



# Bird City Texas Criteria

Bird City Texas recognizes 2 levels of commitment to improving native bird populations and their habitats: Basic certification and High Flyer status. High Flyer certification is a second tier recognition, and includes all the requirements of Basic Certification “plus” fulfilling the requirements of High Flyer.

## Required Actions for All Communities:

Your community must complete all of the following requirements:

- R1. Community forms/maintains a collaborative body that supports the application development and management of their Bird City enrollment<sup>†</sup>
- R2. Community creates one resolution (proclamations are not accepted) that recognizes World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on a reoccurring basis. Community holds an event each year to celebrate WMBD<sup>†</sup>
- R3. Create and maintain a demonstration bird-friendly native landscape on at least one highly visible community property<sup>\*\*†</sup>
- R4. Include noticeable information on municipal tourism and/or Chamber of Commerce website about local birding sites, lists of native birds, tips for landscaping for birds, local educational resources, birding events, bird-related citizen science projects, and bird clubs
- R5. Promote the American Bird Conservancy’s *Cats Indoors* program through education/ outreach to residents
- R6. Provide businesses and residents with education/outreach and/or a communications campaign about dark sky lighting solutions
- R7. Provide businesses and residents with education/outreach and/or a communications campaign about reducing bird collisions with buildings
- R8. Promote the use of native plants in landscaping through community website, newsletters, public events, and through use of the National Audubon Society’s *Plants for Birds* program<sup>\*\*</sup>
- R9. Provide and promote information on the importance of controlling invasive species (both plant and animal)



# Bird City Texas Basic Certification Options:

## Category 1: Community Engagement

Your community must meet at least 5 criteria from this category:

- 1a. Initiate community participation in at least one community science program annually: Audubon Climate Watch, Christmas Bird Count, D-Bird, Globe at Night, Great Backyard Bird Count, Hummingbirds at Home, Invaders of Texas, Swifts Night Out, Texas Nature Trackers\*\*
- 1b. Engage community and partners in long-term (greater than 5 years) local bird monitoring programs that incorporate eBird and/or iNaturalist
- 1c. Implement an annual communications campaign about issues and actions related to Bird City Texas, creating Bird Friendly Communities, and the criteria that the community adopts
- 1d. Create and install demonstration displays in public areas that educate the public about the benefits of dark sky compliant lighting, window modifications that improve glass visibility and reduce glass reflectivity†
- 1e. Install bird watching amenities in public parks, such as bird blinds, observation decks, interpretive signs, binocular loan out programs, and birding/trail guides†
- 1f. Host at least one native plant sale with high emphasis on native plants (at least 75% native plants available)\*\*
- 1g. Host 3 community volunteer planting events per year featuring native plants on public properties, community centers, libraries, or other sites where the plantings would be labeled and visible to the public\*\*
- 1h. Engage the public park system and/or local museums to offer environmental education opportunities for the public that support the objectives of the Bird City program
- 1i. Public park system has interpretive/educational signage in natural areas that are open to the public that prioritizes bird identification and native bird ecology in their message
- 1j. Include a recurring (at minimum quarterly) native bird education themed section in a community newsletter, social media platform (i.e., Facebook, NextDoor, etc.)
- 1k. Conduct a speaker or workshop series (minimum 3 events per year) with topics focusing on issues relating to birds, wildlife, habitat, environmental stewardship, etc.
- 1l. Sponsor an annual bird festival that promotes community stewardship and appreciation of native birds and their habitats
- 1m. Work with traditionally underserved communities to increase engagement with parks, ecological education, and birding resources
- 1n. Educate the public about the responsibilities and best practices of providing food and water for birds and discern the benefits of natural food sources from supplemental feeding



## **Category 2: Habitat Enhancement and Protection**

Your community must meet at least 8 criteria from this category:

- 2a. Develop and implement a bird-centric wildlife or habitat management plan for all lands owned or managed by the community\*\*
- 2b. Acquire, through purchase or easement, long-term habitat for birds, wildlife, and native plant communities representative of the local ecosystem (wildscapes and demonstration gardens will not qualify)\*\* †
- 2c. On existing protected properties, actively manage or improve existing habitat for birds, wildlife, and native plant communities representative of the local ecosystem\*\*
- 2d. Create and conserve corridors and connectivity between habitat areas to promote movement and migration of birds, wildlife, and native plant communities†
- 2e. Incentivize residents, businesses, and community group participation in local habitat enhancement/restoration programs\*\*
- 2f. Implement wetland habitat restorations or installations to mitigate flooding rather than stream channelization\*\*†
- 2g. Where public safety allows, implement a policy and training that ensures dead trees are left standing in parks/natural areas to provide foraging and nesting habitat
- 2h. Develop and adopt a community approved list of only native tree and shrub species recommended for use by all new developments (business and sub-division developers) †
- 2i. Reduce municipal water use for landscaping by implementing permanent once/week landscape watering with irrigation system/sprinkler schedules citywide and/or native landscape incentive programs
- 2j. Implement an active invasive plant species removal program on public lands
- 2k. Under the guidance of a Wildlife Management Plan, community actively uses prescribed fire that benefits birds and native ecosystems
- 2l. Create overlays and other zoning and land use restrictions so that nature preserves are buffered against negative impacts of development†
- 2m. Enact and enforce more stringent city ordinances protecting existing bird habitat
- 2n. Implement seasonal management practices (such as mowing, pruning) that protect nesting birds,
- 2o. Manage natural areas in public parks to encourage the growth of native plants that provide important wildlife habitat including managed “No Mow” areas for native grasses and plants
- 2p. Sponsor at least 5 habitat restoration projects of at least 1 acre in size in the community to improve bird habitat over the 3 year period\*\*
- 2q. Manage a municipal or public golf course for the benefit of native birds
- 2r. Community conducts an inventory of city lands (using iNaturalist or comparable platform) to document plant and animal species present and assesses habitat quality
- 2s. Review all properties slated for municipal development to avoid impacting quality bird habitat where possible, including adjusting siting of buildings to avoid habitat



### **Category 3: Creating Safer Spaces for Birds**

Your community must meet at least 4 criteria from this category:

- 3a. Educate building owners/architecture community about Bird-Friendly Buildings best design practices and the conservation value of reducing collisions
- 3b. Provide best design guidelines about reducing bird collisions and impacts to businesses applying for new building permits
- 3c. Participate in National Lights Out Program during spring and fall migration periods
- 3d. Conduct a sustained educational campaign focused on the impacts of pesticides and herbicides on bird populations and include practical information on proven Integrated Pest Management options
- 3e. Implement Integrated Pest Management strategies to minimize use of pesticides and herbicides on city-managed property
- 3f. At least one municipal or major public building receives LEED certification that includes the Credit for Bird Collision Deterrence (during review period)†
- 3g. Provide alternative transportation throughout the community (e.g. hike and bike trails, rideshare programs, bike lanes)†
- 3h. Reduce light pollution by using dark-skies compliant shielded lighting throughout community and does not install or use blue wavelength lights (4000 Kelvin) in all outdoor publicly owned fixtures with a target of approximately 2700 Kelvin†
- 3i. Prohibit feeding of ducks on community-managed properties to decrease domestic disease transfer to migrating waterfowl
- 3j. Community stormwater management plan implements actions from the National Menus of Best Management Practices for Stormwater
- 3k. Active program to remove invasive or harmful animal species, including harmful or invasive bird species, deer, and/or wild pigs
- 3l. Actively prohibits the formation, maintenance, or support of outdoor cat colonies inside or adjacent to parks/natural areas. Removal of cat colonies within or adjacent to parks/natural areas will also suffice
- 3m. Monitor and limit the release of native wildlife and prohibit the release of domestic animals within parks/natural areas to prevent unhealthy over-concentration of native species or introduction of non-native species that would be destructive to birds



# Bird City Texas High Flyer Certification

Bird City Texas anticipates that in the years ahead its communities will want to strengthen their commitment to bird conservation. These additional criteria demonstrate that higher level of commitment. To earn a High Flyer designation, a community will need to document that it still meets Bird City's basic qualifications and meets the additional requirements outlined below.

## Required Action for all High Flyer Communities

All communities must meet all the following criteria to be eligible for High Flyer status:

- HF R1. Prohibit Trap, Neuter and Release programs for feral or free roaming cats. Does not actively subsidize or condone outdoor cat colonies, and prohibits the formation, feeding, and support of outdoor cat colonies
- HF R2. Create and/or maintain a demonstration bird-friendly native landscape on at least two highly visible community properties that would be visited by socioeconomically diverse groups in your community\*\*

## Bird City Texas High Flyer Certification Options

### Category HF1: Community Engagement Certification Options

Your community must meet at least 1 criterion from this category.

- HF1a. Local school district(s) uses native Texas ecosystem/conservation programs in curriculum for all K-12 students in either science, social studies, or language arts
- HF1b. Sponsor a community planning charrette that brings in major municipal, industry, and community partners to improve bird conservation within the community that results in a draft/preliminary community conservation plan
- HF1c. Enact an annual series of highly-visible community planting events that engage a dedicated corps of volunteers to restore native habitat on city-owned properties\*\*

### Category HF2: Habitat Enhancement and Protection Certification Options

Your community must meet at least 3 criteria from this category.

- HF2a. Community requires the use of native plants for landscaping in all new landscapes in publicly owned or managed spaces, buildings, and properties\*\*
- HF2b. Designate a new nature park primarily managed for the benefit of native plants, wildlife, and ecosystems<sup>†</sup>
- HF2c. Community has enacted a \$2 per capita dedicated fund for habitat conservation, enhancement, or restoration\*\*
- HF2d. Manage all recreational areas (including sports areas) in public park system to include at least 5% contiguous area designated as natural habitat



- HF2e. Community designates, manages, and maintains at minimum 2% of parks as preserves where resource protection is prioritized over human use and enforce policies such as: no pets allowed, noise management, limited number of visitors, pedestrian use only, and closing to allow for land management practices
- HF2f. Community has at least 1 golf course within its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) certified as an Audubon Certified Cooperative Sanctuary
- HF2g. Community has created and implements a Smart Growth development plan to protect and manage watersheds, open space, and habitat areas
- HF2h. Community has conducted overview of all community parks and natural areas within the community, owned by all entities, to develop a greenbelt/corridor master plan using creation of more natural areas and trails to connect all green space throughout the community. Include land acquisition plans and detailed timeline for implementation.

### **Category HF3: Creating Safer Spaces for Birds Certification Options**

Your community must meet at least 2 criteria from this category.

- HF3a. Enact and enforce a city-wide ordinance requiring domestic cats to be kept indoors or in an enclosure
- HF3b. Construction ordinance requires that new public buildings seek LEED certification (silver or higher) that includes meeting the requirement for the LEED Credit for Bird Collision Deterrence
- HF3c. Design or retrofit public buildings to reduce bird collisions using Bird Friendly Buildings guidelines by American Bird Conservancy and Audubon
- HF3d. Participate in Bird-Friendly Buildings: Lights Out program in all city-owned buildings
- HF3e. Community actively and intensively traps brown-headed cowbirds on several community-owned lands
- HF3f. Implement adaptive feral hog population control plan that encompasses several community-owned lands
- HF3g. Community prohibits distribution of single-use plastic through regulatory action (straws, shopping bags, balloons, etc) and provides clean-up containers for microfilaments, when applicable

\*\* Evaluative metrics are required for all future commitments. Communities should identify their own metrics that can help evaluate the success of each activity. Criteria marked with \*\* are special reporting categories. For these activities, evaluative metrics must include one or more of the following: number of acres affected, number of people engaged, number of native plants sold, and/or put in/taken out of the ground (when appropriate).

† Criteria will be given even if accomplished, or first implemented, before the application year. Credit for this criteria is only applied to the application year, not future certification years.