

DRAFT - Revised Criteria for Participating in the “Bird City Iowa” Program – March 2016 eac

To achieve initial *Bird City Iowa* certification, local applicants will need to demonstrate in a written application that they have met at least seven (7) of the following criteria: including three (3) from Category 1, one (1) from category 2, and three (3) from Category 3.

1. Creation and Protection of Native Habitat (Applicant must complete at least three of the following criteria.)

- A. The community has a park system or open space with native habitat for birds and a number of other kinds of wildlife species. For initial *Bird City Iowa* designation, this may be completed by the creation of a bird check-list.
- B. Existing native habitat for birds and other wildlife has legal protection (e.g., public ownership, conservation easements, etc.).
- C. Park planning seeks to provide additional native habitat for birds and other wildlife.
- D. The community has programs that encourage native habitat development on private property and/or does not restrict "wild" or natural lawns and landscaping, as long as those areas are comprised of native sedges, grasses and flowers.
- E. The community offers the public information on how to control and remove [invasive plant species](#) such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, barberry, or others.
- F. The community has established a volunteer support group for one or more of [Iowa’s Bird Conservation Areas](#) (BCAs) or one or more of [Iowa’s officially designated Important Bird Areas](#) (IBAs).
- G. A local leadership organization (such as Chamber of Commerce, a service club, etc.) takes an active role in the planning process for protecting and enlarging habitat that is most favorable for birds and other wildlife species.
- H. The community follows sustainability principles for land use planning and resource management recommended by aligned organizations such as the [American Planning Association](#) or [the National League of Cities’ Sustainable Cities Institute](#).
- I. The community has established a storm water management program that reduces polluted runoff and ensures protection for wetlands, riparian areas and other aquatic ecosystems.
- J. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other community action in furtherance of native habitat creation or protection or some other important community accomplishment in this category.
- K. The community participates in the [Tree City, USA](#) program.

2. Limiting or Removing Hazards to Birds (Applicant must complete at least one of the following criteria.)

- A. The community has a regulatory or administrative program in place to control free-roaming cats and actively publicizes the American Bird Conservancy [Cats Indoors!](#) program. A trap-neuter-release program **does not** reduce cat predation on birds.
- B. The community provides easy-to-obtain information to property owners (especially for buildings along waterways) regarding protecting birds from window strikes and how to assist an incapacitated bird that has suffered a window strike. The establishment of community program to publically recognize and thank home owners and buildings or businesses owners that have taken steps to reduce bird strikes can greatly increase the adoption of such practices.
- C. The community supports only [bird-friendly construction and placement of communication towers](#).

- D. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other important community accomplishment in this category.

3. Public Education (Applicant must complete at least three of the following criteria.)

- A. A program is in place to help students and community members in general take part in the development of a community bird checklist.
- B. Schools in the community are implementing Flying WILD, or similar curriculum, helping ensure that the nation's students are knowledgeable about the conservation needs of migratory birds, butterflies other pollinators, as well as other wildlife.
- C. The community, through bulletin boards, brochures and publications in city hall, the public library, or other public locations, newsletters, city or county websites, or other media, provides information to property owners on methods to create and enhance backyard habitat for diverse wildlife species.
- D. The community encourages property owner or homeowner use of best practices (e.g., Dark Sky ordinance, building codes designed to reduce collisions, wildlife-friendly gardens, etc.)
- E. Local news media run stories on migratory birds, habitat conservation, etc.
- F. The community provides links to other organizations with information on backyard habitat programs. These might include: Audubon, National Wildlife Federation, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Iowa State University Extension, Iowa Ornithologists' Union, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Douglas Tallamy's comprehensive work *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, and *Beyond the Birdfeeder: Creating a Bird-Friendly Yard with Native Wisconsin Plants*, by Mariette Nowak.
- G. The community is represented in at least one bird monitoring program such as the Christmas Bird Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count, or other actively coordinated citizen science project.
- H. The community adopts an official resolution recognizing International Migratory Bird Day *and* hosts a celebration marking International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) during spring or fall bird migration periods. A sample resolution can be found [here](#). For ideas on public celebrations see <http://www.migratorybirdday.org/>.
- I. The community sponsors and supports an annual birding festival.
- J. The community has a program that involves schools, garden clubs, or other organizations, in habitat development, or butterfly or bird conservation activities.
- K. The community provides information regarding safe and responsible wildlife rescue and assistance, including contact information for aligned organizations and Iowa-permitted wildlife rehabilitators.
- L. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other important community accomplishment in public education about native birds and other forms of wildlife (e.g., merchants are encouraged to carry/promote bird-friendly products).

Annual Recertification Sustained Flight Awards

To maintain its "Bird Friendly" designation, a community must reapply annually and demonstrate it meets at least seven (7) of the criteria, using the same formula as above. In order to expand its bird-friendly impact, the community may choose to select other listed criteria to accomplish. A community will receive "Sustained Flight" status after completing three years of successful participation in the program.