by the dam on Garden Hill Drive. From Lark Avenue turn onto Garden Hill Drive (opposite the southbound 880 Lark Avenue exit) then veer to the right at the fork in the road. Meet at the gate at the next bend in the road (before you get to the Santa Clara County Department of Recreation and Youth Science Institute buildings.)



Keel-Billed Toucan

by: Judy Bingman

come first served so call now to reserve your display space. The deadline to enter your photograph is **Friday, August 14** and *space is limited*. The event will be held on **Sunday, August 23, from 12 – 4:00pm at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher**.

Refreshments will be served. We hope you will be able to be a part of this fun event. Please call the store and we will send you the entry form and information.



A LOOK AT WHAT'S NEW!



Birdbaths

- New shipment has arrived!



More New Scarves

-So many bird styles, we're now hanging them from the ceiling!

Linen Placemats, Towels & Grabbitz™

-Brighten up your Table with birds and flowers!



Enamel Bird Treasure Boxes

- Quail, Chickadee, Barn Owl and more... colorful and sweet!



BirdsBeSafe now available in the store



© Birdsbesafe

We hear story after story from our customers how their cat or a neighbor's cat has killed another of their backyard birds. It's very disturbing to our customers and to all of us here at the store.

This of course is not a

local problem; this is a world-wide issue impacting many species that simply cannot maintain their numbers because of cats. The American Birding Conservancy reports, "In the U.S. alone, free-roaming domestic cats kill an estimated 1.4-3.7 billion birds and 6.9-20.7 billion mammals. For perspective, consider that 1.4 billion is equivalent to the entire human population of China, the most populous country in the world. As the number of cats continues to grow and owners continue to allow their pets to roam, harmful impacts will surely increase."

As a store dedicated to the well-being of our local bird life we want to help with a solution. The most effective solution is to keep cats indoors, but some people tell us that is not an option. So we did some research and are very excited about a new product we now carry in the store called "BirdsBeSafe" cat collars.

It's a simple idea that works. The BirdsBeSafe collar is a brightly colored, break-away, wide collar with reflective edging that is visible to most birds. The colors get the bird's attention. This means the birds see the cat and can get away before the cat has a chance to catch the bird. Please note that during the spring when young birds leave the nest and are still not able to fend for themselves they are still very vulnerable to cats. Keeping cats indoors during this time of year is still the ideal solution, but getting a BirdsBeSafe cat collar is highly recommended. Come on down to the store and we'll show you our colorful selection of cat collars that offer you a solution.

*Los Gatos Birdwatcher
King's Court Center
792 Blossom Hill Road
Los Gatos, CA 95032*

#C0615

May / June 2015

Pay to the order of Our Loyal Customer
15% Off One Item

Memo: Expires 6/30/15

One Coupon per customer, please.
Excludes sale items, excursions and optics.
Not to be combined with any other offers

Field Trips & Outings



Saturday Morning Local Bird Walks

Join us most Saturday morning for an enjoyable meander looking for birds. Call the store Friday nights after 7pm to find out where we are going the next morning. Our local bird walks are from 8 to 10 am and we return to the store for bagels and shade grown coffee. Some of the nearby places we go to are Guadalupe Oak Grove Park, BelGatos Park, Almaden Lake Park, Shoreline and Charleston Slough.

No Charge.

Sunnyvale Audubon walks

First Wednesday of the month

May 6, June 3, July 1

Noon to 1pm

Bring your binoculars (loaners are available) and meet Freddy at the **Sunnyvale Pollution Control Plant** where Borregas and Caribbean meet off of 237. After entering the plant turn left at the first stop sign and continue to the end of the parking area. We will see raptors, shorebirds, and lots of ducks.

No Charge.

Let's Go Birding with Lisa Myers to Mines Road – Almost full

Saturday, May 16, 8:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Mines Road is located on the eastern side of the Mount Hamilton Range is an annual event for birdwatchers. We never know what to expect and that is one reason this day is always an adventure. **Fee: \$60 Bus and Birdaloo**



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
BIRD OBSERVATORY

Let's Go Birding and the Los Gatos Birdwatcher partner with SFBBO

Saturday, June 13, 2015. 9:00-11:00 am (fills at 20)

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) is a nonprofit in Milpitas with the mission to conserve birds and their habitats through science and outreach. Recently, SFBBO started a "Birds in Your Neighborhood" event series to introduce the community to the birds studied in their research programs. Please join Lisa Myers as you visit an active colony of Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, and Black-crowned Night Herons that nest at Almaden Lake in San Jose. A volunteer from SFBBO will also be there to share data and discuss how the birds are doing and how people in the community can help.

The event is free and open to adults and kids ages 7 and up. Space is limited. Please pre-register with SFBBO at outreach@sfbbo.org.

Let's Go Birding with Lisa Myers to Big Sir for Condors

Saturday, July 18, 8:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Every summer we plan a trip to Big Sur to go in search of the California Condor. Brought back from the brink of extinction is it always exciting to spot these majestic vultures flying overhead. We never know for sure if we will find one, but we have been very successful over the years. The total population of California Condors is roughly 430 with just over 30 living in and around the Big Sur Coast. We will stop en route to look for other birds in addition to condors. This trip will fill fast so call the store to reserve your spot. The Los Gatos Birdwatcher & Let's Go Birding will match up to \$50 in trip participant donations and make a donation to the Ventana Wildness Society. **Fee: \$60 Bus and Birdaloo**



King's Court Center
792 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos, California 95032
408/358-9453
email: info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com
website: www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com



Return Service Requested



Whoooo's In Your Backyard?



Western Screech Owl sitting on a Wisteria Vine.
Photo by Dale Workman

PRESORT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN JOSE, CA
PERMIT NO. 10

Dates to Remember

Mother's Day | Sunday May 10
Memorial Day | May 25 CLOSED
Flag Day | Sun. June 21
Father's Day & first day of Summer | Sun. June 21
Independence Day | Sat. July 4 CLOSED

Store Hours

Monday – Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday: 12 noon to 5 p.m.

