

All About Birdathon

During Birdathon, held during April, to take advantage of Spring Migration, teams of birders spend their designated 24 hour period identifying by sight or sound as many bird species as they can. It can get a little competitive but it is always fun. Prior to their BIG DAY, the teams ask for pledges, either a per bird amount or a flat sponsorship amount.

The money raised during the Birdathon goes directly to the Apalachee Audubon Society chapter to help pay for environmental education programs such as *Audubon Adventures*. These kits are developed by National Audubon Society for elementary school classrooms and they include ideas for teachers, classroom posters and individual reading materials. Audubon works with state academic achievement standards to assure that students can develop appropriate academic skills through the nature content of the kits. The theme changes every year. In a recent year, the "Feats of Nature" theme emphasized how animals defend themselves, migrate and build and how plants rule the world. For more information about this program see <http://www.audubon.org/educate/aa/index.html>.

One *Audubon Adventures* subscription package for 35 students costs approximately \$45. This past year we were able to fund kits for 77 classrooms in 30 Leon, Jefferson, Franklin and Wakulla county schools. We would love to be able to expand the program. Helping the next generation to understand nature and the interconnectedness of all life is critical to the future of the planet.

The 2011 Birdathon Teams are:

Harvey's Harriers: Judy & Harvey Goldman, Karen Wensing, Kathy Besbekos, Ann & Blakely Bruce; Birdathon Day April 8; Visited St.Marks NWR, Mashers Sands, St. George Island State Park and Ochlocknee River State Park; 122 species.

What's That Red Bird?: Tracee Strohman, Pam Flynn, Bill Hudgens, Priscilla Yotter, Karen Pritzl, Jo Eldridge, Glenda Atkinson; Birdathon Day April 23; Emphasized Low Carbon Footprint and birded St.Marks NWR exclusively; 93 species.

Mellow Yellowlegs: Fran Rutkovsky & Paul Rutkovsky, Mike Tucker, Ed Woodruff, Dana Stewart; Birdathon Day April 23; Multiple sites; 104 Species.

White Ibis: Dana Bryan birding with Audubon of Florida Staff; Birdathon Day April 17; St.Marks NWR, Bald Point State Park, St. George Island State Park and points along the way; 145 Species.

Flamingo (aka Fledgling or Toddlerathon): Maisie Wraithmell (3), Savannah Ferguson (2), Violet Carr (2), Mackenzie Binns (3), Max, Rowan & Coral Nelson (3), Eleanor Belcher (2); Birdathon Day April 16; Lafayette Park, Tallahassee; 4 Bird Species plus 2 plastic flamingos, 50,000 pill bugs, 1 very dramatic millipede, jasmine, bottlebrush, honeysuckle, sparkleberry.