

# Los Gatos Birdwatcher



IN THIS ISSUE	PAGE
Special Events	1
A Treasure From the Past	2
Changing Seed Preferences	4
Class Project Needs	4
Lisa Myer's Hummingbird Class	4
Look What Freddy Found	5
Services Available	6
Kid's Corner	6
Field Trips	6-7
Guest Greeters	8



## Migration Class – Lisa Myers

Thursday, September 20 6:30 – 8:00pm | Field Trip, September 22, 8-10 am

Migration is an incredible undertaking for the bird world. The many species that arrived last spring to breed in northern habitats are now migrating back south to spend their winter. It's also the time of year when many species return to the Bay Area until next spring. This workshop will focus on how birds migrate and what species to look for at this time of year. **\$20/per person.**



Photo by: Judy Bingman

## Photo Presentation – Judy Bingman Goes to Iceland

Thursday, September 27, 6:30 – 7:30pm

Though Judy mainly likes to photograph wildlife, she was very taken with the landscape in Iceland and the fact that it changes about every 25 miles or so from lava fields with moss growing, green fields with Icelandic horses grazing, mountains with purple lupine growing up the sides, and her favorite – waterfalls with rainbows above. Her photos of the Icelandic horses are among her favorites.

*No charge, but please call to reserve your space.*



Photo by: Meggi Raeder

## Photo Presentation – Meggi Raeder visits Bhutan – Magical Kingdom in the Himalayas

Thursday, October 18, 6:00 – 7:00pm (note time change)

Meggi Raeder has traveled into the Himalayas several times and visited Bhutan in 2010 and 2011. A closed country until the mid-70's with deep grounding in the Buddhist religion, Bhutan is a country struggling with keeping its culture and yet opening up to the modern world. Meggi will present images and stories from her fascinating journey high in the Himalayas. *No charge, but please call to reserve your space.*



## Raptors Class – Lisa Myers

Thursday, October 25 | Field Trip October 27, 8-10am

Hawks, falcons, eagles...they are majestic and powerful and they prey on mammals, fish, rodents, birds, snakes, and insects. From Peregrine Falcons to Bald Eagles, this workshop will focus on the different species of raptors that come to our yards and live in Bay Area open spaces. It is during the fall that many different species of raptors can be seen throughout California as they return for the winter. Our Oct. 27 morning field trip will be held Santa Clara County's Coyote Valley. **\$20/per person.**



## Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society presents the 21st Annual Wildlife Education Day!

Saturday, October 27, 2012 from 10am-2pm at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino.

There will be birdhouse building, nature arts and crafts, live animals, environmental groups from around the bay area, and the ever popular "early bird" shorebird walk at Charleston Slough (8am). For details about the events and to find out about the annual wildlife poster contest, visit [www.scvas.org](http://www.scvas.org).

# A Treasure from the Past

Long time customer, Gwen Fox, came into the store the other day bearing a treasure. She collects old books and a friend had given her a 1927 bird book. "Would you like it?", she asked. One look told me that this was special. Not only was it a bird book, it was "Birds of the Pacific States" by Ralph Hoffmann and in beautiful condition. The color plates were charming and the text very readable.

What peaked my interest was that 1927 publication predates the 1934 publication of Roger Tory Peterson's "A Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America," which I had understood to be the first guide for the general public. My understanding was that prior to 1934, all birding books were written and consumed by academics and scientists, but here I was holding a book that was purposely made to be "readable as well as accurate," according to the author. The illustrator of this book was Major Allen Brooks. While Peterson included his descriptive paintings of every species in a standardized format with identified field marks, Brooks drew sketches of each bird in a habitat setting. The front plate, which originally caught my eye, entitled "Mobbing of a pygmy owl" shows an Oregon junco, kinglets, chickadees, and nuthatches perched around the owl with two Steller's jays coming in for a look.

Upon further research by husband John, we found out that Ralph Hoffmann was a generation ahead of Peterson and while Peterson's Eastern (1934) and Western (1941) guides are considered the first "modern" field guides, Peterson does mention Hoffman in the preface of the 1941 guide. "There

was already one excellent handbook in use – Hoffmann's "Birds of the Pacific States" – but this only covered the States of Washington, Oregon, and California, whereas there was hardly a thing that was adequate for most other parts of the West. This guide (*meaning Peterson's*) does not intend to replace Hoffmann's handbook, rather, it could be most effectively used as a companion piece to it. The approach of the two books is quite different. Hoffmann's is especially thorough on the voices and habitats of birds, much more complete than is possible in a book of this size."

In Hoffmann's book we can trace the evolution of bird names and it is fascinating. The acorn woodpecker was known as the California woodpecker. The peregrine falcon was the duck hawk. The coastal white-crowned sparrow was called the Nuttall sparrow. I had to laugh at the spotted towhee. When I first learned to bird, I knew the spotted towhee as the rufous-sided towhee and was rather miffed when they changed it to spotted because I thought the rufous-sided was much more descriptive. Guess what? In 1927 it was called the spotted towhee! So over the years it has gone from spotted to rufous and back to spotted. Same with the white-tailed kite that has gone from white-tailed, to black-shouldered, and back to white-tailed.



From *Birds of the Pacific States*

On page 61, Hoffmann describes the then still viable California

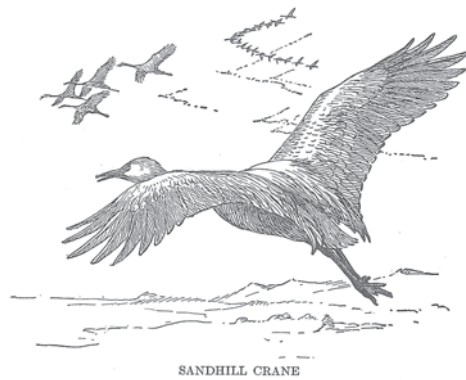
Condor and Brooks draws the soaring giant. He starts the description with words that are still valid today. "The ambition of every California bird student is to see a Condor. The great size of the bird, the restricted range, and the comparative inaccessibility of its haunts combine to give the student a tremendous thrill when the last canyon wall is climbed and the great black bird is seen soaring over the next jagged peak." Our

field trip groups have seen condors at Pinnacles and at Big Sur and the feeling is the same now as it was then.

On page 297, Hoffmann states that "The return in April of the black-headed Grosbeak at once fills great spaces that have been silent with sweet and penetrating melody. The eager males, each singing from a high perch on its own breeding ground, broadcast their powerful song in all directions so that a listener standing in orchard or woodland is never out of range of two or three performers." Customer Linda Stinchfield and her husband, Kim, live just south of us on Skyline and she keeps a bird diary. The past five or so years she has seen and heard the grosbeaks' return to our ridge on or about April 1. So while many other changes in nature have taken place, the grosbeaks' timing is right on schedule.

American goldfinches were called willow goldfinches and lesser goldfinches were green-backed goldfinches. Hoffmann describes the green-backed's call as a

“shivering note like the jarring of a cracked piece of glass.” He goes on to describe the male’s nesting call as “sweet twittering notes that suggest the song of a canary” which may be why many people call them “wild canaries.” Hoffmann’s description in flight is exactly what we use to identify them flying now: “The ordinary flight of a Goldfinch is undulating, each stroke of the wings bearing the bird upward, and alternating with an instant of downward drop while the wings are closed.”



From *Birds of the Pacific States*

Even in 1927 the Sandhill Crane was a species of concern. Hoffmann starts his entry on Sandhills with the following: “The Sandhill Crane belongs to the vanishing races, like the bison and the Indian of the plains. Cultivation and drainage have already destroyed much of its breeding ground and greatly reduced its numbers. “ His distribution numbers are actually worse than they are today where we have good-sized flocks wintering in the Central Valley. “Rare summer visitor (Apr-Oct) in wet meadows of northeastern California; a few winter in the interior valleys.” Brooks’ illustration shows a close up crane flying, with many more in the familiar lines or skeins that we see out at Woodbridge Road in Lodi on our winter field trips.

Every once in a while, there is a date marked next to a bird: Tilden 9-7-75 (red-tailed hawk) where the owner marked down that they had “heard call”, 3-12-76 (white-tailed kite), 1-23-74 (spotted sandpiper).

I am also very lucky to have some early Roger Tory Peterson guides: two 1941 Western North America, one 1947 Eastern North America, and my parents 1961 Western guide.

One of the 1941 guides was given to me by long-time customer, Gretchen Beers. It is interesting to see the evolution of the guides. In the 1941 editions there are six color plates. By 1947 there were many more color plates and by 1961, almost all were in color. By the 1961 edition, a checklist is included where my father marked all his finds.

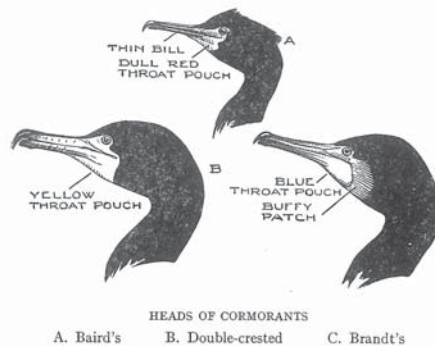
During Lisa Myers’ class on Beginning Birding we discussed field guides. One participant, customer Ellen Bateman, brought her mother’s first bird book in to show. The original copyright was 1897 with her book’s printing date of 1932.

The Bird Book was written by Miss Neltje Blanchan and illustrated by Miss Nellie Pairpoint, which is unusual as most birding books have been written by men.

Lisa pointed out that habitat and behavior are two things that will help in identification in addition to field marks. In the beginning of her book, Blanchan lists the

birds that are seen in various habitats: “Birds of the Air Catching their Food as they Fly” (a list of flycatchers, swallows, gnatcatchers, and hummingbirds); “Birds of Tree Trunks and Large Limbs” (woodpeckers, flicker, nuthatch, creeper, chickadees, etc.); “Birds Seen Feeding on the Ground” (sparrows, junco, meadowlark, robin, mourning dove, and many more). I have never read a field guide or handbook, as the earlier books are called, that had such habitat detail and would like to see that feature. Other sections include: Bird Families, Seasons of Birds, Birds Grouped According to Size, and Description of Birds Grouped According to Color. There are many current field guides that are popular with beginners that divide by color, but if you are interested in progressing in birding, a standard taxonomically arranged field guide of the Western United States will give you much more information. Unless the guide shows the female

with the male or vice versa it’s hard to identify a brown female house finch as related to red male house finch.



From *A Field Guide to Western Birds*

As I was writing this article, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s magazine “Living Bird” arrived with an article about a new book. “In the Field, Among the Feathered”, by Thomas

Dunlap follows “the history of field guides to birds in America from the Victorian era to the present.” How timely. The book has been ordered and it will be interesting to see if any of the authors above are listed.

## So Why are the Birds Eating Differently Now?

During different parts of the year birds eat differently. During May, June, and part of July our lesser goldfinches added sunflower chips in greater amounts to their diet of nyjer/thistle. Most of the consumption seemed to be done by parents feeding babies and then, babies feeding themselves. The sunflower chip consumption is still high as we seem to have a new, later, crop of babies. Well into August, we are seeing baby red-breasted nuthatches (a first at our house) and hearing about young juncos and towhees.

Starting in November when the crowned sparrows return from their northern nesting territory, the consumption of millet will go up. Customers who have switched to Just Hearts from Patio Mix may want to shift back so that there is millet to kick out. Patio Mix, Birder's Choice, and Garden Mix are all purpose mixes. By all purpose I mean that when put in a tube feeder, the millet will be kicked out by birds looking for sunflower, peanuts, and safflower. Patio has no shells, which means no weeds will grow with Patio, Birder's Choice has shells, and Garden Mix has one seed, safflower, that will grow and has a light shell. This means weeds will grow with Birder's Choice and possibly with Garden.

Los Gatos Birdwatcher has many single seeds, a large variety of mixes, and our seed preference chart to show you who likes what. Just ask for your own copy.

---

## Meat Trays still needed for class projects!

Everyone has heard our plea for egg cartons. We have reached our maximum. Thank you! However, we still need styrofoam meat/produce trays in **white** or **yellow only**. Please rinse them before bringing them in. These will be used for our Weather Watcher program and the kids make weather vanes out of the styrofoam cut out as a fish.



Thanks to everyone who has recycled these items with us in the past and we look forward to repurposing your trays.

## Lisa Myer's Hummingbird Class and Field Trip receives Rave Reviews



Twenty-four participants came to the store in July to learn more about hummingbirds. Freddy started things off with a discussion of hummingbird

feeders and the importance of keeping them clean.

Lisa discussed the various types of hummingbirds we are likely to see in the valley showing slides of each. Lisa had brought several nests, one still on the leafy branch from her yard. The variety of nest styles is interesting given that most of them were done by female Anna's hummingbirds.

When we were discussing these classes, we were wondering where would be the best place to take folks for the field trip. Our employee, Judy Bingman, said, "Come to my house, I have lots of hummers." Judy lives in the Santa Cruz mountains on Skyland Road and does indeed have lots of hummers with seven feeders at last count. When the group arrived at 8am on Saturday, Judy was ready with coffee. Her 2 month old lab puppy, Liberty (a.k.a. Libby), was ready for tummy rubs. Lisa was delighted to see all the hummers and later on, the Hairy Woodpecker, pygmy nuthatches, lesser goldfinch, purple finch, house finch, and acorn woodpeckers. There was lots going on at Judy's and everyone was pleased.

Check out the schedule for Lisa's next classes on Page 1.





LOOK WHAT  
FREDDY FOUND!

**COMING SOON!**  
FREDDY'S FINDS FROM THE  
LAS VEGAS APPAREL SHOW.



**Rising International**  
Colorful and casual  
hoodies from Nepal



**Calendars**  
Get ready for 2013  
- many styles to choose from



**Garden Art**  
Whimsical garden  
stakes made out of PVC



**Halloween**  
Owls are popular this year



**Haitian Wall Art**  
New Styles



**Christmas Cards**  
Coming September 15

# 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.

• **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 (availability may be limited)

• 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.

## Kid’s Corner

Call 358-9453 to reserve your space.



### Seed Search

**Thursday, September 27, 4-5 pm at Belgatos Park**  
For ages 3 to 9 Fee: \$10/child

Come join us at Belgatos Park to investigate all sorts of seeds. Discover which seeds different birds prefer. Adventure with us on the trails as we search for seeds and the creatures who like to eat them. Bring home some special seeds for the birds and squirrels in your yard.

### Night Search

**Thursday, October 18, 4-5 pm**  
For ages 3 to 9, Fee: \$10/child

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher to learn how to search for nighttime creatures and find out how they find their food in the dark. Dissect an owl pellet, play a listening game, go on a smelling search, and create your own flying bat.

## 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.**

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

#C1012

/ 2012

Pay to the order of *Our Loyal Customer*

**15% Off One Item**

Memo: *Expires 10/31/12*

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

### **Sunnyvale Audubon walks**

First Wednesday of the month  
September 5, October 3, November 7  
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 Santa Cruz for Fall Migration**

Saturday, September 15, 2012 – 8:00am - 4:00pm  
The fall migration will be underway and birding the coast always turns up great species. We'll spend the day in Santa Cruz as we bird Santa Cruz's Lighthouse Field State Beach, Natural Bridges State Park and Antonelli Pond. Santa Cruz Lighthouse Field State Beach provides 36 acres of undeveloped coastal terrace. Also known as Point Santa Cruz, this area forms the northern boundary of Monterey Bay. The habitat here provides shade, shrubs, and trees for migrants to take shelter and rest before continuing their journey south. In addition to the historical lighthouse the 4200 feet of ocean cliffs provide an excellent vantage to scan the oceans below for marine life and ocean birds. We'll work our way to Natural Bridges and Antonelli Ponds where we'll look for more migrants taking refuge in this coastal oasis.  
Fee: \$30 + share of gas.

### **Let's Let's Go Birding with Lisa Myers To East Bay Reservoirs**

Saturday, October 20, 2012 - 8am - 4pm  
Located in the East Bay, Lafayette and San Pablo Reservoirs are in Contra Costa County between Walnut Creek and El Cerrito. Combined, they offer 2000 acres of open space including two major reservoirs and several hiking trails. Stocked with trout we'll scope the reservoirs for Osprey and the other species that live in or near the water, while we take time to bird the surrounding habitat as we look for migrating songbirds. This is the first time the Los Gatos Birdwatcher has visited this area and we are excited to see what we will find.  
**Fee: \$30 + share of gas.**

### **Let's Go Birding with Lisa Myers To Cosumnes River Preserve**

Saturday, November 17, 2012 - 8:00am - 5:00pm  
We'll spend the day at the Cosumnes River Preserve which is located north of Stockton in San Joaquin County. This preserve is a hot spot for many fantastic species that return here each winter, including waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes and raptors. According to their website "the Cosumnes River Preserve was created to protect this land as it is the only remaining unregulated river on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. In its lower reaches, it flows through one of the biologically richest regions in California's Central Valley, before merging with the Mokelumne River to flow into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and eventually the Pacific Ocean."  
**Fee: \$30 + 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

PRESORT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
LOS GATOS, CA  
PERMIT NO. 43

**Check Out Our Special Events!**  
see Page 1

Return Service Requested



Printed on  
recycled paper

## Guest Greeters



*Dog on Duty*  
Lucy climbs seed  
mountains in  
search of peanuts.



## Dates to Remember

Closed Labor Day - September 3  
September 22 - Autumnal Equinox  
October 8 - Columbus Day observed

## Store Hours

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

