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Winter is a Great Season to Introduce Suet By Lisa Myers

If you look up the definition of “suet” it is described as the fatty tissue found around the kidneys of beef, and sheep used in cooking. (*The fat from pork is a different consistency and is known as lard.*) Back in the day when trying to feed one’s family no part of the animal was wasted. Suet was included in many old world recipes like sweet and savory puddings, dumplings, pastries and pies. Surprising to many, suet is also a food you can offer your



California Scrub Jay Eating Suet
– Nancy Turek

wild birds. The fat that makes up suet provides birds with nutrition, energy and calories. In the wild, birds will take advantage and dine on the fat they find on a dead animal they encounter in nature. Because fat offers twice as much energy than carbohydrates and protein, suet is appreciated by birds during their migration, or birds feeding young. For insect-eating birds, it can be a life saving food source when insect numbers are low – especially in the winter.

Historically, winters in the Bay Area have not been very severe, so eating suet is not necessarily a matter of life or death for a bird, but when offered, our backyard birds will take advantage of this high energy food source. It is also an easy and convenient way to feed your backyard birds if bird seed is not your thing. All you have to do is decide which type of suet feeder you prefer and then select the suet that is right for that feeder. Suet comes in many different shapes and sizes. No melt suet, although greasy, is not affected by hot temperatures. To eat suet, your birds will land on your suet feeder and pull the suet through the cage. Little gets dropped onto the ground and there are no shells to sweep.

Suet comes in several flavors. Some flavors contain added insects and mealworms, while others include mostly peanuts. If squirrels are an issue in your yard, as is usually the case, suet also comes in hot pepper. The birds do not have a developed sense of taste and do not notice the added spice, but a squirrel with its mammal mouth can taste that extra heat and will leave your suet alone.

When you place suet in your yard you have to give your birds time to find it, so don’t give up too soon. And remember this feeder will be used differently throughout the year. At times you may need several suet cakes to get you through a few weeks, while other times one cake may last longer. There are many different species that are known to visit suet feeders including White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse, Bushtits, woodpeckers, Northern Mockingbirds, juncos and jays.

We can help you pick the right suet and feeder for your yard and address any observations you make afterward.

Winter Coupon

15%

off one item

Loyal customers simply mention this coupon

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

Expires March 31, 2023 #WINTER2023





How To Reduce Window Strikes

by customer & birder LC Boros

The “bonk” — that tell-tale sound of another bird colliding with our windows. As we restored native habitat at our San Jose ranch, what was once an overgrazed Wasteland, it began to thrive. The population of resident avian beings soared and the number of bonks, once a rare thing, increased. Fatalities were not uncommon and my little hospital box was in frequent use — especially during the nesting season. I tried lowering blinds and putting up small colored window clings, but that didn’t help much, so up went funky gel clings and seed feeders that suctioned to the windows, but the gels oozed and the feeders, in addition to all our other feeders, were too high maintenance with regular cleaning. Larger traditional anti-strike clings helped, yet not enough to stem the tide. During these experiments I also noticed that not all windows are equal. Our MidCentury Modern house has over 110 exterior windows, but it was the bank of north-facing ones in my office and the south-facing glass walls of the great room that were responsible for almost all of the bonks. East and west facing windows of the same dimensions only had a handful of strikes over the years and the same is true for the south-facing second-story windows.

Last spring I decided it was going to take some serious work to curb the number of collisions so I researched more options. And there are so many: ranging from special glass and vinyl, to cords and clings and tapes... oh my! The newest cool thing is fancy glass that is clear to human eyes yet actually filled with patterns that avian eyes can detect. If we were building new, this would be a great choice, but replacing even just a few dozen panes of glass is not a very economical



Bird dust on window after a bird strike.

solution. If you are building new, ask your architect about this option. Then I looked at privacy vinyl, but it’s meant to cover an entire window which wouldn’t work for us since we like to look out our windows. (*In fact I have an entire website dedicated to what we see outside!*) Finally, cords could have been a great option for us — twine/string that hangs vertically in front windows secured at both ends or just from the top (*Acropian BirdSavers™*). They do a great job of creating visual clutter while not obscuring a view, but we have some pretty epic weather up here which can bring sustained winds over 65mph and gusts of 90mph. Cords would not fare well in such conditions.

In the end I went with a three stage approach: clings, feeders, and tape. For the south-facing sliding glass doors in the great room I plastered the large clings I had used elsewhere and using a suction cup I hung a hummingbird feeder on the exterior of the fixed pane. It turns out that hummingbird feeders suctioned to glass are a good deterrent. As for the clings, clear ones, even if a solid color just did not work. I learned it’s best to use visually complex ones like those you’ll find at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher known as Window Gems. While you don’t need to arrange clings in any particular pattern, you do need a lot of them to fill the area. (*Sidenote - if we were into decorating for the holidays I would so invest in different themed clings and make them part of each season!*) My third phase was much more labor intensive, as I used a few dozen rolls of BirdTape from CollidEscape, also available at the store. Using a ladder and our manlift, I installed the strips vertically, 4 inches apart on all the other problem glass. It was a total of 9 hours of labor, but now four months later the results are in!



Acropian BirdSavers

We have had just two fatal strikes a handful of stunning bonks, and all were the result of our resident Cooper's Hawk trying to use our glass to help score a meal. When it is out cruising, the fleeing songbirds now break like a wave as they approach the windows. So, while more costly than traditional clings, much more labor intensive to install, and only for exterior use, the CollideEscape tape really works. There's a reason why major cities invest and install the CollideEscape products on skyscrapers. We're very glad we have put in the work to curb collisions. Plus cleaning with a squeegee is still super easy.

Finally, I have some extra rolls I plan to use on the sliding glass door that currently just has clings on it, as I would like to re-use those clings to combat a new problem we have: humans bonking themselves into the glass door.



CollideEscape covered Windows



Window Gems come in several designs

Tips to remember

- You don't have to do every window of your home.
- Visually complex is the key.
- There's no one perfect solution.

WindowAlert is another product available at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher that may be a solution for your windows. These window clings use UV light to alert your birds. Listed below are the reasons birds get confused by windows.

1. Bird strikes often occur when birds perceive a **LINE OF FLIGHT** through one window of your home and out another.
2. Bird strikes may occur when birds see **OPEN SKY** reflected in your window.
3. Bird strikes are often a problem near **BIRD FEEDERS**. Bird feeders should be positioned closer than three feet or farther than 30 feet from your windows.
4. Bird strikes are a problem with highly reflective windows, windows near bodies of water, and windows near indoor mirrors. These situations may be difficult to remedy.





Let's go Birding

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 each 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. 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. We register participants per walk during the month the walks are scheduled. Call the store to register 408-358-9453. Walks start on-site at 8:30 AM and end around 10:00 AM. After confirmation details per walk will be provided.

Jan 14	Agnew Historic Park, Santa Clara
Jan 21	Palo Alto Baylands, Geng Road
Feb 4	Sierra Vista Open Space, East Foothills
Feb 18	Lake Cunningham, San Jose
Mar 18	Shoreline Lake, Mtn. View
Mar 25	Kevin Moran Park, Saratoga

Seasonal Reminders



Do any heavy pruning or tree trimming now, before the breeding season starts in March.



Clean out your nest boxes now, so they are ready for new nests by March 1.

Woodpecker Workshop

In the field with Lisa Myers
January 14 • 10:30 AM – 12:00 noon

Rain canceled this workshop during the fall so we are trying again. This workshop will take place entirely outside as we concentrate on the woodpecker family. We'll review interesting facts about this group of birds and the many species that are found throughout the greater Bay Area.



Acorn Woodpecker
– Tony Woo

We'll spend the morning walking throughout Vasona County Park where we'll be on the look out for several different species of woodpeckers including Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hairy, Nuttall's, Acorn and Downy Woodpeckers. Call the store to register 408-358-9453
Fee: \$35

New To Birding? This is the class for you!

With Instructor Lisa Myers
February 22 • 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Class will take place at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher. In the last few years, many people have picked up binoculars and have started enjoying the birds they find in their neighborhoods or local parks.

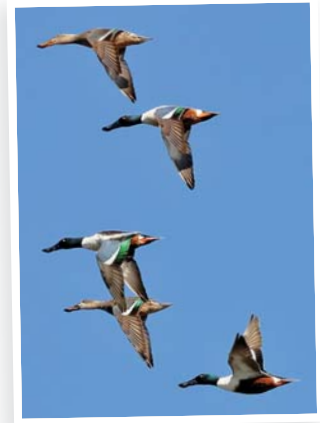
This class will review how to ID birds, how birds get grouped together, how habitat and seasons affect what you will find, how to attract more birds to your yard, how to use binoculars, plus the many birding resources available to you and much more. This will be a fun class geared for those new to birding. Call the store to register 408-358-9453.

Fee: \$25

Bay Area Duck Workshop

In the field with Lisa Myers, February 11 • 9 AM – 1 PM

With both salt water and fresh water habitats, every winter the San Francisco Bay Area becomes a magnet for many different species of ducks. Ducks are also a lot of fun to identify and are a great way for the beginning birder to learn the skill of identification. Male ducks have striking field marks which make their ID much easier than many other types of birds. We will also study the females as they are often hanging out with the males. This workshop will take place in the field. Walking will be required on flat trails as we look for waterfowl. You'll need optics, snacks, liquids and proper layering for cold and possibly wet weather. Rain does NOT cancel, like water off a ducks back! **Fee: \$50**



Northern Shovelers
– Tony Woo

Bird ID Workshop

Open to all levels • Tuesday, March 14 • 6:00 – 7:00 PM (sunset is at 7:17 PM)

These free workshops help customers learn how to identify four different species of birds found in the Bay Area per season. This workshop will take place at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher outside in our back parking lot from 6:00–7:00 PM (sunset is at 7:17 PM). We'll go over several different species of hummingbirds that will be returning to the Bay Area this spring including Costa's, Calliope, Black-chinned and Allen's. We ask that you bring your own folding chair and field guide with you. Call the store to save your spot. 408-358-9453. **Free**

Birding Popularity is Soaring

Birdwatching has found many new fans over the last few years. These new birders walk into the Los Gatos Birdwatcher and share their photos, stories and excitement for the birds they are noticing for the first time. We wanted to make sure you knew about some of our most local organizations dedicated to helping birds and helping you learn about birds through bird walks, classes and zoom presentations.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon / SCVAS.org

Promoting the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and other wildlife by engaging people of all ages in birding, education, and conservation.

Sequoia Audubon Society / sequoia-audubon.org

Protecting native birds, other wildlife and their ecosystems in San Mateo County by engaging people of all ages in conservation, education, advocacy and enjoyment.

Ohlone Audubon Society / ohloneaudubon.org

Providing conservation and environmental advocacy towards the protection and persistence of valuable habitat for birds and other native species throughout southern and eastern Alameda County.

Golden Gate Audubon Society / goldengateaudubon.org

Engaging people to experience the wonder of birds and to translate that wonder into actions which protect native bird populations and their habitats.

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society / mtdiabloaudubon.org

Committed to the sustainable balance of our community's people, birds, other wildlife, and habitat through conservation, education, and advocacy.

California Audubon / ca.audubon.org

The birds Audubon pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. By honoring and celebrating the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Audubon will bring new creativity, effectiveness, and leadership to our work throughout the hemisphere.

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory / SFBBO.org

To conserve birds and their habitats through science and outreach and by engaging hundreds of volunteers each year in community science projects and offering opportunities for the public to enjoy birds and learn about conservation.

LOS GATOS BIRDWATCHER

We were inspired by our customer and asked her to share with you how birds are helping bring joy to the children living at CHoNC

Dear Los Gatos Birdwatcher Staff

By CHoNC volunteer Monica Song

Someone once said, *"As long as there are flowers and children and birds in the world, have no fears, everything will be fine."*



We want to thank Lisa and her staff at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher for their assistance and generosity in helping us acquire several bird bird feeders and seed to be used on the windows at the Children's Recovery Center of Northern California, which has two locations in our area. The children being cared for by the wonderful staff at CHoNC have severe disabilities, and many are also medically fragile. For some of the children, CHoNC is their permanent home, and the nurturing staff is their family. This past summer my children and I began serving as volunteers during music therapy and activity time at the Bascom Avenue facility.

One day while volunteering, we noticed the big windows in the hospital rooms and thought it would be great to have birds stopping by for the children to enjoy from their rooms. Upon suggesting this to their

Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, we learned that she had hoped to do something like that for some time, but lacked the resources and staff to bring it to fruition. We were happy to help make this a reality for the children at CHoNC!

I stopped into the Los Gatos Birdwatcher one afternoon to ask about options for bird feeders, and Kathleen was beyond helpful in sharing information so we could make the best choice. She even donated the first "Window Cafe," a bird feeder that attaches to the window by powerful suction cups. Owner Lisa was happy to grant a generous discount for the bird seed and the rest of the bird feeders. Charitable donors in the community also contributed towards the purchase of seed and thirteen more feeders.



The Window Cafe feeder was a fantastic suggestion. We were able to place feeders on the outside of several windows allowing optimal viewing by the children inside.

We are so pleased with the bird feeders which are made in the USA and will be replaced by the company if they are damaged for any reason. Thanks again! We know the children at CHoNC will be delighted for years to come by their winged visitors!

You can read more about CHoNC here: www.chonc.org/

Services Available –An Update to Feeder Cleaning

For decades the Los Gatos Birdwatcher has provided the service to clean your bird feeders with the suggested minimum donation of \$5.00 per feeder. And if your feeder is in really bad condition we suggest you donate a little more. Donations go to one of several Bay Area charities we believe in. Customers select to which non-profit they prefer and usually make their donation when they pick-up their feeders. Collection boxes with information about each non-profit are located inside the store.

Starting with 2023 we are changing how we are providing this service. Going forward we will only be able to take in and clean feeders that are from reputable manufactures and/or manufactures with whom we are a retailer. We are making this change because too often customers bring us inexpensive bird feeders they have purchased from one of the big box stores. These feeders are really not intended to last long and are often made of inferior parts, parts we do not have available in the store. The manufacturers of such feeders have little concern about one's ability, or inability to take them apart to clean.

As a result they are difficult to take apart, clean, and put back together and are too time consuming for this free service. In addition, if these feeders break in the process of putting them back together we have no way to get replacement parts. We hope customers will re-consider the purchase of these inexpensive, hard to maintain feeders.

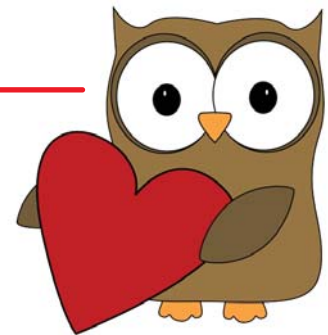
The next time you want to get your feeder cleaned, please bring it in and we will take a look at it. If we are not able to clean it we will show you why we recommend your investing in a new feeder. We will even give you \$5.00 off on one of the feeders we are proud to sell in our store. A feeder that is supported by the manufacturer, is easier to take apart and clean and will last for many seasons. The brands we stand behind include Brome, Aspects and Droll Yankee.

We raise thousands of dollars annually with our feeder cleaning service while also maintaining a healthy feeding station for your birds.



Valentine's Day is February 14

Remember this Valentines Day that the Los Gatos Birdwatcher is the one stop place to shop! When you pop in to get your bird seed we encourage you to also pick up that special something for your Valentine's. We have all kinds of great gifts for the garden in addition to jewelry, scarves and much more. And we'll even gift wrap it for you.



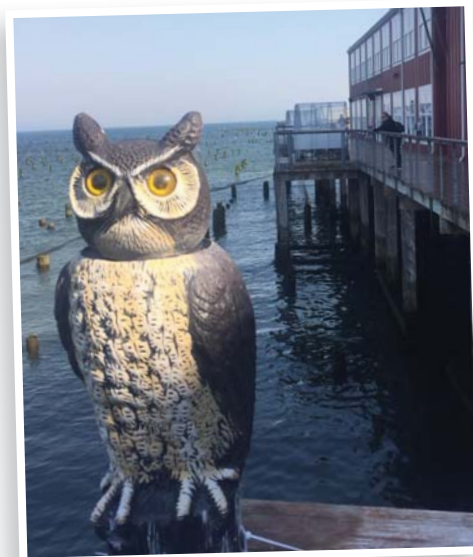
We'd be happy to help

Fake Owls – Do they Work?

Customers often come into the store asking if we sell plastic owls. Their hope is to put the plastic bird on the roof of their house, or on a fence to try and scare away a problem bird. Depending upon where you live, the problem birds could include crows, gulls or pigeons.

Sadly, the birds you are trying to scare off with your plastic predator soon realize that the bird is not real. At first it might get their attention, "What the heck is that?!" But the birds in any area are aware of what goes on in their neighborhood and after awhile will realize that the plastic owl is not a threat.

Some plastic owls have moveable parts that blow in the wind. These may scare off some smaller birds for awhile or in the moment, but again, they pose no real threat and the birds eventually learn that. For these reasons we do not sell plastic predators at the store.



Plastic Owl



LOS GATOS
Birdwatcher

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

Find us on Facebook
and Instagram



Dates to Remember

January 16 – Martin Luther King Day
February 14 – Valentine's Day
February 20 – President's Day
March 12 – Daylight Savings Time
March 17 – St. Patrick's Day
March 20 – 1st Day of Spring



Loyal Customer Discount

Mention this coupon and take...

15% off one item

Coupon Expires March 31, 2023

#WINTER2023

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

Store Hours

Please visit: www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com

