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Atlanta Audubon Society Program Aims to Help the Brown-headed Nuthatch

(Atlanta, Ga.) February 6, 2016 – February has arrived and despite the lingering winter temperatures, some bird species are already preparing for spring. Brown-headed Nuthatches are one of Georgia’s early-nesting species, and these small brown birds are already searching for cavities in which to build their nests. Atlanta Audubon is asking metro-Atlanta residents to help create habitat for this iconic southern bird by placing nest boxes in their yards.

In 2015, Atlanta Audubon launched a conservation program to build habitat for these birds, which make their homes in pine forests in the southeast. To date, more than 300 nest boxes have been placed in parks, schools, backyards, and other spaces around metro-Atlanta by Atlanta Audubon Society and by concerned citizens who enjoy seeing these birds in their yards.

Identified as a climate-endangered bird in the recent National Audubon Society Climate Report, the Brown-headed Nuthatch is in danger of disappearing from Georgia, one of the few states it calls home. For the past three years, Atlanta Audubon Society has been working with parks, neighborhoods, and other community groups to place Brown-headed Nuthatch boxes across Atlanta and north Georgia.

“The Brown-headed Nuthatch is an indicator species for the health of southeastern pine woodlands. It is a high-priority species for conservation in the Piedmont,” says Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon Society Executive Director. “This bird does not migrate, so if its habitat shrinks even more, it will have a tough time adapting. Unlike many songbirds, however, Brown-headed Nuthatches readily build nests, raise young, and roost in human-made nest boxes. This is an excellent opportunity for us to help reverse the downward spiral that we caused for this species over the years.”

There are several ways people can get involved and help save Brown-headed Nuthatches:

- Purchase a nest boxes from Atlanta Audubon Society’s online store at www.AtlantaAudubon.org. The boxes are hand-constructed by a Georgia builder using locally-sourced wood, and they have an easy-open front for easy monitoring and cleaning.
- Visit your nearest **Bird Watchers Supply Company**, **Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU)** store, or **The Garden Enthusiast** in Tucker. All of these stores carry nesting boxes with the smaller 1” opening

or 1" excluders that may be used on nest boxes with larger openings, and many run late winter promotions on Brown-headed Nuthatch boxes.

- For those who are handy or prefer do-it-yourself projects, you'll find plans for download at atlantaudubon.org/brown-headed-nuthatch.
- After installing a box on your property, become a citizen scientist and help monitor and report on activity at your box through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Nestwatch Program (www.nestwatch.org).

For more information on Atlanta Audubon Society's Brown-headed Nuthatch program, visit www.atlantaudubon.org.

The mission of Atlanta Audubon Society is to protect Georgia's birds and their habitats through conservation, education, and advocacy.

Photo Caption: Brown-headed Nuthatch photo by Christy Cox

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