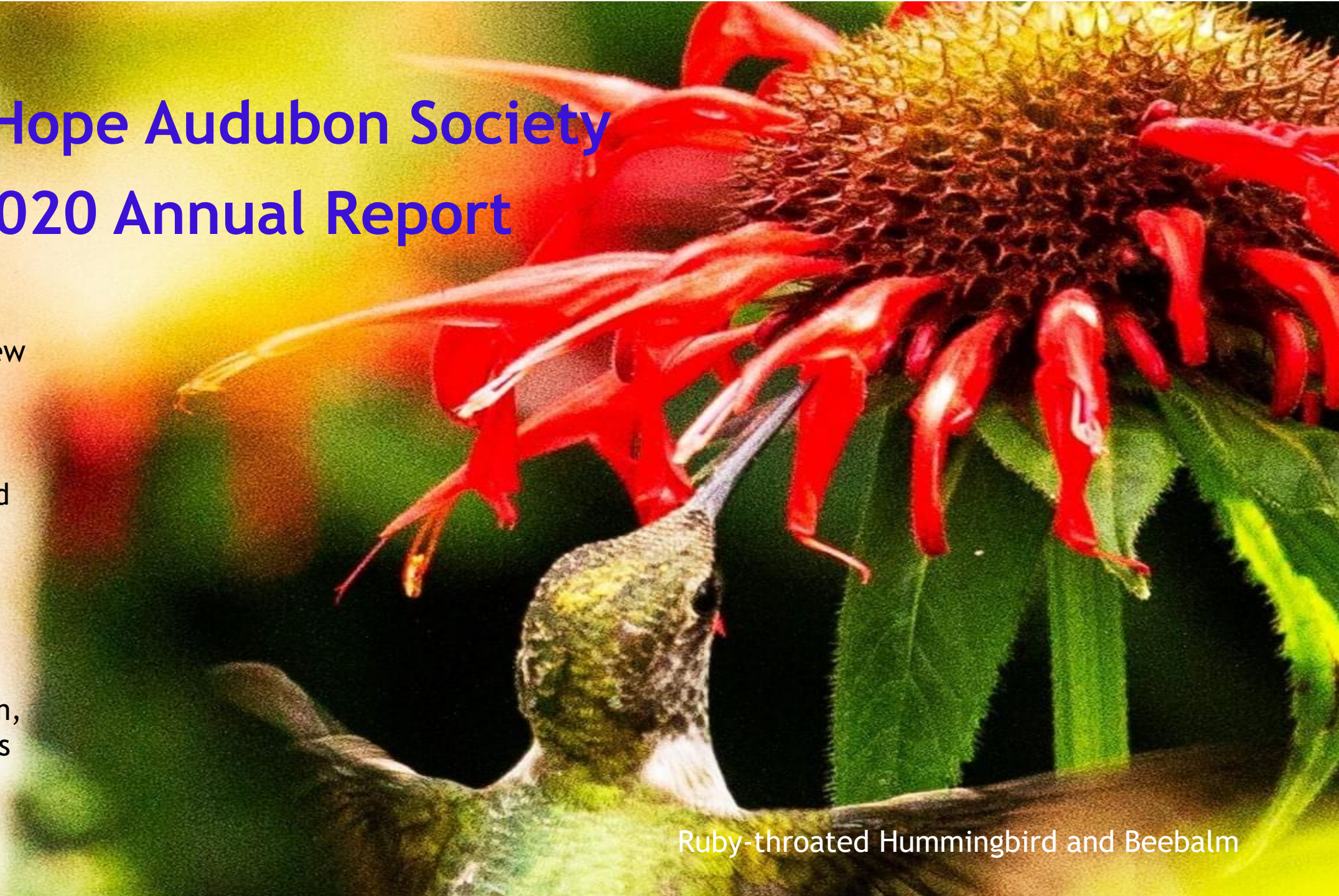


# New Hope Audubon Society

## 2020 Annual Report

The mission of New Hope Audubon Society is to promote the conservation and enjoyment of birds, other wildlife, and ecosystems, focusing on Chatham, Durham, Orange and parts of surrounding counties.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Beebalm





NHAS President  
Barbara Driscoll  
Live streaming  
RAPTOR  
INSIGHTS!

*NHAS Board of Directors, committees and members are committed to this valuable work!*

**Conservation**



**Education**



**Get Outdoors**



We are working in many spaces to implement a variety of self-imposed conservation goals.



## Conservation

Prothonotary Warbler

Advocacy

Bird  
Friendly  
Habitat

Nest Boxes

Community  
Science

# Conservation

New Hope Audubon Society supports a variety of environments when needs arise in our local communities.



Yellow-throated Warbler

- ✓ NC Botanical Garden conservation work at Mason Farm (Chapel Hill) continues with the assistance of \$3,500 for the purchase of a bush hog. Mason Farm habitat provides an excellent ecosystem that supports local wildlife and birds.
- ✓ Sandy Creek Park (Durham) has a diverse ecosystem and hosts a lot of birds, walkers and families. Our funds \$2,500 supported beaver levelers needed to help with flooding related to beaver activity.
- ✓ Booker Creek - This multi-year project continued as volunteers worked over a 1000 hours in 2020 removing invasive plants and planting natives. Native plantings were funded as part of a Burke Grant from National Audubon.

# Advocacy

Advocacy takes place on a lot of levels and avenues at NHAS. Volunteers are building conversations around the value of native landscapes and ecosystems that support birds and wildlife. This work in our local communities includes educating city and county government elected officials, and some work with state government officials. We participate broadly with Audubon NC and National Audubon to address areas of concern and help to build their programs. 2020 activities included:

- ▶ Durham City Council - Hollow Rock Park issues highlighted at a council meeting, and we advocated for Open Space Funds.
- ▶ Durham Town Council, City and County - Working to implement a Bird-Friendly Community pilot that was approved and currently building an Action Plan underway.
- ▶ Durham Planning Commission - advocated to keep green space around affordable housing residences.
- ▶ Town of Chapel Hill - Built awareness and advocated for a Leave the Leaves. Campaign coming Fall 2021.
- ▶ Durham Environmental Coalition - A collaboration with environmental organizations in Durham to advocate for socially just environmental action, support organizations in addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion, and support connection and relationship building between environmental groups.
- ▶ Southern Environmental Law Center - Our advocacy centered on comment letters signed for the Rollback of Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Red-Cockaded Woodpecker down-listing under ESA, and Incidental takings under Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- ▶ Congressman David Price - Discussions centered on Better Energy Storage Act, Safe Building Act, Migratory Bird Protection Act, and Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act.
- ▶ Wildlife Commission - Advocated prohibiting Sunday hunting at Jordan Lake and Butner Game Lands with the Sunday Hunting Focus Group.
- ▶ Advocacy Day - Multiple meetings attended with volunteers highlighting advocacy topics centered on birds and healthy ecosystems and bird friendly areas.
- ▶ Collaborations with Audubon NC: Members attended Climate Advocacy Training, Support for Clean Energy/Energy Storage Campaign, and participated at Chapter Day and Chapter Meetings.
- ▶ Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - New committee organized and promoted training and education within NHAS and externally.

If you're always  
trying to be  
normal  
you will never  
know how  
amazing you can  
be.  
- Maya Angelou

# Bird Friendly Habitat

This unique certification program has been in progress for over five years. Interested homeowners request a bird friendly evaluation of their property to assess how well the property supports birds and wildlife. Many factors go into the assessment including evaluating the percentage of non-native invasive plants and trees on the property. The written evaluation includes great tips and ways to eliminate invasive plants and suggestions of bird friendly native plantings to replace the invasive plants. The rating given to each property allows homeowners to display signage indicating their “Bird Friendly” status. The goal of the signage is to build awareness and start conversations between neighbors. This program is entirely volunteer managed and 48 new or revisits occurred in 2020.

*Bird-friendly team worked along with other environmental groups to rewrite the landscape manual and ordinances for Durham City/Council which included adding 76 plants to the "Do Not Plant" list.*

Habitats for birds in a yard, at a business, or in any public or private outdoor space is changing using our **BIRD FRIENDLY HABITAT** program!



**Conservation is at the heart of our nest box sales. Nest boxes provide cavities for cavity-nesting birds whose populations have decreased due to habitat loss. As the Covid-19 pandemic influenced more people to get outdoors, efforts to support nature increased. Thanks to everyone who purchased and installed a nest box in 2020 to help with habitat loss for specific birds.**

Eastern Bluebirds

## Nest Boxes



# Community Science

NHAS has a long history of leading and participating with data collection and research centered on bird counts. 2020 projects included eagle nest counts and Christmas Bird Counts.

## Jordan Lake

- ✓ Jordan Lake Spring Bird Count 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic.
- ✓ Historical data from bird counts since 1997 was added to the NHAS website.
- ✓ Bald Eagle Quarterly Bird Counts were also completed with limited interactions.
- ✓ Jordan Lake Gulls Revisited - Revisited Blog
- ✓ 4 series of blogs created to highlight species that are increasing, decreasing, and other notable observations at the lake.

## Christmas Bird Counts 2020

- ✓ Counts were completed for Jordan Lake, Chapel Hill and Durham.

## South Ellerbe Creek Restoration Project

- ✓ Initiated monthly bird counts to support Durham County's effort to convert the area into a restored wetland. Volunteers are supporting this project with representatives from the Durham Storm-water Department.

## Climate Watch Survey

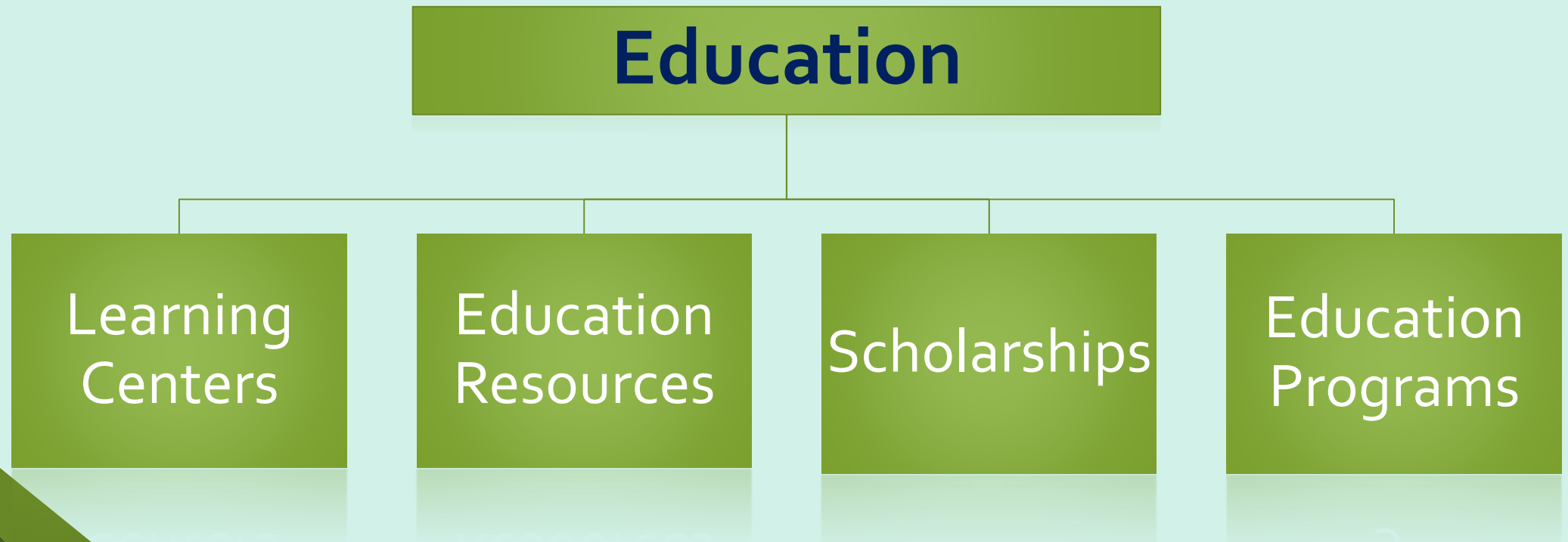
- ✓ Since 2016 Audubon volunteers collect data to document how birds are responding to climate changes. Fourteen NHAS volunteers surveyed 144 points for the 2020 survey.

Bald Eagle at Jordan Lake





Our programs are designed to engage all ages. Educational presentations and programs build awareness on many levels around conservation, wildlife habitat, ecosystems, great birding locations and bird identification. Direct and indirect education and mentoring occurs at our activities and help build relationships, bird knowledge and advocacy.



## Learning Centers

New Hope Audubon Society uses hands on learning centers to engage participants in a variety of setting throughout the year. These learning centers were not utilized in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. Current learning centers include:

- ✓ Flight and Migration
- ✓ Bird Song and Communication
- ✓ Feathers
- ✓ Bird Nests
- ✓ What and How Birds Eat
- ✓ Chimney Swifts

## Education Resources

New Hope Audubon Society promotes the online educational resources offered through Audubon NC and National Audubon Society.

- ✓ [Audubon Adventures](#): Engaging students in grades 3 through 8 with the natural world.
- ✓ [Tools of Engagement](#): Centered on conservation.
- ✓ [Guide to North America Birds](#): A searchable index of North American birds.
- ✓ [Birds and Bird Watching](#): Birding in North Carolina.

## Scholarships

Two scholarships for *I Walk the Eno* Camp with Eno River Association were awarded in 2020.

# Education Programs

## **North Carolina Botanical Garden**

The Botanical Garden and NHAS has a long history working collaboratively. Our joint commitment to education is seen as they have provided space for our in-person monthly meetings. Collaboration supporting speakers is another avenue where we partner. 2020 Programs included:

- ▶ Susan Campbell, “Hummingbirds”
- ▶ Curtis Smalling, Director of Conservation, Audubon NC, “Climate Change Impacts on Birds”

## **Duke BOOST (Building Opportunities and Overtures in Science and Technology) Collaboration**

The program is designed to excite young people about science and inspire them to pursue careers in medicine and related fields. A young birder from Atlanta engaged the participants as he shared his passion around birding and science. Working with BOOST is a multi-year endeavor, and NHAS is planning to support additional programming in 2021. This sponsorship helps educate audiences about opportunities in areas that are outside traditional avenues.

## **Audubon North Carolina**

NHAS is fortunate to work closely with the state Audubon organization. Joint educational programs included:

- ▶ Virtual Chimney Swift Night Out
- ▶ Raptor Insights Program, Chatham County Library, February event with over 150 attendees, and another event in November

## **Cornell Workshop for Educators**

Sponsored a Durham Public Schools educator to attend the workshop. Additional sponsorships are planned for 2021.

## **Blogs**

NHAS Directors and members share their insights via blogs throughout the year.

- ✓ Barbara Driscoll, “Restoring the Lower Booker Creek Trail to a Bird-Friendly Habitat”
- ✓ Norm Budnitz, “Jordan Lake Gulls Revisited – Revisited”
- ✓ Barb Stenross, “Preventing that Dreaded Thump”
- ✓ Elizabeth D. Hilborn, DMV, “Neonics, Bee-Killing Insecticides that also Harm Birds”
- ✓ Norm Budnitz, “Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part 1”
- ✓ Norm Budnitz, “Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part 2 Woodpeckers”
- ✓ Norm Budnitz, “Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part 3 Species in Decline”
- ✓ Norm Budnitz, “Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part 4 Species that are Increasing”
- ✓ Norm Budnitz, “The Hoop House, a Healthy Mini Ecosystem”
- ✓ Catherine Bollinger, “Your Yard is Your Pollinator Garden”
- ✓ Jim George, “Keeping Up the Tradition of Passalong Plants”
- ✓ Jim George, “Help Build a Homegrown National Park”
- ✓ Lynn Richardson, “Durham Is for the Birds! Working toward a Community Bird-friendly Designation”
- ✓ Nick Harper, “Leveraging Biodiversity Benefits on a Working Farm”

## **Bird Identification Signage**

Signage is a needed avenue to educate users about birds and bird activity in specific areas. Signage was designed for Brumley North and Brumley South, working with Triangle Land Conservancy.

## **Bird Friendly Habitat**

Presentations to 10 different groups (over 245 people) both in-person and virtual highlighting the value of bird friendly habitats. A bird-safe building presentation designed to help build awareness for future architects was given to a NC State architecture class.

# Education Programs

## *Monthly Meetings (September – May)*

Educating members and guests at monthly meetings is a signature of Audubon programs across the state and nationally. Our listing of members including national members reaches over 1,000 annually. 2020 presentations included:

*Join us the  
first Thursday  
monthly at  
7:00 pm  
(Sept - May)  
For more  
information see  
our website!*

- ✓ Debbie Roos, “Attracting Pollinators with Native Plants”
- ✓ David and Judy Smith, “Birds and Other Fauna of Southeast Brazil and the Atlantic Forest”
- ✓ Bradley Saul, Orange County – State of the Environment Report
- ✓ Jeff Pippen, “Monitoring Butterflies for Change; North Carolina and across the Continent”
- ✓ Ralph LaForge, “Camera and lens selection, photo editing, environment concerns...timing is everything and then some!”
- ✓ Nick Harper, “In Nature’s Image: How farmers can work with nature to achieve better results for humans and wildlife”
- ✓ Lesley Starke, “Important Plant Areas of NC”
- ✓ Joe Donahue, “Evolution of Wild Bird Carving according to Joe”

A group of people are gathered outdoors in a field or parking area. In the center, a man wearing a blue beanie and a dark jacket is gesturing with his arms outstretched towards the left. To his left, another man in a grey jacket and cap looks towards him. In the foreground on the right, a man in a dark puffer jacket and cap is looking down at a smartphone. Other people are visible in the background, some wearing hats and jackets. There are cars parked in the distance, including a white SUV and a silver SUV. The background consists of trees, some bare and some evergreen, under a clear blue sky. A large green banner with the text "Get Outdoors" is overlaid on the center of the image. A green and grey geometric graphic is in the bottom-left corner.

Get Outdoors

## *Local Birding*

New Hope Audubon Society has a great group of volunteers leading birding activities weekly, and often biweekly prior to the COVID pandemic. Chatham, Durham and Orange counties combined have over 200 eBird hotspots enjoyed by our local members. These hotspots provide a rich diversity of bird species year-round. Chatham county has listed more than 300 species identified over the years. We look forward to the days when we can once again safely meet and enjoy birding as a group.

## *Field Trips*

Annual trips are part of our educational programming and January 2020 allowed local birders to travel to the coast. The three-day trip gave birders opportunities to see over 85 species of birds.



. Belted Kingfisher

# 80+ Volunteers

*from our local members participated in various ways promoting environmental conservation, birding activities and the enjoyment of birds and other wildlife, and worked to provide educational opportunities in Chatham, Durham, and Orange Counties and parts of surrounding counties with*

## 4,150+ hours of volunteering in 2020

*Volunteers provide the vision and labor for our work. It is the strength of our volunteers that allowed our goals and objectives to move forward during 2020.*

New Hope Audubon Society gained over 100 new members through National Audubon memberships in 2020. These new members make up some of the 1,500+ national members connected to our local chapter. We welcome all the new members and look forward to getting to know everyone.

*While 2020 was a unique year, we remained unified around a passion for promoting birding, strengthening our bird friendly habitat programs, and elevating our voice advocating for environmental conservation. Our programs are making a difference and we look forward to growing our reach across our local communities and creating lasting change. I hope you will join us in 2021 as we continue to build and strengthen our programs.*

- Barbara Driscoll, NHAS President



# New Hope Audubon Society

*A special thank you to our generous donors!  
We are committed to maximizing the  
impact of your gifts. We continue to  
believe that our investment in  
conservation, education and sharing the  
beauty of bird watching with others helps  
build a better planet.*

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\*This report highlights our work  
for the 2020 calendar year,  
financials are located on our  
website under Donate.

## 2020 Annual Report



Grasshopper Sparrow

*All Photographs are supplied by NHAS Members*