

# Los Gatos Birdwatcher



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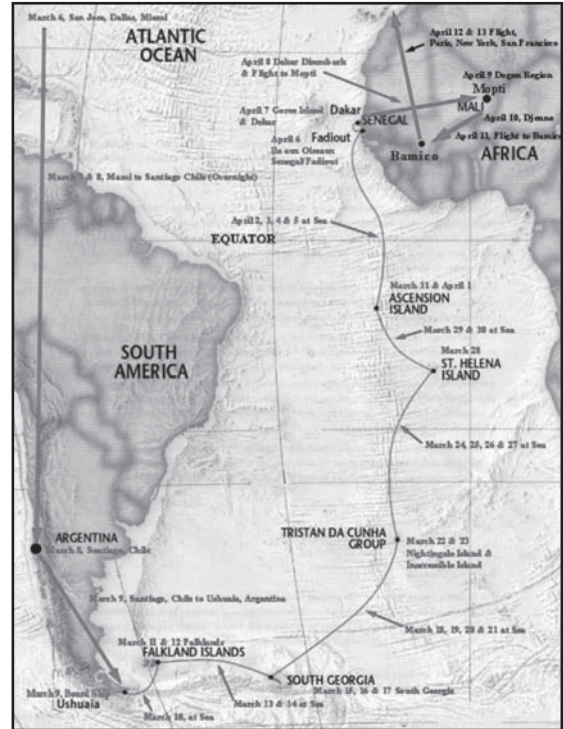
## Antarctic to Africa

(Freezer to Oven) Photo Presentation  
Thursday, March 22, 2012, 6-7pm

In one trip, Ginny and Jerry Kaminski visited the Falklands, Ascension Island, and other remote islands of the Atlantic and then crossed the Atlantic to visit North West Africa. Join them on their journey where along the way they saw penguins, fur seal pups, albatross, ship wrecks, oiled penguins, sea turtles, Caspian terns, the largest mud brick mosque, and an African funeral dance.

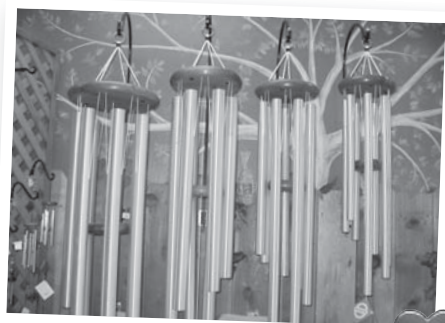
**No Charge**

Call NOW to reserve your place. **408/358-9453**



## Tweet Your Valentine to Something Special for Her Garden!

From **Wednesday, February 8 through Tuesday, February 14** all garden products, including Windchimes, Bird Baths, Statuary, and Flags will be **15% Off**.



# We ALL Need Water

December 2011 was the second driest December on record! The snow pack is non-existent! Lexington is as low as it is in the driest of summers! Luckily we can still turn on the tap and water comes out. The birds, on the other hand, are searching everywhere for water. Water to drink and water to keep their feathers clean. The birds are looking for your bird baths, fountains, and ponds. We have seven baths around our yard and they are always very busy. One in particular is drained every night by our resident deer.

Not only are bird baths necessary, they provide a stage for a great "variety show." We watched a junco take a lively bath while two fox sparrows tried to get a drink, ducking all the spray. One evening at dusk, I watched five mourning doves roost around the edge, head scrunched

into their feathers, all with their tails towards the center, in the water. On the back deck, our three saucer baths are popular with towhees, goldfinches, and chipmunks. The quail put one foot on the rim to steady themselves while they lean forward to drink. When the cedar waxwings are in town gobbling up madrone berries, ten or so at a time take water breaks around the bird bath edge alternating up and down like the old children's pecking hens wooden toy.

Water can be presented in a saucer on the ground, a pedestal bath, or a hanging bath. Keep the bath clean and fresh. Adding a dripper or "Water Wiggler" attracts the birds to the moving water. Misters are most attractive to hummingbirds and they will fly in and out of the spray. Place



Photo by Judy Bingman

the bath within ten feet of a shrub or tree and far enough away from feeders to that shell debris will not fall into it. It is important that the bath is near enough to cover so that the birds have a safe place to preen after their bath. Cleaning the bath regularly is important for the birds as well as for keeping mosquito larvae from growing. If algae grows, clean the bird bath with an enzyme cleaner or white vinegar and add a few drops of "Fountec" to keep it algae free.

# Two Great Places to Bird this Time of Year

## – Vasona Lake County Park and Ulistac Natural Area

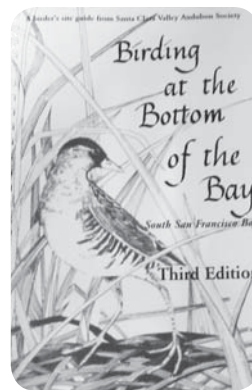
One of the best birding books for this area is Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's *Birding at the Bottom of the Bay*. Fifty four sites in Santa Clara County are detailed with directions, habitat, specialties of the area, and how to bird the area. I asked our regular bird walk expert, Janna Pauser, for her picks of great places to bird in early spring.

Vasona Lake County Park (#53, page 128) is a great place anytime of year, but early spring is a great time to catch the nest building of the great blue herons in the grove of eucalyptus near the car bridge. Winter sparrows are plentiful in the bushes along the creek. Egrets and herons hang around the island before the creek spills

into the lake. Common mergansers and double crested cormorants swim in great flotillas, diving up and down.

Another great place for early spring birding is Ulistac Natural Area (#48, page 122). Since this 40 acre urban open space is bordered on one side by the Guadalupe River, birds migrating along the river corridor stop over to eat and rest.

The volunteers who have transformed this park from a golf course into oak and riparian woodland, and seasonal wetland have also planted a native



*Birding at the Bottom of the Bay*, is a featured book at Los Gatos Birdwatcher

plant butterfly habitat that is a delight. All the plants in that area are labeled so if you are interested in seeing natives planted and used by butterflies, hummingbirds, and warblers, this garden is highly recommended.

Janna also suggested any of the riparian corridors by our local creeks – Alamos Creek, Los Gatos Creek, and Coyote Creek are high on her list for early migrants.

*Birding at the Bottom of the Bay* is available for \$9.99 at Los Gatos Birdwatcher and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

# The Magic Persimmon Tree

Photo by Ellen Bateman

Early in January we went to Picchetti Ranch Open Space Reserve in Cupertino for our Saturday morning birdwalk. Janna Pauser had emailed me that a yellow-bellied sapsucker had been seen in the persimmon tree. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers usually winter in the south from Texas to Florida, not in sunny California.

The persimmon tree is just off the parking lot and there were several birders already there with scopes as well as several photographers with their high-powered lenses. As the



California Thrasher by Matthew Dodder

sun started to shine on the tree the birds started to come in to feed on the Fuyu fruit, but no sapsucker yet. Our group got bigger as did the number of birds in the tree American Robins, spotted towhees (which I would not have pegged as fruit eaters), yellow-rumped warblers (both Myrtle's with a white throat and Audubon's with the yellow throat), a brilliant Townsend's warbler, and a ruby-crowned kinglet popped in for a nibble. Two California thrashers arrived on scene and birding instructor, Matthew Dodder, made a beautiful quick sketch. Also in the tree were hermit thrush, golden-crowned sparrow, song sparrow, California towhee, and acorn woodpecker. Flying over were band-tailed pigeons, a single varied thrush, scrub jay and Steller's jay. Still no



sapsucker and we weren't about to leave knowing what normally happens when you do! A gang of European starlings muscled in and took over the tree for a while. Many birds scattered but after a bit they started returning. Finally, our patience paid off and a beautiful female yellow-bellied sapsucker arrived at the tree and started to feed. Such a pretty bird with lots of spots. Once we saw the sapsucker we walked further up the hill and had views of a soaring red-tailed hawk and heard a wrenit. Not much going on, so we were glad we stayed at the magic persimmon tree.

# Squirrel Buster Peanut Feeder makes it's Debut

After much anticipation, the Squirrel Buster Peanut feeder from Brome Bird Care in Canada made it's debut on our shelves just before Christmas. Now those who feed the birds suet nuggets or shelled nuts can do so without worrying about the bushy-taileds getting to it. Just as with the other Buster products, the Buster Peanut shuts off the food source with the weight of the squirrel either from the top or from the bottom. This new feeder holds  $\frac{3}{4}$  quart of shelled peanuts or nuggets. Since we aren't carrying shelled peanuts right now because of the cost, customers are trying nuggets or Nature's Trail Mix. Some of the Nature's Trail nuts are a bit big, so hitting the nuts with a hammer or rolling pin



to break things up a bit works too. The feeder is also weight adjustable for selective feeding and is woodpecker friendly by providing a large tail prop allowing them to feed comfortably, using their tails for support and balance – just like they do on trees.

An adjustable spring mechanism controls how much weight the wire mesh will support. Openings in the middle section of the wire mesh align with the peanut ports, providing birds access to the food. When a squirrel climbs onto the feeder, its weight automatically forces the wire mesh down, closing access to the ports.



## Kid's Corner

Call 358-9453 to reserve your space.

Reservation  
Required

### Critter Search

Thursday, February 16, 4-5pm  
Belgatos Park  
For ages 3 to 10  
\$8/child

Come explore the trails of Belgatos Park in search of creatures great and small. Listen carefully and follow signs to discover what the critters are up to on this wonderful winter day. Make a small boat to float in the creek. Rain or shine. Bring rain gear just in case.

### Signs of Spring

Thursday, March 15, 4-5 pm  
For ages 3 to 10  
\$8/child

Spring is almost here. Join us at Los Gatos Birdwatcher for a delightful story, a silly puppet show, and other fun activities to help you see the signs of spring in your neighborhood. Make your own croaking frog friend too.

### Super Shedders

Thursday, April 19, 4-5 pm  
For ages 3 to 9  
\$8/child

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher to find out about all sorts of creatures that shed. Watch a silly puppet show and examine a fascinating variety of shed specimens. Create your own special shedder, too.



Miss Christine and Luke share opening presents on his second birthday.

## Services Available from the Los Gatos Birdwatcher

- **Feeder Cleaning** – Drop off your feeders any day of the week. We clean on Mondays and Thursdays, asking only a donation to one of four charities (Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center, Nike Animal Rescue Foundation, and Friends of San Martin Animal Shelter). If possible, please bring your feeders in early in the day. We will call you by closing for pickup.
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- **Frequent Buyer Program**, buy 9 bags 20# or higher of the same seed and get the 10th one free. Coupons do not apply.
- **Seed Delivery** in the local area, free for over \$40 total, \$4 charge for under \$40 total, available on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- **Monthly children's nature programs** and children's programs for pre-schools through 3rd grade. Also great for scout troops. For more information, ask for our new "Educational Programs Insiders Info" Sheet.
- **Outreach to community organizations** about birding. We have birding and "Show and Tell" programs ideal for gardening and other service groups.
- **Backyard Bird Consulting Program** - Freddy will come out and see what you have, what you want, and what might work. The consultation is about an hour and the cost is \$20, which will be applied to any purchase of new feeders, seed, baths, or hardware.
- **Birthday parties with Build a Seed Feeder workshop**. Bring 11 of your friends to the **Los Gatos Birdwatcher** (or at your desired location) and build a birdfeeder. Learn about the different birds that are likely to come to the small hopper feeder that you construct from a pre-cut wooden kit. (Includes a packet of seed, use of tools, and instruction.) *Cost*: \$15 instructor fee + \$10/child
- We offer **Gift Certificates** and our popular "**Drop a Hint**" cards that allow you to choose a selection of gifts you would like (wish list) to be considered and when the gift giver comes in with the list, we know exactly what you want.
- Spend \$100 or more and receive our new **reusable canvas tote** with royal blue handles – quite spiffy! The tote is also for sale for \$3.99 and would make a good "wrapping" for a gift.
- 15% off one item Coupon is available every two months. You don't have to bring in the physical coupon, but you do have to let us know at the time of the sale that you would like to use it. We do not apply the coupon automatically. The coupon excludes optics, trips and sale items. Coupon does not apply to Frequent Buy purchases.



# The Great Backyard Bird Count

## February 17-20, 2012

Why a Backyard Bird Count? According to the birdsources.org website "Bird populations are always changing and a "snapshot" taken approximately at the same time every year, helps scientists answer the following questions: Where are the finches and other irruptive species? Compared to last year, how has this winter's weather influenced bird populations? Will late winter movements of many songbirds and waterfowl species be as far north as they were last year?" These are all questions that you can help answer.

Some interesting statistics from the 2011 count – Total checklists: 92,218; Total species: 594; Total individual birds counted: 11,471,949! Locally, San Jose entered 62 checklists and Los Gatos entered 47. Let's try to top that.

Count the birds in your backyard, local park or other natural area on any or all of the four count days. Watch the birds for at least 15 minutes on each day that you participate. Count the greatest number of individuals of each specie that you see together at any one time and write it down. We recommend watching for a half-hour or more, so that you'll have a good sense of what birds are in your area. Log onto [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) and enter your counts. If you are unable to access the internet, send your count page to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Attention: GBBC, 159 Sapsucker Wood Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850 prior to March 1, 2012. Make sure to include your zip code, what habitat you're in and weather you counted at your home or at a park.



photo by: Gary Aspenall Cedar Waxwing

Day	Time	Species	Count
		American Crow	_____
		Common Raven	_____
		Belted Kingfisher	_____
		Brewer's Blackbird	_____
		Western Bluebird	_____
		Brown-headed Cowbird	_____
		European Starling	_____
		Red-winged Blackbird	_____
		Black Phoebe	_____
		Brown Creeper	_____
		Bushtit	_____
		California Quail	_____
		Canada goose	_____
		Cedar Waxwing	_____
		Chestnut-backed Chickadee	_____
		Finches: American Goldfinch	_____
		Lesser Goldfinch	_____
		House Finch	_____
		Pine Siskin	_____
		Golden Eagle	_____
		Great Blue Heron	_____
		American Kestrel	_____
		Peregrine Falcon	_____
		Merlin	_____
		Northern Harrier	_____
		Cooper's Hawk	_____
		Red-tailed Hawk	_____
		Red-Shouldered Hawk	_____
		Sharp-shinned Hawk	_____
		Anna's Hummingbird	_____
		Western Scrub Jay	_____
		Steller's Jay	_____
		Dark-eyed Junco	_____
		Killdeer	_____
		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	_____
		White-tailed Kite	_____
		Yellow-billed Magpie	_____
		Mallard	_____
		Western Meadowlark	_____
		Mourning Dove	_____
		Northern Mockingbird	_____
		Red-breasted Nuthatch	_____
		White-breasted Nuthatch	_____
		Pygmy Nuthatch	_____
		Barn Owl	_____
		Great Horned Owl	_____
		Western Screech Owl	_____
		Rock Dove (Pigeon)	_____
		Band-tailed Pigeon	_____
		American Pipit	_____
		California Thrasher	_____
		California Towhee	_____
		Spotted Towhee	_____
		Fox Sparrow	_____
		Golden-crowned Sparrow	_____
		House Sparrow	_____
		Song Sparrow	_____
		White-crowned Sparrow	_____
		American Robin	_____
		Hermit Thrush	_____
		Varied Thrush	_____
		Wild Turkey	_____
		Townsend's Warbler	_____
		Yellow-rumped Warbler	_____
		Acorn Woodpecker	_____
		Downy Woodpecker	_____
		Hairy Woodpecker	_____
		Nuttall's Woodpecker	_____
		Red-breasted Sapsucker	_____
		Northern Flicker	_____
		Pileated Woodpecker	_____
		Bewick's Wren	_____
		House Wren	_____
		Wrentit	_____
		Other _____	_____

Above is a detailed list of local wintering birds grouped by type with a place to record your count.



LOOK WHAT  
FREDDY FOUND!

FOR  
VALENTINES DAY



**Valentine's Day Gift Ideas**

- Mugs, Tea Light Holders, Candles, and a New Children's Book "*Airplanes in the Garden*"



**New Beaded Pins**

- Squirrels, Butterflies, and Dragonflies and many more.



**Beaded and Woven eyeglass holders from Guatemala**

- Hold on to your glasses with color and style.



**Carved Birds**

- Gordon Stennett has restocked the case!



**New Glass Bird Bath Designs**

- Colorful, functional, and just right to attract bathers to your yard.



**Stylin' Mollies!**

- New tops for spring.



**New Photo Frames**

- Painted glass from Joan Baker in 3.5x5 and 4x6 sizes.

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

#C0312

/ 2012

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## Field Trips & Outings

### **Saturday Morning Local Bird Walks**

*NO WALKS Saturdays – February 18 and 25*

*John and Freddy are birding the Yucatan!*

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**

**March 7, April 4, and May 2 - 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.**

**Call soon for reservations. These trips fill up fast.**

### **Let's Go Birding to Sunol Regional Wilderness**

**Saturday, March 24 - 8am to 6pm**

The Sunol Regional Wilderness was once an ancient seabed and home to California's Native Americans. Today it consists of 6,859 acres used for cattle and outdoor recreation. In March the wildflowers should be in bloom and many of the birds will have returned to the area for the breeding season. We will spend this day walking park trails concentrating on bird song and behavior as nesting activities will be underway.

**Fee: \$25 plus share of gas**

### **Let's Go Birding to Fremont Peak**

**Saturday, April 21 - 8am to 6pm**

Fremont Peak has a lot of history surrounding it as far back as 1847 when Army Captain John C. Fremont selected this 3,169 foot peak to raise the American flag. He and his men then waited for a war that never happened. Just out of San Juan Bautista, one travels 11 miles up to the peak. This winding, mountain road has few travelers and affords birders many places to look for great birds. Once at the top on a clear day you can see Mount Hamilton, the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range and the Pacific Ocean. You can also often find Canyon and Rock Wren, Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcon and Sage Sparrow.

**Fee: \$25 plus share of gas**



# Los Gatos Birdwatcher

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

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## Part-time Canine Greeters

*John and Anna (aka Princess Buttercup)  
 share a deep conversation*



*Photo by Anna's Mom, Judy Bingman*

## Dates to Remember

2/14 Valentine's Day	3/17 St. Patrick's Day
2/20 Presidents' Day	3/20 First Day of Spring
3/11 Daylight Savings Time Begins	

## Store Hours

Monday – Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
 Sunday: 12 noon to 5 p.m.  
**Phone: 408-358-9453**

