

Birdsong Nature Center

March-April, 2025

TRAILS AND BIRD WINDOW OPEN WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS

*Hours: Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays 9 to 5
Sundays 1 to 5*

March

- Sat. Mar. 1 Free Family Day
- Wed. Mar. 5 Butterfly Garden Workday
- Mar. 5 Land Management Workday
- Sat. Mar. 15 Spring Plant Sale
- Wed. Mar. 19 Land Management Workday
- Sat. Mar. 29 Spring Plant Sale

April

- Wed. Apr. 2 Land Management Workday
- Thur. Apr. 3 Butterfly Garden Workday
- Sat. Apr. 5 Free Family Day
- Apr. 5 Forest Therapy Walk
- Sat. Apr. 12 Spring Trail Ride
- Wed. Apr. 16 Land Management Workday
- Sat. Apr. 26 Take a Child Outside in the Springtime
- Wed. Apr. 30 Land Management Workday

BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER
WEB SITE: www.birdsongnaturecenter.org
EMAIL: birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org
X: @BirdsongNatureC
FACEBOOK: Birdsong Nature Center
YOUTUBE: Birdsong Nature Center
PHONE: 229-377-4408

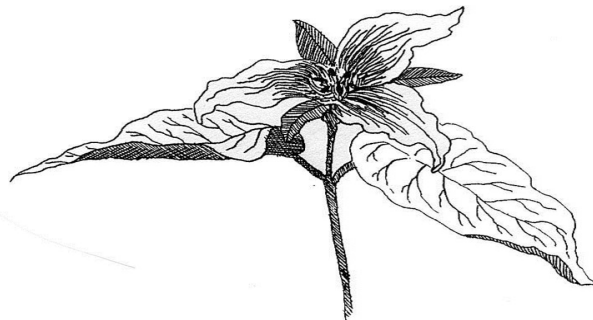
Please, no pets on Nature Center property.

Admission: members, free; non-member adults, \$5.00; children 4-12, \$2.50

Dear Friends,

We are extremely pleased to announce that thanks to all of you, we have exceeded our 2024 Buildings Appeal goal of \$60,000! We have received 97 gifts totaling \$61,920 and have been very touched by your generosity, kindness, and commitment to Birdsong. Now we can move forward with our plans to put a new roof on the iconic Barn, complete the renovations on Roy's House to make it habitable for rental or another useful purpose, and upgrade the outdoor restrooms for the benefit of our visitors. We could not do this without your support, so please accept our heartfelt thanks for your important contributions. Through you, we can continue our stewardship of Birdsong's valuable resources. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Joe Peresich
Board of Directors



SPRING PLANT SALES
Saturdays, March 15 and March 29
9am – 1pm

It is almost time for Birdsong's Spring Plant Sales. This is our 18th year of Old-Timey Plant Sales, and we will offer two: the first will be on Saturday, March 15th from 9:00am to 1:00pm and the second will be on Saturday, March 29th from 9:00am to 1:00pm. We plan on two sales in case we lose one to bad weather, and to give our plant shoppers a choice of dates. We will hold back some of the plants for the second sale, so the March 29 event will have a fine new selection of plants, not picked-over leftovers from the 15th.

As always, we have hundreds of wild azaleas in three sizes. We have the usual pink and white canescens azaleas and the yellow-gold austrinum, plus many rare and unusual hybrids. Thanks to a generous donation we will once again have an old-timey favorite, golden hurricane lily bulbs. We will have hundreds of native perennial plants, some of which will be in bloom for one or both sale dates. We hope you'll come out on the 15th or 29th of March and enjoy a spring day at Birdsong while you shop for beautiful and interesting plants to enhance your garden.

Admission to the entire Nature Center is free of charge on both sale days. Come and walk the trails, visit the Bird Window and Gift Shop, and take home some special plants!

- June White
Plant Sale Chair

“BIRDS OF A FEATHER” QUILT

A fundraising raffle
Drawing on Saturday, March 29th, at 1pm
Need not be present to win
\$5 per ticket

Our dear friend and talented volunteer Faith Hazelip has donated another beautiful quilt to Birdsong, similar in size and design to last year's "Feathered Friends" quilt. She would like to see it used to raise funds for the Center. We will raffle it off at the second Birdsong Plant Sale on Saturday, March 29th at 1pm. Raffle tickets are available and the quilt can be seen at the Birdsong greeting station from now until March 29th. The quilt is throw-sized, at 54 x 66 inches. It is very colorful and has a central panel displaying images of four local songbirds - Carolina Chickadee, American Robin, Common Yellowthroat, and Eastern Bluebird— in a repeating pattern, all surrounded by a pale green and gold patterned border. It is beautiful and would make a lovely spring-time gift for someone special, perhaps your favorite bird enthusiast!

For more information and raffle rules call (229)377-4408.

GIFT SHOP NOTE

Now that our new gift shop is up and running, we plan to have it open on Plant Sale Days. After you have done your plant shopping, feel welcome to visit the gift shop at the House and have a look at some of our new items. In addition to the new Birdsong T-shirts, we now have totes and aprons with the Purple Martin design!

BUTTERFLY GARDEN WORKDAYS

Wednesday, March 5th

Thursday, April 3rd

9 to 11 AM

The Birdsong Butterfly Garden's seasonal cycles help define the type of work the team of gardeners undertakes each month. Plants are mostly dormant in winter, so in January the group removed tree seedlings and some yaupon holly from flower beds, raked paths, and mulched native azaleas. In February, they shifted their efforts from the Butterfly Garden to invasive species removal close to the house. While a Native Nurseries crew tackled large trees like invasive camphor, ligustrum and loquat, the Butterfly Gardeners went after smaller shrubs, trees, and berry-producing non-natives such as nandina and coral ardisia. In March and April, work will shift back to the Garden, and it will be time to prune back old growth to make way for new spring sprouts.

If you visit the Butterfly Garden this spring, you may notice a few changes. In an effort to keep maintenance manageable and concentrate more intensive cultivation of pollinator plants to fewer beds, some beds will now be mowed once or twice a year to promote meadows of native grasses. Some additional native trees or shrubs may be added in the future.

The gardening group usually meets on the first Thursday of the month, *but in March they will meet on the first Wednesday, March 5th*. They then will go back to the first Thursday in April. Volunteers are always welcome. No gardening experience is necessary, just a desire to work alongside friendly folks and pick up a wealth of plant and pollinator knowledge at the same time. Bring gardening gloves, your favorite gardening tools and a water bottle. Pack a lunch if you wish to stay afterwards.

Contact Donna Legare (dlegare@comcast.net; (850) 386-1148 or Birdsong (229) 377-4408 if you have any questions.

FREE FAMILY DAYS

First Saturdays: March 1 and April 5

On first Saturdays of the month admission is free and we offer a \$5-off membership special. If you know of any families who have never been to Birdsong, please let them know about this opportunity. This is a nice chance for first-time visitors to enjoy the trails, get to know the property, hike the trails, and visit the Bird Window and Butterfly Garden. Scheduled programs that occur on these days do have a fee.

Admission: free



LAND MANAGEMENT WORKDAYS

Wednesdays: March 5 and 19, April 2, 16, and 30

9am to noon

This time of year, we are focusing on getting ready for burning in specific locations and will be raking around snags and clearing firelanes. Please be prepared for the weather and bring work gloves and any favorite tools. There will be water and a snack on the truck; bring a sandwich if you want to have lunch together afterwards and Birdsong will provide drinks and dessert.

Please note: If the weather turns out to be good for burning on a scheduled workday, we will pivot to doing a burn, *and that means meeting at a different time of day*, so do let us know in advance if you are planning to attend so you can be informed of any potential time and activity change. It will also help us prepare for lunch in case you want to join us. Please contact us at 229-377-4408 or email kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org. Thank you!

FOREST THERAPY WALK
With Laura Poorman
Saturday, April 5, 1-3:30 pm

Forest therapy walks offer a unique experience compared to traditional nature hikes. Lasting 1.5 or 2 hours and covering a relatively short distance, these walks enable participants to feel a deeper connection to nature. The experiences encountered during such walks can be profoundly meaningful and even life changing.

Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion in nature, forests, and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land. It is inspired by Shinrin-yoku, the Japanese practice of “Forest Bathing.” Forest Therapy focuses on fostering a reciprocal relationship between the forest and the practitioner. It provides a clearly defined sequence of guided events to allow for creativity and serendipity while embracing individual inspiration. Birdsong Nature Center offers an ideal place for this practice.

Laura Poorman is a Forest Therapy Guide certified through the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy. She encourages us to slow down and experience nature in a variety of ways: “As we slowly wander Birdsong’s beautiful property, I will offer a set of carefully crafted invitations to engage all our senses. There will be moments of sharing, reflection, and we will end our time with a tea ceremony. This is not a hike; this is a slow-paced meander through nature.”

“Please prepare and dress for the weather. Bring water and a snack as needed. Perhaps bring a small blanket, yoga mat, or pad to use to sit on the ground. Bring a stool or chair if needed. Please wear footwear suitable for walking outside. I guide walks in the rain as long as there is no lightning or severe weather. Please dress for wet weather as needed. I find the rain is another part of nature and the experience.”

\$30 per person. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED, please. Call 229-377-4408 or email lynn@birdsongnaturecenter.org by noon on Friday, April 4th to reserve your space. Minimum class size, 5; maximum, 15 people.

SPRING TRAIL RIDE
Saturday, April 12th
10:00 – 11:30AM

Join us for a mid-morning trail ride to experience Birdsong in springtime. We will point out birds, flowering plants, and signs of wildlife as we go. We will make stops to discuss Birdsong’s history, ecology, and land management, and visit places such as the Gin House Field’s Star Pasture, longleaf pine planting, and others. We will also discuss the significance of the conservation easement recently placed on the property.

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE. Please call by noon on Friday April 11th to reserve a space. We will be taking the truck and trailer and there is room for 12 people. Be prepared to be outdoors for several hours; dress for the weather and bring binoculars. We’ll have a cold drink on the back porch afterwards and you can visit the Bird Window.

\$15 Friends, \$18 nonmembers, children half-price.

TAKE A CHILD OUTSIDE
In the Springtime!
Saturday, April 26
9:30 – Noon

Celebrate our recent Earth Day (April 22) and the wonders of springtime with your favorite child or children. Leaders Sandra Sallee and Carolyn Cohen will take you on a natural adventure in the woods at Birdsong. To honor this special time of year, give an ongoing gift to your child: an appreciation of the Earth, our home; a better understanding of where they live; and the use of all their senses at this lively time of year. Walk the trails and search for evidence of animal homes, signs of their presence, and springtime behavior. The birds will be singing and feeding babies! Enjoy the fresh air, some exercise, and explore nature with your child in the great outdoors. After the walk Sandra and Carolyn will help your child make several natural crafts they can keep and enjoy.

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE. Call or email by noon on Friday, April 25th to reserve your space.

\$7 Friends, \$9 nonmembers, children half-price. Includes a handout and resource list for year-round activities with children.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT NOTES

February 11, 2025

Weather: The Ice Storm Our part of the world experienced a once-in-a-lifetime weather event overnight on Tuesday, January 21. We had plenty of warning that an extraordinary storm was coming our way, bringing heavy snow and sleet, with temperatures in the high teens. The snowfall started in the evening after dark, with snow soon being replaced by sleet. The sound was memorable – the tiny plinking of each pellet as it landed, in the millions, resulting in a 3-inch blanket of compacted, angular little ice diamonds across the entire landscape. Waking up the next morning to this unfamiliar world of white was astonishing.

I know each of us has a story we'll remember from that day. Where I live in Tallahassee, there is a long wide grassy slope down to the street and it soon became the place for all the neighborhood children to go sledding, using anything at hand that would slide. My neighbor and her children were using a yoga mat, a baking sheet, a swimming innertube, and best of all for the 7-year old, a laundry basket. It was absolutely delightful to watch; I don't think I've ever seen happier kids. Quite a few older kids and adults came to play, too – on a beautiful sunny ice cold day – what a gift from Mother Nature!

As much fun as this was, it was hard on our Birdsong staff to have to stay home. We all desperately wanted to go see what the snow and ice was like at Birdsong. Of course, no one needed to be out driving on ice-covered roads, and it was being strongly discouraged in Tallahassee. Grady County officials declared a state of emergency and put a two-day curfew on any travel so none of us could go to work until Friday morning. With the storm over, the sun coming out, and temperatures rising, the ice began to melt, making driving conditions better. Alan got in early that Friday after some nerve-racking driving on the remaining heavily iced stretches of Meridian Road. He found no damage to property and toured the trails to check on things. Fortunately, he got some very nice photos before the melting set in that day. Lynn came in early too and took a wonderful series of photos of the ice around the house and gardens – you may have seen them; we posted them on Facebook. I waited until early afternoon, concerned about getting out of Tallahassee safely, and by then things were not too bad on the roads.

Even with the melting that had already happened, Birdsong was a magical sight. All that white! Going up the driveway, it was white but for the tire tracks. I had a look around the gardens and then went for a walk to document what remained. On the trails past

the Barn, through the Gin House, to Big Bay Dam, and around the Farm Pond there were long white expanses of now-solid ice to crunch through, with the forest floor still white in many places. The Star Pasture was a series of concentric circles of white, where the snow had not yet melted in the impressions of the mower wheels. The experience was uplifting, yet very poignant somehow, perhaps because of the impermanence of something so beautiful, soon to be gone.

Two significant things struck me on this walk. The first thing that impressed me deeply was the ice itself. I've already mentioned the exquisite sound the pellets made when falling. Light little clinking tones as each one made its landing. In every photo I took, including close-ups, it is clear that this blanket of white is made up of individual particles of ice, 1 or 2 millimeters across. Each one is brilliant and shapely and sparkling in the sunlight. Then to realize that this enormous storm we had and the expanses of ice that we're admiring are actually a collective of individual miniscule crystals. Isn't water amazing?

The second thing is: there were so many animal tracks! We don't get to see tracks much at all here because most of our trails are mowed grass. We do get to see tracks on the clay parts of our roads after it rains. So getting to see how many deer had been moving along the trails and through the woods was amazing, and a confirmation that we have a very nice population of White-tailed Deer at Birdsong! There were also other interesting tracks and sign. On the Holly Woods trail there was a very distinct line of large bobcat tracks, leading from the Woods across an open trail and then into the Letz Mill Woods. In several places there were squirrel tracks, where the animal had come down a tree, scouted around, and then gone back up again. There was also evidence here and there of tiny creatures, perhaps mice, who emerged from a hole in the snow, scampered across the surface making barely visible tracks and then disappeared into another hole. There were also tracks of a bird, not tiny, about the size of a Blue Jay, that had left its mark on the trail. In several places it appeared that small to medium-sized mammals had relieved themselves, and there was scat that might have been fox. This tells us how much wildlife activity we do not get to witness directly on a regular basis. Thanks to the snowstorm we got to see evidence of the wildlife we work so hard for, doing our best to manage the land well and keep Birdsong going so they will have the habitat they need.

Apart from the immediate impacts of the storm, it now seems that the rest of our winter was condensed intensely into those few days. Ever since, we've had unseasonably warm weather and now trees and plants

such as redbud and southern red maple are acting like winter is over and are blooming. It is still too early and very disorienting. That extraordinary storm won't be forgotten any time soon.

The Bird Window Much to our surprise, an Ovenbird showed up last year before the holidays and is now seen almost daily at the Window. On some days, there are two! It is interesting that they spend so much time here, since they aren't here for the seed or corn. These warblers are entertaining to watch; they explore all corners of the Bird Window area, checking around in the gravel with their odd, hopping gait. They are most noticeable for the dark orange and black stripe on their heads, very distinctive. They have a dark-spotted breast, almost thrush-like, with an olive-brown back and a white eye ring. They are very appealing, and not terribly shy, although they do love to hide in the camellia by the pool. This is the first year that we've had more than one, and for such an extended time. The White-throated Sparrows have also been coming to the Window since last year, and now there are several, in fact one day Lynn saw 5 of them at one time. The males are getting into their courtship plumage; the white throats and yellow lores really stand out, even without binoculars.

Other winter residents we enjoy seeing are the Hermit Thrushes – there have been many of them out on the trails this year – and our beloved Gray Catbirds. Lynn has been placing sprigs of yaupon berries by the pool and the Catbirds and Thrushes enjoy them immensely. So does the American Robin we see from time to time. Other interesting birds listed by visitors at the Window include Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Song Sparrow, Eastern Wood Phoebe, Chipping Sparrow, Pine Warbler, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

The year-round residents who typically come by daily include the Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Blue Jay, Northern Cardinal, Brown Thrasher, American Crow, and Carolina Wren.

Bats For the last three years we have told you stories about our two tiny Eastern Pipistrelle bats that we found roosting on very cold nights. This took place from late December until the end of March. It was always delightful, always a learning experience. We started to check for them after mid-December last year, and found one bat on only one occasion, the little male. After getting back from the holidays, we began checking regularly and we are sorry to report that we have not seen a single bat at all in the new year, even after the ice storm. We do not know where they have gone or what has happened to them. We are just disappointed and a bit sad not to see them again. They really captured our hearts and were very entertaining to observe. As you may recall, the little female had a strong personality and would reach over and push and rotate her partner around as he was hanging from one foot; she'd

stretch out her wings and yawn and preen on our brief visits. We'll keep watching in case they do show up. We really miss them.

Land Management Alan has been working hard over the winter to get the fencerows and perimeter line trimmed and cleared of brush and overhanging branches. This will allow him to get in there easily with the tractor to harrow so we can get started on our cool season burning. The harrowed line around the property, a legal requirement for burning, is a fuel-free band of bare harrowed earth that provides a barrier to fire. Our hardworking Land Management volunteers have been coming out regularly to help with these burn prep activities and we are now finished with this phase, so harrowing can begin! Alan and the crew have also been raking around our desirable old snags – they are valuable nesting and feeding habitat for woodpeckers, nuthatches and even chickadees. We go to a lot of trouble each season to protect these dead trees from fire. It is worth it – yesterday we got to see and hear two Red-headed Woodpeckers on a beautiful old snag south of the House Pasture. Between raking around them in advance of burning and then spraying them with water on burn day to prevent them from catching fire, we really get to know our individual snags over the years! Sincere thanks to our dedicated crew who have worked so hard already this year: Russ Barrett, Scott Ball, Carolyn Cohen, John Barksdale, Karen Berkley, Sandra Sallee, Mike Weed, Stanton Beazley, Kris Travis, Dylan Ryals-Hamilton, and Douglas Gillis.

The ice and snow seemed very severe at the time, and I thought all our old camellia shrubs might lose some of their winter buds but instead they've responded by blooming profusely. I've never seen this many camellia flowers! All the different varieties around the house and garden are laden with colorful healthy blooms, bright white, pale pink, and deep reds. They last a while, so do come out and enjoy this unexpected response to the ice storm!

-KDB



NEW FRIENDS OF BIRDSONG

Tallahassee

Julian Morgan and Rachel Varner
Will Baggett
Amelia Rankin and Alex Chew
Gary Cochran and Sue Gray-Cochran
Douglas Gillis

Thomasville

Janice Turner
Patricia and Tony Arrizola
Rodney Larson

Cairo, GA

Brandi and Lance Gainous
Karen Nania

Leesburg, GA

Kathie Entz

Moultrie, GA

Angela and Lester Castellow

BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER WISHES TO THANK:

In memory of my friend, Linda R. Most:
Karen Seward

In memory of my dear friend, Linda Most:
Annete Goldsmith

In memory of Virginia Craig:
Shane and Nia Wellendorf

In memory of Virginia Craig. She was a long time active member of the Magnolia Chapter:
Florida Native Plant Society

In loving memory of Geraldine Murphy (Aunt Jeb):
Anita Dixon

In loving memory of Gerry (Geraldine Murphy), a donation has been made to Birdsong Nature Center by Jennifer, Thea, and Philip Smith and their partners. We, too, all love birds and are pleased to support this place that was so dear to Gerry's heart.

In memory of Elizabeth F. ("B") O'Toole:
Alex and Jane Hinson

Special Financial Gifts:

Doug and Julie McPherson
Cheryl Burnett and Roland White
Rad Cook
Apple Lane Foundation
Community Foundation of South GA, Inc.
Ellery and Robin Sedgwick Fund
George E. Crouch Foundation

BIRDSONG'S CORPORATE SPONSORS

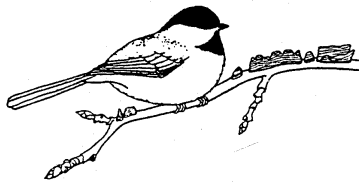
Native Nurseries
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Blue Bear Farm & Cattle Co. LLC
Magnolia Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society
Wiregrass Electric, Inc.
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**Birdsong Nature Center
Board of Directors
2023-2024**

President Joe Peresich
Treasurer Bill Preston

Directors

Jim Antista
Scott Ball
Ellery Sedgwick



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: _____

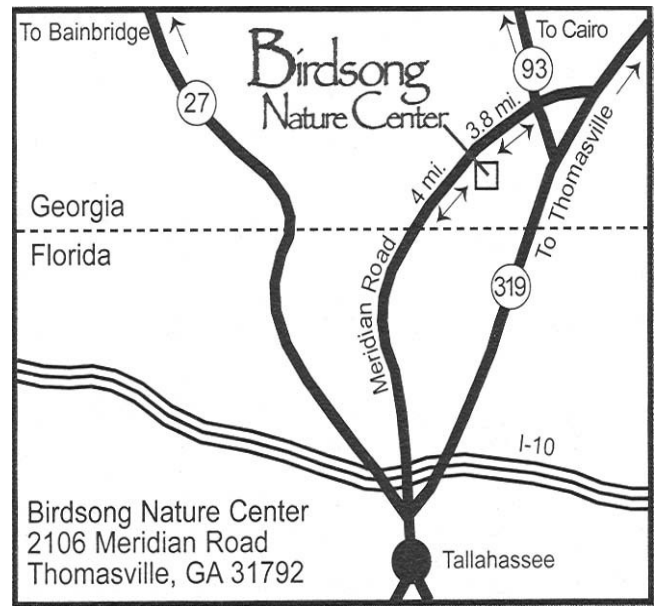
I would like to join the Friends of Birdsong in the following category:

- | | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Friends | \$45 | All of the above benefits for each member of the immediate household. Four free one-time guest passes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of the Cardinal | \$60 | Five free one-time guest passes in addition to above. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of the Chickadee | \$100 | Six free one-time guest passes in addition to above. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of the Hummingbird | \$250 | Hummingbird feeder in addition to above. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of the Bluebird | \$500 | Bluebird nesting box in addition to above. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/legal guidance | <input type="checkbox"/> Serve on Board of Directors | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund raising | <input type="checkbox"/> (please submit resume) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greeter | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching (birds, nature walks, stars, etc.) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Shop Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Management | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Development | | |

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.



DIRECTIONS:

From Tallahassee: Meridian Road north, 4 miles past FL/ GA border 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
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TALLAHASSEE, FL
Permit No. 660

*Birdsong Nature Center
2106 Meridian Road
Thomasville, GA 31792
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