

Bird Friendly Iowa

Minimum Criteria for County Designation

Designation as a Bird Friendly community indicates that minimum standards have been met. Community engagement to continually recognize and ameliorate threats to birds is critical for long-term success. Each year a community must reapply and demonstrate it continues meeting the minimal criteria. After three years of successful participation in the program, a community will be awarded Sustained Flight status.

Bird Friendly Iowa anticipates that in the years ahead its communities will want to strengthen their commitment to bird conservation. These additional criteria demonstrate a significantly higher level of commitment. High Flyer applications may be submitted by those currently recognized as Bird Friendly Communities as part of their annual renewal.

Protect, restore & enhance bird habitat (3 of 11)

- A. County has prepared a habitat assessment or management plan for one or more of its natural areas or parks, and is implementing the plan.
- B. A list of bird species present has been completed for one or more designated areas in the County, and has been updated within the past three years.
- C. A substantial portion of the county's land has legal protection through public ownership or conservation easement. These lands include managed native habitats that support at least 10 Greatest Conservation Need native bird species. The applicant needs to justify why it feels that this protection is "substantial".
- D. County public land management and/or acquisition details priority for native habitat for birds, plants and other wildlife.
- E. County has programs to encourage native habitat development on private property and/or allows for "wild" or natural lawns comprised of native plant species. The County supports and/or endorses these programs.
- F. County offers public information about controlling or removing invasive plant species.
- G. County Conservation Board partners with local leadership organizations, civic clubs, etc., to support an active role in planning for protected habitat favorable to birds, native plants and other wildlife.
- H. County has a volunteer support group for a DNR Bird Conservation Area or Audubon Important Bird Area.
- I. The county follows sustainability principles as recommended by natural resource professionals, for land use planning and resource management recommended by aligned organizations such as the County Conservation Board, IDNR, NRCS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program.
- J. One or more communities within the County have a storm water management program or other designation such as Tree City USA, Bird Friendly Iowa, etc.
- K. Demonstrate, in narrative, an action program or project within the county that furthers native habitat creation or protection, or some other important accomplishment in this category such as managing nest boxes or similar program efforts.

Reduce threats to birds (2 of 10)

- A. The County has regulatory or administrative program to control free-roaming cats and/or actively publicizes a "cats indoors" campaign.
- B. The County has ordinance language or other means for enforcing state law regarding time constraints for mowing roadsides.
- C. The County provides information on how businesses and homes can protect birds from window collisions, and publicly recognizes those taking such steps.
- D. The County uses strategies to reduce window collisions on public buildings.
- E. The County supports bird-friendly construction and placement of communication towers.

F. The County has a program to reduce pesticide use on public lands and/or an educational effort to reduce pesticide use on private lands.

G. The County strongly discourages destruction and removal of bird and wildlife native habitat during nesting seasons (i.e., through its permitting process).

H. The County has requirement(s) for non-toxic ammunition on public hunting areas.

I. The County has receptacles for used fishing line at one or more fishing areas.

J. Demonstrate, in narrative, some other important accomplishment in this category.

Educate & engage people in birding & conservation (3 of 13)

A. County staff and volunteers actively educate about birds, which includes providing information about identification, natural history, habitat needs, and/or environmental and human threats to bird populations.

B. The County encourages students and/or other community members to participate in citizen science bird monitoring or developing local bird species checklists. Areas within the County are represented in at least one bird monitoring program, such as the Great Backyard Bird Count, Audubon Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, or other actively coordinated citizen science project.

C. The County provides or helps implement Flying Wild or other curricula designed to educate Iowa students about conservation needs of migratory birds.

D. The County provides age-appropriate public programming on one or more bird information topics. This may include field trips, speaker series, displays, or other media.

E. The County sponsors, supports, or coordinates an annual birding festival.

F. The County provides bird information through displays, brochures, newsletters, websites and/or other media.

G. The County has a program that involves schools, garden clubs or other organizations, habitat development or butterfly & bird conservation activities.

H. The County provides information regarding safe and responsible wildlife rescue & assistance, including contact information for aligned organizations & Iowa permitted wildlife rehabilitators.

I. The County at least annually submits bird information articles which appear in local newspapers.

J. The County has a website presence where it provides links to organizations with bird information.

K. The County adopts an official resolution recognizing International Migratory Bird Day and hosts a celebration recognizing International Migratory Bird Day during spring or fall migration season.

L. The County has developed structure(s) for the purpose of facilitating nesting of birds, such as ospreys, trumpeter swans, barn owls, kestrels, peregrine falcons, and chimney swifts, which is visible to the public and includes interpretive signage or other media.

M. Demonstrate, in narrative, some other important accomplishment in this category.