

## Thoughts on fundraising, and suggested language, from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

### From Ruth Oppedahl, Executive Director:

Often people feel hesitant about “fundraising”. At NRF, we don’t use that word very much, because when you work for a worthwhile cause and recognize that the world is an abundant place; then people **will** respond. There are just two things to remember which are somewhat paradoxical:

1. People give to people. Why does my Uncle Virgil who lives in Virginia donate to the Foundation Flamingos Team? Because he knows me and he believes in me. Trust that people who know and care about you, also care about what is important to you. They want to support you and help you do your good work. Your friends may even be insulted if you don’t ask them to help with something you feel so deeply about. If you are beginning, the easiest thing in the world is to send an email to your friends and family.
2. It’s not about you, it is about the birds. Sorry, but it is the *birds* that need our help. Think about how rotten it feels to see an important habitat lost to development, a bird that’s hit a window, or a trembling eagle affected by lead shot. Think about the joy brought into your life by the evening song of the hermit thrush, or the whistling feather of ducks flying overhead, or the peenting of the wood cock announcing spring. This is not about you, you are asking for the *birds*. You believe it is important, and so will your friends and family.

[Wisconsin ranks #2 in birding](#). One-in-three people watch birds. Give the people in your social network the opportunity to express and support their love of birds by involving them in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon.

### From Camille Zanoni, Development Director:

We believe that birds are important and that they need our help. Birds serve as bellwethers of our environment’s health. Their well-being and survival reflects the state of our prairies, wetlands, forests and savannas. The Great Wisconsin Birdathon exists to help protect Wisconsin’s birds, many of which are currently threatened or imperiled. Your gift to the Birdathon will directly help Wisconsin’s birds by funding important projects like Whooping Crane and Kirtland’s Warbler conservation, bird monitoring and research, and more. Birds matter. To help Wisconsin’s birds today, visit [WIBirdathon.org](http://WIBirdathon.org) or send your gift to: Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin Birdathon, PO Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701.

### From Diane Packett, Great Wisconsin Birdathon Coordinator:

No one really likes asking for money. So don’t—ask people to “sponsor” you in your quest to find as many birds as you can. You can distance yourself a bit by using social media. We’ve seen a Facebook post, repeated once in the season, generate over \$1,000 in donations. Share a request or video on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

If you’ve never done this before, don’t worry; it’s very often the brand new teams that raise the most money.

Ask everyone! Family, friends, classmates. Oddly, the non-birders often give more than the birders, maybe because of the novelty of the idea of a Birdathon, or because birders already give to other bird conservation causes.

As Ruth said, people give to people. Tell your personal story about why birds are important to you, and why you are involved in the Birdathon. Talk about people or events that inspire you, whether an author like Aldo Leopold, a trip you took where you discovered birds, or a family member such as a birdwatching friend or relative:

"My grandmother loved to watch the hummingbirds at her feeder. It would be a shame if they stopped coming back."

"Watching birds had kept me sane during difficult periods of my life."

"I've been studying birds for years and now I want to contribute to their conservation more than ever."

Include pictures of yourself birding, or your favorite birds. To make it easy for people to donate online, include the link to your personal or team fundraising page.

And don't forget to send your donors a personal thank-you and report of your Birdathon day!