

# Birdsong Nature Center

September-October 2016

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Birdsong will be closed from Tuesday, August 16 to Tuesday, September 6, and reopen Wednesday, September 7

### September

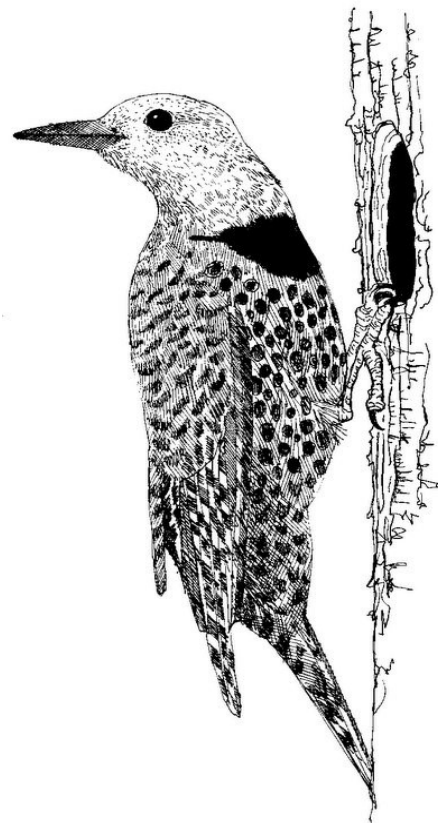
Thursday	Sept. 1	Butterfly Garden Work Days
Saturday	Sept. 10	Volunteer Orientation
Saturday	Sept. 17	Take a Child Outside
Saturday	Sept. 24	Project WILD For children's program leaders

### October

Saturday	Oct. 1	Ephemeral Wetland Walk
Thursday	Oct. 6	Butterfly Garden Work Days
Sunday	Oct. 9	Birdsong's 30th Anniversary Party
Saturday	Oct. 15	Coastal Birding Trip to John Phipps Preserve at Alligator Point
Sunday	Oct. 16	Wildflower Walk

### November

Saturday	Nov. 5	Wild Neighbors of the Red Hills
----------	--------	---------------------------------



#### BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER

WEB SITE: [www.birdsongnaturecenter.org](http://www.birdsongnaturecenter.org)

EMAIL: [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org)

TWITTER: @BirdsongNatureC

FACEBOOK: Birdsong Nature Center

YOUTUBE: Birdsong Nature Center



#### BIRD WINDOW AND TRAIL HOURS

Wednesday	9 AM - 5 PM
Friday	9 AM - 5 PM
Saturday	9 AM - 5 PM
Sunday	1 PM - 5 PM

#### Bird Window and Nature Trails

Welcome to Birdsong! Enjoy the beauty and serenity of the Bird Window and learn to identify resident and visiting birds up close. Walk the Nature Trails to observe wildlife in a variety of habitats and enjoy the sounds of nature at the Listening Place. Before you leave, you may want to visit the Chickadee Corner Gift Shop. We hope you enjoy your stay!

*All visitors please sign in at the Registration Center. Trail maps are provided. Pets, trash and fires are not permitted.*

#### Registration

Please register for all programs by calling or emailing: (229) 377-4408, 1 (800) 953-BIRD, Birdsong Office  
Fax line (229)-377-8723, or [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org)

Dear Friends,

It has been an active and interesting summer at Birdsong, particularly with this year's abundance of rain that came along with the hot and sunny days. We have very much enjoyed the many visitors to the trails and Bird Window who've come by, and we're very happy to have the great new members who joined during our "Next 30 Years" campaign. It was a special treat to meet all the charming families, inquisitive children, parents and guardians who joined us for programs over the summer months. With them we explored aquatic worlds and met the inhabitants up close; learned about gopher tortoises and peeked into their burrows; caught all kinds of amazing bugs to learn about and look at closely, many of kinds we'd never seen before. Wonderful groups of grownups were out for bird walks and trail rides. Many dozens of bluebirds, wrens, nuthatches and other varieties of young birds fledged from nesting boxes spread across the property, while a new generation of martins leaped from gourds and flew off to South America. And we are yet again inspired by the beauty of the Butterfly Garden, its brightly colored wildflowers in bloom, equally colorful butterflies, bees and insects of many types taking advantage of its nourishments. It has been a memorable summer, and we couldn't be more delighted for all the great new friendships made and old friendships renewed. Thank you all for coming out to the Nature Center – it has been a great pleasure having you here! And a very special thank you to our small but dedicated staff, our many amazing volunteers, and our very generous supporters who make these wonderful things happen at Birdsong all through the year - none of this would be possible without you, and we could never say "thank you" enough.

Birdsong Nature Center turned 30 years old this year. We plan to celebrate the special occasion with a 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on October 9<sup>th</sup> and with a special Winter Solstice Celebration in December. We'll be contacting you later with details. We hope that you'll come help celebrate the occasion, and help mark the beginning of Birdsong's *Next 30 Years!*

Sincerely yours,  
Joe Peresich, Board Chair



**Put On Your Calendar  
Old-Timey Plant Sale  
Third Saturday in March  
March 18, 2017**

## **BUTTERFLY GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS**

What joy a butterfly garden can bring to our lives! We get to be delighted with the presence of the beautiful and fascinating butterflies while nurturing our own physical fitness, emotional and spiritual health. Since any butterfly garden is truly a pollinator garden, we also become acquainted with many species of other pollinators. I've counted 9 species on one plant at one time - little creatures I never knew existed!

We also make a significant difference for the survival of biodiversity. We have all heard of the drastic loss of monarch butterflies and honeybees. These represent the threats to survival of all of our pollinators, on which we depend for vegetable and fruit production. Honeybees were brought from Europe to pollinate our food crops, but recent research shows that the native pollinators are involved too. All of life is based on native plants and the insects that rely on them. As their numbers decline, so does all of biodiversity.

Why native plants? The essential insects that form the basis of the food chain and provide most of the pollinator services cannot reproduce without the native plants they evolved with. The decline of butterflies and other pollinators comes from habitat loss and the massive use of herbicides in farming (a good reason to avoid GMO's), on the roadsides and elsewhere. The good news is we can make a difference by planting natives in our yards!

A prosperous pollinator garden supports the adults with multiples of native nectar plants that bloom in succession through the seasons. You want there to be flowers blooming throughout the warm seasons. The adults can only lay their eggs on host plants that their caterpillars can eat, and this is very limited for many species. For example, monarch caterpillars can only eat milkweeds. No milkweeds, no reproduction, no further generations. This is true for most of the other pollinators, too: to support the reproduction of a wide variety of pollinators, we need to provide a variety of native host plants.

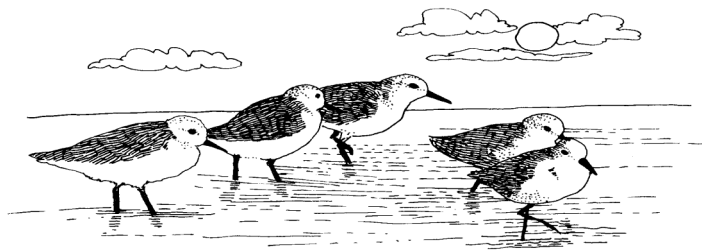
The good news is that many of the very best plants are trees. If you have native oaks, black cherry, plum, willows, crabapple, blueberries, maple, elm, pine, or hickory, hawthorn, basswood, or ash in your yard, you are already providing the very best food plants for Lepidoptera (butterfly and moth) larvae caterpillars. Did you know that 97% of baby birds can only eat insects and spiders, and caterpillars are their favorite? If you don't have any or many of such trees, one of the best things you can do for butterfly and bird reproduction is to plant some throughout your yard! In the pollinator garden, we need to emphasize other native host plants that have not been significantly modified. Recent research is showing that pollinators significantly prefer natural natives and can more successfully reproduce on them. This is also true for nectar plants. The nectar in cultivars is less nutritious and less desirable.

For monarchs we all need to phase out the use of tropical milkweed as natives become increasingly available. It is essential that we cut down to the ground no later than Thanksgiving all of the tropicals that we still have in our yards. There is a protozoan disease that harms monarchs which survives through the winter on the tropicals, then deforms or kills the next year's monarchs. I recently met a woman who had bought a tropical milkweed during the winter. She raises the caterpillars, and she found that most of them were deformed, and if they survived to adulthood, the adults were deformed, too.

It's a challenge to find the very best native host plants. You want to seek out native nurseries, online sources, and plant sales that provide them. The Birdsong Plant Sale offers many of the native trees needed for many species of pollinators. We are also developing a new section of other host plants for the sale. More on this later.

As you develop your butterfly garden, continue to think of other pollinators, too; think of nectar and native host plants. And be prepared to enjoy the beauty of nature and share it with your family and friends, especially any children in your life! We need to entice them from their screens to the richness of real life!

-Beth Wiggins Grant



**COASTAL BIRDING TRIP  
TO JOHN PHIPPS PRESERVE  
At Alligator Point  
Saturday, October 15  
9am or 10am (see directions) until noon**

Fall is a good time for coastal birding: the migration is in full swing and many species that were not here in the summer are either passing through or here to stay for the winter. We're likely to see Shorebirds (sandpipers, plovers, godwits, etc.), Seabirds (pelicans, terns, gulls), Raptors (ospreys, eagles, falcons), and some upland species. We will be birding along the shore of John Phipps Preserve, seasonal home to a number of imperiled bird species. Our leader is Mike Miller, who works with nesting and migratory shorebirds in Franklin County.

Wear comfortable shoes that can get wet, comfortable clothes and a functional hat. Binoculars, water bottle are a must; snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent, spotting scope, camera and field guide at your discretion. This is a walking tour on uneven sand; total distance about 1 ½-2 miles. Geared for adults.

Meet at 9:00AM at the Well's Fargo Bank parking lot at the intersection of South Monroe Street and Paul Russell Road, across the street from the Florida Fair Grounds entrance. You may carpool from there if there are other willing participants, or you can meet at the Phipps Preserve gate 10:00AM. Directions below.

This birding expedition will last till around noon. You can bring a lunch, or stop at Angelo's by the bridge or other good seafood restaurants in Panacea on the way home.

**RESERVATIONS, PLEASE.** Call or email to reserve your spot by noon on Friday, October 14th. There is a class limit of 12 adults. Bring cash for lunch, and to help with carpooling.

\$6.00 Friends, \$10.00 nonmembers.

**DIRECTIONS:** US 98 to Ochlockonee Bay, cross Ochlockonee River, to first paved road on left (Route 370), turn left and follow the road (Alligator Drive) to the end, just past the marina.

## EPHEMERAL WETLAND WALK

Saturday, October 1st  
9:30AM to noon or so

Join ecologists Rebecca and Ryan Means of Coastal Plains Institute for a Birdsong Ephemeral Wetland Walk! Rebecca and Ryan have over 20 years experience studying ephemeral wetlands in our area and will begin the program with a slideshow to share some of their pictures and knowledge. We will then head out to hike to a few wetlands and experience them first hand! We will learn amphibian larvae identification and sampling techniques as well as general natural history of wetland plants, reptiles, invertebrates and much more! This program is geared towards citizens of all ages, including young ones, but there will be walking involved. All equipment will be provided. Plan to get wet!

**RESERVATIONS, PLEASE.** There is a class limit of 20 people. Please contact us by noon on Friday, September 30 to reserve your space. Be prepared for walking several miles; wear shoes you can get wet; bring sun protection, water, and your lunch or a snack.

\$6 members adults, \$10 non-members, children half-price.

## TAKE A CHILD OUTSIDE WEEK

September 24 – September 30, 2016

**Take a Child Outside Week** is an international program designed to help overcome obstacles that keep children from discovering the natural world. By arming parents, teachers, and other caregivers with resources on outdoor activities, our goal is to help children across the country develop a better understanding and appreciation of the environment in which they live, and a burgeoning enthusiasm for its exploration. Going outside connects children to the natural world, helps kids focus in school and reduces chances of obesity. Please see this website: <http://takeachildoutside.org/> for more information.

## TAKE A CHILD OUTSIDE AT BIRDSONG

Saturday, September 17  
9:30-11:30AM

If you are a parent, grandparent, or friend of a child please join leader Sandra Sallee in anticipation of *Take A Child Outside Week* and take a child on a natural adventure at Birdsong. We will walk the trails where we may find evidence of deer, coyote, or other wildlife; see butterflies face-to-face; search for doodlebugs; and watch birds go about their daily activities at the Bird Window. We will practice using all our senses as we explore what nature has to offer. Sandra will then assist the children in making a nature-related craft to take home, possibly using any natural materials they have collected. This program is geared for children and accompanying adults who want to learn how to better share the wonders of nature with their favorite children. Resource material on outdoor activities will be provided.

\$4 Friends, \$8 nonmembers, children half-price. **RESERVATIONS PLEASE:** we ask that you register by phone or email by Friday noon on September 16 so we know how many people to prepare for. All memberships and renewals are \$5 off today - you may want to join or re-up so you can come back and enjoy more of Birdsong with your favorite child during Take a Child Outside Week or the rest of the year!

## WILD NEIGHBORS OF THE RED HILLS

Saturday, November 5,  
10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Live, native hawks and owls, a turtle and a snake — St. Francis Wildlife Association's wildlife ambassadors — will help education director Sandy Beck explain the unique adaptations that enable each to hunt and survive, the important roles they play in our Red Hills ecosystem, and what we can all do to help them. Your heart will be touched by their personal stories and inspired by their unique power and beauty. This 1 1/2 hour program includes hands-on teaching tools such as feathers, talons, skins and shells and interactive questioning and is suitable for families with school-aged children.

**RESERVATIONS PLEASE:** we ask that you register by phone or email by Friday noon on November 4. Dress for the weather. Bring a picnic if you would like to stay for lunch and explore Birdsong

\$4 member adults, \$8 non-members, children half-price.



## THOMASVILLE ANTIQUES SHOW FOUNDATION GRANT

We are very pleased to announce that Birdsong has received a special grant from the Thomasville Antiques Show Foundation (TASF) to assist us in our mission to expand educational opportunities and nature experiences for children this year. This support will allow us to:

- double our scheduled nature program offerings for children, to 12 per year.
- provide a series of field trips in partnership with the Thomasville Community Resource Center to give their students hands-on nature experiences at Birdsong
- provide a "Become a Natural Leader" training course to increase expertise and teaching skills for Birdsong volunteer program leaders and the staff of TCRC.

We are very honored to have received this gift, and extend our sincere thanks to the Board of Trustees of the TASF for providing the funding to enable Birdsong to better serve the children our community.

**Here is how you can get involved:** Birdsong needs an expanded cadre of well-trained volunteers to lead programs for children. We work with groups of school children, scouts, FFA, home school groups, church groups, and many others. Not having a full-time dedicated educator on staff, we rely on our volunteers to lead such groups, usually two leaders per program. If you would like to help Birdsong make a difference, and give our young people a high-quality learning experience outdoors, we are providing a multi-session training program this fall. We invite you to call or email to sign up for the Project WILD Workshop below, and schedule a screening interview with Executive Director Kathleen Brady. There is no charge for this training, thanks to our Thomasville Antiques Show Foundation funders, but we do require that participants agree to lead 5 programs in the coming year. Please note: most children's programs are scheduled during the week, so attendees must be able to volunteer on week days and occasionally on a Saturday.

### ***BECOME A NATURAL LEADER:*** **A Training Program for Volunteer Children's Program Leaders**

This is a 3-part training to be held in September, October, and November of 2016.

Part 1: A Project WILD Workshop, provided by Georgia Department of Natural Resources staff, see below.

Part 2: A 3-hour session at Birdsong Nature Center, including *How to Lead a Guided Nature Walk for Children*, and instruction on using Birdsong's trails, Bird Window, Butterfly Garden and Bluebird Trail. Educational materials provided. Date to be announced.

Part 3: A 3-hour plant and wildlife ID session onsite at Birdsong so volunteers may learn to identify our most common plants, birds, etc. Date to be announced.

### **Part 1: Project WILD** **Saturday, September 24, 9am to 4pm**

#### **Led by Georgia's Department of Natural Resources Education Staff**

This award winning and nationally recognized environmental education workshop is a day-long outdoor immersion in teaching natural principles through the use of environmental games and activities. An excellent instruction manual is included. This is an extraordinary program and it is a lot of fun for participants. Volunteers will come away inspired and energized, with some new friends and with all the tools they need to give children an appreciation and awareness of nature.

You may be a retired school teacher, or you may never have taken a child outdoors to learn, but this class and the subsequent sessions will give you the confidence and knowledge to lead a great kids' program. If you have been looking for a way to change the world for the better, you can start right here!

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED by Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.** Call (800)953-2473 or email Executive Director Kathleen Brady at [kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org) to sign up and schedule your screening interview or to request more information.

Dear Friends,

We are looking forward to seeing you at our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, October 9! We would be very interested in your reflections on this significant milestone for Birdsong and want to invite you to send us your reminiscences, observations, or comments about your experience of Birdsong over the years, what it has meant to you, how it has impacted your life, or that of someone you know. This may take the form of an essay, a note, a poem, artwork, video, music – whatever you are moved to do. We would like to compile these in some fashion in order to share them with your fellow Birdsong members at the Anniversary Celebration, by emails, or in upcoming newsletters.

Here is a poem about Birdsong written by co-founder Betty Komarek in 1994:

## The Wheel of Birdsong Nature Center

is formed of many spokes:  
our volunteers, now and over the years  
our board members, now and over the years  
our staff, now and over the years  
our members family, and friends, now and over the years.

The ability to keep our balance  
and roll forward  
depends  
on all the spokes.

There are no large or small ones  
all  
are equally necessary.

Praise and Thanks.

Blessed Be.

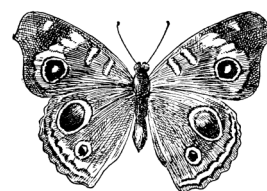
-bbk

**PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR!**  
**Birdsong's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party**  
**Sunday, October 9, 4 – 7pm or so**

We still have details to work out, but we want to invite you to our 30th Anniversary Celebration on October 9 at 4pm, behind the Barn. There will be music by *The Adventures of Annabelle Lyn*, nature walks, trailer rides, and old-fashioned games for the children. We are looking for a food truck to provide a meal, or you may bring a picnic and your favorite drinks. We will hear comments or stories from some of our prominent members over the years, and let you know about some of our plans for the *Next Thirty Years*. Members will receive an invitation with all the details in late September – we just wanted you to save the date!

## Here is a list of the butterflies seen on our August 6, 2016 trip to Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park with Dean and Sally Jue:

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail  
Cloudless Sulphur  
Little Yellow  
Gray Hairstreak  
Gulf Fritillary  
Zebra Heliconian  
Variegated Fritillary  
American Lady  
Common Buckeye  
Red-spotted Purple  
Long-tailed Skipper  
Dorantes Longtail  
Hoary Edge  
Golden Banded-Skipper  
Southern Cloudywing  
Horace's Duskywing  
Zarucco Duskywing  
Tropical Checkered-Skipper  
Clouded Skipper  
Fiery Skipper  
Southern Broken-Dash  
Zabulon Skipper  
Byssus Skipper  
Lace-winged Roadside-Skipper  
Ocola Skipper



**Thank you, Dean and Sally!**

**BUTTERFLY GARDEN WORK DAYS**  
**Thursdays, September 1 and October 6**  
**9:30AM to Noon**

Please join our Butterfly Garden volunteers on the first Thursday of the month to tend our beautiful Butterfly Garden! Bring gardening gloves, knee pads, clippers, and lunch if you wish to stay afterwards. For more information call Donna Legare at (850)386-1148 or Birdsong at (229)377-4408.

## VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Saturday, September 10

9:30AM to Noon

You can play a major role in Birdsong's *Next Thirty Years* by volunteering your time, energy, and expertise. Birdsong has a very small paid staff that has its hands a little too full! Your involvement can make a big difference to Birdsong's day-to-day operations and help us move ahead to exciting things!

There are many volunteer job opportunities available:

Expertise-based opportunities include: fundraising, teaching educational programs, marketing, technology support, artwork, photography and community outreach, among others.

For ongoing operational support year-round we need your help with:

The Bird Window - greeting visitors and helping them learn about birds and Birdsong

The Butterfly Garden and Bluebird Trail

Gardening around the house

Event support – event planning, parking, registration, set-up, tear-down, etc.

Hospitality – setting up/decorating for programs, holidays, greeting, baking, serving

Clerical support – stuffing envelopes, etc.

Building and equipment repairs, carpentry

Land management projects: invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, and prescribed burning.

*Right now, support of all kinds is needed and very welcome. We particularly need land management volunteers, program specialists/leaders (for adult and children's programs) and folks who can help us with our upcoming events on October 9<sup>th</sup> and the Winter Solstice on December 17<sup>th</sup>.*

*If you have fundraising experience, we'd like to talk to you: please call or email Executive Director Kathleen Brady at (800)953-2473 or [kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org).*

Please join us for a Volunteer Orientation session that will start with a discussion of Birdsong's history, mission, and legacy; its organizational structure; and its educational and land management philosophies. We will then tour the property by trailer to acquaint participants with our reason for being: the land, its plant communities and the wildlife they support. We will conclude with a tour of the Bird Window, gardens, and historic buildings.

We ask that participants make appointments that day for an interview with Director Kathleen Brady, so we may learn more about your interests in order to place you. We are happy to offer training for any volunteer position and our staff and many veteran volunteers are available for ongoing training and support. You need not start out as an expert.

We can guarantee that as a Birdsong volunteer, you will get to meet some wonderful people, you will be making a big difference, you will learn something new every time you come out, you will be appreciated and honored for your contribution, and most important: it will be fun!

No charge. **RESERVATIONS, PLEASE.** Please call or email the office to sign up by Friday, September 9th. Class limit: 15 people. Continental breakfast included. Dress for the weather.

## WILDFLOWER WALK

Sunday, October 16

2 – 4PM

Join native plant enthusiast Beth Grant on a leisurely walk to enjoy Birdsong's fall wildflower display. Beth was inspired many years ago by our friend Don Hill, who first fell in love with Birdsong when he came out every few days in the fall to observe the progression of blooming. If you attend the October 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, you can go on a nature walk with Beth and see the flowers, then come back the following week to see how the flowering has progressed. Beth is a knowledgeable leader and will take you to the most colorful spots on Birdsong. This time of year our fields erupt in gold and purple, and Beth can help you identify these beautiful native wildflowers.

\$4 members, \$8 non-members, children half-price. Dress for the weather and bring your camera!



## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT NOTES

August 13, 2016

**Weather** We are in the August doldrums, very ready for the change of seasons that is gradually beginning to happen. The sun's trajectory has angled south, so there is a slight shift in how the day looks; it is barely perceptible, but it is happening. The heat and humidity feel just the same, if not more intense, however. We have a long way to go before things start to cool off.

There have been some major rain events in the past two months. In June we got 5.71 inches of rainfall, and in August, 3.15 inches ten days ago and 2.95 inches the day before yesterday. The ground is still saturated and water is flowing over all the dam spillways. The beavers have gotten busy again, actively building after a dry spell between flooding events when no water was flowing and there was nothing for them to do. I wonder how beavers spend their leisure time...

The vegetation is thriving. As soon as Chuck gets the 12 miles of trails mowed, they need mowing again. We have several brushy areas in the woods that we planned to bush-hog this summer, but have learned from experience that the woods floor needs to be quite dry to go in with the heavy tractor and mowing rig. Over the years, Chuck has encountered a number of undetectable soft spots where the tractor has suddenly bogged down. Not an enjoyable thing, and it involves a lot of work getting out. We will wait for drier weather to cut those areas.

**The Upper Pond and Farm Pond** With all our rain, the ponds and swamp have remained nearly full all summer and the aquatic plants are healthy and blooming. In the Upper Pond, Spadderdock pads are bank to bank and extending their round yellow flowers above the surface. In the Farm Pond, two carnivorous *Utricularia* species are in full bloom, with abundant tiny pink and yellow flowers - it is really pretty and makes the entire pond look rather festive. There are several patches of Fragrant Water Lily, with its beautiful pure white flowers and typical lily pads at either end of the Farm Pond. The most abundant aquatic plant is Water-shield, or *Brasenia*, the one with the small oval-shaped pads. At first glance you might take this ubiquitous plant for granted, but here is what I found in Wikipedia:

“*Brasenia* exhibits wind pollination. The flowers have a two-day blooming period. On the first day, the functionally female, or pistillate flower, extends above the surface of the water and exposes the receptive stigmas. The flower then recedes below the water surface and on the following day emerges as a functionally male, or staminate flower. It is elevated higher than on the previous day and the anther-bearing filaments are extended beyond the female carpels.<sup>[9]</sup> The anthers dehisce, releasing the pollen, and the flower is then withdrawn below the water where the fruit develops.”

Flowers emerging and receding? Changing from female to male one day to the next? Amazing. It is blooming now through September, so you will have a chance to see these

intriguing maroon flowers across the entire surface of the Farm Pond. Another interesting plant is Lemon Bacopa – there is a patch right by the gravel spillway on the east side of the Upper Pond dam. The flowers are an intense blue. When you go see them, break off a short stem and crush it with your fingers – it gives off a delightful lemon scent. A fascinating world awaits you at the Farm Pond! And we haven't even gotten started on the invertebrates! Plus.....

One more very odd Farm Pond finding: Alan Parker visits the pond almost daily to check on beaver activity. About ten days ago at the Farm Pond spillway at the west end, about two feet out into the shallow water he saw what appeared to be part of a leg and foot of a hog, mostly bone, apparently eaten. It was only about 12 inches long. He took photos, and there was no question – it had to be in the pig family. Going there myself a few days later, all that was left were two bones in the mud; the distinctive foot with hooves was gone. We have a small gator that lives in that part of the pond, so he may have been nibbling, but he isn't large enough to have taken a hog that size, even though it was small.

This is a mystery, because we do not have wild hogs at Birdsong. The hogs in the area live over by the river across Meridian Road and north of us, quite a ways off. They have been hunted there, local folks eat them, and we know from our neighbors that they can get really large, hundreds of pounds. We once found hog hair in coyote scat on the place right after a neighbor had killed and butchered a huge wild hog that had been destroying another neighbor's grape arbor. Coyotes are wide-ranging, so that coyote may have indulged in scraps from that occurrence and then traveled to Birdsong. That has been our closest connection to the wild hogs by the river. So, it is a mystery. How did a really small hog get preyed upon, and by whom, and transported to our Farm Pond. Let us know what you think.

**Raccoons** A young mother raccoon has been bringing her three offspring to the Bird Window these last few months. It has been enormously entertaining. Except for gray squirrels, raccoons are one of the few mammals that will actually come close to humans in broad daylight and let us observe them going about their business. This mother raccoon is quite small, and she knows exactly what she is doing – she shows up with babies in tow and takes full advantage of all the Window has to offer. Her first stop is the black oil sunflower seed on the stump. She climbs up and starts shoveling – she can consume a tremendous amount of seed in a short period of time. The babies will attempt to climb up and join her, but she will only put up with one of them at a time on the stump, if that. When all that seed is gone, she stands up on her hind legs and pulls the Betty Feeder over, holds it with one hand and puts her nose inside, and shovels with the other hand. When that seed is gone, she gets down and climbs up onto the bamboo feeder along the edge of the Window, and cleans that out. Next, she proceeds to the corn disc and eats until she is full. She is quite strong and will lift up that metal harrow disc and move it to get at the corn that has fallen underneath.



All the while she is eating, the three babies are doing their best to keep up and are hungry little eaters in their own right. These youngsters have grown a lot in the past month, and their mother is clearly setting more stringent boundaries – she runs them off if they get too close, and they get the message.

Once lunch is over, they often go cool off in the pool. Mom will settle herself in and relax, chin at water level, tail afloat. The babies all join in and the pool fills up with striped tails and little furry faces! You can tell they are enjoying themselves. One morning, all four had a dip first, sitting under the mister. When they came over to the stump and feeders, in that morning sunlight, they all appeared to be dusted in glitter – the mist adhered to their fur and reflected tiny pinpoints of light – it was magical.

They are really beautiful creatures. They have such a unique, kind of rolling walking gait; their striped tails are huge and they handle their food very delicately. Their faces are endearing, with the black masks and bright black eyes – there is obvious intelligence there. We have enjoyed observing them and wish them well. We do have a concern, of course, that they are becoming somewhat dependent on the Bird Window, and getting used to being around people, if only through the Window. We will start chasing them away if we think they are getting too comfortable, but for now Mama is in charge and we trust her judgment. She has done a great job so far.

**The Pear Tree** Next to the Barn stands an old pear tree; Betty called it a sand pear. The fruit is very firm when ripe, very flavorful, but almost crisp and very gritty. Betty used to make a marvelous cooked “applesauce” out of these pears in the late summer. In spring we are thrilled when the old pear tree blooms because we don’t know how long this tree will live, so its blooming is something to celebrate. This typically happens right before the Plant Sale and it happens fast: white flowers cover the tree and within days, it starts snowing petals that blow all over the House Pasture.

We also love to see this tree at this time of year when it is in full fruit and every branch is loaded down with dozens of pears. You are welcome to have some. They aren’t the best for eating out of hand, but try cooking them the way Betty did and you will be pleased. The deer love them too; we find lots of partly eaten pears on the lowest branches and on the ground where the ripe ones have fallen. Be alert when you approach the tree because wasps and bees are attracted to the rotting fruit on the ground.

This abundance of pears is also attracting other attention. Yesterday I saw something I have never seen before. Driving past the Barn on my way out to the Farm Pond, there were about 5 crows up in the pear tree. They flew off and the I didn’t think much about it, but on the way back, there they were again, about a third of the way from the top. So I stopped and got out the binoculars to see better what they were doing, and they were eating pears! As soon as they realized I was watching, they flew off, so I looked around the tree and lots and lots of pears had holes in them!

Even better, there were three Red-headed Woodpeckers flying from pear to pear, eating; and a Pileated Woodpecker, awkwardly hanging on to a heavily laden branch, hammering away on a pear! So a lot is going on up in that tree. We will definitely be checking to see who has come by to take advantage of a tree loaded with pears.

**The Bird Window** Our summer resident birds are enjoying the Bird Window. We have got more baby Cardinals this year than I can remember. The other morning, there were fourteen of them, on the stump, on the bamboo, on the corn, on the suet feeder, in the water and in between. The Cardinal population is dealing once again with mites, as they do every summer, which causes them to lose feathers on the head, making them look a little moth-eaten, plus the babies are molting and in various stages of color change, so it makes for a somewhat motley assortment. We also had a Blue Jay Moment yesterday, when seven jays were there at one time; there were only two parents and the rest were juveniles learning to feed themselves. Our other regulars include a juvenile Brown Thrasher, four different Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Chickadees, Carolina Wrens, Towhees, Titmice, and our Red-bellied Woodpecker quartet who are intensely fond of suet. The young male hammers on the metal edge of the roof if Mirhi, bringing seed and suet, doesn’t get there soon enough to suit him. There are several pairs of Bobwhite Quail who come regularly to eat corn, and rarely, we get to see an Eastern Bluebird in the pool.

It is fun to feed the birds this time of year because all of them are so used to us and they show up the minute we arrive. They don’t wait for us to leave to get started, they just tuck in and make all these little satisfied sounds while we are doing the finishing touches. It is a very nice way to start the day, in the company of birds...

We hope that you are enjoying your summer and have taken every opportunity to be outside. Yes it is hot and humid, but there are always discoveries to be made and wonders to be found, especially if you have someone to share them with. We want to thank our summer program leaders and all of you who came out and enjoyed playing in the pond, finding amazing insect life, investigating gopher tortoise burrows, and encountering wonderful birds – that Common Yellowthroat that sang so beautifully on Marvin’s birding walk comes to mind. We will be closing for the last two weeks in August, but we will look forward to seeing you in September. By then, we will be enjoying our Indian Summer and know that cool weather and fall wildflowers are on the way.

KDB



## BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER WISHES TO THANK:

### *Our Very Special Program Volunteers*

Marvin Collins, for *Summer Morning Birding*

Dave, Lucas and Justine Almquist, for *Bugs, Bugs, Bugs!*

Dean and Sally Jue, for the *Butterfly Field Trip to Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park*

Sandra Sallee, for leading *Take a Child Outside for a Natural Scavenger Hunt!*,

### *Special Financial Gifts*

Terry Ward and Judith Barrett

### *Special Thanks To:*

Winnie and Wolfgang Adolph, for ongoing improvements in the Birdsong gift shop and for researching and ordering new inventory. Thank you too, for helping correct our computer and server problems.

Nancy Ann Thomas, for looking after the Bird Window and taking good care of the birds.

Bob Dunne, for the beautiful bird photos.

Alan Strowd, special thanks for his accounting expertise and support on the Finance Committee, and for volunteering at the Bird Window.

The Candelario and Albritton families, our home school group from Valdosta, who come out every month to work and play hard in the heat and keep our garden in good shape.

Alan Parker, for providing site, garden, and land management support and beaver dam de-construction.

Joe Peresich, for his special donations to Birdsong, for ongoing improvements to our Facebook page, and for continued website and Paypal management.

Birdsong's Board of Directors, for their commitment and hard work.

Tami Tomasello, for being our social media coordinator and managing our Twitter site so expertly.

Myles Black and Bob Bearss, for ongoing summer Bluebird Monitoring.

Butterfly Garden volunteers Donna Legare, Bob Bearss, Beth Grant, Myles Black, Jan Blue, Yvonne Stinson, Connie Lechnar and George McEntire. Thanks to all for the keeping the Butterfly Garden beautiful!

## THE BIRDSONG NEWSLETTER AND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

We are planning to switch from a hard-copy newsletter to an electronic one early in 2017. This will save on paper, printing and mailing expenses. We also will be sending more email updates on current events, nature sightings and other Birdsong news, so we want to be sure we have your correct email address on file. Please take a moment to email Mirhi in the Birdsong office at [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org) so she can make certain you are on our list and won't miss any upcoming messages. If you do not use email, please give us a call at (800)953-2473 and we will be happy to make arrangements for you to receive a newsletter. Thank you!

### **Birdsong Nature Center**

#### **Board of Directors**

**2015-2016**

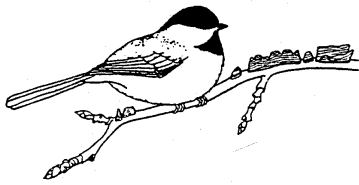
<b>President</b>	Joe Peresich
<b>Secretary</b>	Margie McInnes
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bill Preston

#### **Directors**

Jim Antista	Brenda Coy
Woody Search	Joe Newborn
Ellery Sedgwick	

### **BIRDSONG'S CORPORATE SPONSORS**

Hopping, Green & Sams, PA  
May Nursery  
Monrovia Growers of Georgia  
Native Nurseries  
O'Toole's Herb Farm  
Trillium Gardens  
Deerwood, LLC  
Barrett, Fasig & Brooks  
Carroll and Company, CPAs  
Import Authority  
Thomasville National Bank  
Private Wealth Management & Consulting, LLC  
South GA Low Cost Spay & Neuter Clinic  
Seminole Alterations



# Birdsong Nature Center

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_

New     Renewal

Credit Card     Check     Cash     Paypal

Credit Card Account #   

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Amount Authorized \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Authorization No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please print clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Primary (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Alt (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Training, experience, interests: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about Birdsong? From a member of Birdsong, the news media, word of mouth, our newsletter, etc?

Please be specific: \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like to join the Friends of Birdsong in the following category:

- Individual Friend                      \$30      Bird Window and Nature Trails free during open hours.  
Two free one-time guest passes.  
Member discount on scheduled programs.  
10% discount on items at the Chickadee Corner Gift Shop.  
Bimonthly newsletter. Reciprocal general admission at  
participating nature centers nationwide (call for list).
- Family/Friends                              \$45      All of the above benefits for each member of the immediate  
household. Four free one-time guest passes.
- Friends of the Cardinal                      \$60      Five free one-time guest passes in addition to above.
- Friends of the Chickadee                      \$100     Six free one-time guest passes in addition to above.
- Business/Corporate Friend    \$100-\$1,000    One free one-time guest pass for each \$10 of membership  
(ie., 25 passes for \$250) and recognition in newsletter.  
Call for more information.
- Friends of the Hummingbird                  \$250     Hummingbird feeder in addition to above.
- Friends of the Bluebird                      \$500     Bluebird nesting box in addition to above.
- Birdsong Naturalist                          \$1,000    Personal tour of Birdsong with Executive Director and/or Board Chair  
for up to 6 people. Call for more information.

I do not wish to receive any (above) benefits with my membership and would like the whole amount tax deductible.

### I would like to support Birdsong by volunteering to help as follows:

- |   |   |                                      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Window Instructor   | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Development            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/legal guidance | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations               | _____                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund raising             | <input type="checkbox"/> Serve on Board of Directors    | _____                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greeter                  | (please submit resume)                                  | _____                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Shop Assistant      | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching (birds, nature walks, | _____                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Management          | stars, etc.)  | _____                                |

Memberships are renewable one year after the sign-up date. Members can upgrade to a higher category membership by sending the balance within the year. Memberships are deductible in part, depending on the value of goods and services received. Please call for information. Receipts stating the value provided and the deductible amount will be sent to those joining at the \$100 or higher level.

# NEW FRIENDS OF BIRDSONG

## **Tallahassee**

Karyn and John Roberts  
Brenda Abstein  
Sarah Cheatham  
Stephanie Sunderman-Barnes  
Nancy M Davis

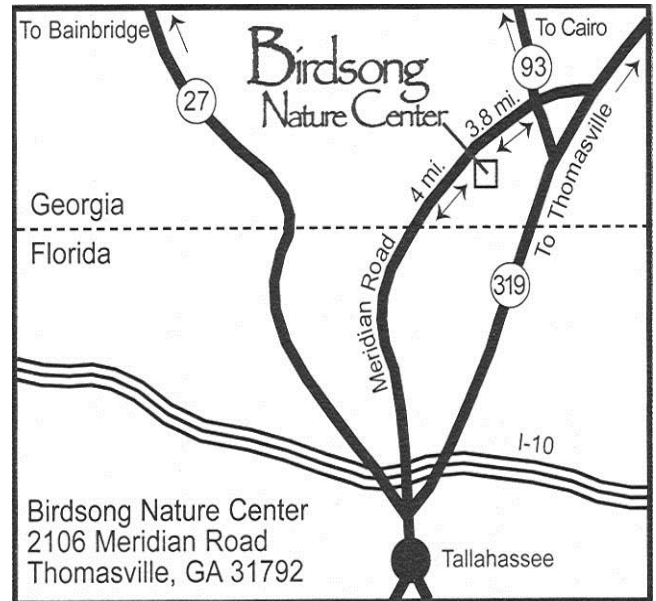
## **Thomasville**

Jennifer Newcombe  
Julie Spence

## **Other Areas:**

Joette Marley  
Catherine Flocks and Nancy Tucker  
Nevin Baggett  
William Stafford

Atlanta, GA  
Crawfordville, FL  
Monticello, FL  
Havana, FL



### DIRECTIONS:

From Tallahassee: Meridian Road north, 4 miles past FL/ GA border (marked by a blue sign that reads Grady Co.), on right side of road. OR 319 north, turn left onto Rt. 93, then turn left onto Meridian Road, 3.8 miles on left side of road.

From Thomasville: 319 south, turn right at Marathon gas station onto Meridian Road, approximately 5 miles from Marathon or 3.8 miles from stop sign at Rt. 93, on left side of road.

Watch for small sign that reads "Birdsong".

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TALLAHASSEE, FL  
Permit No. 660

Birdsong Nature Center  
2106 Meridian Road  
Thomasville, GA 31792  
Address Service Requested