

2008 WILDATHON
Fund-Raiser for the New Hope Audubon Society
May 5, 2008
Chair: Karsten Rist

Please help make our annual Spring fund-raiser a success by acting on one or more of the three suggestions below. Clip and mail the form at the bottom of this page today!

1. Make a financial contribution.

Contributing to the New Hope Audubon Society's WILDATHON is one of the best ways to protect important bird and wildlife habitat right here in Chapel Hill at the Mason Farm Biological Reserve and on the NC coast at our Audubon Coastal Islands Sanctuary (see reverse side for more info), and to help further the chapter's outreach and educational efforts.

2. Lead a team or join a team.

You do not have to be an expert on birds, flora or other fauna to participate. Each team will have experienced members. You also do not have to solicit pledges in order to be on a team (although it is a great help to the fund-raiser if you do). Team leaders establish exact times, meeting location, and routes. The Wildathon has proved to be educational, challenging, and quite a lot of fun. Consider forming teams with friends, families, neighbors or co-workers. Call Karsten Rist (919-490-5718) if you want more information, or if you want to lead a team or to join a team.

3. Help bring in donations.

See if your employer will provide matching funds for your donation. Beyond making a donation yourself, participants can help raise money by soliciting donations on behalf of their team. It's not as hard as you think when you believe in such a goal. Written materials can be provided to assist you in your fund-raising endeavors. Just call for help (490-5718).

If actual species counting or donation soliciting is not your forte, please volunteer to help with other aspects of our fund-raiser, such as dissemination of information, including posters and fliers, follow-up for pledges, etc.

.....
New Hope Audubon Society Wildathon Pledge Form 2008

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

_____ My tax-deductible gift of \$_____ to support the Wildathon effort is enclosed.
Please make checks payable to New Hope Audubon Society.

_____ I pledge \$_____ per species identified by the _____ Team.
(Team leaders will be listed in the newsletter).

_____ A matching gift is enclosed. My company name is _____, and matches my charitable gifts.

_____ I pledge \$_____ per species I observe in my neighborhood or at my feeder on Wildathon Day.

Signature _____

Please return form to: New Hope Audubon Society PO Box 2693 Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27515, or to the Wildathon Team Leader of your choice. **Commitments to form or join a team are requested by May 1. Pledges are due by May 15, and payments by June 1.**

WHERE YOUR WILDATHON CONTRIBUTION GOES

Mason Farm Biological Reserve

What is now the Mason Farm Biological Reserve and surrounding lands were willed to UNC by Mary Elizabeth Mason (great-granddaughter of the first settler of the area, Mark Morgan), and her husband, Rev. James Pleasant Mason. The land, given in memory of their only heirs- their daughters- who died of typhoid fever in their early twenties, passed to UNC in 1894. Mason Farm supports around 50 research projects and fieldwork for 10 - 20 different undergraduate courses each year. It also provides great enjoyment to local naturalists, including New Hope Audubon Society and Chapel Hill Bird Club members, many of whom congregate yearly to watch the Woodcock mating displays. Mason Farm is an area of such concentrated study because of its diversity of wildlife. Three areas within Mason Farm have been nominated (but never approved) for the NC Natural Heritage Program- the Big Oak Woods, the Shagbark Hickory Forest and the Rhododendron Slope. The entire Reserve has recently been nominated as an Important Bird Area; an official announcement of this designation will be forthcoming. These and other diverse habitats, including wetlands of various types, open fields and edges, support 65 species of butterflies (out of 78 found in the entire country), 215 avian species (one less than the entire country), mammalian predators including the bobcat and 100 species of other vertebrates. Even longtime frequenters of Mason Farm need to stop and remind themselves of how truly important this place is to all of us as adjacent areas continue to encroach. It is one of the last large, undeveloped areas remaining in the Piedmont. There are fewer places for the bobcat to roam, and Mason Farm continues to be one. Despite all of these impressive statistics, the only funding the Mason Farm receives from UNC is for road upkeep. The dollars you give will go toward open field maintenance, new construction and repair of benches, addition or replacement of interpretive guide posts and fences, and registration materials.

North Carolina Coastal Islands Sanctuary

The Audubon Society began protecting coastal birds in North Carolina in the very early 1900's, when plume hunters had nearly wiped out many of our species. The practice of killing birds for their feathers has long since vanished, but equally devastating problems associated with coastal development and a rapidly growing human population threaten many birds. National Audubon recognized this threat and launched the North Carolina Coastal Islands Sanctuary program in 1989 to acquire and protect habitats critical to the survival of wading birds and seabirds. Today, Audubon's Coastal Islands Sanctuary includes 20 islands between Cape Fear and Cape Hatteras that support more than 60,000 nesting seabirds and wading birds. Walker Golder, the Sanctuary's one full-time employee, must (with volunteer help) count nests, monitor the sanctuaries, raise money to support the sanctuary, keep trespassers away, coordinate research and management projects, and work to acquire new sanctuaries. That's where we come in. The money we raise assists him in these endeavors. And his work is paying off. Fully one-half of the nesting seabirds and wading birds on the coast of North Carolina nest on Audubon Sanctuaries. Audubon recently restored 7 acres of nesting habitat on Wainwright Island, which now supports 1600 nesting pelicans and 11,000 nesting terns. Since Golder began posting Battery Island, the number of nesting ibises has doubled to almost 18,000. Golder says, "Thanks to our conservation efforts along the coast, many water birds are doing well. All they needed was a little help- and I'm glad New Hope Audubon was there to assist."