

Los Gatos Birdwatcher



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Countdown to Hanukkah and Christmas

– Starts November 15

What is important this holiday season? Great Selection! Unique Gifts! Saving Money!



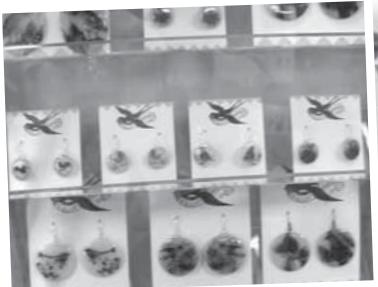
November 15 – 27
15% off All Feeders (*including hummingbird and squirrel feeders*)



November 29 – December 5
15% off All Birdbaths
(turkey not included)



December 6 – 12
15% off All Clothing
(that includes SOCKS)



December 13 – 19
15% off All Jewelry



December 14 – 24
25% off All Holiday Items
(including Calendars)



Small Business Saturday

The Town of Los Gatos and King's Court Center are participating in Small Business Saturday which falls on Saturday, November 30, between Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It is the day communities celebrate the Shop Small movement and support small businesses that help fuel the economy and invigorate communities. It will also save you on gasoline. What do you enjoy most by shopping at our store? Tell us and encourage your friends and family to Shop Small year round. If you have any suggestions as to how we can serve you better, let us know. We are proud to be a small business and we are proud to support our community through tax revenue and through our extensive outreach and donation policy. **Mention Small Business Saturday on November 30, 2013 and receive a special discount of \$5 off purchase of \$10 or more** (*not to be combined with other discounts, please.*) We so appreciate our customers who have supported us throughout our eighteen years. Thank you!



Upcoming Events



Photo Presentation

Thursday, November 14, 2013 6:00 – 7:00

Belize through the eyes of Richard Casserley

Belize, a former British colony, is the only Central American country where English is the official language. With almost 600 species of birds recorded, there are probably more birds than people. Enjoy the diverse habitats, colorful birds and Mayan ruins through the lens of Richard's camera.
No charge – Reservations Required.



Lisa Myers' Beginning Birding Workshop #5

Class: Thursday, November 21, 6:30 – 8:00pm

Field Trip: Saturday, November 23, 9:00 – 11:00am

This beginning birding workshop will focus on the sparrows and other brown birds that we find in our yards this time of year. We'll talk about the field marks to look for so we can figure out the mystery species wintering in your yards.

Fee: \$20 per person – Reservations Required

No Workshop or Field Trip in December because the holidays are too crazy.

No Workshop or Field Trip in January because Lisa Myers is leading her own Let's Go Birding trip to Costa Rica.



Photo Presentation

Thursday January 16, 2014 6:00 – 7:00

The Cheesmans go to the Serengeti

Doug and Gail Cheesman have been leading African wildlife safaris since 1978 with the majority of their 60 safaris to Tanzania and Kenya. Until his 1998 retirement from DeAnza College, Doug taught zoology, molecular biology and ecology for biology majors. Doug will present a running dialog of wildlife behaviors that he has observed watching the many mammals and birds in East Africa. *No charge – Reservations Required*

Olivia Ady has fledged

Olivia Ady has worked for us in many capacities over the last couple of years when she was home from college, in the summer and after she graduated from Maryland Institute, Center of Art in 2012. If you have attended the last two Artist Exhibits in August you have seen her work. She is quite an artist in paper engineering and created the 3-dimensional red-winged blackbird that hangs in our home as well as a spectacular belted kingfisher and a stunning Townsend's warbler.

She is off to Los Angeles to start her career in stop motion animation and we had a farewell gathering for her where we gave her a head start on setting up an apartment. She is staying with her college roommate until she lands "the" paycheck.



We miss her pixie smile and laugh, her prodigious amount of bagged seed and her feeder cleaning skills. Above all we miss her sweet and gentle nature and her creativity to turn ideas into reality! Thank you, Olivia, and all the best from all your friends and customers!



**Receive a free
Snowman
Sunflower
Feeder
with the Purchase
of \$100 or more.
(\$27 value)**



Edible Ornaments and Seed Birdhouses

Dress up your yard

and feed the wildlife.

We just got our order

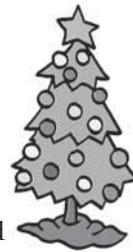
of seed ornament

garlands, seed covered birdhouses in several designs, seed ornaments in holiday shapes, and seed ball ornaments. For more ideas on ornament projects that you can do at home, pick up our *Los Gatos Birdwatcher Insider Information Sheet on Edible Ornaments*. There you will find detailed instructions for pine cone feeders, cookie cutter ornaments, peanut garlands, and orange baskets.



Festival of Trees includes Photos with Santa!

The 2013 Festival of Trees at King's Court kicks off on **Saturday, December 7 from 12:00 – 4:00pm** with entertainment, balloon artists, and photos with an excellent Santa. Every year selected local schools and community organizations vie for cash prizes by decorating trees at the shopping center. All the organizations will be attending the festival kick-off and will be able to answer questions about their missions. The winners are determined by your votes. Until December 17th you can support these local organizations by voting for your favorite tree at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher and all the other retailers in the center. One vote per person, please. The Peoples' Choice awards will be announced on December 20th and the top three vote getters will receive cash awards of \$500, \$350 and \$250 respectively. Be sure to come see all the trees so creatively decorated and support your favorite with your vote.



Question?

What class topics would you like to see Lisa Myers of Let's Go Birding teach in the coming year?

Because we won't have classes in December (crazy holidays) and January (Lisa's leading a trip to Costa Rica for spectacular birding) we want your ideas for beginning birding topics or if there is something else you want to learn about. Years ago we did a few classes on Setting up your Feeding Station, Different Feeding Options for Different Times of Year, Optics and Building Birdhouses. The possibilities are endless, we just need to hear from you. Please email Lisa with your ideas at lisa@letsgobirding.com. We know there is interest out there and we want to keep things fresh and new. You will see the results in the new year.



Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts

– check out the SCVAS.org website for all the details for these fun birding events.

Costa Rica in the “Green” Season – Trip Report

“Green” Season means that it is the rainy season and since we were in the rainforest it rained a lot which made everything spectacular and lush. There were great clouds, lightning, thunder, downpours, all in a relatively warm temperature. We did get cold (40’s) when we were up at 12,000ft.

From September 27 through October 6 nine of us birded with our guide, Roger, and driver, Enrique, on Road Scholar’s Birding Costa Rica – Off the Beaten Path. Most Costa Rica trips stay up north but we went south. It has been five years since we visited Costa Rica and were struck by how much cleaner and more prosperous the country looked. Babs Gildersleeve, former employee and resident of Costa Rica since 2007, told us that there has been a concerted effort to clean up roadside trash. The whole country seems to have adopted recycling as a mantra. The size of the group was ideal because there was lots of trying to find a little warbler way up in the canopy and a larger group would have had much more difficulty. John and I were joined by long time Saturday birdwalker, Bev Hesse, and her daughter, Chris, my college roommate, Pat Whitesides and her husband, Don Bauman, a sister team from New England, Mimi and Nancy and Gary from Oklahoma who was on his seventh trip to Costa Rica. Amazingly we found new places and new birds for Gary and even a new bird for our guide, Roger!

There would be lots of time in the van as we had much ground to cover but it also meant a lot of “roadside birding” and having lunch at the local “comida typical” which



were buffet style lunch stops that the locals traveling the road frequented. The food was spectacular.

Our first “roadside birding” adventure was down a side road off the highway. Roger worked it out with Enrique that Roger would walk us down birding and Enrique would come pick us up – we liked that arrangement! This walk was where we first met my new favorite sparrow, the rufous-collared sparrow, who acts like a sparrow and has a bit of a crest that goes up and down with great regularity and has a richly colored rufous collar. We also had our first of many tropical kingbirds (from then on called TK’s) and my first yellow-faced grassquit, a Tennessee warbler and a Costa Rican acorn woodpecker. Next bathroom break was at a “comida typical” with a secret – hummingbird feeders set up outside the windows of the entire restaurant! (see photo) What a magnet for hummingbirds and birders – no wonder they charge for bathroom use if you don’t buy anything. We bought t-shirts, coffee and snacks. We saw seven varieties of hummingbirds including fire-throated HBs, purple-throated mountain gems, magenta-throated woodstar, volcano HB, green violet-ear, scaly-breasted HB and scintillant HB. In the bushes below the hummers there were large-footed finch and extremely cute yellow-thighed finches.

Another “roadside birding” was done at a pullout in front of some birdy bushes. We saw our first passerini/aka scarlet-rumped tanagers where the male is a stunner of black with a scarlet-red rump. If you are the Pacific side, the female passerini, called Cherries, is towhee color with a pumpkin upper breast and rump. On the Caribbean

side, the female is called passerini and doesn’t have the pumpkin. We also had a boat-billed flycatcher and the first of many blue-gray tanagers and white-crowned parrots.

Night two was spent at the very funky Talari Lodge which had lots of colorful directional signs made out of cut out, painted tires. A Costa Rican family owns it and the dinner there was voted the best. Potato soup, grilled boneless chicken breasts, rice and peppers, black beans and for dessert a simple pineapple slice slathered with caramel sauce and topped with ice cream. Before dinner we birded the grounds and found a blue-crowned mot mot taking a dust bath in front of the laundry building. We went down to the raging river and saw fire-billed aracaris fly around a large hole in a tree – one went in, then another until there were four aracaris in the hole with their bills sticking out roosting for the night. That night John swears the crickets were playing a chorus on steel pipes!

Just to be clear, John and Don do not bird before breakfast and therefore enjoy coffee, their cameras and all the birds at the fruit trays put out near the dining room. On our 6am walk the rest of us saw lots of birds including thick-billed euphonias, buff-throated sultater, streak-headed woodpecker and the soon-to-be-common Hoffman’s woodpecker and my nemesis bay wren who I heard multiple times but saw only four days later. Then we joined the photographers for breakfast and saw red-legged honey creepers, green honey creepers, golden-hooded tanagers (siete colores – seven colors), and palm tanagers.

On our way to the next eco-lodge we stopped at Los Cusingos which is the former home of Dr. Alexander Skutch, a botanist and naturalist who

wrote the "big" book on Costa Rican birds. He and his wife lived very modestly in this magical place from 1941 until his death in 2004. The Tropical Science Center acquired Los Cusingos in 1993. Their house is as they left it and open to visitors. The flowers at this wonderful farm were varied and adapted to the different hummingbirds that called it home. White-faced capuccine monkeys also call it home and thrilled us with great leaps to and from the trees. Closer to the next lodge we found a wonderful meadow where Enrique, our driver, found a Southern lapwing, a fork-tailed flycatcher and a bare-throated tiger heron. Continuing on our way we saw these signs for "very bad bridge" up ahead. They were right. We all got out of the van and walked. Everyone and the van made it safely.

Night three and four were spent at the Esquinas Rainforest Lodge run by Rainforest of the Austrians. Not only was it a beautiful location with fabulous birds, but it had an fascinating history. According to their brochure, the lodge is in "the Esquinas Rainforest in southern Costa Rica, one of the most biodiverse jungles in Central America and part of the Osa Biological Corridor around the Golfo Dulce, was severely endangered by logging. Since 1991 the non-profit organization Rainforest of the Austrians, founded by the Austrian musician Michael Schnitzier, has been



Southern Lapwing

trying to save this last unprotected lowland tropical forest on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica by purchasing properties and donating them to the Costa Rican National Park Service, after which they become part of Piedras Blancas National Park". This NGO has projects in species protection, teaching and research, community development and sustainable tourism, which is where the lodge comes in.

This lodge included a pool fed by the nearby stream so it was drained and refilled frequently and it was COLD but Pat, Mimi, Gary and I braved the initial shock and had a great swim. The lodge also hosted two groups of white line sac bats, one outside Pat and Don's room and another one behind the "Bat Crossing" sign above the bar. Dusk came at 5:30pm and they were off to collect thousands of bugs. The next day we were greeted by a buff-rumped warbler with a great voice and a flicky tail. While we were eating a orange-billed sparrow decided that the bird in the side-view mirror of the van needed to be seen off the premises. It reminded us of the towhees at home during breeding season. We also saw a new hummingbird, a purple-crowned fairy, that was spectacular. John saw his favorite bird from the Yucatan trip, the squirrel cuckoo, as well as great curassows, becards, tyrannulets and as he describes them Flycatcher #27, Wren #4 and Tanager #15. I understand his frustration because a lot of them look the same. An afternoon walk to a large cow pasture added yellowish tyrannulet, chestnut-billed toucan, black-bellied whistling ducks, Amazon kingfisher, white ibis, little blue heron and five wood storks coming in to their roost tree for the night. We suddenly realized that it was nearing dark and



threatening rain and we were a long way from the hotel. Never fear, Enrique arrived just before it started to rain and before we had to break out the flashlights!



Next stop for nights five and six was Las Cruces which is one of three field stations owned by the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) and was formerly the botanical gardens started in the 1960s by Robert and Catherine Wilson. Lots of plant research is conducted and full semester classes are taught here with the students staying in the Wilson's former home. There are many comfortable cabins for groups like ours or other researchers and a wonderful dining facility with a deck that protects from the rain (annual mean rainfall is 157 inches) and gives great views of some very birdy trees. While it was pouring we still birded and saw yellow-headed caracara, Blackburnian and flame-throated warblers. The next day Ariadna, one of the outreach specialists, gave us an in depth tour of the grounds and green houses. We had a brief look at a blue-headed parrot but Roger missed it – it was a life bird for him so we were all on the look out to see it again. That evening we walked down the driveway towards the public road. We got to the end just in time to watch a large flock of crimson-fronted parakeets assemble for their evening meal before flying into a huge adjacent palm to roost for the night. The next morning we saw two blue-headed

parrots in the warbler tree from the day before. Mimi ran down to Roger's room to make sure he saw them. It isn't often a group can give the guide a "life bird."

Nights seven and eight were spent at Savegre Lodge in the small secluded valley of San Gerardo de Dota that we had heard great things about. Getting there was a bit of a challenge because we went down, down, down a bumpy road. The owner's father had discovered the valley in the 1950's when they got lost on a hunting trip. They went from one cow to many to great cheese production to realizing that preserving the valley and its wildlife through eco-tourism was more sustainable. Even though in a valley, the lodge is at 7,500 feet so the mornings and evenings were chilly requiring extra blankets and a portable heater left for us at the door. In addition to several lodges, residents are also dedicated to the production of apples, peaches and trout to stock the river for fly-fishing. We arrived an hour before dusk which was when the birds have one last feeding frenzy and gather in their roost tree. We were lucky to see a rather rare endemic, the yellow-bellied siskin, hide behind the leaves in a tree near the parking lot. The next morning we were out before breakfast and since the Quetzal was the target bird, John and Don decided it would be best to go on this one. The Quetzal didn't have his "resplendent" tail because we were outside the breeding season, but he was a spectacular large trogon and when in the sunlight his back shown a bright emerald. A birding high point at Savegre were all of the hummingbirds that swarmed the four nectar feeders put out near the entrance: green violet-ear, magnificent HB and green-crowned brilliant. Banana feeders were on the other side of the driveway and attracted yellow-thighed finches, silver-throated tanagers and the WOW flame-colored tanager! Roger found another of his long birding roads where the star of the show was a pair of spangle-cheeked tanagers feeding on seed pods. Enrique

picked us up at the bottom and we headed back to the lodge where we got to see the ponds of trout, each pond with a different sized trout. We were hoping to see an American dipper in the rushing water, instead we got great views of the tiny (3-7/8 inches) torrent tyrannulet flitting among the rocks.

On the way to our last accommodation we went up to 12,000 feet in search of some pre-montane residents. We all heard the timberline wren and a few saw it. There was a magenta-throated wood star (HB) with pollen all over his crown as he went from small shrub to small shrub. All the plants that high up are quite stunted but he was finding lots of flowers. We also had good looks at two black-billed nightingale thrushes and some saw the volcano junco. Back onto the bus to get warm and then we were off to our last eco-lodge, Rancho Naturalista near Turrialba on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. The

American family that owns the lodge had originally tried to grow coffee and when that didn't work out turned to butterfly enthusiasts and birders. Bev and her grandson, Taylor, visited Rancho Naturalista nine years and was delighted that it was still as wonderful as she remembered. The upstairs deck was ringed with hummingbird feeders attracting white-necked jacobin, rufous tailed HB, green-breasted mango, violet saberwing, blue-tailed mangrove, violet-crowned woodnymph and green hermit. All of these hummingbirds in great numbers, male and female, were flying furiously around the feeders, fighting off the bees. The next day we saw what a few bananas on the

fruit tables brought in: blue-crowned mot mols, Montezuma oropendola, black-cheeked woodpecker, passarini tanagers, collared aracari and many more tanagers. We did several birdwalks on the property and always returned to wonderful meals and friendly conversation with Lisa Erb and her husband, Mario.

Our last walk, aka slog through mud, was by a river close to the lodge. The trees were alive with birds flitting from branch to branch and Roger had a hard time keeping up with them all and ran back and forth making sure that everyone saw the bird. Green kingfisher, streak-breasted wren, white-shouldered tanager, red-eyed vireo, blue black grosbeak, russet antshrike, cinnamon becard, tropical gnatcatcher, tawny-capped euphonia, American redstart. The prize was the elusive sun bittern. A stealthy grebe-looking bird with long orange legs and a long, sharp orange bill was found feeding among the rocks on the far side of the river. Roger was telling us how he had never seen more than one

at a time when Mimi called that she had another. They are beautiful birds when they walk and outstanding when they fly. Their wings look like an owl butterfly wing! After de-mudding our shoes, packing our bags and one last lovely lunch we took our leave of Rancho Naturalista with waves and bell ringing from all the staff.

Back to San Jose, the farewell dinner, final checklist – 252 species – airport good-byes and home. It was a great trip and we would highly recommend Road Scholar for anyone going to Costa Rica who isn't already going with our own Lisa Myers on her Let's Go Birding trip in January 2104.

Photos by: Don Bauman

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

#C1213

/ 2013

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

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Kid's Corner

Reservation Required

Call 358-9453 to
reserve your space.

November Ginger Seed House Tradition

Ginger Seed House Workshop \$25/ house
For the whole family:
Friday, November 29th, 3-4:30 PM

Join our after-Thanksgiving tradition. Don't miss this special family activity as we build festive houses together out of seeds for the birds and squirrels in your neighborhood to feast on. Wear clothes that you don't mind getting grubby. A great opportunity to create this masterpiece without having to fuss with the mess! (Not appropriate for anyone with peanut allergies.)

Ginger Seed House Kits

Ginger Seed House kits will be available to take and make on your own on November 25th. A sample will be available in the store to provide inspiration. For \$25 we provide all the basics; seed block for the foundation of the house, matzo for the roof, ice cream cone for the chimney and lots of different seeds for the decoration. All you do is supply a cookie sheet, the peanut butter and your imagination! Ginger Seed House kits make great gifts for families. (We can make special "no peanut" kits upon request, just call to order.)



Field Trips & Outings

Saturday Morning Local Bird Walks

Join us every 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. Except for our once a month all-day field trips, we go on a local bird walk from 8 to 10 am and return for bagels and shade grown coffee. Some of the nearby places we go to are Oka Ponds, Guadalupe Oak Grove Park, Belgatos Park, Almaden Lake Park, Shoreline and Charleston Slough.

No Charge.

Sunnyvale Audubon walks

First Wednesday of the month
December 4 - Noon to 1pm (None in January)
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.



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

Free Snowman Feeder
See page 6

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Holiday Wishes

All of us at Los Gatos Birdwatcher wish all of you, our loyal customers, a Happy, Healthy and Safe Holiday Season.

May the New Year bring Peace and Community to us all! Thank you!

Freddy, John and our entire staff

Dates to Remember
11/27 Hanukkah begins • 12/21 Winter Solstice • 12/25 Christmas

Special Hours
Monday, December 16 – Saturday, December 21 10AM – 7PM
Sunday, December 22 11AM – 6PM
Monday, December 23 9AM – 7PM
Tuesday, December 24 9AM – 4PM
Tuesday, December 31 10AM – 4PM

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and New Year's Day

Store Hours

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

