



A Conversation with a Blattodean

I was outside filling my bird baths, talking to the birds, when I suddenly found myself staring at a most unusual looking creature. "Whoa," I said startled. "What the heck are you?" "What do you mean?" he said looking around. "I'm just another human being same as you." "No, you're not," I said. "I'd say you look more like someone from another planet."

"Oh, crap, what gave me away?" he said looking disappointed. "Well," I said. "I think it's the fact that your thumb is sticking out of the top of your head, your feet are at the end of your arms, and let's just say there's an appendage coming out of your back that belongs in the front and much lower. You might want to put some pants on over that." "Oh, of course," he said shaking his head. "Sometimes my parts converter gets mixed up. It's an older version and probably should be updated. Hold on." He shook himself all over and then, amazingly, he was looking more appropriate for a human being, except for his seven fingers. "Well," I said with a smile. "Not perfect, but at least your language translator is working correctly." "Sometimes that gets out of whack as well and I revert to my native language," he said. "Let me know if I suddenly stop making sense. Name's Ned, by the way."

"Where are you from, Ned? I asked. "Oh, I'm from the planet Blattodea" he said. I looked at him blankly. "That's definitely not part of OUR solar system," I said. "No," he chuckled. "My home is located in Andromeda, the next largest galaxy over from the Milky Way." "You mean the next solar system over from ours, right?" I corrected. "Nope, the next galaxy," he said. "Wait a

moment," I said confused. "Exactly how long have you been traveling?" "Not long," he said. "A few weeks, maybe." "That's impossible!" I exclaimed. "You can't travel faster than the speed of light." Ned looked at me with raised eyebrows. "No, but you can travel through tears in the fabric of space time. Don't worry, you humans will figure it out eventually." Just then a shadow passed over us and Ned ducked behind me,



cowering. I stared at him with a surprised look on my face. "What's the matter?" I said. "Are you really afraid of a Scrub Jay? You're a hundred times larger than that bird!" "I don't know what it is," he said. "We Blattodeans seem to have a deep-seated fear of Earth birds. And, for some reason," he said looking warily at my feet, "shoes." "We've never been able to figure out why that is. Maybe something that happened way back in our evolution."

"So, why are you here?" I chuckled. "Are you on vacation?" "No, I'm here to observe humans," he said. "I was trying to carefully blend in until my parts converter malfunctioned and you noticed that I looked a little "off." There are others of us here, too." "Oh," I said looking around. "Is there anything I could help you with?" "Yes," he said. "I am getting a little hungry. Do you have any table scraps?" "Table scraps? How about some pork rind and pigs knuckles?" I said, thinking what an odd request

that was. "No, I was thinking something more along the lines of `djnczlk@hfa#ewbvwwf` or maybe `pwkdzkdhfk$`" "Hold on, Ned," I said holding up my hands. "Either your language translator is starting to act up or you're swearing at me." He shook his body all over. "Sorry, what I meant to say is that some potato peelings or apple cores would be great for lunch." What? I thought to myself. How strange is that? I mean who doesn't like pork rind and pigs knuckles? "Never mind," he said. "I'll find something. We Blattodeans can eat pretty much anything."

"If you're here to observe humans," I said. "What have you learned so far?" "Let's see," he said thoughtfully. "Oh, I know!" "Here," he said extending his hand. "Pull my finger." "What!?" I exclaimed. "You're here to observe human behavior and that's what you've learned? Pull my finger?" "Well, we can't learn anything technological from you. We are so much more advanced." "How long have Blattodeans been around?" I asked. "Oh," he said, looking skyward and counting on his seven fingers. "I'd say somewhere in the vicinity of 300 million years." "Wow!" I said. "You're truly an ancient culture. No wonder you're so advanced." "Yes," he said. "We have lived through all kinds of cosmic events. We are true survivors." "What else have you learned on this planet?" I asked. "Well, we've learned that you don't mix light clothing with dark clothing in the washing machine." I stared at him in amazement and said, "That's it?" He frowned, looking confused. "We don't wear clothes on Blattodea. This is all new to us." "Then, how do you stay warm?" I asked. "We thrive in temperatures between 70 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit, preferably on the humid side. Blattodea remains that temperature year round. We used to grow food there, but we use food replicators now. In the days before replicators we would just eat each other if we had any problems with the food supply," he said matter-of-fact. "What?!" I said incredulously, putting my hand over my mouth. "You ate each other?" "If need be. There was always plenty of us

to go around," he said. I wasn't sure where this was headed, but I had a last burning question. "Can I see what you look like without your parts converter?" "In my natural form?" he said. "I don't think you want to see this. It has never gone well for us to show our true form to humans. They run away in disgust, shrieking and screaming." "It won't bother me," I said, confidently. I mean what could he look like that's so horrible? Three giant heads? Hands with claws like knives? Greenish body? Teeth as large as a saber tooth tiger? I mean this advanced civilization has lived for millions of years. He seems nice. What could possibly go wrong? "Well, you ready?" he said. "Yes," I said, covering my eyes peeking through my fingers. "Okay, here I am." I slowly uncovered my eyes and looked around. "Where are you?" I asked. "Here," he said. I looked around again. "Where?" "Down here," he said impatiently. I looked at the ground and there was Ned. Ned, the cockroach.

Bless the Blattodeans ~ Joanie and Annie



30th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday and Sunday, 12/6-12/7

This year we will be celebrating something really BIG---our 30th anniversary!!! We'll celebrate with live birds, food, drinks and our wonderful banjo players. And, a two-day 20% off sale (in store only)! You can come in to do your shopping at a leisurely pace and still get the discount for anything (excluding optics). Let's hope the weather will cooperate this year! We moved our anniversary weekend to the first weekend in December this year due to customer requests.

Wild Birds and Music!

Deb Hodson and **Banjos by the SF Bay**, starring Deb Hodson, a longtime customer and super talented banjo player along with her equally talented band - Saturday, 12/6, 11-1pm.

Elaine Friedman from the **Corvid Connection** will be here as she has for many years bringing some of our old friends with her - Saturday, 12/6, noon-3pm:

- Western Screech Owl, Whisper
- Common Raven, Vader
- American Crow, Jimmy
- Western Scrub-jay, Katniss
- Black-billed Magpie, Cody

For our extra special celebration this year we will also have Jenny Papka from **Native Bird Connections** here with her raptors. Native Bird Connections is a not-for-profit organization that works with live wild birds while sharing educational messages with groups of all ages. Jenny will possibly be bringing her Eurasian Eagle Owl (one of the largest owls in the world) and Swainson's Hawk - Saturday, 12/6, 1-4pm.

Who's here for the winter?

Here are the birds you might see in your yard at this time of year and what they primarily eat. White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrow (seeds), Cedar Waxwing (berries, insects), Oregon Junco (seeds, suet), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (insects, suet), Hermit Thrush (insects, berries) Northern Flicker (seeds, insects, suet), American and Lesser Goldfinch (seeds), Townsend's Warbler (insects, suet), Yellow-rumped Warbler (insects, suet). Birds that eat a purely insectivorous diet will sometimes eat suet, too. Please don't use insecticides in your yard. The birds need insects to survive.

February Seed and Suet Sale!!!

If you didn't get a chance to take advantage of the November seed and suet sale or the anniversary weekend sale there will be another month-long sale in February. It's best not to store seed for months at a time, but in winter it will store longer in the cooler weather. All seed and suet will be 15% off for the entire month of February and the large bags you buy still count towards your 10th free bag.

Season's Greetings...



I can't believe East Bay Nature is now celebrating 30 years in business! We have customers that have been coming in since we first opened. I am so thankful for my wonderful employees, Deirdree and Chris, for keeping the store running smoothly and delivering

seed to our customers. But, if it wasn't for you, our customers, we wouldn't be here. As always, my sincerest thanks to you all. We wish you, your family and your backyard friends the most joyous of holidays.

Special note: I would also like to thank Jimmy Gahl for his many, many years of formatting our newsletter and for putting up with my constant changes and additions. Thank you, Jimmy!

Happy, happy everything - Joanie, Annie, Deirdree, and Chris (and our little community of fish)

Seed Delivery Service Reminder

We are continuing with our delivery service due to its popularity. Here's how it works—for a minimum of \$40 delivery is free to local areas, including the tri-valley area. The cost for delivery in outlying areas is \$8. February and November seed sales are included as long as your order is placed during seed sale month. To find a list of cities in outlying areas please visit our website at www.eastbaynature.com and click **Shop Online**. You can order online, give us a call or send us an email. Thank you!



A Word About Seed

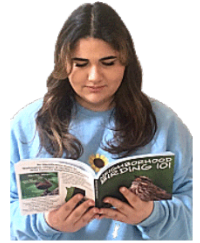
We have had problems getting corn-on-the-cob from our seed vendor this year. I'm hoping that problem will go away with this fall's harvest. I'm still waiting to hear about the status of corn-on-the-cob. There is no problem with cracked corn or whole corn kernels.

"Why don't my birds eat millet?" is a common question we get from our customers. Millet is the small yellow round seed included in some of our mixes. Millet is eaten by a number of birds, including White and Golden-crowned Sparrows, California Quail, California Towhees, Oregon (Dark-eyed) Juncos, Mourning Doves, Band-tailed Pigeons--mainly, ground feeding birds. Our chickadees, titmice, woodpeckers, nuthatches, grosbeaks and finches---mainly, birds that eat from hanging feeders---prefer sunflower seeds, peanuts, safflower and suet which are higher in fat and nutrition. Millet is less expensive and frequently used in cheaper bird seed mixes to keep the cost down. Most birds will throw it on the ground if they find it in hanging feeders, which is not a bad thing if you also have plenty of ground feeding birds to clean it up. If you don't, you may want to switch to one of our seed mixes, such as Pure Patio Mix, Briones Blend or Just Hearts. Sunflower chips are still the number one seed with birds and included in many of our mixes.

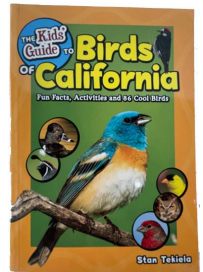
Annie's Reading Corner

The Kid's Guide to Birds of California – Stan Tekiela

Author Stan Tekiela, has written the perfect bird identification guide for children and grandchildren. For children (and adults) just starting out in the wonderful world of birding this book starts with the basics—bird anatomy, types of nests, attracting birds with feeders, fun and interesting facts about birds that you won't find in most field guides, calls and songs, and where you'll likely find a particular bird.



The photos are large and the book is divided into sections relating to color, such as "mostly blue, mostly black, mostly yellow", etc. Inside you'll find 86 of the most common and important California birds to know, field marks, favorite hangouts, range maps and Stan's cool facts and fun activities for everyone.



Stan's cool facts: Mourning Dove parents regurgitate a liquid called "crop-milk" to feed their young. It is also one of the few birds that drinks water without tilting its head back. The Lazuli Bunting gets its name from lapis lazuli which is a semi-precious blue stone used in jewelry. If you've seen a male Lazuli Bunting you understand how it got its name. Brown-headed Cowbirds are called brood parasites, meaning they don't nest or raise their own families. Instead, they lay their eggs in other birds' nests, leaving the host birds to raise their young. They have laid their eggs in the nests of more than 200 other bird species. Wood Duck females lay some of their eggs in other Wood Duck nests resulting in as much as 20 or more eggs in a single nest. The young stay in the nest for a day and then jump from as high as 60 feet to the ground or water to follow their mom.

Gentle Winter Reminders

Don't forget to clean your bird feeders and bird baths. The rain seems to find its way into feeders especially if the wind is blowing. A squirrel baffle (metal or plastic cover) over the top of your feeder really helps with the rain. Birds will eat wet seed, but not moldy seed which can make them sick. You can also add Feeder Fresh to your seed to soak up moisture. Keeping your feeder clean will also prevent the spread of any diseases. Birds still take baths—even in the rain! They need to keep their feathers clean of debris and dirt. Once they've taken a bath they'll spend time preening. Birds have an oil gland located at the base of their tail. They will use their beak to spread the oil evenly over the rest of their feathers to help keep themselves waterproof. If their feathers are not waterproof they won't survive the nights. Keep your bird houses up all year (cleaned out, if they were used). Birds will roost in them during the winter to get out of the elements at night.

New Products

T-shirts – Sabaku Artwear

Beautiful new t-shirts from Sabaku (Japanese word for “desert”). The Sonoran Desert is home to Sabaku in Arizona. New designs include **Desert Dress Up**, a quail design in a soft sage color. **Birdies**, blue and purple birds in dark denim. **Bouquet of Hummers** in deep turquoise, **Catryoska**, six cats resembling Matryoshka (Russian nesting dolls), in blue sky and, **Fetish Necklace**, one of the artist’s original and most popular designs in midnight with ¾ length sleeves...\$44.95.



Bird Baths - Florence and New Italian Art Co.



We just received a new shipment from our statuary vendor, Florence and New Italian Art Co. There are all sorts of styles of concrete baths, the pics show just a few. Nice time to get a new bath and start out with a copper purification disk to keep that bath clean with minimal work...\$100 on up.

Wildberry Fields Lotion– The Naked Bee

The Naked Bee has come out with a new fragrance—Wildberry Fields. Silky hydration with the scent of ripe wild berries and vibrant wild flowers that creates a fresh fruity melody. Contains aloe and shea cream with honey, Acai berry and strawberry extracts. Smooth and luscious in a 4.4 ounce glass jar...\$12.99.



Socks – SockSmith Design

The SockSmith folks have been busy creating new designs. A really cute one is the “cat daddy” design. We also have— owls, chickadees, roosters, hens, birds and butterflies. Their socks come in medium and large (not in all designs, unfortunately). Most are a cotton blend and a few exceptionally soft bamboo blends. We also have a few cotton knee high socks in California poppy designs...\$9.95 through \$11.95.



Earrings – Illustrated Light/DC Designs

Illustrated Light has some gorgeous new designs in spectacular colors. Their unique art is a UV protected giclee image printed onto stainless steel creating ultra-lightweight, waterproof jewelry. All earrings are hypoallergenic and contain no nickel. The multi-layered art and colors create depth and beauty. Handcrafted in Colorado...\$18.00-\$32.00.



Evolution Feeder – Brome

This is a new Squirrel Buster feeder closely resembling the Squirrel buster Classic, Plus, and Legacy feeders. The main differences are the easy-to-close top, Brome's patented Seed Tube Ventilation™ that permits humidity and hot air to escape through vents at the top of the feeder and replaces it with fresh air and a water diverter that features a two-part design with a trough and spout, complemented by a drip edge above each seed port helping to keep the seed dry. And, as with all their models, squirrel-proof...\$74.95.

Word River Rocks - Garden Age Supply

We have a large shipment of 2 1/2"-3" river rocks with mostly single words—Hope, Courage, Balance, Dream, Breathe, Happiness, Thank You, Kindness, Miracles and many more. These are actual river rocks, not man-made material...\$9.95.



Art Poles – Studio M

We thought we had lost the art poles when Studio M out of Missouri closed, but the brand was purchased by Demdaco with new designs and are available once again. The art poles come in 60", 40", 13" and 10" sizes. Artfully designed in bold colors and special messages they look gorgeous in the yard and retain their colors year after year...\$19.95 on up to \$240.00.



Art Boxes – Art Gifts

We’ve carried these simple little boxes for years. They are ceramic hinged boxes in a variety of styles. Each box contains a special little gift inside. I think the blue or pink bear box would be good for storing baby teeth. I especially like the New York taxi and the little school house with the bus out front...\$16.95





Holiday Cards and Calendars
- Crane Creek Graphics

For 30 years we have carried holiday cards from Crane Creek Graphics. The mixed holiday cards are back, 10 cards per pack, each a different bird image, as well as single holiday cards. We still carry their regular boxed bird cards (blank inside)... \$15.95-\$18.95. The Wild Wings 2026 calendar is available for \$17.95.

Seed Ornaments - Mr. Bird

This year we have Ollie the owl, star-shaped ornaments and seed balls. We also brought in the small bird houses, called casitas. The seed covers an actual wooden wren house that you can use once the seed is gone. Always nice to put seed ornaments on your Christmas tree and then outside after the holidays for the birds to eat...\$5.50-\$7.99 for the seed ornaments and \$36.00 for the casita.



Plush Animals - Douglas Toy

Douglas Toy makes incredibly soft and life-like plush animals for kids. They are reasonably priced and are looking for a good home.



We've got hedgehogs, donkeys, raccoons, penguins, opossums, Barn Owls, Great Horned Owls and Snowy Owls. They range in size from 5" to 10" and in price from \$11.95 to \$25.50.



Bird Ornaments and Hummingbird Wind Chime
- Ganz



We have lots of acrylic bird ornaments that are appropriate for any time of the year. Our latest birds are the Northern Cardinal and Steller's Jay. These are a little different than the hummingbird ornaments we love...they also have a good luck bird charm attached to their backs. The little silver charms are a replica of the bird that carries them. They can hang in a window, tree or rear view mirror.

The vibrant red and blue colors are great...\$25.95-\$27.95. The acrylic hummingbird wind chime is very pretty. The hummingbird resembles our local Anna's Hummingbird in color. The silver tubes sound soft and sweet. It measures a little over a foot in overall length...\$27.99.

Blue-footed Booby and Highland Cow
- Regal Art & Gifts



It's easy to see why the Blue-footed Booby is so popular. What's not to love about a bird with bright blue feet and innocent-looking eyes with a startled look? If you've ever been to the Galapagos Islands you'll recognize this bird right away. The booby measures 20" long x 14" high. The Highland Cow is new and, from what I understand, Highland Cows are very popular now. I guess it's their hairy bodies and faces that make them adorable. The cow is 5" long and 10" high. Both critters are made of metal, realistically painted and can go indoors or out...\$75-\$77.

Northern Cardinal Garden Bench - Ganz

It's said that "Cardinals appear when angels are near". The bright red of the Northern Cardinal is a symbol of hope and love. Our beautiful new metal bench is black overall with several cardinals in a tree gracing the back of the bench. The red on the cardinals really pop against the black. Measures 40" long x 21" deep x 40" high...\$445.



Kitchen Towels, Pins, Cards and Stickers
- Brenna Daugherty

Brenna Dougherty is a Walnut Creek artist who designs California-themed products. Her flour sack kitchen towel



displays the state of California with symbols of our redwood trees, grapes, beaches, poppies, Half Dome and a Joshua tree...\$18.00. Her cute pins of the Golden Gate Bridge and heart-shaped California poppies are colorful and pretty...\$12.00. She makes stickers with the same design as her towel, also "San Francisco/Golden Gate Bridge" and "Stay Gold" poppy sticker...\$4.00 each. And, she also designs cards---thank you notes and a bouquet of poppies...\$19.95 for a 6-pack. All are designed and printed in California.

Quilling Cards – Quilling Card LLC



Quilling is the art of rolling, coiling and shaping small strips of paper to create a cohesive three-dimensional design and

has been practiced for centuries. Historians have been able to date the art form back to ancient Egyptian times where crafters would use a bird's feather as the tool to coil the paper upon. Throughout the Western world, quilling has seen different periods of resurgence over the years. These cards can be mailed or just given as gifts...\$9.95.

Garden Gnomes – Ganz

These cute little garden gnomes would make great stocking stuffers. Each colorful gnome is riding on the back of either a turtle, frog, snail or squirrel. They only measure about 3" high. Great as a set or just individually for \$14.65 each. Indoors only unless in a covered area.



Kitchen Towels and Stickers – Alice Frost Studio

More flour sack towels and stickers from another local artist. Alice Frost lives and works in



Marin County. Her unique prints of hummingbird, raven and quail silhouettes are great. But, if you look closely you'll see that each bird pattern is actually made up of tiny silhouettes of our local birds as well.

Each design features hundreds of California animal species, from hummingbirds to grizzly bears to redwood trees.

Made from high-quality cotton, these soft, absorbent, and lint-free towels are perfect for drying dishes, polishing glassware, or proofing bread. Lightweight and quick-drying for everyday use. Her bird stickers are designed with the identical pattern as the towels. Stickers are \$3.95 each and towels are \$21.95.

Pillows – Manual Woodworkers and Weavers



New pillow designs are in with Northern Cardinals, hummingbirds, cats, dogs and a campfire. I ordered the campfire pillow for a customer, but kind of like it myself. Reminds me of camping in Desolation Wilderness many years ago. The pillows range in size from 18" square to the extra-long lumbar pillow with a line of three kitty faces or dog faces...\$28.50 to \$63.25.

Lindsay Wildlife Experience

1931 First Avenue - Walnut Creek - 925-935-1978 www.lindsaywildlife.org



Wildlife Hospital Contacts:

The Lindsay wildlife rehabilitation hospital currently accepts patients in an outdoor drop-off area between 10am-4pm each day. Before you bring in an animal, please contact the Hospital Hotline Voicemail at 925-659-8156 or email hotline@lindsaywildlife.org. All hotline calls are monitored from 9am-5pm every day. Expect a return call the same day or the next day if calling after 5pm. Veterinary Emergency Group (VEG) in San Ramon, will provide after-hours care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife, but no longer accepts birds. They provide emergency care to wildlife until the animal can be transported to the Lindsay Wildlife Rehabilitation Hospital. VEG will accept wildlife patients between the hours of 3pm and 6am at their office at 2431 San Ramon Valley Blvd. in San Ramon. Please call VEG at 925-718-7771.

2026 Bird Walk Schedule



Check our website (www.eastbaynature.com) for the 2026 schedule of dates and places or drop by the store for a list of bird walks. The marvelous Michael Massey will be leading our bird walks. We meet the first Saturday of every month at 7:45am at the store. You can carpool or drive directly to the site to meet the group, if you prefer. All is free and no reservations are required. Please note that a few of the destinations have changed.

Cooper's vs. Sharp-shinned Hawks



It seems like almost daily people post online with photos asking for help identifying the photo they took of a hawk. Is it a Cooper's or Sharp-shinned? They are difficult to tell apart unless they're sitting side by side, which is not likely to happen. I've learned a lot just by reading the responses.

Overall, Cooper's are larger than sharpies. But then, that can vary depending on whether it's female or male. Females are larger than males, so a large female sharpie can be close to the same size as a male Cooper's. Great. There are other considerations, such as a flatter looking head on the Cooper's with a noticeable dark cap. There's also the more squared off tail on the sharpie compared to the rounded tail of the Cooper's. Both have a long barred tail, although the Cooper's tail has a broad white tip at the end. The Cooper's has a blocky-looking head shape compared to the

sharpie (pictured). Again, unless they are sitting side by side it's difficult to distinguish the differences.


And then, there are the juveniles. Sharpies may show more blurry streaking on the chest than the Cooper's dark streaking on a white chest. They are both fast, agile and lightning-quick at catching small birds. If you blinked, you didn't see it. Oh, and they both have yellow legs, Cooper's legs are a bit thicker. Okay, I'm dizzy. 'Nuff said.

East Bay Nature

1270A Newell Avenue
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
925-407-1333

www.eastbaynature.com

Contact: Joanie Smith
joanie@eastbaynature.com



Fall / Winter 2025

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

(Use before 2/28/26. One coupon per customer, please.)

- Joanie Smith, Owner

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

We will be closed for:

Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

We close at 3:00pm on:

Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

