



Bird City Wisconsin

Sample Application

(Updated December 2021)



Submit applications online at www.BirdCityWisconsin.org

APPLY FOR BIRD CITY STATUS

- 1) Achieve a total of at least 8 points, meeting:
 - a. A minimum of 8 criteria
 - b. At least 3 criteria from Category 1
 - c. Both A and B from Category 6
 - d. A minimum of 1 criterion in at least 3 of the other categories (Categories 2-5).
- 2) Submit a narrative and documentation.
 - a. Narrative: Describe how your community meets every criterion submitted. Use complete sentences and explain your documentation.
 - b. Documentation: Where possible, electronically document each criterion submitted (e.g., photos, event flyers, brochures, ordinances, web links, etc.).
- 3) Complete the preamble, provide the additional required information, and have a municipal employee or elected official sign and date your application.

APPLY FOR HIGH FLYER STATUS*

***RESTRICTION:** Communities that officially support cat colonies, encourage feeding or housing for outdoor cats, or explicitly permit free-roaming cats are not eligible for High Flyer status.

- 1) Achieve a total of at least 20 points, meeting:
 - a. A minimum of 6 criteria worth 2 or more points from at least 2 categories
 - b. Requirements 1b, 1c, and 1d in “Apply for Bird City Status” (above).
- 2) Complete steps 2 and 3 above (“Apply for Bird City Status”).

FEES AND SUBMISSION

- 1) The nonrefundable application fee is \$175, paid electronically or by check.
- 2) Initial application deadlines are March 1, July 1, and November 1. Annual Renewals are due January 31.

NOTE

- 1) A single action cannot be used to meet multiple criteria unless it is truly exceptional, has distinct components, and can be justified in the narrative.

Preamble

As _____ (title, such as mayor, parks director, etc.) of the village/city/town/county/sovereign nation of _____, I am applying for official recognition as a Bird City. Our community has met Bird City Wisconsin's requirements, including enactment of a resolution recognizing World Migratory Bird Day. I also attest that, where possible, my community's actions align with Bird City Wisconsin's primary themes of urban conservation and environmental education aimed at making communities healthy for birds... and people.

Category 1: Habitat Creation, Protection, and Monitoring

- (1 Point) A. Comply with Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" law for land use planning and resource management. This criterion is an option only for applications submitted before July 1, 2017.
- (1 Point) B. Attach results from *organized* bird monitoring or data obtained from researchers or volunteers in the local park system. (Exclusions: Programs that receive credit under 4C: Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, Swift Night Out)
- (1 Point) C. Provide evidence (e.g., official designation of natural areas, easements, etc.) that existing bird habitat within community limits has *legal* protection. (Exclusions: Leash laws; prohibitions against disturbing nests and wildlife; areas consisting primarily of mowed grass)
- (1 Point) D. Document that current community planning seeks to provide additional bird habitat.
- (1 Point) E. Attach a copy of a local ordinance to demonstrate that your community does not restrict natural/native landscaping that emphasizes native plants and non-turf lawns.
- (1 Point) F. Show that your community offers the public information on how they can control and remove invasive species in order to improve or maintain bird habitat.
- (1 Point) G. Attach a state publication showing that there is a segment of the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail or a designated Important Bird Area within or adjacent to your community.
- (1 Point) H. Show that the local Chamber of Commerce or a similar group (e.g., an Audubon chapter, Wild Ones, etc.) takes an active role in the planning process for protecting and enlarging favorable bird habitat.
- (1 Point) I. Document a recent project that created or restored bird habitat in your community. (Exclusions: Bird feeders and small-scale artificial nesting structures)
- (1 Point) J. Show that a *significant* number of properties have been recognized as having bird-friendly yards (e.g., [Yardmap/Habitat Network](#), [National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Certification Program](#)).

- (1 Point) K. Implement a tree risk policy that includes specific plans to leave dead trees standing as nesting and foraging resources for birds when it is safe to do so ([follow Urban Tree Risk Management, especially pg. 153](#)).
- (2 Points) L. Show that your community has restored at least two acres of woodlands, wetlands, or prairie.
- (2 Points) M. Demonstrate that your community offers a *program* for private property owners who are interested in dealing with invasive plants that have significant negative impacts on bird habitat.
- (2 Points) N. Show that your community works on public lands to control invasive species that have significant negative impacts on bird habitat.
- (2 Points) O. Document a program to support the establishment of natural lawns and native landscaping, possibly including public presentations of Audubon's [Plants for Birds Initiative](#) (contact them for a presentation kit).
- (2 Points) P. Demonstrate the implementation of a program to preserve [Chimney Swift nesting and roosting sites](#) (**preferred**) and/or to construct [Chimney Swift towers](#).
- (2 Points) Q. Document the establishment of a program to promote the conservation of Purple Martins through research, state of the art management techniques, or public education.
- (2 Points) R. Show how your community aids a local youth group (e.g., Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of USA, 4-H Club, etc.) or conservation group in bird conservation projects (e.g., bluebird trail, habitat restoration, Wood Duck nest boxes, etc.).
- (2 Points) S. Demonstrate how a public golf course is managed to benefit birds.
- (2 Points) T. Document that your community maintains a birding trail or hot spot location with educational signage and/or literature. (Note: A birding hotspot alone is not sufficient – your community must actively promote birding and public education at the site itself.)
- (2 Points) U. Show that your community maximizes the value of right-of-way space (e.g., power lines, pipelines, etc.) by planting them with native grasses, shrubs, herbs, and other prairie/grassland plants.
- (1-2 Points) V. Your community supports the wintering grounds of Wisconsin's birds by drinking Birds & Beans bird-friendly coffee. Buy coffee for personal consumption or for resale through our special site, which offers Birds & Beans' lowest wholesale prices and free shipping. Your community receives one point if combined annual purchases exceed \$1,000 and two points if they exceed \$10,000. [Place your order here!](#)
- (1-2 Points) W. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

Category 2: Community Forest Management

- (1 Point) A. Demonstrate that your community has been awarded [Tree City USA](#) status by the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- (1 Point) B. Implement a municipal moratorium on the trimming of trees and shrubs and the mowing of ditches, storm water retention basins, and other grasslands from May 15 to July 15 to prevent the destruction of active bird nests. (Exceptions: Invasive species control and public safety)
- (1 Point) C. Document an ongoing community program to incorporate a *significant* number of native trees, native shrubs, native herbaceous plants, and/or cultivars of native species in public or large-scale private landscaping.
- (1 Point) D. Attach an ordinance or other official policy that requires your community to prescribe at least 50% of its annual street tree budget AND at least 75% of its non-street tree budget (e.g., parks, schools, institutional properties, publicly-owned natural areas, etc.) for native species and their cultivars and hybrids. ([Recommendations for SE WI](#))
- (1 Point) E. Show that your forester, a member of your tree board, or another person currently responsible for managing your community's trees has completed the Wisconsin DNR's [Wisconsin Community Tree Management Institute](#).
- (1-2 Points) F. OTHER: Demonstrate in an attached narrative.

Category 3: Limiting or Removing Threats to Birds

- (1 Point) A. Describe your community's educational program to control free-roaming cats and/or the manner in which you actively publicize the [Cats Indoors!](#) initiative.
- (1 Point) B. Demonstrate that your community provides property owners with information on how to protect birds from window strikes (e.g., online links, brochures).
- (1 Point) C. Show that your municipality practices [Integrated Pest Management](#), using natural pest control and the best available science to minimize pesticide and herbicide use.
- (1 Point) D. Document that a municipal or major public building has been awarded LEED certification as a bird-friendly building ([LEED SSpc 55](#)).
- (2 Points) E. Document a program that effectively reduces feral cat populations (Note: See 3F for enforced ordinances). (Exclusions: Trap, neuter, release/return programs)
- (2 Points) F. Demonstrate that your community enforces an ordinance that requires domestic cats to be kept indoors, on a leash, or in an enclosure to prevent them from preying on birds and other wildlife and spreading disease.

- (2 Points) G. Show how your community regulates communication tower construction, siting, [and lighting](#) to mitigate their risk to migrating birds.
- (2 Points) H. Document that your community operates a significant [Lights Out](#) program that dims building lights to reduce collisions during spring and fall migration or that you have an [outdoor lighting ordinance](#) that includes Lights Out during bird migration.
- (2 Points) I. Demonstrate that your community has enacted a bird collision monitoring program and has treated problem windows to reduce collisions with municipal and commercial buildings.
- (2 Points) J. Document that your community has registered a municipal building(s) in the Wisconsin Humane Society's [Wings BirdSafe Business](#) program AND show that this building has made an effort to reduce window collisions (see "[Things that can be done at businesses](#)").
- (2 Points) K. Attach your community's ordinance that requires new buildings to be built following bird-safe design, construction, and operation guidelines (e.g., [Toronto Green Standard](#), see [Ecology: Bird Deterrence](#); [San Francisco](#)).
- (1-2 Points) L. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

Category 4: Public Education

- (1 Point) A. Demonstrate that schools in your community participate in a nationally-recognized environmental education program (e.g., [Flying WILD](#), [Audubon Adventures](#)) or that your community organizes its own substantial education and outreach program for young people.
- (1 Point) B. Provide web links or a community newsletter demonstrating that your community educates property owners on methods to create and enhance backyard habitat for birds.
- (1 Point) C. Demonstrate that your community is represented in at least one citizen science bird monitoring program (e.g., the [Christmas Bird Count](#), [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), [Swift Night Out](#)).
- (1 Point) D. Describe your community-sponsored annual bird festival. This must be a multi-day event or a truly exceptional one-day event.
- (1 Point) E. Illustrate a program that involves schools, garden clubs, or other organizations in bird conservation activities.
- (1 Point) F. Demonstrate that your community understands the critical ecological role of pollinators by documenting your [Bee City USA](#) status or by describing another substantial effort to promote pollinator health (for ideas visit the [Xerxes Society](#) and the [Pollinator Partnership](#)).

- (1 Point) G. Provide a link to your community's Bird City Wisconsin webpage, which must be visible from the main page of your municipal website (it may be located at the first level of a drop down menu on the main page but cannot be any less visible) **OR** demonstrate that your Bird City effort has a *significant* social media presence.
- (1 Point) H. Document a substantial *regular* program that educates young people on any of the following topics: climate change, energy efficiency, green/bird-safe buildings, or environmental sustainability.
- (1 Point) I. Show that your municipality promotes and supports a bird club or other environmentally/ecologically-minded club. (Exclusions: Garden clubs, unless you demonstrate a strong focus on native plants)
- (1 Point) J. Document that a municipal building has significant bird-friendly landscaping that features native plants AND signage that explains the importance of native plants and providing diverse habitat for birds (e.g., brush piles, water features).
- (2 Points) K. Demonstrate that your community actively raises awareness of its bird assets. Examples include placing a remote web camera on a nest platform, offering regular, public bird watching field trips, or creating a significant educational resource on your community's bird life.
- (2 Points) L. Show that your community works with traditionally underserved communities to increase their access to natural areas, environmental education, birding resources, and local environmental experts.
- (3 Points) M. Show that your community participates in the Natural Resources Foundation's [Great Wisconsin Birdathon](#) **to raise money for your community** and for statewide conservation.
- (1-2 Points) N. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

Category 5: Energy and Sustainability

- (1 Point) A. Document an energy audit for a municipal building and show that your community is working to implement its recommendations.
- (1 Point) B. Show that your community goes above and beyond in its support for, and implementation of, green transportation (e.g., bike trails, rideshare programs, bike trails/lanes, etc.). Be sure to utilize the narrative to illustrate why your community is exceptional because standard practice will not receive credit.
- (1 Point) C. Document that a municipal building is [LEED certified](#) (silver or higher).
- (1 Point) D. Document that your community has been recognized as a [Green Tier Legacy Community](#).

- (2 Points) E. Show that your community has implemented a sustainability plan that improves your community's energy efficiency and/or increases the use of renewable energy. (Exclusions: Smart Growth comprehensive plans)
- (2 Points) F. Demonstrate that your community participates in a community solar program or that a municipal building receives a significant percentage of its electricity from renewable energy.
- (2 Points) G. Discuss your community's ordinance that requires new buildings to seek [LEED certification](#).
- (2 Points) H. Describe your community's efforts to educate residents about climate change.
- (2 Points) I. Document that your community is part of the [Energy Independent Community](#) program.
- (1-2 Points) J. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

Category 6: World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)

- (1 Point) Adopt a resolution to recognize WMBD (A) **AND** hold a *public* event to celebrate WMBD (B).
 - A. Resolution: Attach a copy of your community's officially-enacted resolution. This must be a resolution that is voted on and passed by the appropriate municipal council/board. Do not submit a proclamation. The resolution must be voted on and passed every two years; annually is preferred.

See our website for a [sample resolution](#) that you can use verbatim or modify to suit your community. If you will vote on the resolution after the application deadline you may submit a draft resolution and submit the final resolution once it has passed.
 - B. Document and describe your event that incorporates the annual WMBD theme in some fashion. If the event has not yet occurred, please share your detailed plans. For information on the current year's theme and event materials, please visit the [World Migratory Bird Day website](#). To see what other Bird City communities have done in the past, [please visit our website](#).

Signature and partners

Signature	Title	Date
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Online presence

Community website: _____

Community Bird City page (if any): _____

Links to local birding, ecotourism, or other relevant sites: _____

Contacts

Please provide contact information for least **two** community officials or citizens who are the best contacts to deal with questions regarding this application.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ City, Zip: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ City, Zip: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

Conservation projects benefit from strong partnerships. Please identify your community partners, and provide a contact person and an email address for each:
