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## A Year Like No Other

By Lisa Myers



This past March marked one year since the pandemic was officially announced to the world. Fear took us all by storm as the deadly Covid-19 virus was verifiably here. Incredibly humbling, how does one do business in the midst of a pandemic? Doing business in new ways has impacted business owners and customers across the globe. Many businesses were forced to close. Sadly, some will never re-open. Owning a nature store had always been my goal and partnering with Freddy & John Howell allowed me to make that happen. With a staff who all have an appreciation for birds, and experience in retail we

have been teaching folks about nature and doing what we could to help the birds. It is our mission. Then in March 2020 I learned that because we sell seed, amazingly, my store would be allowed to remain open. This was good news for our customers, the store, and the birds; however, selling seed now became a health issue as we had to insure we were protecting customers and staff. With lots of hard work and care we successfully survived this past year. In fact, feeding birds has become a new hobby for many sheltering at home. With maximum store capacity regulated by the state, we have met many new people one customer at a time.

An awareness for nature has erupted, a positive consequence of sheltering at home. We are a valued and appreciated resource for all who enjoy birds. As an essential business my staff have been working with the public six days a week and with gratitude I add that no one contracted Covid. Like many of you, staff members are just now getting vaccinated. Customers recently vaccinated are walking in the front door for the first time in a year. They inhale and take in the ever-present smell of the bird seed and say how surreal it is to be out of their house. With big smiles they announce that we are one of the first stores they wanted to visit. We feel honored! They are excited to be back and we are happy to see everyone. We are grateful to have survived a year in business like no other, and we thank you all for being part of our success.

*Peace sign "door decor" available at the store*

## If You Find A Baby Bird

If you find what you think is an orphaned baby bird on the ground, we encourage you to leave it alone and watch from a distance to see if its parents come down to feed it. Several different species of birds actually leave the nest a few days before they can fly. They hide in the bushes while their parents come down to feed and care for them. However, if you have determined your baby bird is in danger and is too young to fend for itself, it is OK to pick up the bird, place it in a box and then call a rescue organization for assistance. **You can refer to our home page for rescue organizations.**



*Bewick's Wren parent feeding a spider to its chick – Tom Grey*

# Spring Coupon

**Mention this coupon and 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 June 30, 2021      #SPRING2021

## Left Bend Winery

### Inviting birds to the vineyard

This winter Richard Hanke came into the store in need of 10 bluebird boxes, an unusual request, as not many people have room for 10 boxes. So we asked where they were all going? He introduced himself as co-owner of Left Bend Winery. Established in 2010, they have a Los Gatos tasting room located at 346 N Santa Cruz Ave. To make their wine, Left Bend purchases grapes from vineyards in the local mountains and sells their wine out of their Los Gatos tasting room. Most recently they planted a five acre vineyard above Watsonville

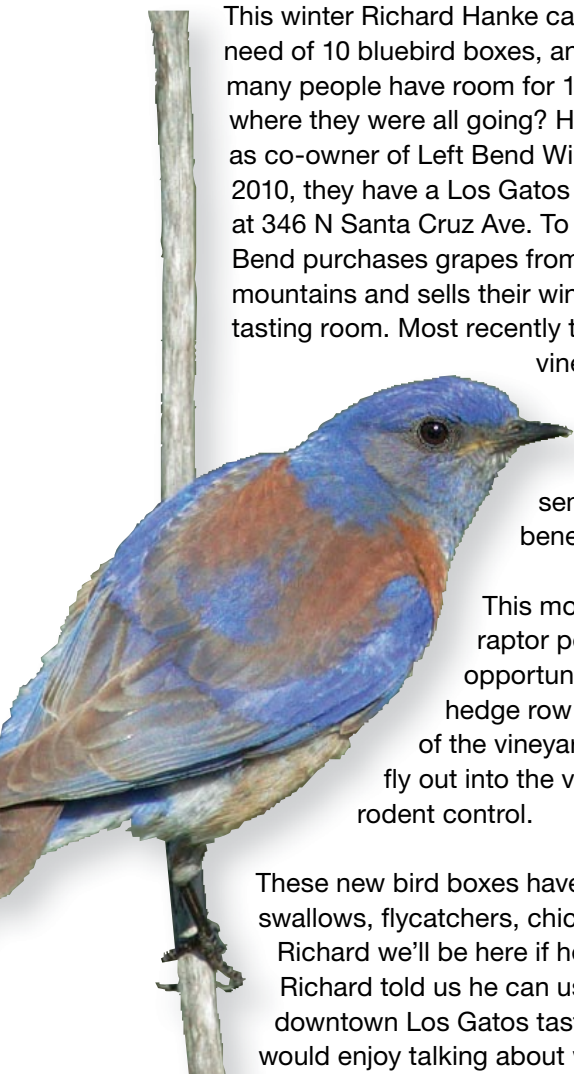


One of 10 nest boxes placed around the vineyard

in the Santa Cruz Mountains. This is an exciting project for the winery and better yet, Richard is farming this new vineyard organically. He has been doing research on how best to protect his grapes from pests. One seminar conducted by his local wine growers association emphasized the benefits of enlisting native birds in pest control.

This motivated Richard to install 10 bluebird boxes, 2 barn owl boxes plus several raptor perches. He has known about the store for years and this was the perfect opportunity to elicit our help. He has also kept a strip of native habitat to act as a hedge row through the middle of his vineyard. Keeping this strip of habitat in the middle of the vineyard gives native birds a place to live, raise young and thrive. They in turn will fly out into the vineyard and snatch the unwanted insects. The owls and hawks will work on rodent control.

These new bird boxes have the potential to attract Western Bluebirds, various swallows, flycatchers, chickadees, titmice, and even a woodpecker. We told Richard we'll be here if he needs more help. We look forward to his updates! Richard told us he can usually be found pouring wine on weekends in their downtown Los Gatos tasting room. He welcomes everyone to stop in, and would enjoy talking about wine, birds and everything they are doing in their vineyard. [www.leftbend.com](http://www.leftbend.com)



Western Bluebird male – Tom Grey



HAPPY  
*Mother's*  
DAY

*Are You  
Ready?*

*Happy  
Father's  
Day!*

**Mother's Day is May 9,**  
followed by **Father's Day on June 20.**

We have all kinds of unique and thoughtful gift items for both Mother's & Father's Day, from jewelry to field guides, binoculars and garden art. We are here to help.

## Celebrating Earth Day with a Photo Contest

Every Spring we take time to celebrate Earth Day. The first Earth Day took place on April 22 over 50 years ago when twenty million Americans protested across our nation in a unified response to the crisis the environment was facing. That protest is credited with launching the modern environmental movement. The Los Gatos Birdwatcher is unique in that we get to celebrate our Earth everyday as we help to educate our community to live harmoniously with nature. The Earth Day theme for 2021 is "Restore Our Earth". While we have not been allowed to gather in groups, our Los Gatos Birdwatcher community has been very active enjoying the outdoors, whether on a local trail or in their own backyard. Customers have had the opportunity to reflect on how to make the Earth healthier for ourselves and every living creature. We thought this the ideal time to invite our Los Gatos Birdwatcher community to share their enthusiasm for nature via a photo contest!

In addition to the top three winners, we will select another 7 runner-ups who will each receive a Los Gatos Birdwatcher \$50 gift card. All 12 images will be included in our first Los Gatos Birdwatcher calendar planned for 2022. Winners will be selected by the staff and will be chosen in time for publication in our Summer newsletter.

**Winners will receive a Los Gatos Birdwatcher gift card to be used in the store**



**1st place \$500  
2nd place \$250  
3rd place \$100**

### How To Enter:

- You must be a part of our Los Gatos Birdwatching community and already entered into our store's database
- You must be an amateur photographer, meaning you do not make a living selling photographs
- Photos can be taken with your cell phone or camera
- Participants can enter up to three photos

Email your photos to:

**Thebirdstore@losgatosbirdwatcher.com**  
before **May 30, 2021**.



**Sandra Brown** *Cooper's Hawk hunting in a San Jose yard*



**Nancy Turek** *Red-breasted Sapsucker wintering at Vasona*



**Tony Woo** *Northern Mockingbirds dining from an oriole feeder*



**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 plan to do two Saturday bird walks a month. Because we cannot gather in large groups we need to restrict the number of participants to 12. 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 8:30 AM on location and end by 10:00 am.

- April 10** Guadalupe Oak Grove Park, San Jose
- April 24** Belgatos Park, Los Gatos
- May 8** McClellan Ranch, Cupertino  
- World Migratory Bird Day
- May 22** Martial Cottle Park, San Jose
- June 5** Coyote Creek Parkway, San Jose
- June 19** Vasona County Park, Los Gatos

## Bird ID Workshops

– Open to all levels

These free workshops help customers learn how to identify four different species of birds found in the Bay Area per season. Workshops will take place at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher outside in our back parking lot from 5:00– 6:00 PM.



*Lazuli Bunting from Lone Pine - Birds of Northern California*

We'll go over each species and review behaviors, food and habitat preferences plus species vocalizations. We ask that you bring your own folding chair and field guide with you. Class is limited to 12 people. Call the store to save your spot. **408-358-9453**.

### April 28 Workshop

- Cooper's Hawk, Red-Shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk

### May 26 Workshop

- Bewick's Wren, House Wren, Pacific Wren, Rock Wren

### June 23 workshop

- California Scrub Jay, Lazuli Bunting, Western Bluebird, Steller's Jay

## Fundraising for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS)



We are fortunate to have an Audubon Society established right here in the Bay Area. In partnership with SCVAS, the Los Gatos Birdwatcher is accepting cash donations toward their 2021 annual spring Birdathon. The next time you come into the store we invite you to contribute to our goal to “fill the bird house”. Donations will be accepted through May 9.

The Los Gatos Birdwatcher will match \$1 for \$1 all monies donated by you, our bird loving community. And if you want to know how you can get involved in this year's event please visit **SCVAS.org**.

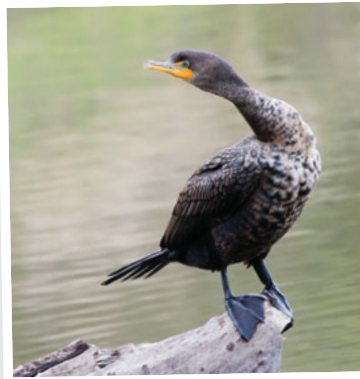


## Fishing Lines and Wildlife

– by Lisa Myers

Recently while on the way to work driving eastbound on Blossom Hill I saw two ladies on the side of the road just past the entrance to Vasona County Park. It's a red zone and not a place to park, then I realized they were standing next to a Double-crested Cormorant. Cormorants are large birds that we find in our local reservoirs. They can be observed diving below the surface of the water feeding on fish. The bird did not belong on the sidewalk and these bystanders were trying to help. I quickly pulled over. As soon as I got out of my car one asked if I had a box, with a lid. And sure enough I did! She said the bird had a stick stuck to its wing causing it to be grounded. We soon realized this unfortunate bird also had a fishing lure sticking out of its lower belly. All of a sudden, the strap on my face mask broke; an unfortunate happenstance in the midst of Covid 19. So, I went into stealth mode.

I had to help this poor bird while not imposing my mask-less face on these two women. We circled the frightened bird and threw a towel over it. Cormorants have long, skinny necks rather snake like, so to help stabilize the bird I grabbed its neck. Unfortunately, it was able to twist its head around just enough to latch onto my hand. The adrenaline was running high and all we could think about was getting this bird safely into the box. It was an awkward struggle for all, and the cormorant would not let go of my hand. I was asked, "Doesn't that hurt?" I quickly answered, "I have a parrot". If you have ever owned a parrot then you know what I meant. They have a hard bite and it hurts. Nonetheless, we got the cormorant into the box and off it went to the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley on Penitencia Creek Road.



Double-crested Cormorant  
– Garrett Lau

The woman who initially stopped to help the bird was already a volunteer for the rescue and she knew exactly where to go, but before she left she asked, "Aren't you the lady from the bird store, I was just there buying patio mix." I replied "yes, it's me". I asked if she could provide us with an update. Moments later I was at the store wrapping my bleeding hand in antiseptic soaked band-aids.

Later that day I received her update. She learned that the cormorant was suffering from an infection caused by the fishing lure embedded in its skin. The rescue folks are familiar with this type of injury. Birds that dive for their food can get caught in fishing lines causing trouble for these birds when they are no longer able to dive for food, or worse yet they get an infection preventing them from flying. Grounded, they shuffle along and get caught in debris which is how this bird was found. Sadly, our bird had so much infection within its body it had to be humanely euthanized.

I nursed my hand wound for several weeks. It swelled, caused pain and tried to get really infected. I even called my doctor to find out if I needed antibiotics.

Why did this innocent bird die? It died because someone left fishing line out in nature. Something preventable. If you fish or know someone that does, please remember whatever you take into nature should come back out with you. If you are fishing please make sure you do whatever you can to retrieve any fishing line and sharp lures you have used.



The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley welcomes your support. WCSV is funded almost entirely by individual donations which go toward the cost of animal food, shelter & medicine. Your support is much appreciated. [www.WCSV.org](http://www.WCSV.org)



**WILDLIFE CENTER OF  
SILICON VALLEY**

*The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley is a 501(c)3 non profit, public-benefit corporation, and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

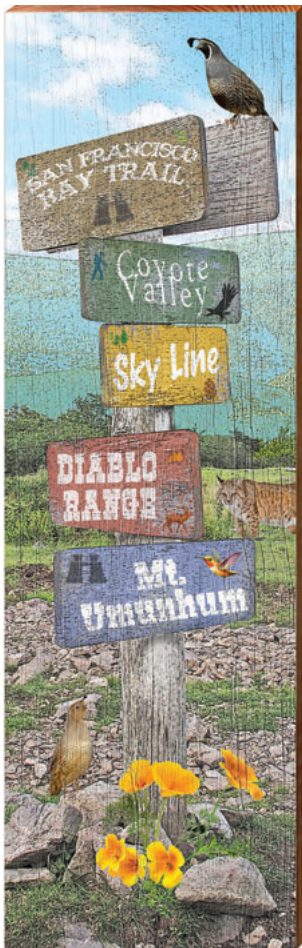
## World Migratory Bird Day

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is traditionally celebrated on the 2nd Saturday of May. Globally it is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. At this time Covid-19 prevents us from holding an event, but we will have this year's 2021 T-shirts available for purchase. This year's T-shirt design was contributed by Artist Sara Wolman. Sara is currently the Visual Information Specialist at the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge where she continues to educate the public about conservation through visual media.

Shirts are being pre-sold for \$19.99 and will be available later this spring. Call, email or come by the store to place your order.



### ***Some of the products we are proud to carry all Made in the USA***



Mill Wood Art is a family business out of North Carolina. They customized a directional sign specifically for the Los Gatos Birdwatcher for all who explore the wild places of Santa Clara County.



We have new ceramic hanging bird baths from Fatty Frog Pots Handmade Pottery. Potter Jennifer O'Keefe, located in Indianapolis, IN, USA, makes pottery for birds, pets and people! A portion of proceeds helps pets in need.



### **“The One That Got Away”**

Cards from Two Dog Studio's are a store favorite. Eileen Sorg is a professional artist based in the Pacific Northwest and is well known for her magical narrative drawings.



Florida Dancing Birds® creates birds and critters that dance on the breeze, and dip up and down and swivel 360 degrees. Each item is handcrafted in the USA. Made of UV-resistant PVC, exterior paint and come with a galvanized stake. We have several styles to choose from.

# The Pine Siskin Irruption & What we Learned

Every few years the lower 48 states can experience a large number of Pine Siskins that arrive for the winter. According to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, “Pine Siskins are an irruptive species, which means that these birds move in irregular patterns in winter”. The winter of 2020-2021 has been one of those years. If you live in the mountains you may get Pine Siskins every year, but those living on the valley floor only see them in these numbers during an irruption. This happens when there is not enough food in the northern part of our continent to support the Pine Siskin population so they go looking for a meal. When they show up they are often tenacious and hungry and can quickly empty a feeder. Many customers had never seen a Pine Siskin so we had illustrations at each register. Unfortunately when Pine Siskins show up in unprecedented numbers they also bring with them Salmonella: a bacteria that can be passed through saliva and fecal matter. When birds come together to eat from our bird feeders they get close enough to spread the bacteria. We needed everyone to wash their feeders and bird baths everyday, but for most taking down everything was the best solution. Customers are slowly putting out their feeders again and keeping an eye out for the species. With Spring the Pine Siskins will migrate away to their breeding grounds and we will continue to provide updates.



Sick Pine Siskin – *Nancy Turek*

## WORD SEARCH

– Words having to do with the inside & outside of eggs

created by Lisa Myers

- |          |        |          |
|----------|--------|----------|
| CHALAZA  | BROKEN | CRACKED  |
| SPOTTED  | DARK   | BIG      |
| CLUTCH   | TINY   | ALBUMEN  |
| HIDDEN   | BLUE   | MEMBRANE |
| GREEN    | WHITE  | YELLOW   |
| SHELL    | TAN    | GRAY     |
| SPECKLED | YOLK   |          |

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

## 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 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](mailto:info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com), or drop by the store and show your photo to our staff.

# Cats and Birds: Creating a Safe Backyard Bird Habitat

The Los Gatos Birdwatching has several “tip sheets” available to our nature loving community. They range in topics which include: setting up your feeders, how to select and install a bird box, learning about binoculars, specifics about bats, hummingbirds and orioles and what to do about squirrels. We are excited to announce our latest “Tip Sheet” on how to deal with unwanted cats that show up in your yard. Whether the cat belongs to your neighbor, or a feral cat, they are uninvited visitors.

When they arrive in your yard they cause deadly trouble for the birds coming to your backyard feeding stations. The neighbor’s un-leashed dog would not be allowed in your yard, but for some reason cats have been given a free pass. An introduced predator brought here by humans, our native wildlife is being decimated. This new tip sheet offers ideas on how you can protect your birds from cats, and options if you have a pet cat that you allow outside. Preventing cats, the opportunity to kill birds is far reaching and a fantastic way that you can help nature and even save a species.

**LOS GATOS Birdwatcher** Tip Sheet  
THE STORE FOR NATURE LOVERS

## Cats and Birds: Creating A Safe Backyard Bird Habitat

**HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS**  
Besides bringing joy to birdwatchers, birds pollinate plants, spread seeds, and control insects. As we welcome them into our yards and living spaces with bird feeders, bird houses, and bird baths we must proceed with caution to protect our feathered guests from outdoor free-roaming cats in the neighborhood.

**OUTDOOR CATS & BIRDS: A BAD COMBO**  
Recognized as a threat to global biodiversity, outdoor domestic cats contribute to the extinction of many wild species of birds, mammals, and reptiles. In the U.S. alone, outdoor cats kill 1.4 billion birds every year which may seem unbelievable but it represents the combined impact of tens of millions of outdoor cats. — American Bird Conservancy

**TRAP, NEUTER, RELEASE PROGRAM**  
TNM is a program by which feral cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, and then released back into the environment where they were found. Rather than immediately reducing numbers through removal, TNM practitioners hope to slowly reduce populations over time. It's a hard life for these non-neutered cats. Unfortunately, studies have shown that these feral cat populations can persist or increase instead of slowly declining, continuing to risk wildlife and healthy ecosystems. — American Bird Conservancy

**INDOOR CATS LIVE LONGER**  
A good way to help wild animals and nature is to keep cats indoors. Studies show that indoor cats live much longer.

*\* Any avian rehabilitator can tell you that when catching a bird, house cats almost always bite down hard on the right wing where it joins the bird's body, crushing the shoulder joint so that their prey is instantly and permanently disabled. Birds die by the hundreds of millions and more than a billion small mammals die every year at the claws of some of our 90 million pet cats (in the U.S.), sorry supplements to their bowls of dry cat chow, an antidote for the boredom of house pets left to roam outdoors.\* — Jane Zickelboon, The Bluebird Effect: Uncommon Birds with Common Birds*



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

- **April 4**  
– Easter
- **April 22**  
– Earth Day
- **May 8**  
– World Migratory Bird Day
- **May 9**  
– Mother's Day
- **May 31**  
– Memorial Day (closed)
- **June 14**  
– Flag Day
- **June 20**  
– Father's Day

The Los Gatos Birdwatcher will continue to remain closed on Sundays.

**LOS GATOS Birdwatcher**

## Loyal Customer Discount

Mention this coupon and take...

# 15% off one item

Coupon Expires June 30, 2021

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

#JUNE2021

## Store Hours

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

**Kings Court Center**  
BLOSSOM HILL RD