



Store Location

King's Court Center

792 Blossom Hill Road

Los Gatos, CA 95032

408-358-9453

info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com

www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com

Store Hours Mon-Sat • 10 AM-5 PM | Tues • 10 AM-7 PM | Closed Sundays

Bird Seed: Is There a Difference?

By Lisa Myers

The Los Gatos Birdwatcher is a busy place. People come to us with all kinds of questions about their gardens. They come to learn about birding or ask what to do when they find an injured bird. Some visit to find the perfect gift or to add something special to their garden. And then there are those who come for a relaxing stroll around the store. But the main reason people come to us is for our high quality bird seed.

Customers shyly admit that at times their spouse brought home a less expensive bag of bird seed from a big box store and discovered that their birds would not eat it. Instead, most of it ended up on the ground.

Why? There are a few reasons. One reason has to do with freshness. Our “seed pile” sits in the middle of our store and is hard to miss. Our goal is to sell all our seed down to the pallets every week. Then every Tuesday, Volkman arrives with a new shipment. This allows us to offer fresh seed bagged right here in California’s Central Valley.

The seed you find at big box stores may have sat in a warehouse for months before it was bagged. After that, it could sit at a distribution center, then on a store shelf, for even longer. While it sits, the seed loses its moisture content, thus making it less appealing to your wild birds.



Milo is considered a filler grain

Then there’s the ingredients found in these other brands. We did our own investigation and dissected a bag and found the mix contained a large percentage of a grain called milo. Milo is an inexpensive grain that cattle and pigeons will consume, but the smaller songbirds that come to our feeders tend to refuse. As a result it gets kicked out of the feeder and onto the ground. Milo is defined as a “filler” grain.

Other fillers included tiny bits of cracked corn. While ducks, turkeys, quail, and squirrels might eat corn, most songbirds do not. One brand even contained empty shells and bits of gravel or grit. This all adds to the weight of the bag, but is not eaten.

We are proud to sell Volkman seed. From sunflower to safflower, thistle or millet, every blend we carry is tailored to the birds you want to feed and none of our mixes contain fillers. You get more bang for your buck! And we stand behind our seed. If you are disappointed in a bag you took home, simply bring it back and we’ll work with you on the solution. **Our Volkman Seed Rep Mike will be joining us the morning of Sept. 20 to help us celebrate our 30th Anniversary.** He’d be happy to talk to you about Volkman Seed products.



Bewick's Wren at bird feeder

—Ron Machado

OUR MISSION IS TO EDUCATE, SHARE ADVENTURES, AND HAVE FUN THROUGH EXPERIENCING BIRDS AND NATURE.



Tour Division of the Los Gatos Birdwatcher sponsors weekend bird walks. Dates and locations are listed below and on our website. Unless it is a special workshop, these walks are free and open to all birding levels, but pre-registration is required. Please refer to our website for details per adventure and then call the store to register at **408-358-9453**.

July 12	Alviso for shorebirds
July 26	Kevin Moran Park, Saratoga
Aug. 9	San Francisquito Creek Trail: Geng Road
Aug. 16	Big Sur in search of Condors
Sept. 6	To Be Determined depending on reports
Sept. 20	30th Anniversary Celebration at the store

Big Sur for California Condors

Saturday, August 16 • Fee \$120

Before Covid we would organize an August Let's Go Birding tour to Big Sur in search of the California Condor. We decided it's time to go back! This will be an all day trip and includes two guides, Lisa & Jessica. Transportation is also included as we travel in a 25 passenger bus via D. Harris Bus Transportation. Participants will need to bring their optics, lunch, snacks and liquids. Meet at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher at 8:30 AM. We'll return around 6:00 PM. We will be stopping at the Ventana Wildlife Society's Discovery Center where we will learn about the California Condors recovery back from the brink of extinction. You will have the opportunity to purchase condor themed items here. There will be minimal walking. Cost of this tour includes 2 guides, transportation, and tip to our driver. A percentage of the proceeds of this tour will be matched by the Los Gatos Birdwatcher and will go to the Ventana Wildlife Society for their efforts to save the condors. Please call the store to register at **408-358-9453**.



California Condor with Turkey Vulture –Fred Lim

Presentation at The Terraces

with Sree Alavattam Birds of the Uttarakhand region in India

Tuesday, August 19 • 7:00 PM • Free

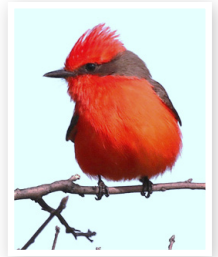
Sree will take us on a photographic journey of the Uttarakhand region of India, nestled in the Himalayan foothills. The varied altitudes, ranging from the subtropical forests to the alpine meadows create a mosaic of habitats supporting an astonishing diversity of avian life. Here, one can marvel at the vibrant, iridescent plumage of the Himalayan Monal, the state bird of Uttarakhand, to the numerous pheasant species. Raptors like the Himalayan Griffon and Steppe Eagle soar effortlessly on thermals while the melodious calls of resident and migratory birds echo through the landscape.



Great Barbet
–Sree Alavattam

Bird ID Workshops

Open to all levels these free workshops help customers learn bird identification skills as we study four different species of birds found in the greater Bay Area. Workshops will take place at the Los Gatos Birdwatcher outside in our back parking lot from 5:30 – 6:30 PM.



Vermillion Flycatcher
–Chris Overington

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. Call the store to save your spot. **408-358-9453**.

July 29 – Hooded Oriole, Bullock's Oriole, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole

August 12 – Western Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Vermillion Flycatcher

Sept. 23 – Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Western Bluebird

We're Having a Party to Celebrate 30 Years!

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, September 20 • 10 AM – 5 PM

This year the Los Gatos Birdwatcher turns 30 so we're having a party. Join us for a day of celebration with free food, guest speakers, and special appearances. You'll experience: a talk about monarchs & milkweed with **Tara Johnson** of NatureDigger,



a crane discussion with **Lisa Myers**, and a Binocular Lab where you can try new optics and get expert advice. Plus Volkman's wild bird seed specialist will be on hand to answer your birdseed questions.



WERC's Executive Director, **Ashley Quick**

Our store's original founder, **Freddy Howell** is also coming. And the ambassador birds of the Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center will be visiting our store 10am–2pm.



Freddy Howell & Lisa Myers



Upcoming events from a few of our favorite bird loving organizations



The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

(SFBBO) mission is to promote sustainability in the Bay Area and beyond by engaging communities in avian research, habitat restoration, and education. Each year money is raised for SFBBO programs with the annual fundraiser known as the California Fall Challenge (CFC). Look for updates to this year's fundraising activities.

The Los Gatos Birdwatcher is a proud supporter of SFBBO and is always excited to be part of the CFC.



Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance

Celebrating 100 years of Conservation and Community

Member Banquet, with keynote speaker **Kenn Kauffman**
Friday, October 3, 2025

All-day Birding Fair:
Saturday, October 4, 2025
West Valley College, Saratoga



Save The Date

The Monterey Bay Festival of Birds

October 10-12, 2025

Events throughout the Monterey Bay Area: Santa Cruz, Moss Landing, Watsonville, Monterey

www.birdschoolproject.org/festival



Fire Prevention Timing in Los Gatos Parks

By Lisa Myers

This last Spring customers shared concerns about the clear-cutting of vegetation and trees from several Los Gatos parks. Birders too who were out on the trails were shocked to find habitat once full of bird song, plant life and shrubs was cleared. And this all took place right in the middle of the bird breeding season. How could this be? I emailed the town and was told special care was being taken to minimize harm to nesting creatures, however we continued to get negative feedback from concerned citizens. So a meeting was scheduled. Consultant/Project Manager **Jim Frawley**, the Environmental Advocate from the Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance, **Shani Kleinhaus**, several concerned citizens, and myself all met at Heintz Open Space and walked the trails together. We learned that the town of Los Gatos had grant money to remove vegetation from several parks. This unwanted vegetation included invasive plants, and plant material that posed a fire risk, or was too close to homes and trails. We all understood the communities desire to protect their homes and make the landscape less vulnerable to wildfires, but why now, right in the middle of the breeding season? Nests built, eggs laid, babies being fed; no way to run from the tractors.



Heintz Open Space vegetation removed

Recent studies by Cornell revealed that bird numbers are down by the billions. Everyone shares their concerns for the environment and that they want to help, but then actions like this take place that are detrimental to wildlife. Why didn't the Los Gatos decision makers know better? We learned the reason this clearing happened now is because the grant had a deadline and that deadline was spring. Thus, the wildlife was sacrificed because available monies had a deadline. Nauseatingly sad. It was too late for this year, but we hoped that a positive outcome of our meeting was that next year the town of Los Gatos and all communities for that matter will try and find a win-win time frame to remove vegetation from open spaces. There are many months out of the year that such fire prevention would not be so detrimental to wildlife. Removing vegetation while birds are nesting is the wrong time. We thank Jim for meeting with us and hearing our concerns. We hope the decision makers do the right thing in the future.



Like dogs, birds don't have sweat glands. This means they can't cool down by sweating the way humans do. On hot days, you might see birds panting with their beaks open to release heat. They'll also seek shade, stay still during the hottest hours, and take full advantage of a bird bath, using the water to wet their feathers and cool their bodies through evaporation.



Loyal Customer Discounts

Loyal Customers are in our store's database and receive: one email per month, our seasonal newsletter, two 15% off coupons each quarter, and enrollment in our frequent buyer program.

15% Off Seed

Loyal Customers mention this coupon and get 15% off one item. Excludes consignment items, Haikubox, sales items, excursions, optics.

15% Off One Item (not seed)

Loyal Customers mention this coupon and get 15% off one item. Excludes bird seed & chicken feed, consignment and sale items, Haikubox, excursions, and optics.

Frequent Buyer Program: Buy 10 bags of the same seed 20 lbs or higher at full price and get the 11th bag free.

One coupon per customer. Not to be combined with other offers. Coupons Expires September 30, 2025.