

# New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter

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P.O. Box 2693, Chapel Hill, NC 27515  
<http://www.newhopeaudubon.org>



## ***Judy Murray, Bird Seed Sale Coordinator***

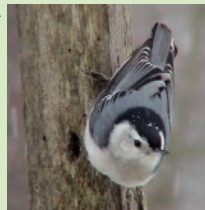
We are sad to announce that Judy Murray is stepping down as the Bird Seed Sale Coordinator. She has been leading this effort for the New Hope Audubon Society (NHAS) for many years: in fact for so many years she has forgotten how many. The Bird Seed Sale is one of two important fund raising efforts (the other is Wildathon) conducted by NHAS each year. Judy started with New Hope Audubon Society in 1994 and has filled many positions on the board of directors. We will miss her being on the board, but hope she continues to come to some of our meetings! Good Luck Judy!

Fortunately for us, Mary George, who provides the refreshments at the membership meetings, has volunteered to replace Judy! Let's welcome Mary as New Hope Audubon Society's Bird Seed Sale Coordinator.

## ***Nuthatches***

By

Norm Budnitz



What is it about nuthatches?

There are lots of birds that spend their lives feeding on the trunks and branches of trees.

Woodpeckers are forever hitching their way up the trunks. Redbellies are noisy. Flickers are flashy when they show their yellow underwings. Pileateds are always a surprise; they are so big and showy. And Downy Woodpeckers, though small, are classy. There always seems to be one around the neighborhood. And, well, sapsuckers. With a name like that, they've got to be good.

Brown creepers are subtle. In their brownness, they blend into the bark. And when they sing, the soft, sibilant sound that barely makes it past my aging ear drums and thence to my brain. Of course, their search for food is pretty special. They start at the bottom of a tree, and spiral up the trunk,



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poking in the bark crevices. Up and up, spiraling around. When they run out of trunk, they flutter flop down to the base of another tree and spiral up again.

Black-and-white Warblers, in their zebra-like finery, are a delight to find, working their way along branches, up and down and sideways. Quite striking, actually, when they come in to my pishing--curious and seemingly tame as they check me out to make sure I'm not a bad guy in the forest.

These birds are wonderful, to be sure. But there's something about nuthatches.

Is it that they seem to defy gravity, climbing down just as easily as they climb up? Black-and-whites can do that. But nuthatches are jaunty when they do it. The warblers are delicate.

Is it their posture, with their heads and tails arched up to reveal their breasts and bellies? They always seem to be looking me straight in the eye, daring me to make the first move.

Is it their 'songs?' Is it the nasal 'ank, ank' of the Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches? Or the rubber ducky squeeze toy sounds that come out of the diminutive Brown-headed?

Is it that they are cute and yet so feisty?

Is it that no matter how many times I have seen them in my life, I have yet to see one hatch a nut? What does 'nuthatch' mean anyway? Ernest Choate (*American Bird Names*) says that 'hatch' comes from 'hack' because the birds hack apart nuts or seeds that are too big to swallow whole. But 'nuthack' doesn't do it. It's got to be 'nuthatch.'

I don't know just what it is about nuthatches. It just is. Maybe it's that sometimes they make me want to giggle like a ~~hxg~~ year old. Happiness is a nuthatch.



## Calendar of Activities



Sunday, Jan 13, **Eagle Count** at Jordan Lake, Steve McMurray coordinator

Sunday, Jan 13, **Bird Walk** with Tom Driscoll, birdwatching at a site to be determined. We will meet at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot at the intersection of Highway 54 and Fearington Rd. The hiking is easy. Please bring sturdy shoes, water, and snacks. We should be out for 2 to 3 hours. All bird watching skill levels are welcome. If you're interested in participating, then please contact Tom Driscoll at [spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com).

Weekend Jan 19 - 20, **Bird Trip** with Tom Driscoll. We are going to see the Snow Geese, Tundra Swans, many other ducks, and many other birds at Lake Mattamuskeet, Lake Pungo, and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. We plan to leave early on January 19 and stay at least one night in Manteo. You would be welcome to go early or leave early. I am hoping we can carpool. Please let Tom Driscoll ([spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com)) know if you are interested in going by January 10.

Saturday, Feb 2, **Stream Watch** with John Kent

Sunday Feb 3, **Bird Walk** with Tom Driscoll. Meet at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot. We will be out for 2 to 3 hours looking for winter birds. The location is to be determined. The hiking will be easy. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and snacks. You must contact Tom Driscoll at [spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com) if you plan on attending.

Thursday, Feb 7, **Membership Meeting**, NC Botanical Gardens, The program will be "Mice Eating Albatrosses at Gough Island" with Johnny Wilson

## Dallas West New Eagle Scout

Fourteen year-old Dallas West of Chapel Hill has nearly completed the requirements to become an Eagle Scout. The Culbreth Middle School student recently completed an interpretive trail with informational signs at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. Specifically, Dallas and his crew erected 20 signs on the Old Oak Trail at Ebenezer Point in southeast Jordan Lake. Dallas worked with Ranger Dan Harvey on this project. These signs contain information about wildlife, such as White-tail Deer, and conservation tips. There are signs that discuss invasive species as well as plant species that are beneficial to animals, such as the Sparkleberry.



Dallas took about two years to finish the project; part of that time included the application and project approval process. He did the project because he wanted to help the community in a positive way. He knew that the rank of Eagle Scout requires a significant public service project and he had camped many times at the recreation area, so he wanted to give something back. This project may also qualify him for the Hornaday Environmental Award.

He also gave a big thanks to the New Hope Audubon Society who funded part of his project. We say great work and a job well done. Dallas!





## *Membership Programs for 2013*

<b>Time/Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
7:00 pm February 7, 2013	Johnny Wilson Graduate student at NCSU	Mice Eating Albatrosses at Gough Island
7:00 pm March 7, 2013	Maria de Bruyn	Birds of Kruger National Park, South Africa, Etosha National Park, Na{ ðiaÉand Nairobi National Park, Kenya
7:00 pm April 4, 2013	Jeff Beane NC Museum of Natural Sciences	Snakes of North Carolina
7:00 pm May 2, 2003	John Gerwin NC Museum of Natural Science	Birds of Nicaragua

## *Bird Walks*

There is a bird walk scheduled for January 13, 2013. at 1pm. Meet at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot. We will be out for 2 to 3 hours looking for winter birds. The location is to be determined. The hiking will be easy. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and snacks. You must contact Tom Driscoll at [spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com) if you plan on attending.

We have a special field trip scheduled for the weekend of January 19-20, 2013! We are going to see the Snow Geese, Tundra Swans, many other ducks, and many other birds at Lake Mattamuskeet, Lake Pungo, and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. We plan to leave early on January 19 and stay at least one night in Manteo. You would be welcome to go early or leave early. I am hoping we can carpool. Please let Tom Driscoll ([spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com)) know if you are interested in going by January 10.

There is a bird walk scheduled for February 3, 2013 at 7:30am. Meet at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot. We will be out for 2 to 3 hours looking for winter birds. The location is to be determined. The hiking will be easy. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and snacks. You must contact Tom Driscoll at [spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com) if you plan on attending.



# ***FEEDER WATCH***

By Tom Driscoll

As the days get colder and shorter, birds are eating more and I have to refill feeders more frequently. For the past month or so, the feeding had abated some because the weather was good and natural food was plentiful, but now the birds including the winter visitors are eating a lot!

Are your birds eating more now? Have your winter visitors all arrived yet? I have seen two Red-breasted Nuthatches and 4 or 5 Pine Siskins already this year which seem somewhat early to me. Other less common birds I have seen in my yard include Brown Creeper and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. I have plenty of White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos as well. Two of our readers have informed me that they have hummingbirds that appear to be Rufous Hummingbirds at their feeders; another friend told me of her neighbor in Durham who has a Rufous Hummingbird as well. Rufous Hummingbirds have probably always wintered in NC if there are enough insects to be found. One of our New Hope Audubon Society members also recently reported an Evening Grosbeak (in Durham) at her feeders. Apparently, this is a poor cone crop year north of here, so grosbeaks and finches (such as Purple Finches) that don't often visit here are here this winter! There are also a few Baltimore Orioles wintering in our area. Be on the lookout for these winter visitor birds.

I also have some birds, such as Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Eastern Bluebirds, and Brown Creepers eating my suet. If you don't provide suet for your birds because the squirrels eat it, consider using the hot pepper suet. My squirrels avoid it! Sometimes, orioles and other birds will eat jelly, so you may want to consider putting out some jelly or using an oriole feeder. I also use more safflower seeds in the winter. They provide protein and the squirrels don't seem to like them. Do you use safflower seeds and, if so, do your birds like them? Some of the local bird food stores, such as the Wild Bird Center in Chapel Hill can show you these feeders.

Although you may have been feeding more birds, are you providing them with water? Most winters can be somewhat dry here. Your birds may be having trouble finding water. To ensure that they continue to come to your feeders, adding a water bath or tray would be very helpful to your birds.

I also want to remind you that cleaning your feeders periodically is a good idea. There is a disease, especially among House Finches, that is spread at feeders.

If you see one of the rare birds or want to recount another feeder story, then please contact me at [sptdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:sptdrdshnk@yahoo.com). I would like to include some readers' bird feeding observations and stories, so please send me some.





## New Hope Audubon Officers for 2012-2013

Position	Name
<b>President</b>	Norm Budnitz
<b>Vice President</b>	Robert "Bo" Howes
<b>Secretary</b>	Pat Reid
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jill Paul
<b>Director</b>	Robin Moran
<b>Director</b>	John Kent
<b>Director</b>	Mark Kosiewski

### *Committee Chairs and Special Projects*

Committee	Name
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Mark Kosiewski
<b>Education Chair</b>	Vacant
<b>Field Trip Chair</b>	Vacant
<b>Hospitality Chair</b>	Jim & Mary George
<b>Membership/Publicity Chair</b>	Tom Driscoll
<b>Program Chair</b>	Tom Driscoll
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Pat Reid
<b>Webmaster</b>	Norm Budnitz
<b>Christmas/Spring Bird Count Chair</b>	Norm Budnitz
<b>Bird Seed Sale</b>	Mary George
<b>Eagle Count</b>	Steve McMurray
<b>Wildlife Observation Platform Chair</b>	Robert "Bo" Howes
<b>Important Bird Areas: Eno River Chair</b>	Tom Driscoll
<b>Important Bird Areas: Jordan Lake Chair</b>	Robert "Bo" Howes
<b>Stream Watch</b>	John Kent
<b>Wildathon Chair</b>	Vacant