

EAST BAY NATURE NEWS



Summer 2019

ANOTHER CONVERSATION WITH A JAY...

A few years back I had an interesting discussion with a Western Scrub-Jay. We talked about how smart and intelligent the corvid family was. Well, the jay did mostly. I just listened. The corvid family, which includes jays, both Scrub and Steller's, crows, ravens and magpies, are known for their smarts.

I saw him again at the feeder recently. I knew it was the same jay because he rushed right over hoping for a special snack. "Hey!" I shouted. "It's...you." "You can call me Alan," he said. "If you feel the need to call me something." "Well, what do others call you?" I asked. "That depends," he stated. "Some people call me "that blue devil". Others call me "dang bird". One of your neighbors down the street has a really long name for me. When I was young for the longest time I thought my name was "get the hell out of here". I decided it must not actually be my name because it was always followed by a few rocks. Some neighbors like me, though. Whenever I'm in their yard they try to give me a bath by spraying me with water."

"Oh," I said. "You can eat here, if you like. Just don't bother any of my other birds." "Oh, sorry, no promises," he said. "It's my nature to be aggressive. The corvid family has a brain that is large in proportion to the size of our body, making us more intelligent than other birds. And, we're omnivores, which means we can eat almost anything—meat, insects, greens, fruit, vegetables, In-N-Out French fries. Good stuff like that."

"I know," I said. "We talked about this last time I saw you. Which, by the way, was several years ago. Just how old are you now?" "Well," he said with a smirk. "Not as old as you, of course. I'm about 8 years old

in human years." "I guess that makes you about 62 years old in jay years," I said smirking back. "Oh, great math there," he chuckled. "Try 72 years old in jay years. And, I didn't even need a calculator."

"Oh, by the by," Alan said. "You are clearly not aware that I am no longer called a Western Scrub-Jay. We western jays have now been officially split. California, Oregon and Washington scrub jays are now called California Scrub-Jays. Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas scrub jays are called Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay. I know. Think I'd rather be called "get the hell out of here" jay than Woodhouse. Anyway, just thought I would give you a little heads up on that in case you weren't keeping up-to-date on your bird news."

"Of course, I am," I fibbed. "Well, in case you're not," he said winking one of his dark brown eyes. "The differences between the "coastal" form (now the California Scrub-Jay) and the "interior" form (now Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay) is that we California Scrub-Jays are darker and described as having a more bold personality, while the

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay is paler, has a thinner bill, and tends to be more shy and inconspicuous, if that's even possible for a jay.

"Good to know," I said. "So, I'll give you a few mealworms as a treat if you'll consider leaving the other birds at the feeder alone." "That sounds like a bribe," he chuckled. "I'll take it." I handed him several mealworms which he promptly flew off with and buried. "Hey, don't bury those!" I yelled. "They'll die by the time you find them again." He looked at me slightly annoyed. "Let me tell you about a study that was done many years ago involving jays and our memory. Try to absorb this, if you can. The study involved whether we scrub jays could remember the 'what, where, and when' of specific caching events. We cache perishable foods, such as worms, as well as non-

degradable nuts and, as you know, we do not eat rotten items, so it's vital that we recover perishable food before it goes bad. Although the jays in the study had no cue predicting whether or not the worms had perished other than the time that had elapsed between the time of caching and the time at which they could recover the caches they had hidden previously, they rapidly learned that highly preferred worms were fresh and still delicious when recovered four hours after caching, whereas after 124 hours, the worms had decayed and tasted awful. Consequently, they avoided the wax worm caches after too much time had passed and instead recovered exclusively peanuts, which never perish. Are you with me so far?" "Yes, of course," I said. "So," he continued. "The experimenters then removed the food after the jays had buried it, and still the jays went to each site to look for the food, relying on memory to do so rather than cues coming directly from the food. Later tests revealed that the jays could remember which perishable foods they had hidden, where and how long ago, regardless of whether the food had decayed or ripened."

"Wow, that's amazing stuff," I chuckled. "Can you tell me where I put my cup of coffee and whether it's still hot?" "Oh, that's really funny," he said shaking his bluish-gray head. "Just what do you expect from an 11" long creature with a brain the size of a raisin? I'm just a bird. A descendant from reptiles. No formal education, no schooling, no books, no internet, no television, no iPhone, and my parents only raised me for two months before I was on my own." "Geez," I said feeling terrible. "I'm sorry, okay? You seemed so knowledgeable. I'm really sorry about that." Just then Alan flew off in the direction of my back door.

"Hey!" I yelled after him. "I said I was sorry! Where are you going?"

"Be back," he said. "Your daughter has a trigonometry question. And, your coffee's cold."

Bless the jays ~

Joanie and Annie





Customer Appreciation Day 20% Off!

Dublin - Saturday, 6/1
Walnut Creek - Saturday, 6/8

This is a one-day only sale! All merchandise (except optics) will be 20% off, no limits! That includes seed, suet, feeders, houses, hardware, baths, gifts, etc. No rain checks, though. We'll have stuff to eat and drink, too. One word of caution—don't store too much seed over the summer. Moths love hot, dry weather. Birds like moth larvae, people don't.



Lindsay Wildlife Experience

1931 First Avenue
Walnut Creek, CA 94597
(925) 935-1978

Lindsay Wildlife Experience Events

Summer is coming! Register for camp at Lindsay!

Keep your kids busy with **summer camp at Lindsay**.

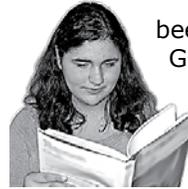
From digging up dinosaurs to natural explorers, the mini-camps and workshops offer a real chance to learn about animals, science and nature—all while having tons of FUN! Camp sessions start at 9:00am. Register at <https://lindsaywildlife.org/events> before all sessions are sold out!

Come to **Lindsay Wildlife Experience** on Saturday, June 22, and meet some monkeys! Friends at Conservation Ambassadors are bringing a few of their friends to Lindsay. There will be two presentations, 10:30am and 11:30am.

And, don't miss the **Volunteer Opportunities Class!**

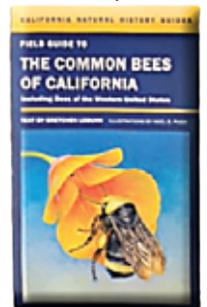
If you are interested in becoming a Lindsay volunteer, you must first attend the Volunteer Opportunities Class. At this class, you'll learn more about Lindsay's many volunteer opportunities and how to get involved based on your skills, interests, and schedule. The next class will be 10:00 a.m., Saturday, June 8th in the Manzanita room at Lindsay Wildlife. You will still have time to attend East Bay Nature's Customer Appreciation Day at the Walnut Creek store, too!

ANNIE'S READING CORNER...



If you are interested in bees this California Natural History Guide, text by Gretchen LeBuhn, will give you a thorough overview of native and honey bee biology. It covers California and the western United States. It provides full color, detailed illustrations that introduce

you to more than 30 genera of bees. Since bees pollinate many plants, especially important agricultural crops, they are an essential part of a healthy ecosystem, yet they are declining, due to habitat loss, pesticides and parasites, stressing the population and causing die-offs. About one third of the food supply in the United States depends on animal pollinators. Besides crops, animals pollinate about three-quarters of our flowering plants. The Antioch Dunes Evening Primrose is going extinct due to a lack of pollinating bees. In this instance, it is bees other than honey bees that are of primary importance. This book suggests ways we can support bees right in our backyards, such as planting a pollinator garden using local native plants, choose flowers with a variety of shapes and colors, choose species that are easy to plant and establish, plant flowers that bloom in succession, plant flowers in clumps, avoid pesticides and protect nest sites by leaving some bare ground. There are approximately 20,000 species of bees in the world, 1,500 species in California. The bees in our state range in size from a tiny sweat bee, not much larger than the head of a pin, to a large carpenter bee, the size of a man's thumb. Most North American bees don't have a queen and a large caste system of workers. They are solitary or semisocial. Semisocial bees have small colonies of bees that are of the same generation that have worker castes and cooperative brood care. Communal bees share a nest but do not cooperate. Not all bees forage for themselves, either. There are types of bees that behave "badly", such as robber bees that actually rob the stores of other bees and parasitic bees that lay eggs in their hosts or kill them outright. This is an interesting small book loaded with information...\$21.95



Gift Cards

How about a gift card for the hard-to-buy-for friend or loved one? They come in any denomination and can be used for virtually any product in the store...



NEW PRODUCTS...

Sierra Birds: A Hiker's Guide



As a naturalist managing the field studies program at the California Academy of Sciences, John Muir Laws noticed that novice birders often distinguish birds by color and size rather than species. This inspired him to create Sierra Birds: A Hiker's Guide, a unique book that assumes no prior birding knowledge on the part of the reader. Color-coded keys eliminate the time-consuming frustration of thumbing randomly through a guide, and a cross-index is also included for more advanced birders. All this in a format that is simply organized, lightweight, and small enough to tuck inside a pocket. A first-rate naturalist, Laws is also an accomplished artist. His illustrations are lively, colorful, and accurate, and drawn to represent species in the manner in which one generally sees them in the field...\$13.00

**Pillows
by Manual Woodworkers and Weavers**



We've got new pillows! Seems like I write about this in every newsletter. We've added a Chihuahua, Bichon, horse, and Monarch butterfly to the collection. The dog pillows have a vibrant background color that complements the color of each dog. The bay horse has "3D" ears that pop out from the pillow.

One small pillow in particular is really cute. It has the silhouette of a Dachshund with the title "It's been a LONG day". Some of our pillows are indoor/outdoor types made of a material called Climaweave that can handle the weather...\$22.95 to \$31.95

**Bird Song Bell
by Studio M**



This little ceramic bell is colorful and cute. Each bell is a different bird—hummingbird, goldfinch, dove or bluebird. The sound it makes with its dinger-donger (can't remember what you call the part that catches the wind) is a delicate bell sound. All come beautifully boxed...\$26.95.

**Bug Condo
by Songbirds Essentials**



This cute little bee house can accommodate different types and sizes of solitary bees. It's made of wood and metal and can hang or sit on its own. Your most likely inhabitants would be any number of species of mason bees. They lay their eggs in little chambers inside each straw, then plug it up with mud. When they hatch the young bees will then chew their way out. Mason bees are the best pollinators!...\$33.95.

**Oriole Feeder
by Perky Pet**



This nice looking oriole feeder is glass with a metal base and orange flower feeding ports. It holds a good bit of nectar and is really easy to clean. There is not a huge selection of good oriole feeders out there compared to hummingbird feeders, but I thought this one looked good and functioned well...\$32.95. Keep in mind that birds don't like change. I think it's best to start with a different model at the beginning of the season rather than later.

Fuzzy Bunz...



I had a damaged seed cylinder that would not be sellable, so I brought it home and set it outside for whoever would like it. The birds and the squirrels took turns off and on, but

the squirrels were the most fun to watch.

**Hummingbird Feeders
by Perky Pet**



We have a number of customers who prefer "top" fill hummingbird feeders, but there aren't a lot of styles to choose from. We've carried one model in particular for quite a while and have now added two more. One is shaped like an upside down maple jar and the other is a pretty purple diamond design. Once you've cleaned your feeder simply screw on the base, then open the top to fill. Both are glass with plastic bases that come apart for easy cleaning. Each sell for \$33.95.

**Foldout Guides
by Quick Reference Publishing**



We carry a boat load of foldout guides ranging from sharks to stars, but we've just added to new cards--Mushrooms of California and Cannabis. Each waterproof card is printed front and back displaying the more common plants. The mushroom card is a guide to common edible and poisonous species. It begins with a few paragraphs on mushroom identification, parts of the mushroom, determining spore color and mushroom types. It lists the common and Latin name, a short descriptive paragraph and a color photo...54 species on one card! The Cannabis card is a guide to 80 common and exotic strains. It lists the components of the cannabis plant and photos of each type...\$7.95 each.



**Products
by Michel Design Works**



We've gotten in a whole bunch of Michel Design Works products--foaming liquid hand soap, soap bars, bath bombs, melamine dishware, aprons and salt & pepper shakers. Most of the designs are butterflies, birds and nests. The fragrances are great, too. The melamine bowls are large, 12 inches in diameter for \$32.95, the accent plates are 8" and come four to a set for \$34.95. The salt & pepper shakers are clear glass with a butterfly design for \$14.95. The shea butter soap is made in England and it is quite large for \$11.35. The foaming hand soap is \$12.50. The bath bombs come in a couple different fragrances for \$6.95. I'm not a bath taker myself, but my daughter is and thinks they're great!

**BODY BAR
by "The Bees Knees"**

Our customer, Belinda McNeely, makes a wonderful body bar out of beeswax, shea butter and honey. It comes in a little round tin with a silver bee charm on the inside. I've been using one at home for my hands and love the rich moisturizing texture. You need to hold it between your hands for just a few moments to heat it up, then rub it on your hands, feet or anywhere you have dry skin. All the ingredients are natural--no additives or fragrances. For especially soft feet you can put on a pair of socks overnight...\$10.95 for a 26 gram tin.



MORE NEW PRODUCTS...



Glass Birds by SPI

These vibrantly colored glass birds are beautiful! They come in blues, oranges, greens, reds and golds. They can be used as paperweights or decorations. Either way, they'll brighten up any spot. Solid glass, they are weighty and sturdy...\$15.95 and \$19.95 for the larger ones.

Cards by Rigel Stuhmiller

Rigel Stuhmiller is a Berkeley artist that paints unique designs for greeting cards. Her birds are wonderful, very simple and colorful. Her selection includes American Goldfinch, Meadow Lark, Raven, hummingbirds, Spotted Towhee, Scrub jay, Mourning Dove, California Quail, Barn Owl, and Hooded Oriole. She also makes Thank You cards that come eight cards and envelopes per pack, including some chicken designs. I've just started carrying her cards and hope to carry more of her products soon...\$3.99 per card and \$14.99 for the Thank You pack.



GENTLE SPRING REMINDERS...

1. Please keep your feeders clean.

Dirty feeders can spread disease. Clean your tube feeders easily with long bottle brushes and warm, soapy water.

2. Keep bird baths clean and full.

You can use Fountec or an enzyme cleaner to keep algae out. If you refill your baths daily or every other day you don't need to worry about mosquitoes. If you can't refill them often enough use a mosquito treatment in the water. It is safe for everyone. Or, use the Water Wiggler. It is battery operated and causes the water to ripple enough to keep mosquitoes from landing on the surface. We have solar water wigglers, too.

3. Be on the lookout for baby birds.

If you find baby birds that cannot be returned to their nest (you can pick them up and put them back into the nest) call the Lindsay Wildlife Hospital for advice - 925-935-1978. Don't relocate the nest unless it is just a foot or two. The parents cannot find it even if it is fairly close to its original location. If you must prune your trees or bushes be sure to check for nests first. Hummingbird nests are very tiny and hard to spot. Best time to prune trees is October, November and December. It's best for the trees and best for our wildlife.

4. Keep your cats indoors!

East Bay Nature Locations

1270A Newell Avenue
Walnut Creek, CA
94596

Phone (925) 407-1333
Fax (925) 937-6291

7186 Regional Street
Dublin, CA
94568

Phone (925) 479-0044
Fax (925) 479-0037

Store Hours

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
(Mon. thru Sat.)
11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
(Sunday)

Web

www.eastbaynature.com

Owner

Joanie Smith
joanie@eastbaynature.com



Bring this handy check list along with you next time you come in.

MY SHOPPING LIST...

Check the items you want to see:

- ___ Body Bar
- ___ Rigel Stuhmiller Cards
- ___ Hummingbird Feeders
- ___ Oriole Feeder
- ___ Foldout Guides
- ___ Bath Bombs
- ___ Foaming Liquid Soap/
Melamine Dishware
- ___ Bug Condo
- ___ Bird Song Bell
- ___ Pillows
- ___ Glass Birds
- ___ East Bay Nature Gift Card

Add any items you need:

**We will be closed
Thursday, July 4th
for
Independence Day.**



Summer, 2019

Pay To The Order of Our Loyal Customer
20% off any single item of your choice

(Please use by 8/31/2019. One coupon per customer, please.)

- Joanie Smith, Owner

Excludes optics and sale items.
Not to be combined with any other offers.