

| IN THIS ISSUE | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Spring Time is a Season of Color | 1 |
| Pride, Charm, and Enterprise in Ecuador | 2 |
| Let's Go Birding | 4 |
| Breeding Season Workshop | 5 |
| SCVAS Birdathon / WERC Workshop | 5 |
| Better Birding with the Right Optics by Nikon | 6 |
| If You Find a Baby Bird | 6 |
| WERC Back by Popular Demand | 7 |
| Services from Los Gatos Birdwatcher | 8 |
| Dates to Remember | 8 |

Spring Time is A Season of Color

by Jessica Guenther

Some people are surprised to learn that birds can see color. Birds can actually see a wider range of colors than humans—why else would their plumages come in all colors of the spectrum? However, did you know that these colors are caused by different things?



Male Western Bluebird – **Gina Dias**

Feather color (also known as pigmentation) can show shades of red, yellow, orange, brown, etc. Sometimes feather pigmentation is influenced by what birds eat. For example, flamingos are pink due to their diet of algae and crustaceans. And for some birds like House Finch, if their diet lacks certain pigments, the male may end up orange or yellow instead of its usual red. However, the color blue is different.

Blue is not from pigmentation within the feather, it is actually from light bouncing off the structure of the feather. The color blue we see in a Western Bluebird or Steller's Jay (both common Bay Area species), is from the refraction of sunlight.

If you took one of their feathers and put light behind it, the feather appears dull and brownish.

But when you take that same light and shine it onto the feather, all other colors are

absorbed in a layer of melanin (what produces hair, eye, and skin pigmentation) and it's the color blue that shows. This is due to the 3D structural makeup of molecules within the feathers. And because it is about the refraction of light, birds that are blue in color will appear brighter on sunny days and almost gray on overcast days when there is limited light. Also, different species show different shades of blue.

So unlike other feather colors, the color blue does not exist in birds but rather in how light reflects back to our eyes and how we perceive that color. Ever wonder if the color blue exists in other forms of nature? Yes, this same thing happens when we look at the ocean and sky. And the blue we see in butterflies, berries, and bugs is also due to light refraction.

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, 2023 #SPRING2023



Male House Finch – **Brooke Miller**
(head color variation)

Pride, Charm, and Enterprise in Ecuador

Written by Customer **Shantanu Phukan**

Intro by **Lisa Myers**

I met Santa Cruz resident Shantanu when he came into the Los Gatos Birdwatcher looking for a new pair of binoculars. He was interested in Nikon and said there were not many places where one can look at and buy binoculars. As a Nikon dealer I told him we were happy to help and I set him up with a new pair. Now whenever Shantanu walks into the store he and I share birding stories. Most recently he told us of his fabulous birding tour to Ecuador. He was impressed by the people he met there and what local farmers are doing to help wild birds in South America so I asked him to share with us his experience. Below is his story. – **Lisa**

I had drooled over South American birds for three decades until, finally, last year I took the plunge and flew to Ecuador for three weeks of birding in the Andes. I was expecting to be both overwhelmed and charmed by the sheer number of colorful birds belonging to families unknown in the temperate north. And so I was. But Ecuador offered more. I left equally charmed by working-class Ecuadorians pioneering a new movement to enhance the habitat in their landholdings. Wherever I went in the states of Pichincha or Napo (the two provinces closest to Quito) I kept hearing stories of community conservation spurred by the boom in bird-tourism. What follows are vignettes of orchardists, dairymen and truck drivers in the vanguard of this change in the ethics of land use.

Victor Manobito was a truck driver ferrying crude oil from Amazonian oil-fields, and he augmented his income with dairy farming. To create more pastures he, like his neighbors, had cut down the

forest on the 13 acres he owned at the foot of a forested mountain. That is, until his wife urged him to look into creating a bird feeding station to see if birders could be enticed to visit for a small fee. Thus was born Concierto de las Aves Reserve, centered around a concrete hut that used to be Victor's home before he moved into the town of Rio Quijos. He hustled out to lead us down an unnamed and unpaved road winding through treeless pastures, opened the gates, and led us on a hike up a hill with dense, chest-high native trees that he had replanted.



Rose-Faced Parrots seen at Mashp Reserve eating bananas – **Shantanu Phukan**



Vinicio, me and my birding guide Alex reaching 294 species in Ecuador

“I first went to nurseries to buy saplings to reforest this hill, but that was too expensive,” he explained. *“So I just started collecting seeds in the forest on the mountain behind me. The saplings you see are now three years old.”* And on the edge of the clearing where we had just spotted a Magpie Tanager were tiny plastic pots with pin-pricks of saplings.

Lurking in the new growth was a Cock of the Rock with a lavish red pompadour arching over an orange eye that I peered straight into from about 15 feet away. I had glimpsed these birds before on leks, but always from a distance as they displayed in the gritty half-light of dawn. You would see them crashing and flying for brief seconds as their dawn display wended down with the rising sun. But here Victor had habituated the



Vinicio's wife Anita; both mushroom farmers

This story of pride and opportunity was repeated in farmstead after humble farmstead. Vinicio Pizarro is a mushroom farmer who had the same realization with the 7 steep acres he owns right on the equator. Marcelo Jumbo grows passion-fruit and salak (an Indonesian palm). Both of them have rigged up feeding stations and are replanting parts of the land to attract more birds. Marcelo insisted that I lounge on his hammocks after we had seen our target birds. We may have been ready to leave, but he had not yet plied us with enough fruit from the nearby orchard. He was soon bringing in entire branches of fruit as we lolled in the hammocks.

At Vinicio's reserve you don't just get to see the birds for the \$20 entrance fee—you enjoy a breakfast that you will never have anywhere else in the world—a large bowl of mushroom ceviche with homemade bread. All of this as Flowerpiercers and Tanagers flit around the table.

In place after place I met Ecuadorians protecting and enhancing the land that they own to entice us Norteños eager for a glimpse of a striking tanager, or an unremarkable Spinetail. The reserves are minuscule, too small to benefit species like Harpy Eagles that require large tracts of undisturbed forest; and they lack the connectivity essential for the movement of wildlife, but the word is spreading—and with it, a pride in the immense avian treasure that is Ecuador's heritage. And in me was a dawning consciousness of how much richer the austere game of listing birds becomes when it is enhanced with human stories.

The delight of this trip, indeed what made this trip outstanding, was to bear witness to this growing enterprise that is run with charm, pride and, occasionally, exceptional homemade cooking.

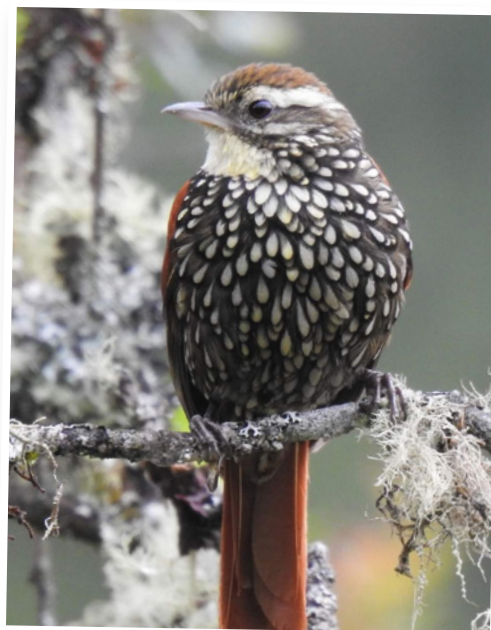


Fruit grower Marcelo also grows Salak Palms, with Shantanu

bird so that it perched languidly, sizing me up with his unearthly pearl of an eye. I asked Victor if he had named it, and when he said no, I ventured that we christen it Victorino (Little Victor). Gales of laughter from both Victor and my guide Alex Toapanta.

But here is what charmed me even more than that confiding bird. As Alex and I prepared to say our goodbyes and head off to lunch, Victor invited himself to come along. *"I won't eat much,"* he said apologetically. I was delighted to have him join us because I sensed his desire to draw out our encounter. Why? I imagine that for him, as for me, the pleasure lay in encountering a man from another culture. I was the novelty for him, much as he for me. When else would I sit down to a meal with an Ecuadorian truck driver turned conservationist? And, it turned out, he wanted to impress me with his new venture.

"I used to make about \$250 per month with milk; with birders I can make about \$700," he proudly explained. And then he added *"I hated truck driving, so this has allowed me to give it up altogether."*



Pearled Treerunner Boca del Pescado – Shantanu Phukan



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.

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.

April 15 – Calero Reservoir

April 22 – Spring Birdathon - Earth Day (pg. 5)

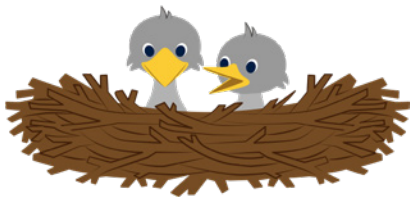
May 13 – World Migratory Bird Day
Coyote Creek Trail

May 20 – SFBBO Workshop (pg. 5)

May 27 – Edenvale Park, San Jose

June 3 – Butterfly Walk

June 17 – TBA depending on reports



Its time to Stop harsh pruning your gardens. Birds are now nesting!

Bird ID Workshops

Open to all levels

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 5:30 – 6:30 PM We'll go over each species and review behaviors, food and habitat preferences plus vocalizations. We ask that you bring your own folding chair and field guide with you. Workshop is limited to 30 people. Call the store to save your spot. **408-358-9453**.



WarblingVireo
– **Tom Grey**

Thursday, April 20 – Cassin's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Plumbeous Vireo, Hutton's Vireo

Tuesday, May 16 – Chestnut-backed and Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatch

Tuesday, June 20 – Wilson's & Yellow Warblers, Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat

Butterfly Walk

June 3 • 10 AM – 1:00 PM

Picchetti Ranch Open Space, Cupertino

It has been several years since we offered a butterfly walk. Please join us as we focus our time out in the field in pursuit of butterflies. Jan Hintermeister and Cathy Brown will co-lead this walk. Both are volunteer docents with the Midpeninsula Open Space District with tremendous experience leading walks and helping people learn about nature. We'll be walking along level, dirt trails, and standing as we look for and study the various species of butterflies we encounter. Lisa will also be there keeping an eye out for the birds. Participants will receive a butterfly ID chart. Please call the store to sign-up. **408-358-9453**.



Checkerspot Butterfly
– **Tony Woo**

Fee \$30.

Breeding Season Workshop for SFBBO

Date: **Sat. May 20 • 12:30 PM**

Location: **Joseph Grant County Park**

Limited to 20 participants: **Fee \$60**

Register at: **www.sfbbo.org/workshops.html**



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
BIRD OBSERVATORY

Are you ready for a workshop that takes you away from your computer screens and gets you outside with the birds? This workshop is scheduled specifically for the breeding season so we can observe local avian species and their springtime behaviors.

Lisa Myers once served on the board of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and is very excited to be able to teach this workshop for this local non-profit. This “three-dimensional workshop” at Joseph Grant County Park will put us in the middle of the action. After the workshop you will better understand the breeding life cycle of various Bay Area bird species and be able to answer the following questions:

- **Why do birds court and how can you spot a courting pair?**
- **How do birds use song during courtship?**
- **What are the different nest engineering strategies between species?**
- **How do birds choose and defend their breeding territories?**
- **What is the difference between precocial and altricial chicks?**
- **How do plumages change between the seasons and how to tell the males from the females?**
- **What threats do breeding birds face in the Bay Area and how can you help?**



Female Gadwall
with ducklings
– *Tony Woo*

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's 2023 Spring Birdathon

Earth Day / Saturday, April 22 • 8:00 – 12:00 PM
The Los Gatos Birdwatcher team fills at 20

Each spring the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society holds their most important fundraiser known as the Spring Birdathon. We are proud to partner with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society throughout the entire year as we spread the word to our bird store community and introduce new birders to SCVAS.org and provide the Cupertino based Nature Shop with high quality bird seed to sell to members. However, this is a time we can show support via their fundraiser. This year SCVAS member and store owner Lisa Myers will lead a new team called the “Los Gatos Birdwatcher”.

We’ll bird several Los Gatos parks in search of as many different species of birds as possible. Birders of all levels are welcome, even if this is your first birdathon. It will be a fun time out in the field! Because this is a fundraiser, to join the team the minimum suggested donation is \$50. And if you cannot join us on Earth Day, we welcome your support. You can do so by visiting the link provided or drop by the store as we’ll have a Spring Birdathon donation box ready for the entire month of April. To register for this team, or donate on line, please visit - **scvas.org/spring-birdathon-teams-2023**

NIKON – Better Birding With The Right Optics with Nikon Specialist Mike Freiberg

Saturday, April 15 • 11 AM – 12:30 PM

Customers often ask how to select a good pair of optics so we designed this special event just for you. Come join Lisa Myers and Nikon's Birding Specialist Mike Freiberg for a fun and friendly review on optics. Optics are one of the primary tools to successfully finding birds in nature and knowing how to use them is important. At times learning how to use your optics is overlooked thus sacrificing the quality of your experience in the field. We know many of you have questions on how to use the binoculars you now have, or you may be thinking about getting a new pair.

Mike has been birding since the age of 5 and has previously worked as a professional bird guide around the world. Lisa met Mike when she was on the Nikon Pro-Staff. Mike will help narrow down the field and have you understanding what optics are best for your style of birding. The event is free but call to reserve your space, **408-358-9453**.



HAPPY
Mother's
DAY

*Are You
Ready?*

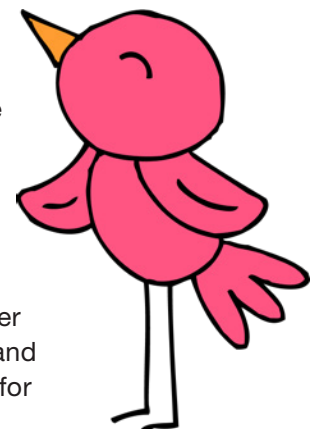
*Happy
Father's
Day!*

Mother's Day is May 14, followed by **Father's Day on June 18**. 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 stones. We encourage you to buy local. It's convenient for you and supports your local neighborhoods. We're here to help, can answer your questions and wrap your gifts!

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 until they can fly. 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.



WERC Back by Popular Demand

Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center WERC
May 13 • 11 AM – 2 PM



We are very excited to have the volunteers from the Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center returning to the Los Gatos Birdwatcher. WERC

is a local nonprofit dedicated to helping sick, injured, and orphaned native wildlife. The WERC volunteers will be here with their non-releasable ambassador birds. The volunteers from WERC will be happy to answer all your questions about their amazing birds. They also go out to schools and visit other organizations to educate the public on how to peacefully coexist with nature.

Please plan to come down to the store and meet the volunteers from WERC. We raise funds for WERC throughout the year through our feeder cleaning service and we encourage you to drop by the store this day and bring some extra cash to drop into the WERC donation bucket. All money raised allows them to continue to do their good work for the animals.



WERC event in front of the store



WERC volunteer with "Terra" the Burrowing Owl

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. Bring your feeder into the store and we'll let you know when it will be ready to pick-up. While we clean feeders for free we do ask that you make 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 higher at full price and get the 11th bag free. Coupons do not apply.

Backyard Bird Consulting Program – We will come out to your home 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.

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, or drop by the store and show your photo to our staff. We invite you to share your photos to our Facebook page and we will provide feedback.

We offer Gift Certificates and complimentary gift wrapping.

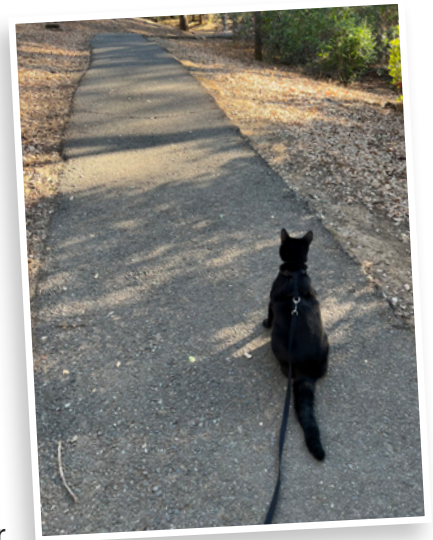
We have a Spring Sale underway... Many items in the store have been marked down as we make room for new deliveries. Hurry in why supplies last.



Happy Cats – Happy Birds

Some people believe that “bird-people” do not like cats, but that is simply not true. Many people who enjoy birds also own cats, however, they keep their cats indoors because they know the stats. According to the American Bird Conservancy, in the U.S. alone, outdoor cats kill 2.4 billion birds every year which represents the combined impact of tens of millions of outdoor cats. And during the Spring breeding season, the loss of a momma bird means the failure of an entire nest full of baby birds. Keeping cats indoors keeps both birds and cats safe from harm.

There are many ways to keep your indoor cats happy and entertained. You can build a screened outdoor “Catio” where your cat can safely spend time outside. You can hang your bird feeders near a window; giving your indoor cat a direct view of the feeders is fun for the cat and safe for the birds. You can also train your cat to walk on a leash. Walking your cat on a leash gives you quality time together while enjoying safe adventures in nature. You can be part of the solution in reducing the threat to birds and nature that free-roaming domestic cats represent.



“Rye” on his leash out at La Rinconada Park



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

- April 9** – Easter (closed Sundays)
- April 22** – Earth Day
- May 13** – WERC event; World Migratory Bird Day
- May 14** – Mother’s Day
- May 29** – Memorial Day (closed)
- June 14** – Flag Day
- June 18** – Father’s Day
- June 21** – First Day of Summer



Loyal Customer Discount

Mention this coupon and take...

15% off one item

Coupon Expires June 30, 2023

#SPRING2023

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

