



## A Dozen Reasons to Become a Bird City

1. **Make a strong contribution to community pride.** Present the kind of image that most citizens want to have for the place they live or conduct business. Bird City provides a way to reach large numbers of people with important "green" information.
2. **Promote and grow your community's environmental reputation through a program that provides guidance, resources and recognition.** Bird City trumpets your current conservation successes while promoting strategies for coordinated, far-reaching, bird-centered conservation activities going forward.
3. **Sustain healthy, functioning natural systems in your community.** Wild birds are essential to pollinate flowers, disseminate seeds, and help keep insect populations under control.
4. **Sustain healthy, functioning natural systems worldwide.** Like the proverbial canaries in a coal mine, birds serve as indicators of the ecological health of our planet. Because of their rapid metabolism and wide geographic distribution, birds provide early warning to us of changes in the environment and potentially harmful biological conditions. Robust, diverse bird populations reflect the underlying health of the ecosystem in which they – and we – live. Since we share our planet with all other species, what happens to birds can happen to us.
5. **Save money.** Without the environmental assistance we get from birds, we would have to spend far more money on pest control and keeping natural systems in balance. Insect-eating birds reduce the need for chemical pest control. Birds also are voracious eaters of weed plants and rodents. They provide us with “free ecological services” and are unheralded assistants to farmers, foresters and gardeners.
6. **Make money.** Bird watching is one of the fastest growing forms of outdoor recreation in the United States. In 2006 more than 48 million Americans watched birds and spent more than \$32 billion on the pastime. People travel to see birds, buy backyard bird feeders and houses, landscape for birds, and spend money to support bird research and protect bird

habitat. In Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources estimates that wildlife watchers spent \$1.3 billion on their hobby in 2001.

7. **Have fun and relax.** In addition to being just plain fun, watching birds can help relieve stress. Watching birds at a feeder or birdbath can be a family experience, with kids, parents, and grandparents.
8. **Get outdoors!** Watching birds can often spark kids' interest in nature and the outdoors. More and more research is revealing the health benefits to kids who spend more time outdoors.
9. **Understand nature.** Birds pull so much together. Learning about birds is more than learning about a single season, type of animal, or habitat. Birds teach us about how we're all connected and how vulnerable our environment can become. Birds live among us .... and we among them.
10. **Build community spirit.** Bird-friendly actions by a community can build cooperation between public and private sectors to effectively manage many types of urban habitat, including forests, prairies and wetlands.
11. **Build beneficial networks.** Bird-friendly actions by a community put people in touch with other communities and resources that can result in mutually-beneficial outcomes
12. **Improve the local environment.** New wildlife habitat areas can offer aesthetic, social, economical and environmental benefits.

