



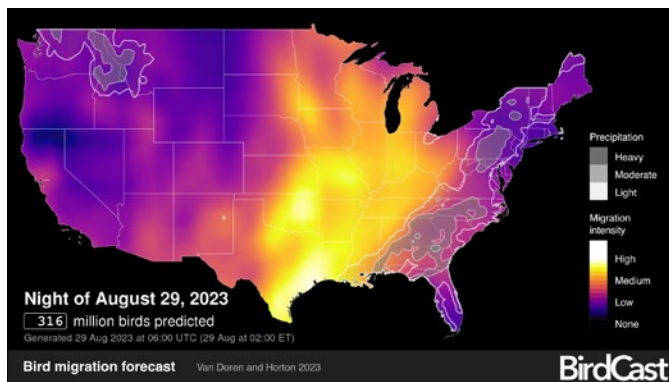
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## BirdCast – Understanding Avian Migration

As the seasons change, fall becomes a time to migrate for birds. Some species have spent the breeding season in the far north. With cooler temperatures, and lack of food they have to move south. This means you'll notice birds back at your feeders that you have not seen in a while like the White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows. And some of our backyard birds that have been with us since spring travel south to warmer climates. Birds moving about the Earth is happening all the time, but the major seasonal migrations happen twice a year in spring and fall. For this reason, we want to bring BirdCast to your attention.

BirdCast is a resource to help you learn where the birds are going and when. This tool was created as a way to forecast bird movement, *“BirdCast proposed to provide real-time predictions of bird migrations: when they migrate, where they migrate, and how far they will be flying..... there was a strong belief and understanding that knowledge of migratory behavior would inspire birders and scientists as well as support decisions about conservation actions on the ground to mitigate numerous hazards birds face and to prevent deaths of millions of birds annually.”* Using satellites and data gathered through eBird, BirdCast offers a system that tracks bird movement. With this data, we learn about migration areas of high concentration. BirdCast offers us maps showing the migration patterns, and on the website, you can click on your state to see which birds flew over the previous night.

Shorebird migration starts earlier in the season with arctic-born fledglings arriving to the Bay Area mid-summer. The songbirds arrive later with peak times usually falling between August and October. Migration is also dependent



on weather patterns, where birds will move based on favorable conditions. Birds understand wind and will wait for tailwinds to help them so they do not have to spend energy fighting the wind. Many species follow specific land formations, the coastline, some mountains or deserts.

With a fall migration journey involving hundreds if not thousands of miles, birds also need to land to rest and refuel. Some birds pick isolated habitats, like lakes, parks, or wherever there is water. Dense habitats next to creeks often reveal a few birds moving through. You

might want to consider places with open skies where you can look for birds flying over; songbirds in the early hours and raptors as the day heats up. Fall migration is a fascinating adventure for our feathered friends. We encourage you to learn more by visiting BirdCast.

# Fall Coupon

**Mention this coupon & take...**

## 15% off one item

Excludes all food items or seed, sale or consignment items, excursions & optics. Not to be combined with any other offers.

Expires Dec. 31, 2023  
#FALL2023

# Amazon – How To Compete

By Lisa Myers



I have had a few people ask me recently why Amazon is able to sell some products for less than the prices they see in our store. It's quite simple – Amazon is a giant and able to negotiate lower prices than I can because they sell at such a large volume. At times they sell products for a lower price than I have to pay for the same item. It is unfair to small businesses,

but Jeff Bezos created this monster, the world's largest e-commerce company. Worth over \$151,000,000,00 himself, he can afford to give products away for cheap and go to the moon if he wants. It's crazy, but it is also the reality of doing business in the world today. Many small businesses could not and will not survive competing against Amazon.

It is our hope that a knowledgeable staff that spends time with you and can answer your questions is worth a visit inside the Los Gatos Birdwatcher. It is our hope that offering jobs to people in the neighborhood, paying local taxes, and helping local schools, non-profits, and organizations with their fundraising is worth a visit inside the store. It is our hope that touching the product before you buy it (and finding quality products!) is worth a stop at the King's Court Center. It is our hope that you will continue to enjoy doing business with real people who will wrap your gifts and help you to your car.

We work together with the other retailers in our neighborhood. There is value in that. And for all of you who take the time to buy local, and stop into the store we thank you. It is very simple, because of you we are still in business.

## Services Available from the Los Gatos Birdwatcher

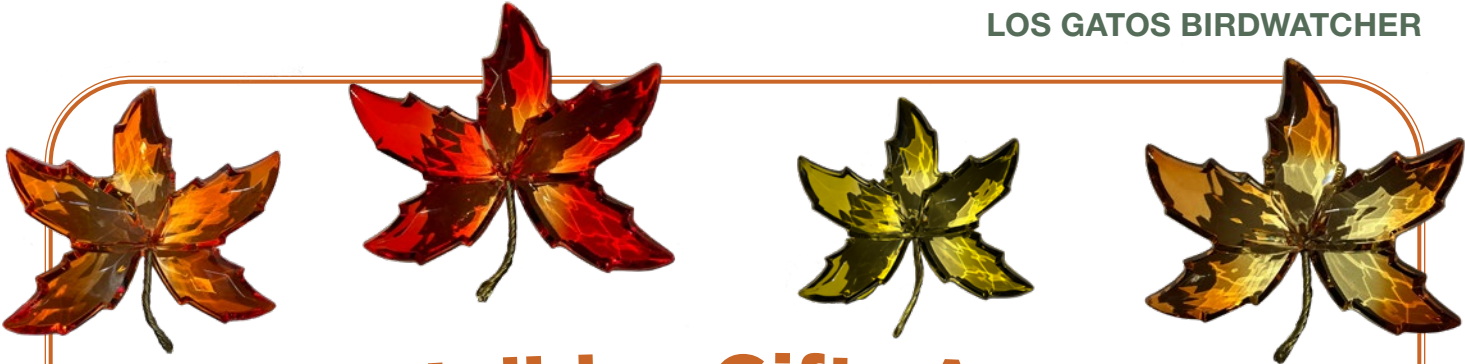
- **Feeder Cleaning** – We want to help you maintain a healthy environment for your backyard birds. That is why we offer this service to clean feeders on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Bring your feeder into the store in the morning and we'll have it ready before closing. While we clean feeders for free we do ask that you consider making a minimum donation of \$5 per feeder to one of the Bay Area charities we support. You'll find collection boxes at the store.
- **Frequent Buyer Program** – Buy 10 of the same seed bags of 20# or high at full price and get the 11th 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](mailto:info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com), or drop by the store and show your photo to our staff.
- **Backyard Bird Consulting Program** – We will come out to your home (15 mile radius) and talk about what you can do to attract more birds to your yard. What species you can attract, where to set-up feeders, bird baths and nest boxes are just some of the topics we'll cover. There is a \$50 consultation fee per visit. With your visit you'll receive a \$25 Los Gatos Birdwatcher gift certificate.



## Honoring Veterans with a 20% Discount

**Saturday, November 11 is VETERAN'S DAY**, a day to honor all our veterans. The Los Gatos Birdwatcher also wants to honor our vets and to do that we are giving veterans **20%** off their entire purchase Monday, Nov. 6 through Nov. 13.

So, if you are a veteran please plan to come into the store that week and let us know you served in the military. It's a small way to thank you for your service to our country and for being a loyal Los Gatos Birdwatcher customer. **(This discount excludes items already on sale.)**



# Your Holiday Gifts Are Here

Choose from a huge selection of nature inspired gift items this holiday season Jewelry, socks, scarves, garden & wall art, kitchen towels, optics and more



### 2024 calendars

We have our nature inspired 2024 calendars available now



### Assortment

Stop in to see our selection of ornaments and decorations to help you with your holiday cheer



### Amos Pewter

We have a beautiful new line of ornaments made out of pewter and could be displayed all year long



### Paper Shark towels

Everyone loves Paper Shark towels and we have many different designs to get you through the holidays.

### Volkman Seed

Gifting a 20 Lb. bag of bird seed may be a perfect solution for your bird feeding loved one.



**Gift Wrapping** – We will gift wrap your items using a variety of options from wrapping paper to garment boxes and bags made from recycled materials.



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 Los Gatos Birdwatcher sponsors Saturday morning bird walks per month. Dates and locations are listed below and on our web page. These walks are free and open to all birding levels, but pre-registration is required. Walks fill at 20 people. Walks start on-site at 8:30 AM and end around 10:00 AM. Call the store to register **408- 358-9453**.

**Oct. 14** Agnews Historic Park

**Oct. 28** Raptor Special event

**Nov. 11** Los Gatos Creek Park

**Nov. 25** Marcial Cottle Park

**Lodi Sandhill Crane Association**

**25th Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival**

November 3 – 5, 2023

[lodisandhillcrane.org/about-the-festival](http://lodisandhillcrane.org/about-the-festival)

*ID Workshops will start in 2024*

### A Day With Cranes!

**Saturday, December 2, 2023 • 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM**

**Fee: \$65 • Call the store to register 408-358-9453**

If you have ever been birding with Lisa you know that her favorite family of birds are the cranes. Worldwide there are 15 different species of cranes.



They can be found on every continent except South America and Antarctica. In North America we have two species of cranes. Sandhill Cranes are one of the most numerous of all 15 species holding strong with over 800,000 individuals. And we have the Whooping Crane.

Central Valley Sandhill Cranes – Tony Woo

This impressive crane is one of the most endangered. Their numbers were once down to as low as 40. After great efforts by landowners and organizations like the International Crane Foundation, Whooping Cranes now number just over 800. While we do not have Whooping Cranes in the west, we can find wintering Sandhill Cranes in California's Central Valley. Sandhills need marsh type habitats to thrive and the flooded farmlands of the Central Valley provide this.

They start to arrive in October and will remain until Spring. We will start this day later than most because we will end just after the sunset. It is 2 hours one way to reach Sandhill Crane habitat. Participants will be encouraged to carpool. There will be little walking. Temperatures could be cold. Everyone should bring their snacks, liquids and lunch.



*A portion of this days revenues will go to the International Crane Foundation to support their work on saving the world's cranes.*

## Project FeederWatch Begins in November

Project FeederWatch is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada. It's a fun way to learn about your backyard birds and contribute to a 30+ year-and-running data-set of bird population changes. FeederWatch is a winter-long (November-April) survey of the birds that visit all locales in North America.

With FeederWatch, you become a scientist in your own backyard and your counts become part of something bigger. You can count birds as often as every week, or as infrequently as you like, the schedule is completely flexible. All you need is a bird feeder, bird bath, or plantings that attract birds.

Visit for details - [feederwatch.org/welcome-to-feederwatch](https://feederwatch.org/welcome-to-feederwatch)



Chestnut-backed Chickadee at feeder  
– Ron Machado

## SFBBO's California Fall Challenge 2023



SFBBO T-shirt Graphic

"The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) is a nonprofit with the mission to promote sustainability in the Bay Area and beyond by engaging communities in avian research, habitat restoration, and education. Each year they raise money for their programs through the California Fall Challenge (CFC) and the Los Gatos Birdwatcher wants to help them reach their goals. Donations of \$80 or more are eligible to receive SFBBO's 2023 CFC T-Shirt (pictured) which showcases a Great Horned, Short-eared, and Burrowing Owl (*the estimated value of the black shirt, \$15, is not tax deductible*).

To learn more, visit [www.sfbbo.org](http://www.sfbbo.org) or write to [outreach@sfbbo.org](mailto:outreach@sfbbo.org). Los Gatos Birdwatcher has also donated a Barn Owl box and signed Crossley ID Guides for their CFC Silent Auction. There will also be a donation box specific to this year's CFC located inside the store and the Los Gatos Birdwatcher will match all donations collected through the end of the CFC.

## Special Event – In Honor of Raptors

**Saturday, October 28, 2023 • 10 AM – 12:30 PM • Fee: \$75**

We invite you to join us for a very special raptor event in the redwoods of Sanborn County Park.

Birds of prey, also known as Raptors are a customer favorite. This is the group of birds that come in all sizes and colors and make a living actively hunting for their next meal. Depending on the raptor the next meal could be a dragonfly, lizard or snake or perhaps a jack rabbit, trout or even another bird. This special event will include a 60 minute raptor workshop with Lisa Myers. With the fall migration upon us raptors are also on the move.

Lisa will review the variety of raptors that can be found in the Bay Area throughout the New Year - How these raptors differ, where they can be found and what is their preferred meal. After the workshop we'll enjoy Falconer Kenny Elvin of Full Circle Falconry as he shares his birds of prey with you. Kenny offers an educational experience for his audience while in the company of several species of raptors. A few lucky participants will win raptor themed door prize! The morning will include breakfast snacks, fruit and bagels plus juice and water.



Lisa Myers and Falconer Kenny Elvin with Lanner Falcon

## Memorable Breeding Season

By Lisa Myers

One of the things we enjoy doing for customers here at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher is helping them with their mystery bird ID. People email us photos or come into the store to show us one they took on their cell phone. Sometimes these birds are observed while out taking a hike or even on vacation. But most are of birds in their own backyards. One species stood out from this past breeding season when I received an email from Margaret who is a previous birding student. The photo was taken by her husband Rick and showed young birds holding onto the inside vertical wall of their brick chimney. She wanted me to confirm that this was a nest of Vaux's Swift. I was very excited to see the photo and confirmed her ID with a big "yes!"



3 Vaux's Swift chicks in the nest – Rick Row

When out birding, swifts are always a bingo bird. They are rapid flyers who spend their day in the air grabbing bugs out of the sky. You never know when one or a small flock will whiz by overhead, but, wow, to have them nest on your own house! There are over 100 species of swifts worldwide with three species found in the Bay Area; the Black Swift, the White-throated Swift, and the small Vaux's Swift.

With a diet of insects, Vaux's Swifts must live where there are plenty flying around. So they spend the winter in and around Central America and arrive in the Bay Area each spring to spend the breeding season. Some stay in our area while others continue as far north as Canada. When they are ready to nest they often pick locations that allow them to fly down and into something like the hollow of a tree. And sometimes as in this situation, a chimney offers the perfect solution. In fact, in the east, they have a species named "Chimney Swift". That species of swift takes advantage of chimneys, but we do not get them here.



Parent Swift coming out of chimney – Rick Row



White throated Swift  
– Fred Lim

Swifts are built for fast, agile flight and have tiny feet that disappear up against their body. It makes for an ideal aerodynamic physique. Their feet are so small that they cannot perch like other birds, however, this body structure is ideal for clinging, and is why they have adapted to nesting and roosting on vertical surfaces. Swifts are in the family “Apodidae” which means “without feet”.

All the different ways birds nest are truly amazing but swifts are special. Using their saliva both the male and female will adhere small twigs to the side of their selected nest cavity. The final nest will measure on average 4 inches across and 2.4 inches tall. Both parents will incubate the eggs which take 18 – 20 days to hatch and another four weeks to fledge. Margaret said last winter’s storms must have blown the cap off their chimney. They had not noticed it was missing until they heard the tiny chirping coming down their chimney. The fact that she and husband Rick live in a flat-roofed Eichler house was helpful. This made it easier for Rick to have a look down inside their chimney and monitor the nest. Margaret’s swift family built their nest toward the top of the chimney where the three chicks could be easily observed.

All swifts have large mouths in proportion to their bodies. They use these gapping mouths to more easily catch bugs on the wing. Both parents will spend the day in flight catching insects. After grabbing 100+ insects out of the air they return to feed the hungry chicks roughly 50 times, per parent a day. That means one nest of Vaux’s Swift can remove over 10,000 pesky insects each day. Talk about pesticide-free bug abatement! We should all be so lucky to have a Vaux’s Swift nest in our neighborhood. Margaret added that they enjoyed hearing the chirping coming from her Vaux’s Swift family and she knew when the chicks were being fed.

After the chicks fledge they are known to come back to the nest sight every night for several more weeks. In 2024 the parents may return to this chimney location and Margaret said they do not plan to put the cap back on the chimney. They hope they do return and look forward to helping the swifts with a safe place to raise another clutch.

In the fall Vaux’s Swift join together in large flocks and work their way down to the tropics as far south as Venezuela for the winter. During their journey they have to find a place to spend the night. They will congregate together and find ideal places to sleep, also known as a roost. Large, old industrial chimneys found in some cities may attract hundreds if not thousands of roosting swifts.



*This Los Gatos customer found this Vaux’s Swift on the ground in his yard. He got the photo just before the bird flew off*  
– Bill Hoeft

Together the birds descend down into these large chimneys at dusk. Nature lovers and bird watchers will visit these known locations every fall to observe this nightly spectacle. Their numbers will be counted and this data will help determine the health of the species. At present, there are estimated to be 870,000 Vaux’s Swift. The closest known large roosting sights around here are in San Rafael, CA where they too are monitored each fall.



Sunset Swift watching – Portland, Or. Karen Mundy

# Releasing Helium Balloons – It’s a Bad Idea

We often see on TV or in our own city parks an event that centers around releasing helium balloons into the air. Everyone lets go of their balloon and the act of it floating up into the sky is supposed to communicate a special message to a lost loved one. Or perhaps its part of a birthday or graduation celebration. Letting these balloons fly off into the environment is just a fancy way of littering with the potential to also harm wildlife. What goes up must come down. These balloons eventually pop and drop back down to Earth. They end up in our oceans, waterways, and open spaces where birds, mammals, turtles, fish and more can get caught in the plastic and or strings. Or worse, wild animals will eat the balloon resulting in harm and often death.



Balloons can also collide with power lines, which can result in transformers blowing out, causing fires, and disrupting the electricity supply to entire neighborhoods. The consequences can be devastating, both environmentally and in terms of public safety. Several states have taken action by passing laws that make the release of balloons into the air illegal. These measures have already started to yield positive results. We encourage you to think of other ways to commemorate your event or loved ones. Maybe you could plant a tree, or throw bird seed out for wild birds to find. Maybe your family could donate to an organization working toward a cause you believe in. Maybe everyone could share with the group something special about the person you are remembering. There are many wonderful, unique ways to celebrate without the potential of harming wildlife.



LOS GATOS  
Birdwatcher

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408/358-9453  
email: [info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com](mailto:info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com)  
website: [www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com](http://www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com)

Find us on Facebook  
and Instagram



## Dates to Remember

Nov. 11 – Veteran’s Day  
Nov. 22 – Closing early 10 – 3 PM (*closing early*)  
Nov. 23 – Thanksgiving Day (Closed)  
Dec. 7 – Hanukkah begins  
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve 10 – 3 PM (*closing early*)  
Dec. 25 – Christmas Day (Closed)  
Dec. 31 – New Year’s Eve 10 – 3 (*closing early*)  
Jan. 1 New Year’s Day (Closed)  
Closed Sundays

## Store Hours

Please visit: [www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com](http://www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com)



LOS GATOS  
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