

# BACKYARD BIRDING LESSONS



“Now we just heard  
a titmouse calling. . . .  
Here’s your  
chestnut-backed  
chickadees right here  
in the butterfly bush.”

— LISA MYERS, IN A GARDEN SESSION

## CAMPBELL WOMAN MAKES BIRD-WATCHING FUN

By Linda Goldston  
*Mercury News*

Ever wonder what that pretty bird was, flitting through your avocado tree? Or yearned to know the source of all the sweet warbling over by the fence?

Lisa Myers knows. And for a fee, she’ll come to your house and tell you. She’ll also teach you how to use bird field guides so you can learn more about your fine feathered neighbors. She’ll even lead a group of your friends on a private birding trip.

But there is no charge for all of the times she makes you laugh.

The Campbell woman’s new company, Let’s Go Birding, promises to do for bird-

### LET’S GO BIRDING

**Classes:** Lisa Myers teaches beginning birding classes for adults at the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and for the city of Palo Alto.

**Details:** Go to [www.letsgobirding.com](http://www.letsgobirding.com) or call (408) 656-7524.

watching what Julia Child did for so many amateur cooks in the kitchen: Make it fun and accessible.

“She’s funny, but she’s really good at what she does,” said Dixie Fisher of Los Gatos, marketing manager for Silico Graphics. “I bought a private session for my mom for her birthday. It was a very special experience that my mom is still talking about.”

Myers, 43, did not set out to become a professional birder. She spent 20 years in her family’s high school senior portrait busi-

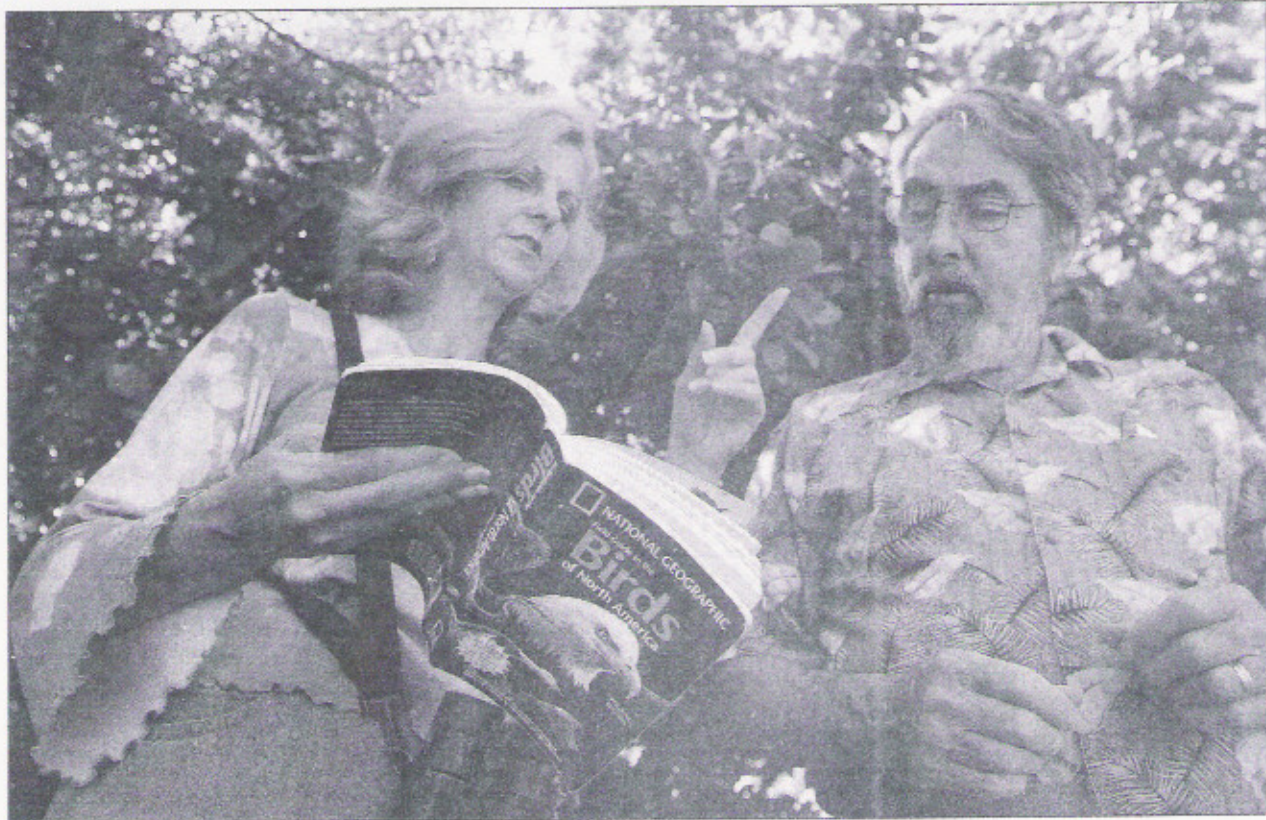
JUDITH CALSON — MERCURY NEWS PHOTOGRAPHS

Lisa Myers’ business, Let’s Go Birding, helps valley residents identify the feathered creatures flitting around their yards — and farther afield. Her instruction includes using bird guides, top.

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Lisa Myers teaches Tom Garry about the birds that fly in his Santa Clara yard. She spent part of the time at the dining room table, going over field guides. "We just met today, but I'm terribly excited about what she's doing," Garry says.

JUDITH CALSON —  
MERCURY NEWS



## BIRDING | Woman's business: What's flying around the yard

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ness, Sanford & Myers Photo Graphic, and was in high-tech sales support for 5½ years before becoming another Silicon Valley layoff statistic.

She decided it was time to form her own business, one that combined her love of the environment with the popularity of one of her passions: birding. It's the fastest growing outdoor recreational activity in the United States, according to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, with more than 46 million birding enthusiasts.

There are plenty of beginning bird-watching classes for children, but Myers, who has taught birding for the past four years for local Audubon societies, realized there were few options for adults who wanted to become birders.

"I try to create a non-intimidating environment where people can learn and have a great time," she said.

As she states on her Web site, [www.letsjobird](http://www.letsjobird)

ing.com: "If you ever have wanted to learn about bird-watching but were afraid to ask, this is a convenient and easy way to get started."

Myers charges \$75 for a two-hour private home visit. She also arranges group birding trips — at \$25 to \$35 — available to anyone who signs up as well as private outings.

During a private session with Tom Garry at his Santa Clara home last week, Myers spent part of the time identifying birds in the yard and part at the dining room table, going over field guides with Garry.

"We just met today, but I'm terribly excited about what she's doing," said Garry, who found out about Let's Go Birding from his wife, who had taken one of Myers' beginning birding classes.

"She's passionate about what she does, and it's infectious," Garry said.

On a bright sunny morning with Myers, Garry learned he had a family of Bewick's wrens, some California towhees, scrub jays, Anna's hummingbirds and

house sparrows all cavorting in his yard.

And those were just the ones they saw right away.

"Now we just heard a titmouse calling," Myers said. And, "here's your chestnut-backed chickadees right here in the butterfly bush, gleaning bugs off the leaves."

She also spotted the mother wren land on a limb with a worm.

"Here's an example of what birding is all about," she said. "The adult lands here with a big old worm in its mouth and one baby came from here, one came from over there, so you must have a nest of Bewick's wrens."

Her clients credit Myers with great skill in locating birds for them to see.

"I think I was spoiled by going out with Lisa first," said Pat Bitton, vice president of international business for PestPatrol, who has been on several different kinds of birding trips.

"What I appreciate about Lisa is the time she takes to make sure everybody on the trip gets

to see the bird."

On an April trip to Mines Road/Del Puerto Canyon in Alameda and Santa Clara counties, Myers and her clients started their day by finding a golden eagle nest with parents and two chicks and ending it with the singing of a western meadowlark. The group identified 60 species on that trip, including the beautiful lazuli bunting and a yellow-billed magpie.

On a trip May 8 to Alum Rock County Park, Myers and her group saw an American kestrel visiting nestlings inside a dead palm tree and had a "fantastic view of an 'invisible' great horned owl standing guard over its young."

One of her favorite outings was a trip to the Central Valley to see sandhill cranes.

"Thousands and thousands of sandhill cranes flew over us during a crimson red sunset," she said. "It was like we saw God."

Contact Linda Goldston at [lgoldston@mercurynews.com](mailto:lgoldston@mercurynews.com) or (408) 920-5862.