



***Bloomin' Birdathon* Raises More Than \$15,000 for Environmental Education & Conservation**

By Kathryn Mitchell, ANS Development Director

This year's *Bloomin' Birdathon* marked the 27th anniversary of this fun, time-honored fundraiser for ANS environmental education and conservation programs. Introducing backyard birding to the next generation of event participants was a goal this year, and happily, more than 30 families requested information on creating a backyard habitat for birds. This was in addition to the 24 participants, who raised nearly \$15,500 to date from their sightings of birds and blooms.

This year's top fundraisers include Marcia Minichiello and the Birdathon-by-Metro team of ANS Board member, John Bjerke, and ANS Executive Director, Neal Fitzpatrick, who to date have raised \$4,235 and \$2,578, respectively. Marcia was also the clear leader in the identification of blooms adding 94 species to her already impressive 135 bird count. Other top fundraisers include Stephen Jones at \$1,306 and Dottie Beck, who raised more than \$1,000.

Other distinctions include the addition of four-year-old Joy Ojala of Sterling, Virginia, and seven-year-old David Lieberman of Bethesda, Maryland, who each identified 11 species of birds in their backyard and raised a combined total of \$101. Newcomer, Nancy Edwards of Silver Spring, Maryland, described her family's involvement as "a fantastic family adventure" as she and her two sons traveled to four areas during their 24-hour period. They were rewarded with a bald eagle sighting at the George-town Reservoir, creating excitement for her elder son, who was eager to add a bird of prey to the family's growing bird list.

Cecily Nabors and Diane Ford created a four-page narrative of their day, highlighted by Diane's penciled sketches of many birds they saw, including the American coot, wood duck, and Northern rough-winged swallow. During their 10 hours of birding, the pair sighted 76 bird species! They ended their day with the sighting of a female black-and-white warbler at Hughes Hollow, described by Cecily as the "icing on the avian cake."

ANS naturalist Mark Garland participated in the annual World Series of Birding excursion, which benefits three Audubon Societies including the Audubon Naturalist Society. This year, instead of teaming with others, Mark decided to go-it-alone, starting his solo competition shortly before midnight on May 12, and ending nearly 20 hours later at the West Cape May Fire Station, the official World Series finish line. Mark is clearly the uncontested leader for identifying the greatest number of birds — 159 species during his two-day trek around beautiful Cape May County. Congratulations Mark! Other participants identifying more than 100 bird species include Marcia Minichiello at 135, Barbara Holloman at 122, Stephen Jones at 118, and Dottie Beck at 112.

A special thanks to the generous sponsors who supported the following 27th Annual *Bloomin' Birdathon* participants:

Adelia Baldwin & Kathy Geary of Stratford Women's Club
Barbara Holloman
Cecily Nabors
David Lieberman
Diane Ford
Dirck Harris
Dottie Beck
Drewry Cromwell
John Bjerke
Joy Ojala & family
Karen Malkin
Kathryn Mitchell
Lisa Davenport
Loree Trilling
Marcia Minichiello
Mark Garland
Matthew Mathias
Nancy Edwards and family

**Nancy Magnusson
Neal Fitzpatrick
Nicholas P. Schliapin
Stephen Jones
Shirley Putnam
Sheila Cochran**