

Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*)

Description: The smallest nuthatch locally. Brown cap down to eye, pale below, gray back, white nape spot. Can often be identified by the squeaky sound of a rubber duck it makes while climbing, up, around and down pine trees. They are social birds and often travel in family groups.

Trends: Declining

Habitat: A denizen of pine forests and mixed woodlands, the Brown-headed Nuthatch breeds locally and lives in our area year-round. Although abundant in some places, especially at Jordan Lake, the bird is threatened across much of its range. Unlike most songbirds, Brown-headed Nuthatches are cooperative breeders and sometimes have helpers at the nest. The helpers are usually young males that stick around to help their parents with nest building, feeding the incubating female, or feeding the new nestlings.

Ways You can help with Conservation:

Place nest boxes in areas with ample numbers of pine trees. New Hope Bird Alliance [sells Brown-headed Nuthatch boxes online](#) and at our monthly meetings. The Brown-headed Nuthatch boxes have a smaller opening which competitors such as Bluebirds cannot get through. Protect nest boxes with predator baffles.

Saving and planting local pine tree species such as Shortleaf, Virginia and Longleaf pines will help future generations of Brown-headed Nuthatches.



Photo by Barbara Driscoll



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