

Tips for Getting Started:

Courtesy of Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS)

Asking people for money can seem daunting, but once you get started, it's not all that hard. Here are a few tips on how to make your Birdathon fundraising easy!

Make a list of everyone you know: Neighbors, family, friends near and far, co-workers, old college roommates, acquaintances from the gym, your dentist....

Cast a wide net. Not everyone will give. But the more people you ask, the more “Yes” answers you will receive.

Think of people whose causes you've supported. Did you sponsor them in a breast cancer walk last year? They'll be more likely to sponsor you in Birdathon.

Don't feel embarrassed. Most people will respect you for caring enough about birds and wildlife conservation to put your time and effort into the Birdathon.

Approach people! Write them an individual note, e-mail or communicate on Facebook. Better yet, meet them in person for coffee, lunch, glass of wine or dinner.

Develop talking points and tell them why Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS) is important to you. Did you fall in love with the Green Backed Heron at the Goleta Slough the first time you saw it? Do you want your grandchildren to be able to see egrets and warblers when they grow up? Etc.

Follow up. If you don't hear a response, e-mail them a second and third time saying, “I want to make sure you got my note about Birdathon.” If you are worried about being too pushy, remember how crowded people's in-boxes are – the first time, they may not have seen your note, and the second time they may have intended to make a donation but forgot. Third time's the charm!

Talk about Birdathon. During your coffee break at work, or in the locker room at the health club, or on your Facebook page, or over lunch with a friend. Tell people how much you're looking forward to the Birdathon and how many birds you hope to see in a 24 hour period. Or, tell them how nervous you are about trying to raise \$700 or more.

Be open and serious. If you let people know you have this ambitious dollar goal, and that you're nervous about how to reach it, some of them will step up to help. Wouldn't you do the same for a friend?

Thank your donors! Acknowledge their contribution as soon as you receive it. Tell them you will let them know your success in the Birdathon and will send pictures from your field research. If they don't decide on the spot to support you, thank them for thinking about it.

Again, TALK ABOUT Birdathon. People will respond to your enthusiasm for birds, nature and SBAS. Tell the world. Who knows.... you might inspire them not just to donate to Birdathon, but to try bird watching or come on a Birding walk themselves.

Talking Points:

Prepare ahead. Develop a script. Here are some points you can include, but the important thing is to make it your own:

With a very small staff and a host of dedicated volunteers, SBAS leads Free, Friday Bird Walks, Creates Premier Bird Trips and monthly Wednesday evening programs. Tackles major conservation projects, such as Shelby Ranch Project, More Mesa Project, Goleta Slough Management Issues, and Chaparral Protection to name a few. SBAS Conservation Committee continues to provide restoration at the Dune swale pond, Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR) and at Lake Los Carneros. SBAS members helped to clean up Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR) due to the Refugio Beach Oil Spill. SBAS has hosted two Winter Bird Count 4 Kids with increasing success, created curriculum and is currently working with “at-risk youth” on the Police Activity League (PAL).

SBAS has been protecting birds, preserving natural habitats and open space and educating people of all ages about birds and other wildlife for 53 years. SBAS is the only Audubon Society in California to have its own raptor facility, (EITS), whereby these Raptor Ambassadors along with volunteer bird handlers meet and greet over 23,000 people each year.

Climate change and ongoing loss of habitat are taking a toll on birds everywhere. We need SBAS to continue to be a strong voice for protecting birds and natural habitat and to have enough funds to carry out its mission for years to come.

All funds raised by the Birdathon go directly to SBAS. The money stays right here in the Santa Barbara County area to help our native bird populations survive and thrive and to inspire and educate current and future generations about the wonders of our natural world. Santa Barbara Audubon Society is a 501. © 3 Non-Profit Organization whose Tax ID Number is 23-7051362.