

Wing Haven

Bird Sanctuary Donated To Public

By MARY ESTES

News Staff Writer

Wing Haven, Charlotte's noted bird sanctuary and gardens, has been donated to the Wing Haven Foundation for use by the public and a thousand people have been invited to a reception tomorrow to celebrate the transfer.

The three-acre sanctuary at 248 Ridgewood Ave., said to be one of only two domestic environments in the country that attracts wild birds year around, has been donated by owners Mr. and Mrs. Edwin O. Clarkson through the Wing Haven Foundation.

The 6 p.m. reception at the garden, given by five Charlotte nature and cultural organizations, is in honor of the Clarksons.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the people of Charlotte to have full use of the sanctuary," said Russ Peithman, director of the Charlotte Nature Museum and on the board of the Wing Haven Foundation.

The Clarksons and the foundation will set up guidelines for its use by the public.

The property in southeast Charlotte has a tax-exempt value of \$30,000, said city-county tax supervisor Robert Alexander, while a member of the foundation said he thinks the garden is worth \$100,000. It has been open to special groups for visitation at various times for many years.

Created by the Clarksons in 1926, it includes wandering paths, vistas and formal gardens with a variety of herbs, flowers and trees.

"It's a botanist's delight as well as a noted bird sanctuary," said Peithman, noting that well-known ornithologists from all over the country have visited the garden.

The controlled wilderness, said Peithman, "is the only place in the country where wood ducks nest and raise their young within a city and the confines of a formal garden."

The house at Wing Haven, the Clarksons' private residence adjoining the garden which includes a library with a valuable collection of ornithology books, is expected to be turned over to the foundation at a future date. Alexander said it is valued at \$28,050.

A membership organization will be created by the foundation in the coming months to help maintain the gardens.



Wing Haven bird sanctuary goes to the public.