

# Birdsong Nature Center

November-December, 2025

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

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

## *November*

|       |     |    |                                    |
|-------|-----|----|------------------------------------|
| Sat   | Nov | 1  | Free Family Day                    |
| Wed.  | Nov | 5  | Land Management Workday            |
| Thurs | Nov | 6  | Butterfly Garden Workday           |
| Sat   | Nov | 8  | Fall Plant Sale/Holiday Open House |
| Sat.  | Nov | 15 | Forest Bathing                     |
| Wed   | Nov | 19 | Land Management Workday            |

**BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER**  
**WEB SITE:** [www.birdsongnaturecenter.org](http://www.birdsongnaturecenter.org)  
**EMAIL:** [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org)  
**FACEBOOK:** Birdsong Nature Center  
**YOUTUBE:** Birdsong Nature Center  
**PHONE:** 229-377-4408

## *December*

|       |     |    |                                                           |
|-------|-----|----|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Wed   | Dec | 3  | Land Management Workday                                   |
| Thurs | Dec | 4  | Butterfly Garden Workday                                  |
| Sat.  | Dec | 6  | Free Family Day                                           |
| Sat   | Dec | 6  | Take a Child Outside for the Holidays!                    |
| Sat   | Dec | 13 | Winter Solstice Celebration/Annual Meeting of the Members |
| Wed   | Dec | 17 | Land Management Workday                                   |

**Sat Dec 20 Birdsong will be closed December 20– January 3**

**Sat Jan 3 Center reopens Saturday January 3, 2026**

*Please, no pets on Nature Center property.*

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

## **BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE**

**October 10, 2025**

**With a special note to our Appeal Donors**

Work continues on the three appeal-funded building improvements projects. We have experienced some unforeseen delays with the flooring installation at the cabin but we are now on track and are looking forward to getting the new pine floor installed fairly soon. It will be made of beautiful wood donated by board member Ellery Sedgwick of Red Hills Lumber. Once we have our floor completed, the volunteer construction team can get back to repairing the porch and finishing the kitchen. Artist and woodworker Buddy Hull is donating some beautiful hand-made wooden countertops made from natural planks, which will be quite striking. So, progress is being made.

For the Barn re-roofing, we have been working with Mr. Charlie Whitney, who does historic building restoration, and he has learned that the type of corrugated metal we've been looking for is not available locally in the heavy gauge that is needed for a barn roof. His contacts have researched this and found that the only place where the correct gauge is available is in Washington state, and shipping costs are prohibitive. So, we will likely be going with the next best option, the old style 5 V-pinch roofing. Mr. Whitney will be coming out soon to give us an estimate on the roof and to look at the construction needed to re-build the shed supports.

(continued)

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On the bathroom project, our volunteers will soon be re-building the cabinet, cleaning the roof, pressure washing the cement floor, and replacing the countertop. McNeill plumbing came out and gave us their estimate on the complete re-plumbing and can do the work once we have the cabinet sealed and bring in all the required fixtures.

***Special note to Appeal Donors:*** We are still currently unsure of the completion dates for the three projects, and as mentioned last time, we will wait until completion to set a date for a celebration. The way things are going it will no doubt be after the first of the year. We will keep you posted on our progress, and please feel free to call if you have any questions. Meanwhile, the work continues, and we are certain you are going to love the results. Thank you again to all who donated so generously to the Buildings Improvement Appeal – your funding is creating some wonderful improvements at Birdsong!

## **TWO OLD TIMEY PLANT SALES THIS FALL!**

**Saturday, October 25 and November 8 (at our Holiday Open House)  
from 9am — 1pm**

Fall is a great time to plant! We will have many varieties of colorful native azaleas and other native shrubs, trees, perennials, blueberries, pollinator plants, and other good old-timey non-native plants.

For information call 229-377-4408 Email: [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org)

**Free admission all day and the trails and gift shop are open!**

## **DEER TROUBLE**

One request we get over and over at our plant sales: “I need something that deer won't eat.” We hear sad stories. In a busy downtown neighborhood, a deer nipped off every fat bud of prize daylilies right before they bloomed. In a country garden, with woods all around, deer came into the yard and ate a huge planting of cardinal guard to the ground. One despairing gardener told of trying to establish a mini forest in an old field. She planted all her favorite hardwood trees, carefully fertilized and mulched them, and dragged hoses to keep them watered through the first two years. When deer began nibbling the leaves she encircled each tree with a wire fence. When the trees finally outgrew the deer, she took the fences down and celebrated — until the deer came back and completely girdled all the tulip poplars by rubbing their antlers on the trunks.

No one seems to have a solution. Spray-on repellents work for a while, but you have to apply the repellent before the deer get started and re-apply after every rain. Eight-foot-high black plastic net fencing will keep them out. Even if deer can jump over a fence they won't try if they can't see the top. But the netting is expensive, and most ornamental gardens aren't configured for this kind of fence. You can lay chicken wire on the ground. Deer won't step on anything that they might get their feet tangled up in. But they will reach over the wire, and it's ugly. One gardener reported that playing Julio Iglesias at a high volume all night kept them away, but the neighbors complained.

Please let us know if you find anything that works to keep deer from eating your plants. We will share it with our plant sale customers.

- June White  
Plant Sale Chair

## **GUIDED FOREST BATHING SESSION** **With Laura Poorman**

**Saturday, November 15, 1 – 3:30pm**

Laura Poorman is a Forest Therapy Guide certified through the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy. 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.”

Laura encourages us to slow down and experience nature in a variety of ways. For this guided forest bathing session, she will offer a set of carefully created invitations to engage all our senses as we wander outward from a central gathering circle. There will be moments of sharing and reflection, and we will end our time with a tea ceremony.

Please wear comfortable clothing and dress for the weather. Bring water and a snack as needed. Perhaps bring a small blanket, yoga mat, pad, or stool to use to sit on the ground, and wear footwear suitable for walking outside.

\$30 per person. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED, please. Call 229-377-4408 or email [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org) by noon on Friday, November 14th to reserve your space. Minimum class size, 5; maximum, 30 people. If possible, please arrive 10 minutes early for registration.

### **TAKE A CHILD OUTSIDE** **For The Holidays!**

**Saturday, December 6**  
**9:30-Noon**

Bring your favorite child to Birdsong and enjoy a morning in the woods with volunteers Sandra Saltee and Carolyn Cohen as you get an early start on preparations for the winter holidays. Give your young person an alternative approach to holiday giving this year and let them collect their own natural materials to make a holiday gift. Each child can take a collecting bag and Sandra and Carolyn will lead the group out on a natural treasure hunt to discover what nature has to offer! This is harvest time, with nuts, berries and leaves in profusion. Back at the Barn turn your child's imagination loose to create whatever item he or she wants or let them make a candleholder or surprise gift item with the materials you have collected.

\$6 Friends, \$9 nonmembers, children half-price. Make **RESERVATIONS PLEASE** by noon on Friday, December 5th, so we know what materials to provide. Call (229)377-4408 or email [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org).

### **FREE FAMILY DAYS**

**First Saturdays: November 1 and December 6**

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 getting to know the property, hike the trails, and visit the Bird Window, Gift Shop, and Butterfly Garden.

**Admission: free**

### **BUTTERFLY GARDEN WORKDAYS** **Thursdays, November 6 and December 4** **9:00 to 11:00AM**

Birdsong's Butterfly Gardeners meet on the first Thursday of each month at 9am.

Please feel welcome to join these accomplished volunteers to tend our beautiful Butterfly Garden! We may also do some invasives removal at the main garden around the house. Your involvement would be very welcome. 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.

## HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

**Saturday, November 8, from 9am to 1pm**

Join us at Birdsong to celebrate the upcoming holiday season and do some holiday shopping at our interesting gift shop! We are holding our Open House concurrent with another fall Plant Sale, so come shopping for a selection of wonderful native and old-timey plants as well!

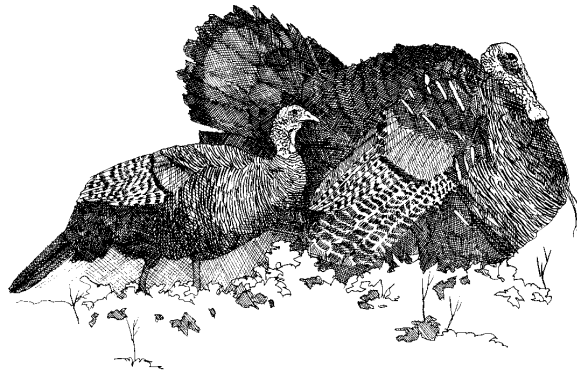
### ***From 9 to 1 pm***

- *Visit the Gift Shop.* We will be offering nature-related gifts, original artwork, books, bird feeders, jewelry, field bags, caps, visors, T-shirts, puzzle, children's items, and more.
- *Our second Fall Plant Sale.* Look for our varied collection of plants south of the Butterfly Garden. We'll have knowledgeable volunteer gardeners available to answer your questions.

### ***From 10 to noon***

- Tea, lemonade, and homemade cookies on the front porch, while they last!
- Tractor-drawn hayrides offered about every half hour. Enjoy a 20-minute ride through the woods and fields of Birdsong on a fall day.
- Children's nature games, crafts, and activities on the front lawn. Led by Birdsong's WILD Ones children's program leaders.

We look forward to seeing you there!



## LAND MANAGEMENT WORKDAYS

**Wednesdays: November 5 and 19, December 3 and 17**  
**9am to noon**

We have plenty of land management projects to work on this fall and could really use your help. Many of these projects are in support of our burn program, and many are basic improvement projects such as removal of invasive plants and clearing trails. If you enjoy working outdoors with good-natured companions, we have opportunities for you. Alan Parker, our land and site expert, will take us out to work on projects such as removing unwanted pine saplings from our fields; removing unwanted shortleaf trees, sweetgums and other hardwoods from the longleaf pine site; raking and clearing around trees and snags in advance of burning; and clearing the trails and fire lanes of any fallen trees and overhanging limbs.

Please be prepared for the weather and bring work gloves. If you have a favorite pair of loppers, a saw, or other tools, you are welcome to bring them, but we do have tools on site. There will be water and a snack on the truck; bring a sandwich if you want to have lunch together and we'll provide drinks and dessert.

Please let us know you are coming so we can prepare for lunch and/or contact us for more information: call 229-377-4408 or email [kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org). Thank you!

## **“A FRIENDLY FLOCK” QUILT**

**A fundraising raffle  
Drawing on Saturday, November 8, 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 and 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, November 8<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. Raffle tickets are available and the quilt can be seen at the Birdsong greeting station from now until November 8<sup>th</sup>. The quilt is larger than a throw, at 56 x 80 inches. It features 14 differently colored whimsical birds on a cream background with a green print border. The backing is pale green. It is charming and would make a lovely holiday gift for someone special, perhaps your favorite bird enthusiast!

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

### **GIFT SHOP OPEN ON PLANT SALE DAYS! October 25 and November 8**

The Gift Shop will be open on our upcoming 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. We have a nice selection of beautiful children's books for you to enjoy. You can do the environment a favor when you purchase a pair of our lovely earrings made from upcycled single windowpane glass or even recycled cereal boxes! For art lovers we have one of a kind paintings of Birdsong structures by Ruth Lampman on wood that came from our 1880's barn or Limited Edition signed prints of the Barn by New Jersey artist Martha Monaghan. Please stop in and have a look around.



### **GIFT MEMBERSHIPS**

Here is something to keep in mind for 2025 holiday gift-giving: a Birdsong Nature Center membership!

Birdsong memberships make excellent gifts: for a very reasonable fee your recipient will have access to this beautiful natural haven for an entire year whenever we are open; receive our newsletter with its Wildlife Management Notes every other month; receive discounts on our nature programs, some of the best in the region; and receive guest passes to share with others. In addition, you, the giver, have the assurance that your funds go toward preserving and managing this beautiful and historically significant land for the benefit of native plant communities and their associated wildlife, and help make it available for all to enjoy.

If you would like to give a Birdsong membership for the holidays or for any other occasion, please contact us at [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org) or call 229-377-4408 and we can help you. We will send your recipient a card informing them of your gift and acknowledging you, the giver. A member packet including a membership card, a newsletter, guest passes, and the nature center reciprocal agreement link will be sent out shortly afterwards. A Birdsong membership is a gift that lasts an entire year!

P.S. We will be selling gift memberships at the Plant Sales on October 25 and November 8 at \$5 off every member category!

## 2025 EASTERN BLUEBIRD NESTING BOX REPORT

We want to offer our sincere thanks to our Bluebird Monitors, David Jones and Myles Black, for their commitment to collecting Eastern Bluebird nesting data throughout the 2025 nesting season. The season starts in the spring and goes from mid-April through the heat of the summer until mid-August when nesting winds down. These dedicated volunteers go out every other week to check 43 boxes in two general locations: 1) the boxes throughout the Gin House Field, and 2) those boxes around the Field's north edge and toward the east and past the cabin. They identify and count eggs, chicks, and keep records on how many birds fledged. Please see the data below:

### Grand Total from Both Trails 2025

| Gin House Field |      |         |
|-----------------|------|---------|
|                 | Eggs | Fledged |
| Nuthatch        | 0    | 0       |
| Chickadee       | 5    | 5       |
| Bluebird        | 98   | 39      |
| Wrens           | 0    | 0       |
| Titmouse        | 6    | 5       |
|                 |      |         |
| Perimeter       |      |         |
|                 | Eggs | Fledged |
| Nuthatch        | 5    | 4       |
| Chickadee       | 9    | 9       |
| Bluebird        | 77   | 65      |
| Wrens           | 5    | 5       |
| Titmouse        | 0    | 0       |

### 2025 Bluebird Trail Totals

|           | Eggs | Fledged |
|-----------|------|---------|
| Nuthatch  | 5    | 4       |
| Chickadee | 14   | 14      |
| Bluebird  | 175  | 104     |
| Wrens     | 5    | 5       |
| Titmouse  | 6    | 5       |



Comments from our Bluebird Monitors and leaders on this year's season:

David Jones: "It seemed to me we had less Bluebirds this year, otherwise a good year. The only big surprise was that the wrens nested later than usual, and we have had 1 box of titmice for 3 years in a row."

Myles Black: "I would point out that the season was a very interesting one from the standpoint of the actual users of the boxes. For me, for one thing, I have never seen a titmouse use the boxes, and second, as I was cleaning a different box after a bluebird fledge, I found the bottom of the box was covered in a layer of acorns! Clearly someone else had designs on the box as well. The point is, that you never know what you are going to find as you are checking the boxes!"

We also want to thank the volunteers who assisted with box monitoring this summer. Rebecca Means, of Conservation Pathways, had been working with her interns here at Birdsong and introduced them to the Bluebird monitoring project. Several returned to help David and Myles with the observations over the following month. There is nothing like opening that box and being greeted with a tiny group of eager baby bluebirds, mouths open and waiting for mom to deliver. That or a small collection of sky blue eggs. If you would like to assist David and Myles next season, please contact us. They will get started in late March, early April, and they love to have help – your time and interest would be appreciated!

## WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

**Saturday, December 13, 2025**

\$10 adults, \$6 children

You are invited to Birdsong Nature Center for the 2025 Winter Solstice Celebration where we will once again be inspired by 565 acres of wildflower meadows, forests, ponds, and swamps, the home to a myriad of birds and other wildlife under the beauty of the stars and moon and galaxy!

We will be doing things a little differently at this year's Winter Solstice Celebration. As you can read in the description below, this year we are thrilled that the drums and percussion will return to our gathering! The ensemble will be brought by Ian Edward Weir, a skilled musician and documentary maker, who is on the faculty at the FSU College of Motion Picture Arts as a Post Production Specialist. After that set, Velma Frye will sing one song and Kathleen Brady will welcome us and explain the bamboo ritual. Then the bonfire will be lit, as Velma sings a favorite chant of Betty Komarek, one of the founders of Birdsong, and the drums will continue.

*4:00 pm* Arrive early, bring your own hot or cold drinks, a picnic supper, lawn chairs or blanket, and a flashlight. Settle in to enjoy the evening.

*5:00 pm* We will hold a very brief Annual Meeting of the Members for one item of business: a board election. All Birdsong members are welcome to participate in voting for a slate of nominees. Please see article on page 8 for more information.

*5:10 pm* Ian Edward Weir and friends will play drums and percussion instruments, as our ancestors did on this important night.

*5:40 pm* Velma Frye will sing "When the First Star Lights" just before sunset.

*5:45 pm* Kathleen Brady will welcome everyone to Birdsong and explain the bamboo ritual.. Then we will light the bonfire, accompanied by Velma singing the "O, Great Spirit" chant with drums.

Once the bonfire is going strong, we will "throw the bamboo." Each person will be given a bamboo stick to throw in the fire where it will explode and create good intentions for the coming year.

*Around 6:30 pm:* Those interested will walk together to the Star Pasture. Dress for the weather, bring a blanket to lie on to observe the stars, and bring a flashlight and your binoculars or scope for viewing.

Rest of the evening: Contemplate the Universe with your family and friends, and warm up around the bonfire.

It is our hope that this evening will give you a moment to deeply connect with nature, to enjoy time with people you care about, witness something beautiful, to reflect on what really matters to you as a new year begins, and experience some peace and quiet under the starry sky before heading back to a busy holiday season.

*PLEASE NOTE:* This is an all-outdoor event. At this time of year there is always a chance of rain, so please pay attention to the weather and call (1-229-377-4408) before driving out if you have questions. You can also check our website [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org) and Facebook page. Unfortunately, if it rains several days in advance, it can soak the bonfire, which may not have time to dry out before the event, as well as the ground where we'll be sitting.

Dress for the weather and remember to bring your favorite drinks, a picnic supper (no food provided), blanket, lawn chairs, flashlight, and binoculars.

Please RSVP and let us know you plan to attend. Contact us at: 1-229-377-4408 or [birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:birdsong@birdsongnaturecenter.org).

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

All members of Birdsong Nature Center are invited to attend the Annual Meeting being held before the Winter Solstice Celebration at 4:45 pm on Saturday, December 13, 2025. Please meet behind the Barn for the brief meeting and stay to enjoy the Celebration.

The main item on the agenda is the election of the Board of Directors for 2025-2026. The Nominating Committee is pleased to present new nominees Sue McFadden and Lora Smith. Sue is the owner of Cazimi Press in Thomasville, Georgia, and helps organizations improve their marketing and branding. If you have read any of Birdsong's Mailchimps in the past few years, particularly regarding the Plant Sales, you are familiar with Sue's beautiful work. Lora Smith is a Scientist at Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway in Newton, Georgia, and is an excellent teacher and interpreter of longleaf pine ecology and its reptiles and amphibians. You may have met her if you attended one of her many wonderful gopher tortoise field days at Birdsong.

We invite you to meet these new nominees at the Celebration, as well as our current and long-serving board members: Joe Peresich, President; Jim Antista; Scott Ball; and Ellery Sedgwick. Our Board has led Birdsong through many positive changes in the last few years, and we are very appreciative of their dedicated service. We hope you will join us for the brief member meeting and stay to enjoy the Winter Solstice Celebration. We'll look forward to seeing you there!

Please note: If you know of any individuals who have skills and talents that could benefit Birdsong's leadership, you may submit their names for consideration by the Nominating Committee for future elections to Executive Director Kathleen Brady at [kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org](mailto:kathleen@birdsongnaturecenter.org)

What do the tall trees say  
To the late havocs in the sky?  
They sigh.  
The air moves, and they sway.  
When the breeze on the hill  
Is still, then they stand still.  
They wait.  
They have no fear. Their fate  
Is faith. Birdsong  
Is all they've wanted, all along.

*Wendell Berry (b. 1934)*



## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT NOTES

### October 11, 2025

**Weather** This has been one of the most stressful summers in memory. We've dealt with extreme heat and humidity since May, and then an extended and damaging drought from August until early October. We had no rain at all from August 15 until September 9, when a .82-inch rain fell, then another extended period of dry hot weather until September 25, with only .21 inches of rain. Now in October there have been a couple of days of rain with about a half inch each, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, and when looking at the 10-day forecast, once again there is no rain expected in the near future. At least recently we are experiencing a cold front moving through, bringing a lot of relief with its winds and breezes and nighttime temperatures in the 50's. It actually feels a little like fall.

Our vegetation has suffered. We had been observing the wilting leaves on shrubbery and the early change in leaf color on many of our hardwood trees. Unfortunately, this was due to the stress of no rain, not the usual fall factors that cause leaf change. We had noticed the wilting, and we all kept enduring the days, but by September 19 we realized that the wild azaleas around the house and in the Butterfly Garden looked seriously parched almost overnight. That Saturday, we hurried around hooking up hoses and sprinklers and trying to revive the azaleas, particularly those lovely old *canescens* that Betty planted long ago for Rodie White. We were quite fearful during those 4 or 5 days that we might have lost a few, but at this point, they seem to have survived. It was really hard to see so many plants and trees in trouble out on the property where we are not able to water. We have learned that there is an expected pine beetle problem on the way for many areas where the trees have been deprived of water. In the Gin House Field, several mature pine trees have died. We thought it might be because of our hot burn this season, but the drought clearly exacerbated the problem and is probably the main reason. The Wild Azalea Garden near Big Bay drain, where Dan Miller planted beautiful patches of *astrinum* and flame azaleas, seems to have come through without mortality, so we are very relieved about that. Those shrubs looked pretty miserable a few weeks ago. The lawns and garden plants around the house were turning brown and crispy, but with just the small amount of rain we've had have started coming back.

The ponds and swamp are lower than they've been in many years, perhaps since 2012, when we had a severe drought. The Spring Pond is completely dry and green from tiny little plants

sprouting across the dry clay. A visitor walked out across the pond bed and brought us back one of Rebecca Means' dip nets that had somehow been lost in the water during a program she led back in the spring. So there is one advantage! The Frog Pond water level was observed shrinking over a period of weeks. The remaining pool in the middle kept getting smaller and smaller, yet was full of activity – crammed with tadpoles, beginning to metamorphose and breathe air – you could see all the creatures breaking the surface of the water. This was of great interest to several White Ibis and Little Blue Herons, of course. The pool completely disappeared and left a wide circle of gray mud within the green and grassy pond boundary. It was full of animal tracks, where apparently deer and raccoons and others had been attracted to the remaining water. It had to be a slog for them to get there; the tracks went deep in the mud and it could not have been easy walking. Big Bay Swamp, Upper Pond, and the Farm Pond are all very dry and have wide bands of decaying vegetation around the perimeter where the water has receded and left the remains of water lilies, *Utricularia*, and *Brasenia*. Yesterday at the Upper Pond, a medium-sized gator was curled up along the edge of a small hammock of Narrow-leaved Sunflower, on top of this muddy pond bed. Normally this spot would be under two feet of water. I don't know if the concentrated pools mean more fish and turtles to eat with less work for him, or if there has been a lot of mortality and pickings are slim. He did not look underfed.

The drought has lessened, but it is not really over. There is now the significant threat of pine beetle infestation in stressed trees. We are examining every dead tree to see if there is the revealing powder at the base indicating boring beetles' presence. We really hope not – coping with a beetle infestation is a huge problem. You have to cut down and burn the worst trees and then spray all neighboring trees with insecticide. Very invasive and complicated and messy. And expensive. Please keep your fingers crossed for us.

Drought is dreadful for the natural environment, but it is also really hard on us humans. The heat alone is enervating but having to witness some of your most beloved plants and trees failing and even dying is very hard to take, especially when there is nothing you can do about it. Betty had two ways of dealing with this years ago, which she espoused emphatically. One was to just accept it. This is part of our lives, it is what we are presented with, it is the *weather*, so accept it and don't complain. The second was to insist to all surrounding people, including visitors and volunteers, to do a rain dance. Which we of course then dutifully did. Interpretive

dance at its finest, I might add. Which, sooner or later of course, worked! If this continues, the next time you are at Birdsong you might get roped into participating in just such a dance, so come prepared with your best rain cloud moves.

**Wildflowers** As mentioned in recent newsletters, we have been looking forward to a wonderful wildflower bloom this early fall. As the drought wore on over the summer, we became uneasy about what would happen to our beautiful fields and woods. We have now seen mixed results, in part due to the drought. One plant we love to see emerge and bloom each fall is *Agalinis*, or False Foxglove. It goes through cycles but will occasionally put on a huge pink show in the Gin House Field. This year, we have seen very little *Agalinis* show up. Alan noticed about a month ago that the *Agalinis* plants in the Star Pasture had tried to bloom, but with the extended drought, the buds turned black, so no flowers there.

In spite of the drought, we have been astonished to see an enormous bloom of *Liatris*, or Blazing Star, most prolifically in the Gin House Field, but also across the entire property, which we have not seen before. This beautiful aster sends up a long, tall, graceful spike of purple flowers and grows in big patches, truly wonderful to behold. It is intensely attractive to pollinators, and any patch you find will be alive with different species of bees and butterflies, including the Gulf Fritillary, Cloudless Sulfur, and Long-tailed Skipper, to name a few. We urge you to come out for a walk along the central trail through the Gin House for a truly amazing experience. The Goldenrod is now coming on strong across this field, with some Narrow-leaved Sunflowers mixed in, so the expanses of purple and gold are stunning. With all the pollinator activity, and a blue sky – it is a fall marvel.

**Bird Window** The Window is a popular place. We are seeing a huge number of Northern Cardinals, with our usual numbers of Blue Jays, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, and Carolina Wrens. The Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have mostly left us – we have not had one sighted at the Bird Window for over a week. Frequently seen but in fewer numbers are these birds: White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, Downy Woodpecker, Common Ground Dove, and an Eastern Towhee male. One unusual sighting of a local bird rarely seen at the Bird Window was a Brown-headed Nuthatch. We are also seeing quite a few migrants. They started showing up in early September and are now surprising us daily.

These include Summer Tanager; Wood Thrush; Red-eyed Vireo; Scarlet Tanager female and male, non-breeding; House Finch; Black-and-white Warbler; Swainson's Thrush, and Eastern Phoebe. An absolute favorite is the Ovenbird! One appeared on September 5th and has been seen again several times. Yesterday, when visiting the Window with the wonderful FSU Environmental Services Project volunteers, we were treated to repeated sightings of the Ovenbird as well as many fly-bys by a Red-eyed Vireo, a House Finch, and an American Redstart. The non-breeding Scarlet Tanager took a long shower in the mister and got soaking wet – when he flew away, the orange patch above the tail was particularly striking against the wet black of his tail. The Scarlet Tanager female was present too, and the Ovenbird made several forays past us at the Window and repeatedly circled the cypress knee. What an unusual bird! The hopping gait alone is eye-catching, but along with the streaked breast and burnt-orange stripes on the cap – fascinating and fun to watch!

The family unit of five raccoons finally dispersed and now we are down to the occasional sighting of just one baby. Mom did an amazing job, but we learned that she was tired of her responsibilities when one day - with all of them there, one stretched out in the pool on its belly and clearly blissed out, and the others busy on the feeders - she stopped, looked around, and collapsed on her side, lying there as if completely spent. Her offspring at the feeders seemed to know that this meant leave me alone and I mean it because one approached, got the look, and veered off toward the pool instead. The one in the pool didn't get the message and approached, apparently intending to attempt to nurse. That was enough touching and she got up and headed off behind the pool, trailed by her nearly-grown brood. We hope Mom will get some peace and quiet until next season.

We are thankful that the worst of the drought is over, at least for now. It is inspiring to witness the resilience of nature under stress – even with all the extreme conditions the fall wildflowers are putting on a display that rivals that of any rainy summer. In a short walk through the woods, you can witness empty ponds, thirsty beautyberry, and brown-leaved wild azaleas and then head for the exuberant spectacle of wildly blooming purple *Liatris* and brilliant Goldenrod throughout the Gin House Field. Come out this fall to enjoy the woods and fields – the grasses will be next to show off, and the migrants are arriving!

- KBD

## NEW FRIENDS OF BIRDSONG

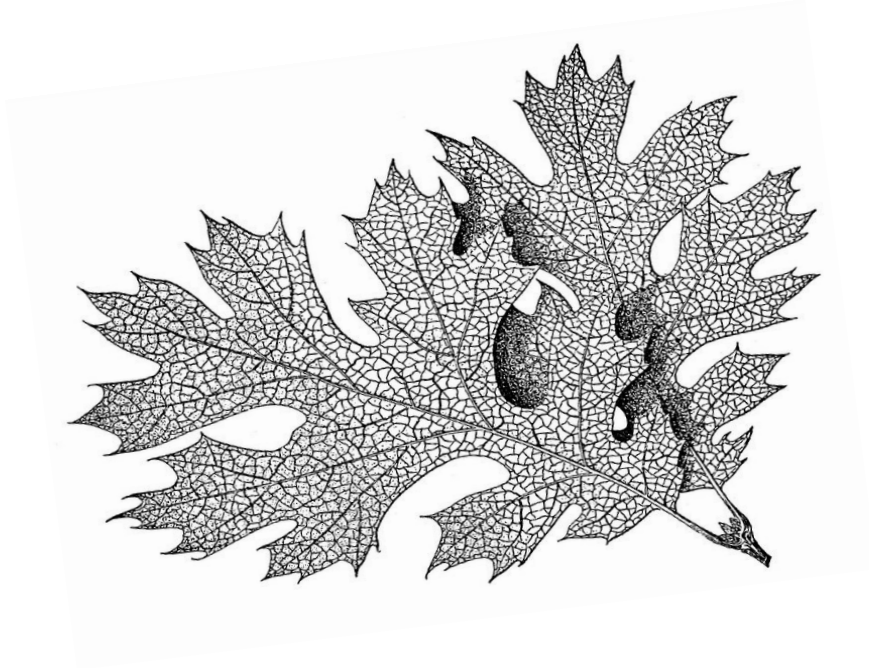
*Tallahassee*  
Keith Osborn

*Dixie, GA*  
Walt Moody

## BIRDSONG NATURE CENTER WISHES TO THANK:

*In memory of Ed Gartner:*  
Suzanna MacIntosh

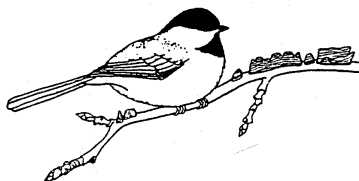
*Special financial gifts:*  
Rita King  
Cheryl Burnett and Roland White  
Spike Gram  
Ed and Marylyn Feaver



## BIRDSONG'S CORPORATE SPONSORS

Faceville Nurseries  
Native Nurseries  
Trillium Gardens Nursery  
Import Authority  
Seminole Alterations  
Chelsea Salon & Spa  
TNB Financial Services  
Target Print and Mail  
Armstrong Tree Service  
Woodleaf Senior Care  
Cowhey & Ward, LLC  
Loblolly Rise  
Blue Bear Farm & Cattle Co. LLC  
Magnolia Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society  
Wiregrass Electric, Inc.  
Homestead Imprinted Sportswear  
Simmons, Mills & Simmons P.C.





# *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: \_\_\_\_\_

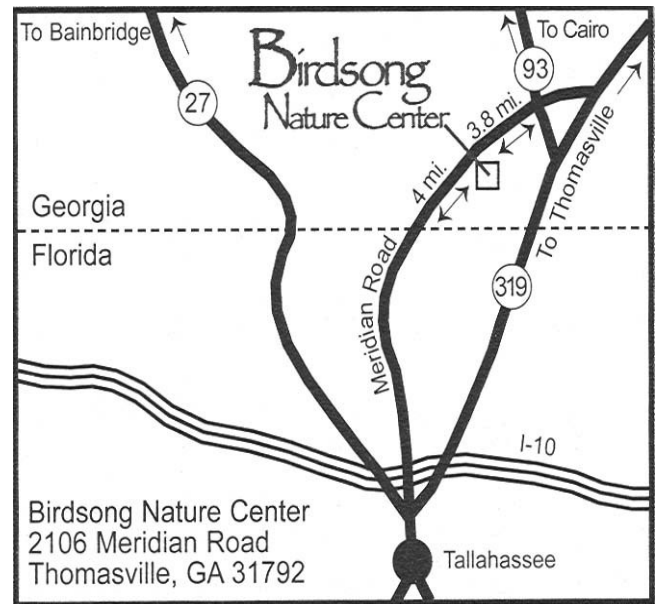
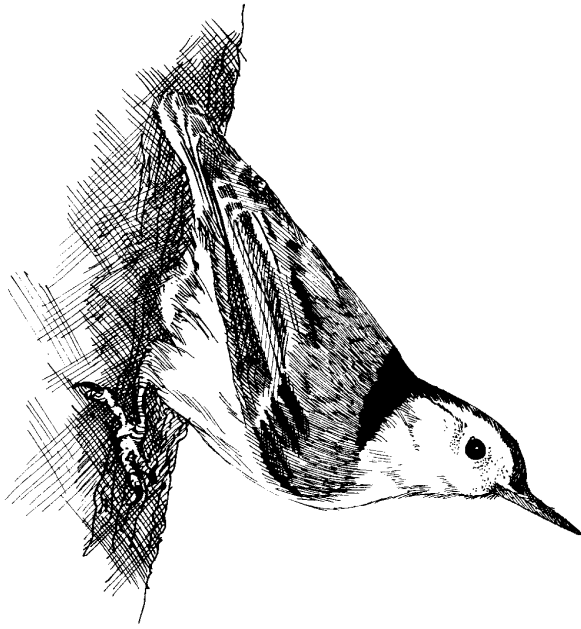
### I would like to join the Friends of Birdsong in the following category:

- |                                                     |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Friend          | \$30          | Bird Window and Nature Trails free during open hours.<br>Two free one-time guest passes.<br>Member discount on scheduled programs.<br>10% discount on items at the Chickadee Corner Gift Shop.<br>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.<br>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".

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

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