

Criteria for Local Governments to be Recognized as a “Bird City”

Bird City Wisconsin seeks to encourage communities to implement sound bird conservation practices by offering high visibility public recognition to those that succeed in doing so.

To assist in achieving certification and public recognition as a community that is “bird-friendly” and protects and enhances habitat for birdlife, "Bird City Wisconsin" has worked with municipal officials and conservation organizations to compile a menu of best practices.

"Bird City Wisconsin" recognition is available to towns, villages, cities and counties and is provided at two achievement levels.

Basic Requirements

To achieve initial annual certification as a “Bird City,” communities will need to demonstrate in a written application that they have met at least seven (7) of the following 22 criteria, including three (3) from Category 1 and one (1) from each of the other four categories:

1. Creation and Protection of Habitat

- A. The community is in compliance with Wisconsin's “Smart Growth” law for land use planning and resource management.
- B. The community has a park system with habitat for birds of a number of species. This is demonstrated by bird monitoring results and/or other data obtained from researchers or local volunteers.
- C. Existing bird habitat has legal protection.
- D. Park planning seeks to provide additional bird habitat.
- 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 such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, and reed canary grass.
- G. The community contains a segment of the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail or an IBA (Important Bird Area). Information on these programs is available at <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org>
- H. The local Chamber of Commerce (or similar group) takes an active role in the planning process for protecting and enlarging favorable bird habitat.
- I. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other municipal action in furtherance of habitat creation or protection.

2. Participation in Programs Promoting Effective Community Forest Management

- A. The community participates in the “Tree City, USA,” program, sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- B. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other important municipal accomplishment in this area.

3. Limiting or Removing Hazards to Birds

- A. The community has an educational program in place to control free-roaming cats and/or actively publicizes the American Bird Conservancy “Cats Indoors!” program.
- B. The community provides easy-to-obtain information to property owners regarding protecting birds from window-strikes.
- C. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other important municipal accomplishment in this area.

4. Public Education

- A. Schools in the community participate in Flying WILD, helping ensure that the nation’s students are knowledgeable about the conservation needs of migratory and other birds.
- B. The community, through bulletin boards, community newsletters, city or county website, or other media, provides information to property owners on methods to create and enhance backyard habitat for birds.
- C. The community provides links to other organizations with information on backyard habitat programs such as Audubon at Home, the National Wildlife Federation, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, University of Wisconsin Extension, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Humane Society of the U.S., and “Beyond the Birdfeeder: Creating a Bird-Friendly Yard with Native Wisconsin Plants,” by Mariette Nowak.
- D. The community is represented in at least one bird monitoring program such as the Christmas Bird Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count, or Swift Night Out.
- E. The community sponsors an annual bird festival.
- F. The community has a program that involves schools, garden clubs or other organizations in bird conservation activities.
- G. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other important municipal accomplishment in public education.

5. International Migratory Bird Day

The city council or village, town or county board adopts an official resolution and the community holds a celebration marking International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), which generally has been observed on the second Saturday in May. *A sample resolution can be found at www.birdcitywisconsin.org/resolution. For ideas on public celebrations see www.birdday.org and www.birdcitywisconsin.org/celebrations*

Sustained Flight Awards

To achieve yearly recertification as a “Bird City” and “Sustained Flight” status, a community will need to demonstrate that it continues to meet at least seven (7) of the above criteria, including recognizing IMBD.