

# Los Gatos Birdwatcher



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## Lisa Myers - Who's Coming & Going

**Class: Thursday, March 28, 6:30 - 8:00pm**

**Field Trip: Saturday, March 30, 8:00 - 10:00am**

**Fee: \$20/per person**

The spring migration has started! How can you get your feeders and garden ready? This workshop will review the different species that will soon depart and get you ready for the species that are about to return. We'll review how you can identify the returning species when they show up in your backyard – orioles, swallows, hummingbirds, grosbeaks, and more.

*March Photo Presentation on "India" by Judy Bingman has been moved to May 16.*



## Photo Presentation by Debbie and Steve Thompson "Mysterious Marsupials of Australia"

**Thursday, April 18 from 6:30 - 7:30pm**

We will travel down under with Steve and Debbie Thompson who will present some photos followed by a video taken in Australia during a month-long trip with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris. This fast-paced, short video will show bits from Eastern Australia – Kakadu National Park, Uluru, Atherton Tablelands, Great Barrier Reef, and Tasmania. Debbie will also show some photos of the interesting marsupials found only in Australia. *No Charge, but please call to reserve your space. Call 408/358-9453.*



## Lisa Myers - Bird Song Workshop

**Class: Thursday, April 25, 6:30 - 8:00pm**

**Field Trip: Saturday, April 27, 8:00 - 10:00am**

**Fee: \$20/per person**

This workshop will focus on how to become a better birder by use of bird song. Birds sing for many reasons from attracting a mate, to declaring territory, to warning against danger. Chicks recognize the sound of their mother's voice before they emerge from the egg. We can use bird vocalizations to help us find a species in the field and identify it.



### Share Your Photos!

Lisa Myers, who teaches the classes listed above and leads our field trips also creates and maintains the **Los Gatos Birdwatcher** Facebook page. She is always looking for photographs to use in her posts. If you are interested in having your photos featured, let us know at [info@logatosbirdwatcher.com](mailto:info@logatosbirdwatcher.com).

## Opticron Binoculars Join the Optics Case

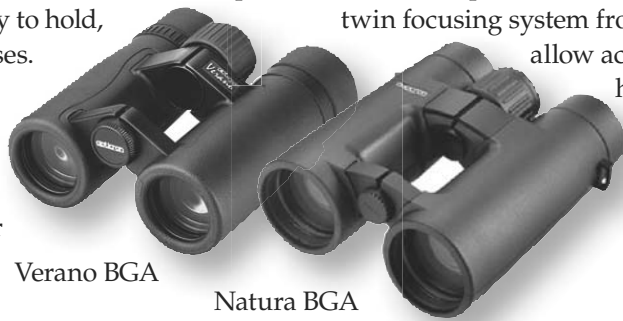
Birders in the UK have been enjoying Opticron products since 1970. In their "About Us" page on their website they state that "Quality and value are two factors critical to the success of our business. Both have been developed and are maintained in partnership with a small number of Japan's elite optical manufactures." All of our upper end models are made in Japan and we are very pleased to add the Verano BGA HD in 8x42 and 10x42, and the brand new Natura BGA in 8x42 and 10x 42. Both models are nitrogen purged, waterproof to 10 feet, have an open bridge body which makes it easy to hold, and have fully multi-coated lenses.

Another addition to the optics case is a travel scope, GS 52 GA ED, which was introduced by the manufacturer

"in response to increasing demand for quality travel scopes and sets new standards for light transmission, resolution, and color contrast in this segment offering today's birder a practical and versatile alternative to larger heavier telescopes in situations where size and weight are an issue." The eyepiece offers 12-36 power and the 52mm objective lens offers ED glass (extra low dispersion which sends more light to your eye). At under 8 inches in length, the GS 52 GA ED is designated a travel scope but features the centrally positioned twin focusing system from the full-size models to

allow accurate focusing adjustment at higher magnification settings.

For backyard birding and photography, close focus has been set at just 8 feet.



## Julie Soulé Has Migrated to Wild Bird Haven in Monterey

Before we opened the doors of the store 17 plus years ago, we put up a sign that asked people to fill out a newsletter request form and stick it in the mail slot next to the door. Over two hundred soon-to-be customers became "mail slots" in our data base. One of those "mail slots" was Julie Soulé. She became a customer and her daughters, Emily and Catherine, attended our classes. In July of 1998, Julie asked if she could work for us. Through the years we have learned together, and from each other. She has taken over ordering many of our product lines, has helped with the dreaded "defectives", and miraculously figured out who needs to be at the store when. Julie also edited our newsletter and kept my grammar in line.

During those years, she and her husband, Peter have become dear friends and their dog, Lucy, has been one of our part-time greeters. Last summer they sold their Los Gatos house and bought a charming 1920's spanish bungalow in Pacific Grove. This meant that Peter and Julie commuted to Morgan Hill for Peter to go to work and then Julie commuted up to us. That's a lot of driving! The long-term goal was that she would transfer to our "sister" store at the Del Monte Shopping Center owned by friend and fellow franchise refugee, Jill Himonas. Julie transitioned her



responsibilities to other employees over the next six months, so when the call came that Monterey was ready for the transfer, Julie was ready to go.

We miss her and we also know that she will be helping Jill in many ways.

We will still get

to see her when we do inventory transfers or when Lucy comes up to see the vet or Julie visits her parents who are still in San Jose. If ever you are down in Monterey and want to see Jill's lovely store, please say Hi! to Julie for us. The store is next to Whole Foods Market and Julie works Monday through Thursday.

## Birders, Please Consider Buying an Annual Duck Stamp

It was probably five years into owning the store that I heard about duck stamps. Duck stamps are required purchases for hunters. I'm not a hunter so I was not required to have one. Over the years I came to understand their importance for habitat conservation but could never find one at the post office and never got off my duff to pursue its purchase.



Recently, my good friend Gail Blesi, brought in an article she had seen in the January 21, 2013 issue of the San Francisco Chronicle. It was titled "Birds Need to Help Back Wetlands, Too" by Tom Stienstra, their outdoors writer. In the article, the author states "Roughly 50 million people enjoy birding in America, but according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, only 2 million of them buy the \$15 federal duck stamp. The stamp pays for national wildlife refuges, which provide habitat not only for ducks, but also for songbirds, raptors, and hundreds of species of wildlife." The money from the stamp and other fees paid by hunters goes towards habitat conservation; however, Mr. Stienstra writes, "as older duck hunters quit the sport, younger hunters are not replacing them at the same rate." He goes on to quote statistics from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service that states "Though duck numbers are high on the flyways, half of all American bird species are in decline. It's directly attributable to a loss of places for birds to live. One third of America's threatened species make their homes in wetlands, and ninety-eight cents of every dollar from the sale of federal duck stamps goes to the purchase of wetlands." For those of us who are non-hunters, it is important to understand that all these protected wetlands are not necessarily hunting areas. Mr. Stienstra comments that, "the ducks are smarter these days. They sleep most of the day in the no-hunt zones. They feed at night in the rice fields. Hunters can sit in their blinds for hours and not see a duck."

Then he gave me the push I needed. "You can buy a federal duck stamp for \$15 at [www.duckstamp.com](http://www.duckstamp.com) (plus \$5.95 service fee) or at the post office." And he gave me another push. "If merely 10 percent of bird lovers purchased the duck stamp, it would raise nearly \$75 million to purchase wetland habitat." So husband John got on line and I now have my 2012-2013 duck stamp in my field guide, and in July 2013 I will purchase next year's stamp. Won't you join me in preserving such important habitat?

## Spring is Almost Here and Our Summer Visitors are on Their Way

Once a quarter, I teach a Backyard Birding Class for Santa Clara Adult Education. It consists of a Wednesday evening class and a field trip the following Wednesday morning at Ulistac Natural Area in Santa Clara. Our last trip was on January 23rd and we saw a first year male Bullock's oriole. Usually we don't get reports of these stunning birds until March when they start visiting feeders in our customers yards. This may be an "early bird" or the rest of group may be on their way. Keep your eyes peeled for a very large, yellowish bird on your hummingbird feeder.

The next changing of the guard will be the departure of the crowned sparrows and our winter warblers. So, say good-bye to those thrillingly-yellow Townsend's warblers at your suet feeders until next year. But don't despair, the black-headed grosbeaks are on their way. These incredibly gorgeous orange, yellow, black, and white birds with the huge "gros", French for big, beaks are on their way from Central America They will make brief stops in the valley before moving up to the mountains to nest in our oak woodlands. In July they will start to go back into the valley

on their way south again. Start listening for what I call a "jazzy robin" or the "Charlie Parker" bird because of its jazzy song. When they appear in your yard, fill your feeder with black-oil sunflower seed and they will love you for it. It won't keep them around any longer because the migratory nesting instinct is very strong, but it will give them coordinates for the return trip of an excellent restaurant.



# It's Called "Superflight"

Last issue I wrote about the pine siskins that are here in an "irruptive" year. That was just the tip of the iceberg. In the winter 2013 issue of *Living Bird*, the magazine of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, there is a two-page article about the phenomenon called "Superflight". The first indications came in August when the red-breasted nuthatches started appearing in the northern states pouring out of Canada all the way to central Florida. "Then the red crossbills went from the Pacific Northwest to the East. A few weeks later, a tide of pine siskins began rolling down out of the north."

Matt Young, an audio engineer and finch expert at the Cornell Lab's Macaulay Library states that by October 2012 it was, "already the largest red crossbill movement ever recorded at Minnesota's Hawk Ridge. It's a superflight like we haven't seen since 1997-1998." According to the article, "it's only once a decade or so that climatological patterns and bird numbers combine for a superflight that sends six, seven, or eight northern species deep into the central and southern United States."

Project Feeder Watch, Cornell's citizen science program, played a large part in tracking our pine siskins. It was stated, "the eBird maps lit up like holly bushes, the red map pins

indicating thousands of sightings in the previous 30 days."

Trees play more of a role than I ever imagined. The Cornell article continues, "Winter finches come south not so much out of choice but because the trees force them to. From a seed's point of view, finches are deadly – every bit as predatory as a Sharp-shinned Hawk is to a finch. So the trees fight back by controlling the food supply. They save up to produce massive amounts of seeds in one year and very few the next. In years with lots of seeds, finches have more than they can eat, so some [seeds] survive to germinate; in years without seeds, they must take to the skies to find better pickings."

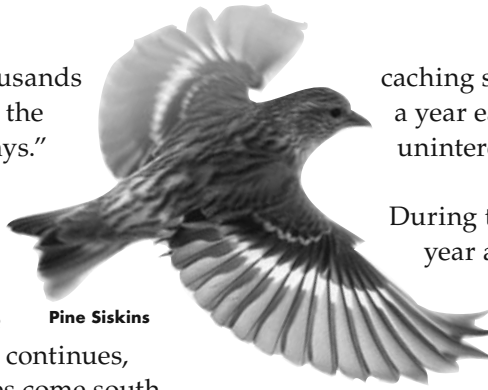
Another research program that is part of Project Feederwatch tracks visits to "smart" feeders by tagged chickadees. Since 2010 they have banded 200 birds and recorded some 3 million feeder visits. They discovered the true scale of seed caching in their data. This data showed some interesting facts. "Starting in August 2010, the tagged birds quadrupled their visits to feeders. Individual chickadees and titmice were taking away up to 200 sunflower seeds per day – far more than they could eat. They spent August through October caching sunflower seeds for the upcoming winter. The next year shows how seamlessly birds can adjust to changing conditions. There were berries on everything, seeds on everything, and it was just an amazing summer. The same birds that had been busy

caching sunflower seeds a year earlier were now uninterested."

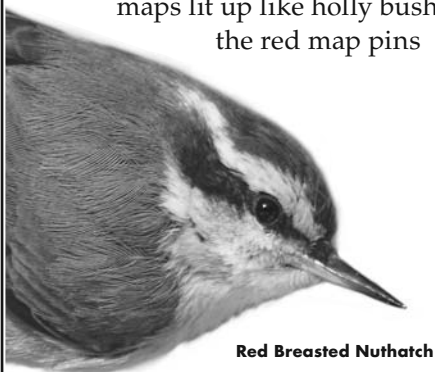
During the last Superflight year about 10 years ago here, we started cleaning feeders after the Fish and Wildlife

Department told everyone to "take down their feeders" when the pine siskins started dying of salmonella. Our main problem about that edict was what about the healthy, non-susceptible birds? How were they going to survive their time here and the trip north? Cornell's article gives us vindication. "Although local birds can fall back on backyard feeders, Superflight species don't have that option. They live in the boreal forests of northern North America, where there are few people and very few feeders. Interestingly, on their southward irruptions those birds also seem to ignore feeders at first, curtailing their movements only when they find natural food. With the dearth of such foods this winter, birds will stay on the move and visit feeders as they search for natural foods."

Our seed sales have also been a huge indicator as to where the pine siskins are. During the winter, our seed delivery was 7,000 to 8,000 pounds of seed a week. In late January it hit 9,000 pounds and the first two weeks of February have each been over 11,000 pounds. In the past two weeks we have run out of several types of seed even though we have ordered a ton more seed! Please bear with us. If we do run out we would be happy to deliver to you the following Tuesday.



Pine Siskins



Red Breasted Nuthatch



LOOK WHAT  
FREDDY FOUND!

EARLY BIRD IDEAS  
FOR MOTHERS DAY!



**New from Nepal**  
- T-shirts and bags



**Feeder and Birdhouse kits back in stock**  
- Birthday Parties and Scout Projects are available again!



**New Hatley nightshirt designs**



*"Advice from a..."*  
**Insulated Acrylic Cups**



**Get ready for Gardening**  
- Tula Hats are back in stock.



**Ceramic Travel Mugs**



**Colorful Blue Q Bags and Totes**

# 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.

Reservation Required

### Duck Expedition

For ages 3 to 9

Fee: \$8/child

Thursday, March 14th, 4:00 - 5:00pm

This fun trip has been rescheduled from January. Bundle up and join us on the trails around Oka Ponds in search of ducks. Come see their beautiful feather colors and designs. Discover how they dive, dabble, and travel far. Play duck bingo and create your own floating duck to take home.

#### Oka Ponds directions.

We will meet at the gate at the end of Oka Lane. Take Lark Avenue to Oka Road and follow it under Highway 85 to the end. Turn left on Mozart and take an immediate right on Oka Lane. Go to the end of the road and park along the street.

### LIVE Critter Time

For ages 3 to 9

Fee: \$8/child

Thursday, April 4th. 4:00 - 5:00pm

Spring is here and new life is bursting forth. Come meet some very special LIVE animals guests visiting from Sulphur Creek Nature Center. Visit a toad, dove, and chinchilla as we discover what changes spring brings to the wild critters in your neighborhood. Create your own flying dove to remember them by.



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

#C0413

/ 2013

Pay to the order of *Our Loyal Customer*

**15% Off One Item**

Memo: *Expires 04/30/13*

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

## 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.**



### **Sunnyvale Audubon walks**

First Wednesday of the month  
March 6, April 3, and May 1  
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 Pleasanton**

Saturday, March 16, 8:00am - 4:00pm

The Marilyn Murphy Kane Trail in Pleasanton is a relatively new trail and we have never birded this area before so this will be a new adventure. It is a level open space trail that meanders around the 500 acre Bernal Ranch. While 200 acres of this ranch have been developed, the remaining 300 acres is beautiful open space and home to rolling hills, oak trees, arroyos and view of Pleasanton Ridge. We will be birding from the trail so there will be a fair amount of walking.

**Fee: \$30 plus share of gas.**

### **Let's Go Birding with Lisa Myers to Santa Clara County Foothills**

Saturday, April 20, 8:00am - 4:00pm

The open spaces of the eastern Santa Clara County foothills are home to some wonderful species. These rolling hills offer the open habitat preferred by many species that we don't see down in the valley, and the spring migration will be underway! We'll travel Marsh Felter and Serra Roads in search of golden eagle, rock wren, Lazuli bunting, lark sparrow, blue grosbeak, and more. Time permitting, we'll check out Calaveras Road too to look for the bald eagles that have nested there for years.

**Fee: \$30 plus share of gas.**

# Los Gatos Birdwatcher

PRESORT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SAN JOSE, CA  
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King's Court Center  
792 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos, California 95032  
408/358-9453  
email: [info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com](mailto:info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com)  
website: [www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com](http://www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com)

Return Service Requested



Printed on  
recycled paper

## Part-time Canine Greeter

Follow me to  
the Los Gatos  
Birdwatcher



## Dates to Remember

Closed Easter Sunday 3/31

- 3/10 Daylight Savings Begins – Spring Forward
- 3/17 St. Patrick's Day
- 3/20 Vernal Equinox
- 3/25 Passover Begins
- 4/22 Earth Day
- 4/26 Arbor Day

## Store Hours

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

