



Los Gatos Birdwatcher

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New Year's Resolution – Let's Bird!

I am reminded of the song "King of the Sloughs" on Grant Hoyt's CD *Ravin' and Crowin'* that is done in a Beach Boys style where he sings about both Charleston Slough and the "King" of the Sloughs, Elkhorn Slough "just north of Monterey." He sings about getting up early, bringing his coffee because "it's cold out there," and trying to identify a variety of birds including "those winter plumage birds that are so hard."

This is a wonderful time of year to bird. The ducks and other winter visitors like our "crowned" sparrows are in and hanging out on the various lakes and perc ponds in the area. Pretty soon, as the days get warmer and longer, we will start to see the spring contingent arrive: orioles, grosbeaks, warblers, and swallows.

Anyone can bird anywhere. You don't have to travel to the other side of the planet even though there are some very spectacular birds there. Put up a feeder, fill up a bird bath, get out the binoculars, and you are birding. If you want to look at some different birds, take a trip to your neighborhood park. Los Gatos is a great place to bird because there are so many green open spaces close by.

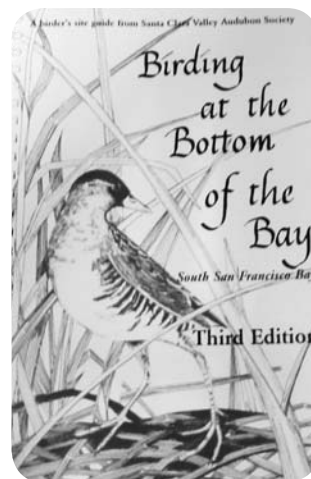
A gentlemen, newly retired from Public Safety, came in to "just look" at our binoculars because he was

thinking about getting into birding now that he had more time. I spent about thirty minutes with him showing him different binoculars and educating him about their use. With our "Binocular Basics Insiders' Info" sheet and most recent newsletter in hand, he decided he needed to go home and study and would be back. Our Saturday birdwalks were of great interest and he knew of several sites because his wife had given him a membership to the local Audubon Society (Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society – SCVAS) and as a "thank you" they had given him a copy of *Birding at the Bottom of the Bay* which describes 54 birding locations in Santa Clara Valley.

Many of our regular Saturday morning birders are retired, many aren't, but all are welcome if you can pull yourself out of that nice warm bed to meet us at the store by 8am. I know how hard it is, but it is such a lovely, invigorating, and engaging way to start the weekend. A group of great folks that quickly become friends. See places that you've never been to. See birds that you've never seen. One Saturday we went to Alamitos Creek at Greystone. It was very

foggy and cold but we managed to see a pair of common mergansers, snowy egret, Anna's hummingbird, chestnut-backed chickadee, and an oak titmouse. Red-breasted nuthatches are uncommon and only seen in winter, but this year they have been seen in many locations. With the aide of one walker's iPod, two red-breasted nuthatches were called in and finally moved out into the open so that everyone had good looks. It was a life bird for many in our group. While basking in the joy of seeing a "good" bird, we also saw a sunny yellow Townsend's warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, and a male and female Western bluebird in the

trees surrounding the park. The biggest surprise was what was atop the tall fir tree in the middle of the development – a white-tailed kite! Usually we have to go up to Charleston Slough or near the bay to see these stunning raptors. Most people are used to red-tailed hawks, peregrine falcons, or Cooper's Hawks, all of which are brownish or grayish. White-tailed kites are white with gray wings and black shoulders. They hover over their



Birding at the Bottom of the Bay, is a featured book at Los Gatos Birdwatcher

Continued next page

New Years Resolution continued

prey as if they were a kite, hence the name.

Other wonderful winter birding sites are Rancho Cañada del Oro by Calero Reservoir, the other parks in the "Bay Coast": Radio Road in Redwood Shores, Palo Alto Baylands, Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant, Sunnyvale Baylands, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge (Alviso and Fremont), Alviso Marina, Hayward's Arrowhead Marsh and Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline, and Coyote Hills Regional Park. These are mostly bay front sites but there is lots of winter birding to be done further inland. Lake Cunningham in East San Jose is always a surprising destination for wintering birds. Be sure to check the trees on the perimeter of the park. Horned and Eared grebes are also plentiful here in the winter.

If you have chinese pistache trees in your yard, check them out! The ones in our shopping center play host to western bluebirds, yellow rumped warblers and cedar waxwings. While walking Sage in Blossom Hill Manor, I saw movement in a deciduous tree that has a largish berry. To my delight I saw American robin, cedar waxwings and yellow-rumps all working on the berries. Outside Schallenberger School there was a call coming from a bush by the entrance. Not sure who was making the sound, probably a house sparrow, but a ruby-crowned kinglet popped out and worked over several of the purple blooms. As I said, you can bird anywhere!

It may still be cold out but there's something heating up out there!

Just before Christmas our Saturday morning birdwalk went up to Shoreline Park in Mountain View. This is a great venue anytime but is particularly active in this time of year because the ducks are in for the winter. This particular day the lake was very busy with masses of American coots, surf scoters, and double crested cormorants swimming fairly close to the boat house. In the distance we saw both snowy and great egrets roosting on the willow trees and perching on the structures on the side of the lake. As we walked around the lake we saw an amazing "feeding frenzy" with brown pelicans and Forster's terns diving from the sky, cormorants and grebes (eared, horned, and pied-billed) all diving under water, and more egrets stabbing fish from their stand on the shore. All of a sudden the fish would move to a different place in the lake and the birds would leave immediately and follow.

In amongst this crazy activity were the common goldeneyes. There was some fishing by diving going on but there was also much courtship display happening. Goldeneyes are beautiful birds. About three-quarters the size of a mallard, the male goldeneye has a tall, peaked head that appears black until the sun shines on it and the iridescence turns it purple, green, and blue. He has a round white patch on his cheek. His body is mostly white with a black stripe down his back to his rump which is also black. The female is also stunning in a more subdued way. Her head is chocolate brown and it

looks as if she dipped her beak in bright yellow paint and then rubbed off the paint on the very tip. She is gray with a little white on her body. The goldeneye courtship display is a bit painful to look at if you think of mimicking their body movement. The male flings his head so that it lays flat on his back and then flings it upright again. This is repeated multiple times in close proximity to the desired female who usually looks rather bored or at least more interested in feeding.

At our January Audubon walk at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant, we saw several snowy egrets with their crests up and looking as if they had just blow-dried their feathers. We also saw Northern Shovelers feeding up close. Usually these over-size billed ducks are on the farther pond. This time they were in



the near pond and quite close. Shovelers "raft," which means that they clump together in groups of 3 to more than 50. They put their

heads flat down on the water and skim with their shovel-looking bill. All of the members of the raft move in close and large circles in order to stir up fish and plant goodies.

On yet another recent walk we saw white-tailed kites starting their courtship display, locking talons in the air. This was on Laguna Road off of Bailey Road in the Coyote Valley where customer Richard Casserley spotted six kites recently. Check out our Let's Go Birding trips and come out and see love in the air!

Services Available from the Los Gatos Birdwatcher:

- **Feeder Cleaning** – Monday 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. 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.

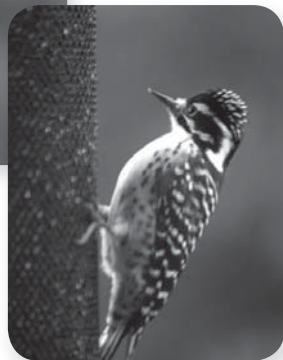
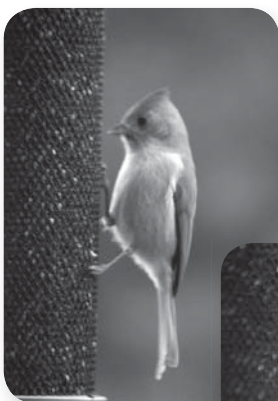
- **Birthday parties with Build a Seed Feeder workshop.** Bring 11 of your friends to the Los Gatos Birdwatcher and build a birdfeeder. Learn about the different birds that are likely to come to the

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



- 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 \$2.99 and would make a good “wrapping” for a gift.



Crazy for Finch Blend

Julie Soule, long time employee and birdfeeder, put our Premium Finch Blend in her Magnet Mesh Nyjer/thistle feeder. Finch Blend is a mix of Nyjer/thistle and fine sunflower chips. In these photos you can see how popular this blend is with more than just the goldfinches. In fact the goldfinch looks rather put out that it has to wait for the oak titmouse and Nuttall’s woodpecker to finish. Karen Fishback has pygmy nuthatches and acorn woodpeckers on her mesh feeder with Finch Blend.



One word of caution during the rainy season, the sunflower chips can absorb moisture and mold very quickly, so keep an eye on it.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

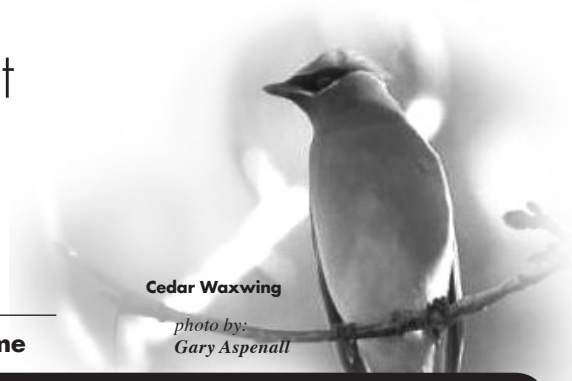
February 18-21, 2011

Why a Backyard Bird Count? According to the birdsources.org website, "Bird populations are always changing and a "snapshot" taken approximately at the same time every year, helps scientists answer the following questions: Where are the finches and other irruptive species? Compared to last year, how has this winter's weather influenced bird populations? Will late winter movements of many songbirds and waterfowl species be as far north as they were last year?" These are all questions that you can help answer.

Some interesting statistics from the 2010 count – Total checklists: 97,331; Total species: 602; Total individual birds counted: 11,233,609!

How it works

Count the birds in your backyard, local park, or other natural area on any or all of the four count days. Watch the birds for at least 15 minutes on each day that you participate. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time and write it down. We recommend watching for a half-hour or more, so that you'll have a good sense of what birds are in your area. Log onto www.birdcount.org and enter your counts. If you are unable to access the internet, send your count page to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Attention: GBBC, 159 Sapsucker Wood Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850 prior to March 1, 2011. Make sure to include your zip code, what habitat you're in and whether you counted at your home or at a park.



Cedar Waxwing
photo by:
Gary Aspenall

Day	Time	Species	Count	Species	Count
		American Crow	_____	Western Meadowlark	_____
		Common Raven	_____	Mourning Dove	_____
		Belted Kingfisher	_____	Northern Mockingbird	_____
		Brewer's Blackbird	_____	Red-breasted Nuthatch	_____
		Western Bluebird	_____	White-breasted Nuthatch	_____
		Brown-headed Cowbird	_____	Pygmy Nuthatch	_____
		European Starling	_____	Barn Owl	_____
		Red-winged Blackbird	_____	Great Horned Owl	_____
		Black Phoebe	_____	Western Screech Owl	_____
		Brown Creeper	_____	Rock Dove (Pigeon)	_____
		Bushtit	_____	Band-tailed Pigeon	_____
		California Quail	_____	American Pipit	_____
		Canada goose	_____	California Thrasher	_____
		Cedar Waxwing	_____	California Towhee	_____
		Chestnut-backed Chickadee	_____	Spotted Towhee	_____
		Finches: American Goldfinch	_____	Fox Sparrow	_____
		Lesser Goldfinch	_____	Golden-crowned Sparrow	_____
		House Finch	_____	House Sparrow	_____
		Pine Siskin	_____	Song Sparrow	_____
		Golden Eagle	_____	White-crowned Sparrow	_____
		Great Blue Heron	_____	American Robin	_____
		American Kestrel	_____	Hermit Thrush	_____
		Peregrine Falcon	_____	Varied Thrush	_____
		Merlin	_____	Wild Turkey	_____
		Northern Harrier	_____	Townsend's Warbler	_____
		Cooper's Hawk	_____	Yellow-rumped Warbler	_____
		Red-tailed Hawk	_____	Acorn Woodpecker	_____
		Red-Shouldered Hawk	_____	Downy Woodpecker	_____
		Sharp-shinned Hawk	_____	Hairy Woodpecker	_____
		Anna's Hummingbird	_____	Nuttall's Woodpecker	_____
		Western Scrub Jay	_____	Red-breasted Sapsucker	_____
		Steller's Jay	_____	Northern Flicker	_____
		Dark-eyed Junco	_____	Pileated Woodpecker	_____
		Killdeer	_____	Bewick's Wren	_____
		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	_____	House Wren	_____
		White-tailed Kite	_____	Wrentit	_____
		Yellow-billed Magpie	_____	Other _____	_____
		Mallard	_____		

Here is a detailed list of local wintering birds with a place to record your count or you can download a list from the birdsources website.





LOOK WHAT
FREDDY FOUND!



Glass Birdbaths and stands

– Lovely glass baths with painted birds, butterflies, flowers, and hummingbirds.



Glass Tables

– New for spring! Round and square glass tables with butterflies, flowers and birds.



Nesting Material

– The birds are starting to scout out nesting spots. You can help by putting up nesting material that they can use.



Nightlights

– New from Joan Baker Art Glass, tiffany style, 3-sided glass nightlights in a variety of designs.



Fountains

– Bring the soothing sound of water into your house or yard. Large variety of colors and styles.



Sale Table

– Holiday bargains, slightly scratched, last of its kind!



Flags, Flags, Flags

– We specialize in the small garden size and have many of the regular size for standard flag poles. Add a cheerful note to your front yard and welcome visitors with colorful and seasonal flags.



Bamboo Jewelry

– Birds, Butterflies, and Dragonflies, all in lovely enamel.



Seed and Suet Duo

– New from Birdola! At the request of customer Rebecca Fuller we are trying these large seed blocks that have a suet center. Her birds love it!



Folkmanis

– Puppets of owls, baby birds in a nest, macaw, Raven, Peacock, Turkey, and many more.

Book Reviews by a Young Birder

The BLUES Go Birding At Wild America's Shore

By Carol L. Malnor and Sandy F. Fuller
Illustrated by Louise Schroeder
Review by Amy Tey (age 8)



\$ 8.95 at Los Gatos Birdwatcher
Rated 5 Stars
Recommended for 3-7 year olds

Are you looking for a creative and educating good book? Look no more! This book is about five young bluebird birders. This troupe consists of two girls, a tomboy sports-girl and a kind "pink" girl. There is also Bing, the band leader, a smart fact "birdy", and a funny troublemaker.

Bing, Eggbert, Sammi, Lulu, and Uno are about to go on a fun adventure! They decide to follow the steps of Wild America's Roger Tory Peterson. So they pack out and head to the states!

On every page, there is:

- Eggbert's Bird Notes-True facts
- A post card-funny and realistic!
- Field Guide clipping-on the bird in the great illustration!
- A silly mistake by Uno

This book has funny illustrations, and realistic, too. The gang has funny thoughts going around, and personalities fit in perfectly!
WARNING: These real birds may lead to bird love. The real places in this book may also lead to inspirational drawing.

United Tweets of America-50 State Birds-Their Stories, Their Glories

By Hudson Talbott
Review by Amy Tey



\$ 17.95 at Los Gatos Birdwatcher
Rated 4 1/2 Stars
Recommended for 4-7 year olds.

United Tweets of America offers both fun drawings and fun facts. All birds' comments are hilarious, too!

Each page consists of:

- 1 bird drawing
- At least 1 comment from that bird
- 1 picture of the state
- 2 facts

Some famous people from that state(some pages have other state things)There is also a country map, and a "Parade of States" This is HILARIOUS! WARNING: If you start reading this book to your children, you might start laughing yourself.

Kid's Corner

Reservation
Required

Call 358-9453 to reserve
your space.

Wet Wonders

For ages 3 to 9
Thursday, February 10, 4-5pm
\$8/child

Come to the Los Gatos Birdwatcher and discover the special wonders that wet weather brings. Find out about critters that like the rain. Stamp an animal track guide as we investigate the muddy tracks you may find. Experiment with water drops and look for beautiful water designs.

Egg Exploration

For ages 3 to 9
Thursday, March 17, 4-5pm
\$8/child

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher to find out about all sorts of eggs. Join us for an egg hunt to discover the vast array of creatures that lay eggs. Examine a variety of eggs from our collection. Learn about where to find the eggs in your neighborhood and create your own hatchling.

Rainbow Birds

For ages 3 to 9
Thursday, April 28, 4-5pm
\$8/child

Join us at Los Gatos Bird Watcher as we learn about where you can find each of the wonderful colors of the rainbow on birds. Investigate bright feathers, beaks and legs too; some that even change color during the year. Discover what those colors can tell us and create a beautiful, colorful bird decoration to take home.

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

#C0211

/ 2010

Pay to the order of Our Loyal Customer

15% Off One Item

Memo: Expires 3/31/11

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 2, April 6, May 4 - 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 to local reservoirs

Saturday, February 19, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

The "Reservoir Run" has been a Let's Go Birding favorite. We spend the day in south Santa Clara County visiting the many reservoirs found tucked away in secluded and beautiful habitats. There are too many reservoirs to visit in one field trip so we'll watch species reports as the date nears to try and narrow our route. Possible stops include Almaden, Chesbro, Calero, Coyote and Anderson reservoirs. Just some of the species we hope to find include, Bald eagles, Wood Ducks, Rock Wrens, Golden Eagles, Western Bluebirds and Varied Thrush.

Fee: \$25 plus share of gas

Let's Go Birding to Sunol Regional Wilderness

Saturday, March 26, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Let's Go Birding to Sunol Regional Wilderness which once provided the ideal environment for Native Americans to flourish. Their bedrock mortars can still be found in the park today. For the past century this land was used by ranchers, but through an agreement with East Bay Regional Park District the land has been opened to the public for hiking, wildlife viewing and even camping. There are over 6,000 acres to explore and we'll pick some ideal trails to hike. This will be early in the Spring Migration and we'll look for species returning to the area after their winter in more tropical countries.

Fee: \$25 plus share of gas

Los Gatos Birdwatcher



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email: info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com

Return Service Requested

**Look What Freddy Found
for Valentines Day!!!
on Page 5**



Printed on
recycled paper

Sage Advice...

Love your valentine. Kiss a Leprechaun.



Dates to Remember

2/14 Valentine's Day	3/17 St. Patrick's Day
2/21 Presidents' Day	3/20 First day of Spring!
3/13 Daylight Savings Begin	

Store Hours

Monday – Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday: 12 noon to 5 p.m.
Phone: 408-358-9453

