

BIRD FRIENDLY CITY

A Program of Bird Friendly Iowa

Bird Friendly City, a community education and action program of **Bird Friendly Iowa** (BFI), mobilizes citizens and public officials who already know that birds are more than beautiful - they are an important part of a healthy ecosystem and critical to our quality of life.

BFI's *Bird Friendly City* program criteria address three main goals:

1. Protect, restore and enhance native habitat for birds and other wildlife.
2. Reduce threats to birds and other wildlife.
3. Educate and engage people in birding and wildlife conservation.

The *Bird Friendly City* program is modeled on The Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA and was created by a coalition of conservation and birding organizations to ensure that Iowa's urban residents maintain healthy populations of birds, pollinators and other forms of biodiversity, and native habitat for them to thrive.

BFI supports Iowa's communities in their efforts to protect and manage green space, build and erect nesting structures, landscape with native plants, reduce threats like collisions, and generally make urban areas friendlier for breeding, wintering, and migrating birds, as well as other types of wildlife.

There are many reasons your community should become a *Bird Friendly City* - but the most important is to create better lives for both birds and people.

BFI's *Bird Friendly City* program encourages communities to implement sound bird conservation practices and education activities by offering high visibility public recognition to those that achieve designation.

BFI has worked with municipal officials and conservation organizations to compile a menu of best practices. *Bird Friendly City* recognition is available to incorporated and unincorporated Iowa communities and is provided at two achievement levels- initial *Bird Friendly City* designation and *Sustained Flight* status after three years of successful participation in the program.



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BIRD FRIENDLY CITY
Application for Recognition
Instructions

- 1) Please complete the Preamble, Basic Requirements, and Partners List.

- 2) Submission instructions, fees, and dates:
 - a. As an organization assisting a community, **we have a strong preference for electronic applications** when possible. Please upload your application at <http://birdfriendlyiowa.org/Pages/BirdFriendlyIowa.aspx?pg=7>.

 - b. If you are unable to submit a complete electronic application (or can only submit a partial electronic application), please mail the other relevant information to:

Bird Friendly City Program
% Trees Forever
770 Seventh Avenue
Marion, IA 52302

 - c. There is a nonrefundable application fee of \$100. Please make your check payable to **“Trees Forever” AND write “Bird Friendly City Application” on the memo line**. Mail checks to the address in 2b above. If you submit a hard copy of your application please include your payment in the same letter.

What Comes with Your *Bird Friendly City* Recognition?

Bird Friendly Iowa celebrates your initial recognition as an official *Bird Friendly City* by providing you with:

- Two street signs with the *Bird Friendly City* emblem;
- An all-weather *Bird Friendly City* flag that can be flown at a prominent civic location;
- A recognition plaque suitable for display at the municipal center;
- A special page on *Bird Friendly Iowa’s* website devoted to your community’s bird conservation and education achievements for birds and other wildlife;
- Two hours of consultation with an expert regarding new ideas for improving your *Bird Friendly City* (a \$200 value);
- An electronic *Bird Friendly City* logo/emblem that can be used on appropriate municipal web sites and printed materials, as well as the web sites of partner organizations and local businesses; and
- Press releases to appropriate media.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Instructions:

- 1) Your community must meet a total of 7 (or more) of the criteria below, with at least:
 - a. Three (3) from Category One: **Protect, restore and enhance native habitat for birds and other wildlife;**
 - b. One (1) from Category Two: **Reduce threats to birds and other wildlife;** and
 - c. Three (3) from Category Three: **Educate and engage people in birding and wildlife conservation.**
- 2) For each criterion that your community has met:
 - a. Attach appropriate documentation.
 - b. Provide a brief narrative containing a description of your community's action(s)
 - c. NOTE: If your community meets a criteria using the "Other" category your narrative will be especially important.

Provide the requested information at the end of this form and sign and date your application.

Annual Recertification and Sustained Flight Awards

To maintain its *Bird Friendly City* designation, a community must reapply annually and demonstrate it meets at least seven (7) of the criteria, using the same formula as above (application fee and application submission). 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.

BIRD FRIENDLY CITY CRITERIA

(Resources to help in meeting most of these criteria may be found on our website - <http://birdfriendlyiowa.org/Pages/Criteria.aspx>)

1. Protect, restore and enhance native habitat for birds and other wildlife. (Applicant must complete at least three of the following criteria.)

- A. The community has prepared a park system or open space assessment that maps out the variety of native habitats that support a number of different bird species, plants and other kinds of wildlife.
- B. A list of bird species present has been completed for the community.
- C. A significant portion of the community's native habitat for birds, plants and other wildlife has legal protection (e.g., public ownership, conservation easements, etc.). Please describe the size and kinds of native habitat and how it supports a minimum of ten (10) nesting bird species.
- D. Park management provides for native habitat for birds, plants and other wildlife.
- E. 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 trees, shrubs, sedges, grasses and flowers.
- F. The community offers the public information on how to control and remove invasive plant species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, barberry, or others.
- G. 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).
- H. A local leadership organization (such as an educational, tourism or conservation organization, Chamber of Commerce, service club, etc.) takes an active role in the planning process for protecting and enlarging native habitat that is most favorable for birds, plants and other wildlife species.
- I. The community follows sustainability principles for land use planning and resource management recommended by aligned organizations such as the American Planning Association, the National League of Cities' Sustainable Cities Institute or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program.
- J. The community has established a storm water management program that reduces polluted runoff and ensures protection for wetlands, riparian areas and other aquatic ecosystems.
- K. The community is currently designated as a Tree City, USA.
- L. 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. (e.g., the community may document the establishment of nest boxes or rookery structures, purple martin towers, osprey nesting platforms, or bat boxes.

2. Reduce threats to birds and other wildlife. (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 bird-friendly construction and placement of communication towers.
- D. The community has a program to reduce pesticide use on public lands and/or an educational effort to encourage reduced pesticide use by home and property owners.
- E. The community strongly discourages destruction and removal of bird and wildlife native habitat during nesting seasons (i.e., through its permitting process). Please refer to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- F. OTHER: Demonstrate in a narrative account some other important community accomplishment in this category.

3. Educate and engage people in birding and wildlife conservation. (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 species checklist.
- B. Schools in the community are implementing Flying WILD, or similar curriculum, helping ensure that the Iowa's students are knowledgeable about the conservation needs of migratory birds, butterflies, other pollinators, as well as other wildlife.

BIRD FRIENDLY CITY PARTNERS

Conservation and wildlife education projects benefit from strong partnerships. Please list your community partners, including a contact person and email address for each:
