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Birding, It's Something For Everyone

by Lisa Myers

While families sheltered at home, many started to take notice of the birds around them. Newspapers all over North America have written about the growing interest in birding. We have noticed it too as everyday new birders come into the store asking for help on how to attract more birds into their yards and how to identify them. Birding is not just for "old" people, its for everyone. Its exciting to meet these new customers and watch their birding interest unfolding.

For those who have been in the birding world, please seize this opportunity —an opportunity of inclusivity for birders of all levels—to increase awareness and conservation of the birds and our natural environments. And birders all over the world should try and remember what it's like to be a new birder. It can be very intimidating to walk into an Audubon meeting, sign up for a "bird class," or join a bird walk where everyone seems to already know each other and the birds. I urge all experienced birders to take the time to make everyone feel welcome no matter their age, the color of their skin, their sex, or what kind of optics they have around their neck.

Let's Go Birding is the tour division of the Los Gatos Birdwatcher. While all birding levels are welcome, the goal has always been to offer a safe place where no question is too silly and those wanting to learn about birds would feel welcome. Birds need all the help they can get and everyone can make a difference. We will continue to encourage the new birder and help to create a great experience so all can enjoy birding for now and into the future.

Let's Go Birding Adventures



SPECIAL SUMMER COUPON

15%

off your entire order

Cannot be used on optics, consignment items or be combined with items already discounted. Limit to 2 - 20 Lb. or larger bags of seed per customer

Expires 09/30/2020
#Summer093020

Check Store Hours on our Web Site!!!

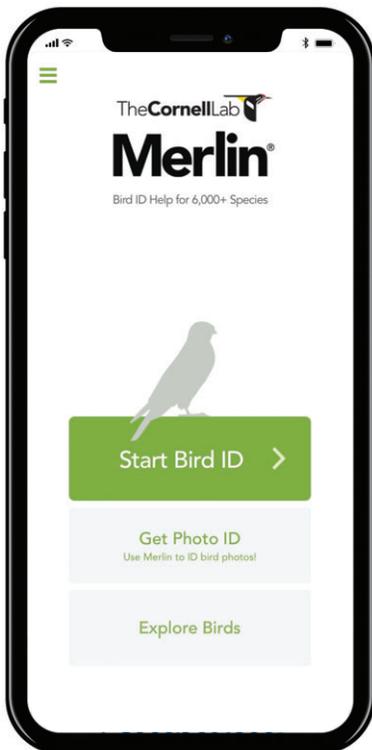
We cut store hours by 40% when the shelter in place order was announced. We keep watching as the governor and Santa Clara County tell businesses what we can and cannot do. It changes depending on medical updates. We keep updating our website, store signage, our social media and our phone machine message, so please check before you head down to the store.

In July we feel we will be open longer hours with the exception of Sundays. We will remain closed on Sunday. We hope this does not inconvenience our customers, but we want to give the store and staff a day to rest. No talking through face masks, no constant washing of hands and wiping down store surfaces. Just a day to stay home and enjoy our families as we hope you do too. We will have extra staff working on Saturday to accommodate the weekend shoppers.



Merlin – A Favorite App for the Curious Birder

Birding has become more popular than ever as folks have slowed down enough to notice the birds around them. Once you start enjoying the birds, the next challenge is how to identify them. Back in the day everyone would flip through their paper-bound field guides trying to locate their mystery bird. In fact, we too easily took for granted the amount of work that went into a book that illustrated all the birds found in your area, or in your country or throughout a continent. Now, in addition to the traditional published field guide there are many downloadable apps that give us more information than you ever thought imaginable per species.



If you are just starting out in birding, or perhaps you do not have a lot of experience working a mobile app, the Merlin app is a great place to start. Created by the folks at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, *“Merlin is designed to be a birding coach for beginning and intermediate bird watchers. Merlin asks you the same questions that an expert birder would ask to help solve a mystery bird sighting... date and location are Merlin’s first and most important questions. It takes years of experience in the field to know what species are expected at a given location and date. Merlin shares this knowledge with you based on more than 800 million sightings submitted from birders around the world.”*

After you give Merlin the location and date of your sighting you will then submit the bird’s color and size. Afterward you will receive several possible options. You can then match the photos they provide with the bird you observed. Bingo! And the app is free. While we recommend you always have a good old fashioned field guide on your shelf, a phone app is a handy resource.

Our New Way to Do Business Lisa Myers



Recently a woman came into the store with her mask on and a sport drink in her hand. We asked if we could help her with anything and she replied, *“Nope, I just came in to spend some time because this is a ‘happy place’ for me.”* She walked around the store for awhile and then headed toward the door. As she walked out she thanked us and said she would be back. It was as if she needed a quick fix in the middle of her busy day.

For all we know, it was her first field trip out of the house after months of sheltering in place. She is not the only one. Customers have shared their gratitude that we have been here to help them keep their feeder’s full. Other’s are thrilled to be back after months of staying at home. We know how fortunate we are to be considered essential, and we take that very seriously.

Here are the things we are doing during this pandemic to keep customers and our staff safe:

- Each staff member takes their temperature on-sight before clocking-in.
- Plexiglass sneeze guards have been hung at each register.
- Our front door remains open so you do not have to touch the handle.
- We have a touch-less hand sanitizer dispenser available to our customers.
- We offer curb-side pick-up, just call ahead to place your order 408-358-9453.
- Our staff wear masks and we ask customers to wear their’s too.
- If you need one, masks are available to purchase at cost.
- We wash our hands many times an hour and after handling cash.
- Customers are no longer asked to sign credit card slips – no sharing of pens.
- We wipe down our hand carts and other surfaces throughout each day.
- We ask customers to maintain 6 feet social distance between each other.
- We stopped gift wrapping to minimize touching of customer’s purchases.
- We only sell optics out of their original box, no returns.
- We removed product to increase open space allowing for social distancing.
- We remain closed on Sundays so all have a day to rest.



Inventory Challenges & Changes

The Los Gatos Birdwatcher is known for its wide variety of products geared toward the gift giving nature lover. With the country experiencing the lock down we have not been able to order various product lines. And some manufacturers will have to shut down while others are just now re-opening.

We are also widening our aisles so that customers can maintain proper social distancing guidelines and this means a reduction in inventory. So things will be changing a bit around the store and we ask for your patience and appreciate your support.



COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS MAY IMPACT ALL DATES

Because of unpredictable Covid-19 restrictions, we have cancelled extra curricular activities normally planned during the store's summer. We are discontinuing presentations at The Terraces until future notice. We have planned fewer birding activities and the bird walks and workshops we do have scheduled will be limited to fewer people so we can follow social distancing guidelines. As you can imagine, everything will be subject to change. The losgatosbirdwatcher.com website will be the best place to look for updates.



Let's Go Birding is the tour division of the Los Gatos Birdwatcher. Let's Go Birding tours get you out of your yard and into different habitats where you can experience a variety of species not found at home.

Saturday Morning Local Bird Walks

FREE

The Saturday morning bird walks were discontinued because of Covid-19 restrictions, but as things "open back up" we will try and do two Saturday bird walks a month. Because we cannot gather in large groups we need to restrict the number of participants to 10. Please call ahead to sign-up. Everyone will have to drive themselves. Locations will be selected based on easily accessible trails allowing for social distancing and with enough parking. There will be no sharing of optics and everyone will be asked to wear a mask. Walks start at 8:15 AM on location and end by 10:00 am.



- Jul 11** We'll be looking for American Dippers
- Jul 25** Los Capitancillos Ponds in South San Jose
- Aug 8** Rancho San Vicente Open Space, San Jose
- Aug 22** McClellan Ranch – SCVAS Headquarters in Cupertino
- Sep 12** Vasona Lake County Park
- Sep 26** TO BE ANNOUNCED

Birding-by-Ear Workshop with Lisa Myers

July 18 • 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

This class was cancelled last Spring because of Covid-19. So we will try again with summertime bird vocalizations. This can include males singing to defend territory, communication between pairs and fledglings begging for food. The workshop will be limited to 10 people so we can keep proper social distance from each other but listen as a group. It will be a learning exercise in observation with our ears! We'll be listening for Northern Mockingbird, Bewick's Wren, Mourning Dove, Spotted Towhee, Oak Titmouse, Dark-eyed Junco, White-Breasted Nuthatch, California Thrasher, Red-shouldered Hawk, California Scrub Jay, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Swallows and more. All levels welcome. Call the store to sign-up, the workshop location will be provided at that time. **408-358-9453.**

Fee: \$25



Spotted Towhee singing - **Jean Fordis**

Bird ID Workshops

– Open to all levels

These workshops have proven extremely popular as customers learn how to identify the birds coming to their yards and into the Bay Area. Workshops take place at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher 7:00 – 8:00 PM (free). These one hour workshops will focus on four different bird species. We'll go over the field marks you can use to make the ID. We'll also talk about behaviors, food preferences and even vocalizations. We ask that you bring your own folding chair and field guide with you for class. To allow the proper social distancing the class will be limited to 10 people. Call the store to save your spot. **408-358-9453**.

Tuesday, July 21

- Four Warblers: Yellow, Black-throated Gray, Orange Crowned & Wilson's

Thursday, August 13

- Ash-Throated Flycatcher, Western Wood-pewee, Black Phoebe, Olive-Sided Flycatcher

Thursday, Sept. 17

- Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk

BEan In Nature – a place for kids to learn

We wanted to introduce you to the people of BEan In Nature Summer Camps. This is a local organization that connects kids to nature with guided Exploration and hands-on learning with programs happening right now.

Their mission: to support and care for the earth and her fragile ecology... helping children connect with wonder and amazement to the natural world, growing their innate curiosity and passion for the earth and its flora and fauna. All while having epic adventures, creating memorable stories to share and sharing our contagious enthusiasm out on the earth.

The staff at BEan in Nature continue to monitor County Park instructions and excitedly plan for Summer Camps organized in smaller, safer numbers, and training staff on new protocols. From survival skills to archery, team building and nature exploration, please check out their web site to learn about all upcoming Summer Camps. **www.beaninnature.com**

Beginning Birding Workshop with Lisa Myers

August 5 • 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

While everyone was sheltering in place many people started birding for the first time. People were home noticing the birds in their own backyard, or while out on a local nature trail. This workshop will help you with the many aspects to birding from field guides and apps, to optics and local hot spots.

All are welcome. To allow the proper social distancing the class will be limited to 10 people. Masks will be required. To be held at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher. Everyone will receive a booklet, *"The Birds of Santa Clara County"*. Call the store to sign-up, **408-358-9453**.
Fee \$25



What Makes Our Seed Better?

Considered “*essential*” we have been open throughout the shelter-in-place orders. Some of our customers, sheltering at home or not aware that we were open, ordered bird seed on-line from other sources. They were disappointed when their birds would not eat this seed. These customers shared their online seed ordering experiences with us and asked why their birds wouldn’t eat it. While we cannot answer for the specific seed they purchased, we can explain what makes our seed so special.

The wild bird seed we carry is only available through authorized dealers like the Los Gatos Birdwatcher and is mixed and bagged in California’s Central Valley, just 90 miles from the store – another great asset to freshness. Our supplier, Volkman Seed Factory created private label mixes specifically for Bay Area distributors. These mixes contain high quality natural ingredients and include Pure Patio, Just Hearts, Songbird Select, Backyard Basics and Birder’s Choice. They don’t use cheap “filler” ingredients and Volkman Seed Factory is known for producing the cleanest mixes in the industry, minimizing waste which means you get more for your money!



Our seed is delivered every week by truck drivers that have also worked throughout the shelter in place. We are grateful they have maintained on time delivery schedules throughout the pandemic keeping us supplied with seed. The big rigs drive into the Kings Count Center early in the morning before the center fills with activity. With a 2,000 pound limit per pallet, the driver off-loads our order in front of the store. Our weekly order is based on our calculations and forecasting on what we anticipate our customers will need every 7 days. This means the seed you take home may have only been in the store for a few hours or just a few days. When you get seed online or from a big box store you simply don’t know how long it has been in their warehouse or on the shelf. When seed sits around too long it can lose its moisture content which makes it less appealing to your wild birds.



Some people live in the Santa Cruz Mountains while others are in the middle of suburbia. One customer may be feeding birds in a yard with several acres while another may be feeding on an apartment balcony. Some families need to avoid peanuts and other’s don’t want shells on their patio. Millet is ideal for the ground feeders and thistle is for the goldfinch. These different habitats and scenarios require different options and solutions. The staff at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher can answer your questions and help you pick the right seed for your situation.

Bewick’s Wren at feeder
- **Don Machado**

Bring Back Your Empty 5lb. Seed Bags

Our new compostable tin-tie paper bags are working so well people do not want to throw them away. They feel it's a waste to use them just once. So we came up with a plan! Bring back your empty tin tie paper bags and we'll use them again.

First, we'll set them aside for a few weeks, and afterward we will re-fill them. If you purchase seed in one of these recycled bags we'll take 25 cents off per bag.



Services Available from the Los Gatos Birdwatcher

- **Feeder Cleaning** – We want to help you maintain a healthy environment for your backyard birds. That is why we offer this service to clean feeders on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Bring your feeder into the store in the morning and we'll have it ready before closing.
- **Frequent Buyer Program** – Buy 9 of the same seed bags of 20# or higher at full price and get the 10th bag free. Coupons do not apply.
- **Help you to ID your Birds** – We can help you ID that mystery bird in your yard. Just take a photo using your cell phone and email it to info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com, or drop by the store and show your photo to our staff.

21 Parts of the bird

created by Lisa Myers

S C A P U L A R X T
 A J H E Y E L I N E
 V L A I N W O R C R
 E R U W N I Z Y O T
 N B I L L N N M V I
 T E F T A G A P E A
 S L O R E D P W R L
 E L I A T S E O T S
 R Y G C B R E A S T
 C P R I M A R I E S

See page 8 for the full list of words



We invite you to share your photos to our Facebook page and we will provide feedback.

It's Hot Outside – Keep Sugar Water Fresh



As soon as you fill-up your hummingbird and orioles feeders with a new batch of sugar water, that water starts to ferment. It's all about the sugar. Mildew and mold start to grow and the warmer the water, the faster it grows. All of that is not good for your birds. In fact, too many contaminants can kill hummingbirds. And you cannot always see problems by looking at the nectar, so we recommend when its above 80 degrees outside, refresh your nectar everyday.

Hanging your feeders in the shade helps. As the temperatures decrease you can go longer between re-fills. Everytime you re-fill take a moment to clean out any black mold you find. Vinegar works well and will not harm your birds. Make sure you have handy brushes to get into the nooks and crannies. Never use red coloring. Your orioles will be gone by September but your Anna's Hummingbirds are resident and are here all year.



Word search word list ALULA, BELLY, BILL, BREAST, CHIN, COVERTS, CREST, CROWN, EAR, EYELINE, GAPE, LORE, NAPE, PRIMARIES, RUMP, SCAPULAR, TAIL, TERCIAL, TOES, VENT, WING



LOS GATOS
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email: info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com
website: www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com

Dates to Remember

- July 4** – Independence Day (closed)
- July 18** – Birding By Ear Workshop
- August 5** – Beginning Birding Workshop
- Sept. 7** – Labor Day (closed)
- Sept. 22** – First day of Autumn



Loyal Customer Discount

Mention this coupon and take...

15% off one item

Coupon Expires September 30, 2020

#SUMMER093020

One Coupon per customer please. Excludes consignment items, sales items, excursions and optics. Not to be combined with other sales items.

Store Hours

Please visit
www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com



Find us on