

# Birdsong Nature Center

January- February 2017

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January

Wed	Jan. 4	Center re-opens
Thur.	Jan. 5	Butterfly Garden Work Day
Sat.	Jan. 7	Winter Sunset Trail Ride
Sat.	Jan. 14	Land Management Overview for Volunteers
Sat.	Jan. 21	Bringing Nature Home
Sat.	Jan. 28	Music to our Ears: a Chorus of Frogs

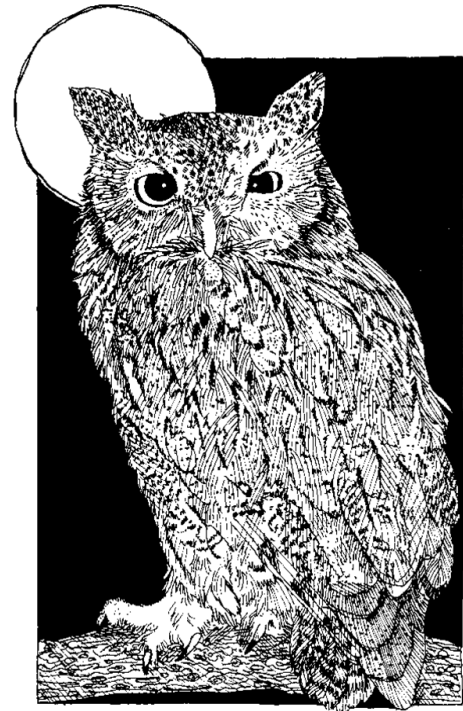
### February

*Call in early February about field trips to Wolf Creek Trout Lily Preserve*

Thur.	Feb. 2	Butterfly Garden Work Day
Sat.	Feb. 11	Take A Child Outside in the Wintertime! Ephemeral Wetlands Walk
Fri.	Feb. 17 to	Great Backyard Bird Count
Sun.	Feb. 19	Great Backyard Bird Count
Sat.	Feb. 25	Birding Hike at Lake Jackson Archeological Mounds State Park

### Upcoming Events

Sat.	Mar. 4	Wild Azalea Workshop
Sat.	Mar. 11	Bringing Nature Home
Sat.	Mar. 18	Old-Timey Plant Sale



### 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,

We enjoyed the great company of many long-time members, as well as newer friends, at Birdsong's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on October 9<sup>th</sup>. It was great fun to be with so many wonderful Friends of Birdsong. We want to say a warm "thank you" to some very special people who made this such a memorable day for us: former Board members Carole Hayes and Donna Legare for sharing their fond memories and insightful observations about Birdsong; Randy and Marilyn Rhea for providing a superb wine tasting experience with their Susina Plantation wines; Sandra Sallee, Teresa Williams and Mary Janek for organizing the old-fashioned children's games that everyone loved; Beth Grant and Jody Walthall for leading very pleasant and informative nature walks; Alan Parker for driving the truck for the scenic trailer rides around the property; *The Adventures of Annabelle Lyn* (Elizabeth Fravel, Kathryn Belle Long, and Holly Riley) for their charming and beautiful musical performance; Judy Langston and Taste Budz catering for making the awesome 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake; Rebecca Kelly-Manders and Street Chefs food truck for keeping everyone happy and well fed; Mirhi Childs and Brenda Coy for taking good care of the membership table; and all of Birdsong's exceptional staff and Board for the great help with setting up for the event. Thank you everyone for attending the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party, and we hope you will join us at the upcoming Winter Solstice event on December 17<sup>th</sup> so we can celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> year with you once more!

All on our mailing list should have received our 2016 Annual Appeal Campaign packet – we ask for your help in securing Birdsong's *Next 30 Years*. The Annual Appeal is our largest fundraising event of the year and one we rely upon greatly for covering Birdsong's operating costs. We hope that you will give Birdsong serious consideration if you are planning end-of-year giving, and please know that our hard-working staff and dedicated volunteers put each dime of your gift to its maximum good use. Thank you very much for your generous support.

As the calendar year draws to a close, I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of our staff and Board, to thank all of you – our honorable members, dedicated volunteers and program leaders, and our greathearted donors – for your extraordinarily kind support of Birdsong Nature Center. It is as the result of all of your generous efforts and intentions that Birdsong is here today, after 30 amazing years, to begin a hopeful journey into its next 30 years. We are very proud to have you with us, and deeply appreciative of your support for the Nature Center.

Thank you to all of our wonderful Friends for such an amazing and memorable year. We wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year, and we hope you will visit us often in 2017.

Sincerely,  
Joe Peresich, Board President



## TWO TREES

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

When asked to name a beautiful spring-flowering small understory tree most people will say "dogwood." Dogwood is a beloved, storied, familiar, and iconic tree. At the Birdsong Old-Timey Plant Sale dogwoods sell out early. Everyone wants a dogwood tree.

But dogwoods can be heartbreaking. They are susceptible to many pests and diseases. Though the dreaded dogwood anthracnose is not known to be this far south yet, powdery mildew and borers are common on dogwoods. With their shallow root systems they are vulnerable to our increasingly severe and frequent droughts. It is very sad to see a tree you paid money for, worked over, kept watered, and filled with hope shrivel up and die in your front yard. Gil Nelson's book *Best Native Plants for Southern Gardens* gives advice for success: Know the provenance of the dogwood tree you buy; dogwoods grown from seeds from northern trees may not be able survive the heat of our area. Protect the shallow root system by mulching deeply and pulling weeds by hand around the root zone -- no Roundup. Plant the tree where its crown will be in sun and its roots in shade. Even with care however, young dogwood trees are more likely to die than other species.

I would like to suggest you try another tree -- Silverbell (*Halesia diptera*). Like the dogwood, Silverbell is a native spring-flowering small (to 30 feet) understory tree. It has a graceful form and elegant clusters of bell-like flowers that dangle from the undersides of the twigs, often before the leaves appear. See photo on Birdsong's website. In fall the leaves turn a glowing yellow. The Silverbell is a fast grower, and it blooms at a young age.

We always have Silverbell trees at the spring sale, but because many people are unfamiliar with this fine tree they are hard to sell. Take some time this winter to read up on the Silverbell and look at pictures. Once you know this tree you will love it as much as any dogwood.

- June White  
Old-Timey Plant Sale Chair

### **WINTER SUNSET TRAIL RIDE**

**Saturday, January 7**

**4:00 – 6:00PM**

Bundle up, bring your friends, and let's go for a trail ride at Birdsong and watch the sun set over the Gin House Field. We'll get started in the late afternoon and visit the Spring Pond, Gopher Tortoise Neighborhood, longleaf pine planting site, Big Bay Swamp, and end up at the Gin House to watch the sun go down. We are hoping that our huge flocks of Robins will still be coming in at dusk to roost next door, and we'll be listening for winter frogs and early evening owl activity.

Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Geared for adults and mature children; we may be stopping to hold still and listen for extended periods of time. If it is dark enough when we wrap up, we'll look for the emerging stars of the winter constellations.

\$6 Friends, \$10 nonmembers, children half-price. **RESERVATIONS, PLEASE.** Call us or email by 4PM Friday, January 6th to reserve a space on the trailer.

### **MUSIC TO OUR EARS: A CHORUS OF FROGS**

**A Winter Evening Frog Ride with Nancy Thomas**

**Saturday, January 28**

**6 – 8:30 PM**

Have you ever wondered what frogs were making those wonderful calls at night? Join frog and nature enthusiast Nancy Thomas by the picnic tables for a short introduction to the frogs of our area and a brief description of the frogs we may hear that are actively calling this time of year. We will then head out on a trailer ride to the Frog Pond, Big Bay Pond, Big Bay Swamp and the Farm Pond, where we can learn to identify some of those alluring calls. You will come away equipped to identify those evocative sounds wherever you go! Dress for the weather, and wear shoes for walking around the edges of the ponds and swamp. Bring binoculars. Nancy has an excellent handout for you and a frog guide for purchase.

Meanwhile, be listening in your own neighborhood for our winter breeders, especially Spring Peepers and Chorus Frogs!

**RESERVATIONS, PLEASE.** This program is geared for adults and mature children. Please call the office or email by 4pm Friday, January 27th to reserve a space. We have a class limit of 12. \$6 Friends, \$10 non-members.

### **2016 LAND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**Saturday, January 14 10AM – 1PM**

Join us for a trail ride and conversation about Birdsong's land management plans for 2017. All volunteers are welcome. Whether you are a seasoned veteran or a newcomer who has been thinking about volunteering, this overview is designed to give you an understanding of our long-range land management vision, and show you specific projects and ongoing efforts we'll actively engage in this year. This session is important for anyone who wants to help us burn this year, as well as anyone interested in invasive species removal, trail maintenance, and native plant and wildlife habitat enhancement. We'll spend the morning in the field and return to the house for lunch together. You will get to meet some wonderful people and come away with an understanding of how valuable your role is in Birdsong's management.

No charge. **RESERVATIONS, PLEASE.** Call by Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup> to reserve your place on the trailer, or for more information. Bring a sandwich; drinks and dessert provided. Dress for the weather.

### **BUTTERFLY GARDEN WORK DAYS**

**Thursdays, January 5 and February 2**

**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.

Our gardeners would very much appreciate the donation of bags of clean leaf mulch for the Garden. Please be sure that the mulch does not contain any stray invasive plants that might take hold. Hand raked or purchased leaf mulch is best! Thank you!

For more information call Donna Legare at (850)386-1148 or Birdsong at (229)377-4408.

**BRINGING NATURE HOME**  
**Saturday, January 21, 2017**  
**10AM - 12PM**

You may have never thought of your yard being a wildlife preserve. Dr. Doug Tallamy declares that is exactly the role your suburban landscape can fulfill if you want to help save biodiversity! Learn from Dr. Doug Tallamy how to *Bring Nature Home*.

Beth Grant has been granted permission from Dr. Tallamy, Professor and Chair, Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware, to present his slide show on his book *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*.

Everyone who loves the wonders of the natural world can contribute to the survival of our native birds, butterflies, and other treasures! The pressures on wildlife populations are greater than ever. For example, some bird and butterfly populations are declining at an alarming rate. We all can help to reverse this trend. There is an unbreakable link between native plant species and native wildlife. Non-native plants do not provide the needed resources. Exotic invasives out-compete the natives, reducing needed resources even in areas that have not been developed. By planting natives and eliminating invasives, everyone can provide a welcoming environment for the web of wildlife while also promoting human well-being. By acting on Dr. Tallamy's practical recommendations, everyone can make a difference. Plus there is no better way to involve children in nature than by bringing it to your garden!

No cost. Handouts will be provided. Copies of *Bringing Nature Home* and our own neighbor Dr. Gil Nelson's book *Best Native Plants for Southern Gardens* will be available for purchase with all proceeds going to Birdsong.

**TAKE A CHILD OUTSIDE IN THE**  
**WINTERTIME!**

**Saturday, February 11**  
**9:30AM - Noon**

Bring your favorite child to Birdsong and let them lead you on a natural adventure in the winter woods with Sandra Sallee. Give an ongoing gift to your child: an appreciation of nature, a better understanding of where they live, and use of all their senses. We will walk the trails to search for evidence of animal homes, sign, and winter behavior. Enjoy the fresh air, some exercise, and time with your child in the great outdoors. We will collect natural materials along the way and create a craft upon returning to the Barn.

\$4 Friends, \$6 nonmembers, children half-price. **RESERVATIONS PLEASE** by Friday February 10th, so we know how many to prepare for. Includes a handout and resource list for year-round outdoor activities with children.

**WOLF CREEK TROUT LILY PRESERVE**  
*Visit Wolf Creek in February, when the Trout Lilies bloom...*

The Wolf Creek Trout Lily Preserve is a biologically diverse 140-acre hardwood forest about 5 miles west of Cairo in Grady County, Georgia. Preserve volunteers will be offering field trips to see this amazing site in full bloom in February. Here is a link to the Wolf Creek website, where you can learn about the upcoming season's bloom, tours, and hours when the site may be open to the public. We urge you to go; this is one of the most impressive botanical displays of our area. You will love it! See [www.wolfcreektroutlilypreserve.com](http://www.wolfcreektroutlilypreserve.com) for contact information.

**20th ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**  
**Friday through Sunday at Birdsong**  
**February 17 – 19**  
**Self-guided or join a scheduled guided group led by Nancy Thomas.**

The 2017 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), one of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Citizen Science projects, will be held February 17-19, 2016. Please have a look at the GBBC event description on their web page at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org) for detailed instructions to create a free GBBC account for entering your observations. You are invited to count birds at bird feeders, in your yard, local parks or other outdoor locations, and then report your findings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) or at eBird.

Guided GBBC counts will be led by Nancy Thomas on Friday, February 17th, and Sunday, February 19th from 8:30AM to noon. If interested, please contact Birdsong to sign up and plan to meet Nancy in the Birdsong parking lot at 8:15AM.

If you prefer doing your own survey, come out and observe birds anywhere at Birdsong, including the Bird Window, for a minimum of 15 minutes and up to as long as you want, on any or all days of the bird count, and as many times as you want. (Birdsong is open 9 to 5, Friday and Saturday and 1 to 5 on Sunday, closed on Monday.) You can turn in your own results online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) or pick up a tally sheet at the registration desk, go bird watching, fill the sheet out and leave it here at Birdsong and we will submit your results.

This is a chance for you to participate in what is now a worldwide citizen science bird count and you can help us by listing observations from Birdsong!

## EPHEMERAL WETLAND WALK

Saturday, February 11  
2 - 5PM or so (might run long)

Join ecologists Rebecca and Ryan Means of the 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 the 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 and possibly wading involved. Because we get excited about what we are discovering, the program might run long. 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, February 10th to reserve your space. Dress warmly and be prepared for walking; wear shoes you can get wet; bring water and a snack. You may want to bring dry clothes and shoes for the ride home.

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

## BIRDING HIKE AT LAKE JACKSON

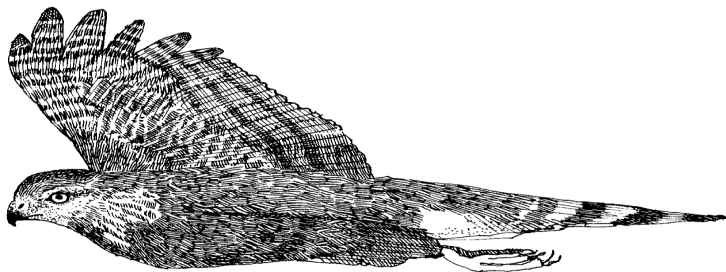
ARCHEOLOGICAL MOUNDS  
STATE PARK

Saturday, February 25, 9 – Noon

Lake Jackson's Mounds State Park is not only a fascinating place to visit for its archeological significance - it also has a wonderful variety of excellent bird habitat to explore. Join experienced birder Mike Miller for a winter birding hike through this interesting park. We will be looking forest birds in the wooded areas, including the old orchard where Mike has found Ovenbirds, Louisiana Water Thrush, and Golden-crowned Kinglets; and aquatic birds in the marsh along the shore of Lake Jackson.

Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars and spotting scopes. Bring raingear in case of rain, and rubber boots or waterproof footwear for walking through the marsh and wet undergrowth. This field trip will be a great opportunity for birding newcomers to learn new skills, and for experienced birders to fine-tune their birding abilities, so bring a notepad and pen for taking notes. Mike will offer a review of some of his favorite birding books.

**RESERVATIONS, PLEASE.** Contact us by Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup> to let us know you are coming. The park is located off US 27, North Monroe Street. Turn east on Crowder Road two miles north of I-10 and go to Lake Jackson Road. Bring cash for the park fee. We will meet in the parking lot.



*Thank You, Birdsong's WILD Women!*

We want to thank the ten wonderful women who are currently in training to lead children's programs as volunteers for Birdsong.:

Jane Storm \* Laurie Jones \* Nicole Copeland \* Beth Grant \* Sandra Sallee \* Carolyn Cohen \* Carole Williams \* Teresa Adkins \* Sharman Franklin \* Jeanette Sickel

This group has completed a three-part training program that consisted of an all-day Project WILD session (hence the name), a three-hour training at Birdsong on use of Birdsong's facilities and how to lead a nature walk for children, and a three-hour session on use of field guides and plant and animal identification. The participants have also been getting direct experience in leading a variety of children's groups, including the fall break students from the Thomasville Community Resource Center.

This is a fantastic group! We have so enjoyed working and learning together that we've decided to extend our training. Each person brings her own interesting set of skills and experience to the team, and we are all learning a lot from each other. Plus, this is a very congenial, supportive, thoughtful group that is here to serve and help advance the cause - to help give children the best possible opportunities to experience and learn from nature. Birdsong is very fortunate to such wonderful WILD Women involved in this effort and we are looking forward to continuing our work together in 2017

Birdsong offers its sincere thanks to the Thomasville Antiques Show Foundation for funding this training project. If you want more information or are interested in joining us, please call Kathleen at (800)953-2473. This effort is not limited to women, men are welcome - we'll come up with a new name!

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT NOTES

December 3, 2016

**Weather** The drought has finally broken. After 10 weeks of no rain, we got 1.1 inches overnight on Monday, and another .59 in the rain gauge today, Thursday, with more rain predicted for Sunday. It is fairly typical to have a fall drought during October, but this one went on for a very long time. We are relieved for our plant life – the leaves on the wild azaleas and cultivated azaleas in the house gardens were starting to die. Fortunately our spectacular wildflower bloom in mid-to-late October didn't appear to be impacted at all. It has only been in the last three or four weeks that the vegetation began to look desperate. So today, even though it is fall and many leaves are brown, the greenery looks refreshed and it feels like balance is being restored.

**Leaf Color** Until the last two weeks we really didn't have much cold weather and there wasn't any leaf color to speak of. There had been a very gradual shift in the landscape from summer green to a tinge of autumn gold and brown. We had quite a few nice cold nights over the Thanksgiving holiday week, and driving up Meridian Road to Birdsong after the holiday it was clear that the shift to fall had happened. The woods were golden! It was magical, and Birdsong too has been transformed. As always, it is hard to describe in words, but now is the time when every hardwood tree stands out, making its fall statement, showing its individuality in all its glory. The variety of color is amazing, with each family of trees exhibiting its unique palette: the rust and russet of oaks, the gold to maroon of sweetgum, the intense gold of hickories, the lemon and orange of cherry, the pink and ruby of sourwood, the red of maple, and pale yellow of hackberry. Branches are draped with grapevines studded with golden leaves, especially beautiful against the evergreens. On a gray day, the leaves are luminous and deep in color. The only drawback to the rains we are finally having is that these wonderful displays of fall foliage are being blown down. It is an excellent time for a walk in the woods – the air smells wonderful and leafy, and you can scuff your feet through the fallen leaves on the trails like you did as a kid, and there is one beautiful tree after another to admire. Fall was worth waiting for.

**Gin House Field** Another natural area displaying a breathtaking change in appearance is the Gin House Field. Thanks to all the rain earlier this year, and to Chuck's extensive mowing of winged sumac and briars, broomsedge has made a wonderful comeback. This beautiful prairie-type grass loves this open oldfield habitat and is clearly thriving there this fall. There are several species of broomsedge present in the Gin House of the *Andropogon* genus, as well as several other native grasses. This time of year, flowering is mostly over and the seedheads have blown away. The few remaining flowering plants are shedding their fuzzy seed heads, and these are being

captured in spiderwebs all across the field.

I hope you can come out to experience this place for yourself before we burn it this year. This sea of waving grasses has turned a beautiful pink-russet-tan color, hard to describe, and the color shifts depending on where you are in relation to the sun. The grasses get thicker and thicker as you walk toward the middle of the field, where the Star Pasture is located. There is something incredibly refreshing about walking through the broad expanse of this field and its wide vista under the open sky, surrounded by shoulder-high grasses.

### ***The Bird Window***

About three weeks ago I made a detour through the Bird Window on my hurried way somewhere else, as I try to do when migrants are being spotted, and saw only a Titmouse choosing a sunflower seed and moving on. I took a moment to focus and breathe and enjoy the scenery and saw something moving in the water of the pool. It was long and light bluish-green and busy. It was a good-sized garter snake, over two feet long, swimming in the pool, moving fairly rapidly and apparently rooting around in the bottom and under the log at the back edge of the water. I became fascinated; the motion was lithe and elegant and went on and on. This snake was apparently poking around for something to eat, and was using its strength to push around in the leaves and debris in the bottom of the pool. It was working hard at this, swimming around and around, and pushing with its head and pressing down with its tail, causing the middle part of its body to rise up above the surface of the water. This went on for 10 whole minutes – it was mesmerizing – and then the snake raised its head out of the water about three inches, with that typical head-parallel-to-the-ground posture, and ate something. It chewed and chewed and swallowed and then just stayed still for a few moments. Then, back to work. For another 5 minutes.

Suddenly a beautiful male Hooded Warbler appeared, bright black and yellow, hopping off a camellia branch down to the left edge of the pool, clearly interested in taking a bath. The snake, at the right side of the pool, lifted its head out of the water and got completely still. It obviously saw the bird. I could not tell if the Warbler had seen the snake; it kept nervously approaching and retreating from the edge of the water and then started hopping along the pebbles toward the snake. I got concerned right then and knew I couldn't help myself if there was going to be some sort of nature drama – I'd have to do something on the bird's behalf, but it wasn't necessary - a Titmouse flew down and distracted everybody and the Warbler flew back into the camellia and did not return. The garter snake remained stock still in the same position, and stayed that way for another few minutes. A squirrel came racing up and stopped on top of the adjacent rock, Betty's "Green Dragon" – she named this curvaceous piece of limestone for its shape, which does resemble a dragon at rest; and its color, green, for the moss it supports, being so close to the spray at

green, for the moss it supports, being so close to the spray at the pool. The squirrel took a moment and just looked down at the snake, the snake didn't move, the squirrel decided nothing much was happening there and headed for the sunflower seed. Our snake went back to its rapid hunting, with that lovely, lilting motion, and, after another few minutes of work, slid out of the pool and moved slowly up side of the big rock and disappeared to the left under the palmetto.

This was one for the books for me. It brought up so many questions. I had never seen a snake act like that before. I didn't know a garter snake would go swimming and diving and digging to find something special to eat. I do not know what delicacies it was working so hard to find in the bottom of the pool. I didn't know that anything worth eating lives in the bottom of that pool. I don't know if a garter snake could even handle eating a warbler. Maybe the warbler saw the snake and wasn't at all concerned. Maybe the titmouse was warning everyone. I love these nature experiences that point out so clearly how little I know.

Another new and unexpected occurrence we are enjoying lately is the presence of two frogs in or at the edge of the pool. We think they are Bronze Frogs, but we are waiting until our friend and frog specialist Nancy Thomas comes out to give an expert's opinion on their identity. It requires a pair of binoculars to see them, and they are not there all the time, but if you settle in about mid-morning and scan slowly along the edge of the pool you will see a pair of golden eyes looking at you just above the surface. One frog is somewhat larger than the other, and both will actually get out of the water onto the pebbles occasionally. Their backs are brown and ridged, and their faces green. The largest one is about 3.5 inches long. I have tried to approach them to take a photo to send Nancy, but they squeak and leap straight into the water and disappear and I've never gotten close enough to take a picture. They are winsome and charming little creatures and I hope they'll stay. Things could get interesting for them when a flock of robins or waxwings move in for bath time! I can't imagine that the garter snake was after these frogs – they are really fast and I'm sure would immediately leave the premises if they knew a snake was nearby.

Otherwise, things have been slow at the Bird Window, as they typically are this time of year. Our songbirds don't need us right now – there is so much wild food available for them, with all the ripe berries and grass seeds and plenty of insects still flying. Several wonderful migrants were seen in October and November, including a pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, the Hooded Warbler mentioned above, a Black-throated Green Warbler; Pine, Yellow-rumped and Tennessee Warblers; Hermit Thrush; and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Other than these occasional migrants, and the regulars coming in for a seed or two here and there, the Window has been a fairly sedate place of late. We get new visitors who tell us, "Oh, I can't wait to see all your birds at the Bird Window; I've heard so much about it!" and we

have to explain that this is a seasonal phenomenon and please come back in a few weeks after it gets cold and the winter residents start returning.

However, now that we've had an unusual and amazing garter snake exhibit in the pool, and resident frogs living here for the time being, we suggest that visitors take a few minutes and give it a chance – who knows what you might see!

**Robins** Two years ago we had an astounding American Robin phenomenon here at Birdsong: tens of thousands of Robins were appearing about an hour before sunset, arriving in droves from all over the landscape and settling with a lot of loud and cheerful noise into our neighbor's bamboo thicket to roost for the night. It was wonderful. Last year we had a lot of Robins, but nowhere near the numbers of the prior year. Recently throngs of Robins have started coming back, and they are busy and noisy and entertaining. We can't tell yet if they will once again reach phenomenal numbers, but it is delightful nonetheless. They gather in the tops of the pecan trees near the office right when Mirhi and I are leaving work. Nothing like a hundred Robins talking about their day to cheer a person up!

**Bob Dunn's Bobcat** If you have been in Mirhi's office in the last year or so, you will have noticed some gorgeous photographs of birds taken at the Bird Window by Bob Dunn, a friend and nature photography enthusiast who visits weekly. Bob has gotten some wonderful shots of a Barn Owl in broad daylight, the Yellow-breasted Chat that spent a spring with us, a rarely seen (here) Painted Bunting in full regalia, the Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and many more.

Yesterday, Bob came to my office with a wonderful gift: he'd had a personal encounter with a bobcat out by the Lewis Field and had taken several portraits from 15 feet away. They are stunning. We will have them on display on the back porch, so please come have a look. In the first photo, Bob discovered himself being watched; this cat is appraising Bob, well-disguised in tall grass. In the most stunning photo, the cat had gotten up to leave and is looking back over his shoulder, bobtail visible, profoundly beautiful, watchful, and unhurried. I know you will be as moved by these portraits as we were...please come and have a look. We thank Bob for giving us such a personal look at what is usually a very elusive creature. Thank you, Bob.

The drought has broken, and more rain is on the way. Wintertime is coming; the solstice will happen in less than three weeks, and we will begin another year-long ride around the sun. We hope you'll join us on this next 365-day adventure and enjoy the whole rich range of possibilities that nature can provide: beauty, learning, wonder, awe, fascination, appreciation – it is all right here, a great big present for you and all your kindred spirits ...at Birdsong.

-KDB

## **BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER WISHES TO THANK:**

### ***Our Very Special Program Leaders***

Sandy Beck, of the Wild Classroom, St. Francis Wildlife, for leading her Wild Neighbors of the Red Hills program and bringing her beautiful raptors and reptiles to Birdsong.

Marvin Collins, for leading the Bear Creek Educational Forest Hike.

Beth Grant, for leading the Thanksgiving Saturday Super Walk.

Sandra Sallee, for leading Take A Child Outside for the Holidays!

Sandra Sallee, for leading the Classical Conversation Home School group and Girl Scout group.

Beth Grant and Sandra Sallee, for leading the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute program.

### ***Special Financial Gifts***

Anonymous gift, in honor of June White

Rebecca Cline

Tom and Carol Lehman, in honor of Tim and Salli Lehman

### ***Memorial Gifts***

We apologize for misspelling Russ Jinright's name last newsletter.

Suzanne Speedwell, in memory of Tom Woodward

### ***Special Thanks To:***

Thank you to all those individuals who have contributed so generously to the Annual Appeal – your gifts are deeply appreciated.

June White, for organizing the Blueberry Sale, and Dan Miller for supplementing it with native azaleas and other wildflowers for sale.

Kristine Dougherty, for the gift of a Celestron spotting scope for star gazing and nature observation!

Carolyn Cohen, for another lovely gift of field guides and natural science books.

Winnie and Wolfgang Adolph, for ongoing improvements in the Birdsong gift shop and for researching and ordering new inventory. The shop looks better than ever and is open for business!

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 hard and play hard and keep our garden and land in good shape. They went to work on a patch of invasive *Crotalaria* west of the Farm Pond this time and made a huge dent. They also found four different kinds of tree frogs in the process!

Alan Parker, for providing site, garden, and land management support and on-going 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.

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

#### **Birdsong Nature Center Board of Directors 2015-2016**

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

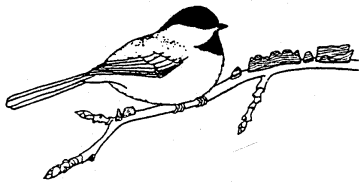
#### **Directors**

Jim Antista	Brenda Coy
Woody Search	Joe Newborn
Ellery Sedgwick	Michael Brezin

#### **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, CPA  
Import Authority  
Thomasville National Bank  
Private Wealth Management & Consulting, LLC  
South GA Low Cost Spay & Neuter Clinic  
Seminole Alterations  
Corporation Service Company





# 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.

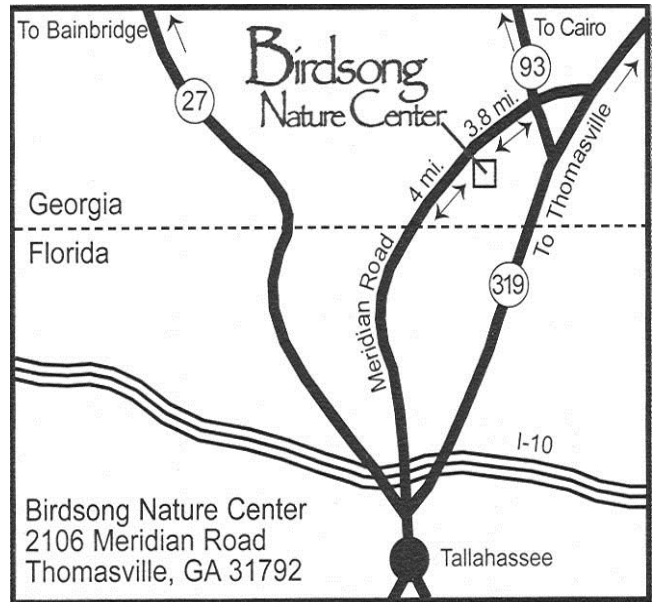
**NEW FRIENDS OF BIRDSONG**

**Tallahassee**

Diane Ogorzaly  
Dr. Debbie Justice-Obley

**Thomasville**

Marlaina Woodcock  
Gabriel & Marths Hanway  
Mary Gainer



**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