Impact Project Report

Improving habitat for birds helps all

Issue

For her Impact Project, Master Naturalists Beth Gaffer chose to work with the New Hope Bird Alliance on their Bird Friendly Habitat Project. This project appealed to her the most as she has always been a birder and has a strong interest in promoting native plants, as well.

Project

The Bird Friendly Habitat certification program involves making site visits to homeowners who express interest in making their properties, no matter the size, a better habitat for birds by meeting certain criteria. These include having at least a 30% coverage of native plants, 15% or less of highly invasive plants, property containing trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, leaving leaves on the ground as possible, eliminating most pesticides, and having at least three other habitat improvements, such as a pond or birdbath.



The visits are set up with a plant ID person, a recorder, and a trainee or two. Beth is in the process of training to be a recorder. This role involves using a guide to make a list of the plants present in each category, and document the criteria that the homeowner has met. They will then be given either a bird friendly habitat sign, or a bird friendly habitat under construction sign, and will be emailed a complete report. If they do not yet meet the criteria of a bird friendly habitat they will be told in person and on the report the steps to follow to improve their yard.

Once the homeowner has performed the improvements outlined, e.g., removing some invasive plants, using window stickers to decrease bird collisions, or other suggestions to make their yard more bird-friendly, they can request a re-visit, so that they can get fully certified.

Results

It has been fun and very educational doing these visits, and especially so when the homeowner has been working hard and is thrilled to be certified. The photo (above) is of an ecstatic homeowner and part of our team.

Student

This project is the work of Beth Gaffer

Highlight

Partner Organization

New Hope Bird Alliance

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