

To achieve annual certification as a "Bird City," communities need to demonstrate in a written application that they have met at least seven of 22 criteria, including three from Category 1 and one from each of the other four categories:

Kenosha County

Became a Bird City Wisconsin for 2014 by meeting 12 basic requirements

Category 1: Creation and Protection of Habitat

- A. Compliance with Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" law for land use planning and resource management.
- B. The community has a park system with habitat for a number of species of birds. This is demonstrated by bird monitoring results and/or other data obtained from researchers or local volunteers.
- C. Existing bird habitat has legal protection.
- E. The community does not restrict "wild" or natural lawns and landscaping.
- F. The community offers the public information on control and removal of invasive species.
- G. The community contains a segment of the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail or a designated Important Bird Area.

Category 2: Participation in Programs Promoting Effective Community Forest Management

- B. Some other municipal accomplishment in this area.

Category 3: Limiting or Removing Hazards to Birds

- B. The community provides property owners with information on how to protect birds from window-strikes.

Category 4: Public Education

- A. Local schools participate in Flying WILD to learn about the conservation needs of migratory and other birds.
- B. Community provides information to property owners on methods to create and enhance backyard habitat for birds.
- D. Community is represented in at least one bird monitoring program such as Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, or Swift Night Out.

Category 5: Community Celebration of International Migratory Bird Day

- A. Community adopts resolution recognizing IMBD and organizes a local IMBD celebration.

Highlights of Kenosha County's Bird Conservation Efforts

Category 1: Creation and Protection of Habitat

1A. Kenosha County has prepared and approved a county wide comprehensive plan that follows the guidelines listed by Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" law concerning land use planning and natural resources. The multi-jurisdictional plan was approved in April of 2010 and is in effect until 2035. Follow this link:

<http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DocumentCenter/View/86> to view the Kenosha County plan in its entirety.

1B. There are many bird monitoring projects that are conducted throughout Kenosha County. Most notably are the grassland bird surveys (2 per year), marsh monitoring (2 per year), Black Tern survey, Crane count (2 per year), Upland Sandpiper survey, and breeding bird surveys that they participate in annually. Bong Recreation Area has an extensive cavity nesting songbird monitoring program with 75 boxes and the Hoy Audubon monitors several birding trails. In addition, there is also Bluebird box, Purple Martin box, Wood Duck box, and Kestrel box monitoring conducted throughout the County.

1C. Chapter 10, Section (5) of the Kenosha County Park Ordinances document states:

No person shall hunt, hunt, trap, injure, molest, or disturb any bird or other animal or disturb the nest or young of any bird or other animal, except the taking of any bird or animal which causing property damage or injuries to persons may be permitted by a written permit. The Park Manager/Director has the authority to allow hunting or trapping in designated park areas to a very limited number of winners of an annual lottery. Those chosen by lottery must strictly follow the rules given them at the time their permit is granted as well as all applicable State laws and rules.

1E. Chapter 12 of the current Kenosha County Zoning Ordinance does not prohibit or restrict the establishment of “wild” or natural lawns. Visit <http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/80> to view the document for further details.

1F. Pringle Nature Center, located in Bristol Woods County Park, hosts invasive species workdays on the fourth Saturday of the month from April to November. Volunteers learn to identify what are invasive plants, why they are invasive, and help by removing the invasive plants. Pringle is also a partner location for the Mighty Acorns program where school children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades visit an adopted site three times a year to do stewardship activities which include removal of Buckthorn, and other woody invasive species, during the winter visit and pulling Garlic Mustard during the spring visit. The Mighty Acorns (<http://www.mightyacorns.org/>) program includes pre- and post-visit lesson plans for the teachers to do in the classroom as well as an on-site lesson plan to go with the stewardship activity.

1G. Kenosha County boasts five areas listed in the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail-Lake Michigan Guide. Those areas are the Bristol Woods County Park/Pringle Nature Center, Bong State Recreation Area, Chiwaukee Prairie State Natural Area, New Munster State Wildlife Area, and Petrified Springs County Park/Hawthorn Hollow Arboretum. These areas include nearly bird habitat found in Wisconsin; signature state species can be found in woodlands, prairie, grasslands, shorelands, rivers, and marshes amongst others. Many different species can be seen during the spring and fall migration seasons. Please consult: <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/trail/> for more detailed information on these wonderful areas to visit.



Above: Chiwaukee Prairie State Natural Area

Category 2: Promoting Effective Community Forest Management

2B. Kenosha County Tree & Shrub Program has been offered for over 25 years and their office has sold nearly one million trees. The purpose of the program is to encourage area residents to plant native trees and shrubs for the purpose of conservation and wildlife enhancement. The program offers a variety of Pines, hardwoods, and shrubs. This sale is open to the interested public in their area. Trees and shrubs are sold on a first-come, first-served basis and picked up by the customer. Interested people are placed on a list to receive their tree order form in the fall of the year. Tree pickup day is typically in mid-to-late-April the following spring. The number and species of trees and shrubs is dependent upon availability, weather conditions, past sales success, tree performance and general demand trends. By March of 2014, they already had orders for 20,000 trees and were still receiving more. The selection of trees and shrubs include packages that are specifically for backyard wildlife and bird habitat.

The Parks Division has been the recipient of 500 Burr, Northern Red, White Oak and Swamp White Oak trees a year through the Million Trees Giveaway by the Living Lands and Waters Program. For eight years they have been under planting their park hardwood forests and lining these trees out in a nursery for future transplanting. In addition to these trees, they typically purchase 300 native trees a year to plant in their parks. A local nursery also donates about 150 left over trees at the end of the season for the parks.

Kenosha County just finished an Emerald Ash Borer inventory and management plan. Ash trees in natural areas that succumb to the borer will be left for birds and other mammals for food and shelter. We have not let the public take Ash firewood for 3 years to insure it wasn't moved out of the quarantined area. Trees that will need to be removed in lawn areas and other spots that would endanger the public will be let out to the public with the stipulation that it will not be moved outside of the quarantine area.

The UWEX has annual horticulture short courses that have included EAB and many other tree and shrub planting, pruning and disease prevention and diagnostic subjects.



Above: Kenosha County Tree Program representatives

Category 3: Limiting or Removing Hazards to Birds

3B. The Pringle Nature Center demonstrates at how to minimize bird strikes at the center. They also include keeping cats inside as part of their program.

Category 4: Public Education

4A. Pringle Nature Center does have the Flying Wild curriculum and uses lessons from it for the third grade Birds school program as well as portions of Boy Scout badge requirements

4B. The UWEX office offers programs about backyard habitat each spring with their “Spring into Gardening” seminar and Master Gardner programs. “Spring into Gardening,” which is a multi-session daylong seminar for the general public, had a class on Backyard Birdscaping in March, 2013, and a class on Hummingbird Gardens in March, 2012.

4D. The naturalist at the Pringle Nature Center is the compiler for Kenosha County in the Christmas Bird Count where she assigns areas for birders to do the count as well as uploads the collected data to the Christmas Bird Count website. Pringle also partners with Hoy Audubon to hold a workshop the weekend before the Great Backyard Bird Count where the participants learn basic bird identification, how to participate in the count, and build a feeder for their yard.

In addition, the County offers many public programs including: the Owl Prowl, spring bird hikes (March-May), Bird Fest, Duck identification, Halloween Hike, Bird Art, Warbler identification, birding by ear, beginning birding, bird feeding, Bluebird information, Search for Short-eared Owls, and bird seed wreaths.

Furthermore, the County conducts many surveys and monitoring programs including: grassland bird surveys, marsh monitoring, Black Tern survey, Upland Sandpiper survey, Crane count, breeding bird survey, Bluebird box monitoring, Purple Martin box monitoring, Wood Duck box monitoring, and Kestrel box monitoring.

Category 5: Celebration of International Migratory Bird Day

The County of Kenosha has adopted and approved an official resolution proclaiming that International Migratory Bird Day shall be the third Saturday of September annually. In 2014, the IMBD event will be held on Sept. 20th at the Pringle Nature Center from 11 am to 3 pm. For more information please contact either Kenosha County Parks at 262-857-1869 or the Pringle Nature Center at 262-857-8008.