



# Bird City Maryland

## Application for Recognition

### APPLY FOR BIRD CITY STATUS

- 1) Achieve a total of at least 10 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 4 categories (Categories 2-5).
  - e. NOTE: 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.
  - f. NOTE: Hereafter the word “city” means city, town, or county.
- 2) Submit a narrative and documentation.
  - a. Narrative: Describe how your city 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 information at the end of the form, and have a city employee or elected official sign and date your application.
- 4) Provide a link to your city’s Bird City Maryland 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) and demonstrate that your Bird City effort has a *significant* social media presence.

### APPLY FOR HIGH FLYER STATUS\*

**\*RESTRICTION:** Cities 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. In addition to steps 2 and 3 above, the applicant must:

- 1) Achieve a total of at least 20 points, meeting:
  - a. A minimum of 5 criteria worth 2 or more points from all 5 categories
  - b. Requirements 1b, 1c, and 1d in “Apply for Bird City Status” (above).

### FEES AND SUBMISSION

- 1) The nonrefundable application fee is \$200. Send a check payable to “Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership” to: Chris Eberly, Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership, 177 Admiral Cochrane Drive, Annapolis MD 21401.
- 2) Submit all documents and attachments electronically to [director@marylandbirds.org](mailto:director@marylandbirds.org).
- 3) Applications are reviewed as they are submitted.

## Preamble

As \_\_\_\_\_ (title - e.g., Mayor, Parks Director, etc.) of the village/city/town/county of \_\_\_\_\_, I am applying for official recognition as a Bird City. Our city has met Bird City Maryland's requirements, including enactment of a resolution recognizing World Migratory Bird Day. I also attest that, where possible, my city's actions align with Bird City Maryland'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

### \*Need at least 3 criteria in Category 1

- (1 Point) A. Comply with county/local "Smart Growth" guidelines for land use planning and resource management.
- (1 Point) B. Attach results from *organized* bird monitoring or data obtained from researchers or volunteers in the local park system. If data are confidential, please provide a summary of the monitoring results. (Exclusions: Programs that receive credit under 4D: Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, Swift Night Out, Maryland Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring Program.)
- (1 Point) C. Attach an ordinance or other evidence (e.g., official designation of natural areas, easements, etc.) that existing bird habitat within city 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 city planning seeks to provide additional bird habitat.
- (1 Point) E. Members of your planning and zoning board have received information on sustainable practices and bird-friendly design.
- (1 Point) F. Attach a copy of a local ordinance to demonstrate that your city promotes natural/native landscaping that emphasizes native plants and non-turf lawns.
- (1 Point) G. Show that your city offers the public information on how they can control and remove invasive plant species in order to improve or maintain bird habitat.
- (1 Point) H. Attach documentation showing that there is a segment of the [Maryland-District of Columbia Birding Trail](#), a designated [Important Bird Area](#), an [Audubon sanctuary](#), or a [Maryland Ornithological Society \(MOS\) Sanctuary](#) within or adjacent to your city.
- (1 Point) I. Show that the local Chamber of Commerce, Sustainability Board, or a similar group (e.g., an Audubon chapter, MOS Chapter, Smart Growth Maryland, etc.) takes an active role in the planning process for protecting and enlarging favorable bird habitat in the city.
- (1 Point) J. Document a recent project that created or restored bird *habitat* in your city. (Exclusions: Bird feeders and small-scale artificial nesting structures)
- (1 Point) K. 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](#), [Maryland's Wild Acres](#), Univ. of MD Extension Master Gardeners [Bay-Wise Program](#), or another location/area/region-specific habitat certification program).
- (1 Point) L. Implement a [tree risk policy](#) (see p. 153, "Converting Hazardous Trees Into Wildlife Trees") designed to leave dead trees standing as nesting and foraging resources for birds when it is safe to do so.

- (2 Points) M. Show that your city has restored at least two acres of woodlands, wetlands, or prairie, or restored at least two acres of stream including riparian buffer (approximately 800 feet x 100 feet).
- (2 Points) N. Demonstrate that your city offers a *program* for private property owners who are interested in removing or limiting the growth of invasive plants that have significant negative impacts on bird habitat (1 point). Ideally this is done without the use of pesticides deemed unsafe for bugs and birds (2 points).
- (2 Points) O. Show that your city works on public lands to control invasive species that have significant negative impacts on bird habitat (1 point). Ideally this is done without the use of pesticides deemed unsafe for bugs and birds (2 points).
- (2 Points) P. Document a program to support the establishment of pesticide-free lawns and native landscaping. Resources are available from Audubon's [Plants for Birds Initiative](#), Maryland DNR's [Maryland's Wild Acres](#), Univ. of MD Extension Master Gardeners [Bay-Wise Program](#), and National Wildlife Federation's [Garden for Wildlife](#).
- (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. Demonstrate the implementation of a program to create *and monitor* nest boxes for Barn Owls, American Kestrels, or another cavity-nesting Species of Greatest Conservation Need (please contact us before initiating a nest box project).
- (2 Points) S. Show how your city aids a local youth group (e.g., YMOS, 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, American Kestrel or Barn Owl nest boxes, Purple Martin condo, Chimney Swift tower, etc.).
- (2 Points) T. Demonstrate how a public golf course is managed to benefit birds.
- (2 Points) U. Document that your city maintains a location for public birdwatching that includes educational signage and/or literature.
- (2 Points) V. Show that your city 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.
- (2 Points) W. Encourage forest regeneration by nurturing undergrowth of native shrubs and trees by protecting seedlings from deer and monitoring their progress with routine aftercare.
- (1-2 Points) X. Demonstrate the implementation of a program to preserve Chimney Swift nesting and roosting sites (2 points) and/or to construct Chimney Swift towers (1 point)
- (1-2 Points) Y. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

## Category 2: City Forest and Habitat Management

- (1 Point) A. Demonstrate that your city 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, stormwater 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 city 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.
- (2 Points) D. Attach an ordinance or other official policy that requires your city 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.
- (1-2 Points) E. Show that your forester, a member of your tree board, or another person currently responsible for managing your community's trees has attended the Maryland Urban & Community Forestry Summit (1 point) and implements ecologically sustainable urban forestry practices (2 points).
- (1-2 Points) F. Demonstrate that at least 10% of city owned open space is managed as grassland or shrubland.
- (1-2 Points) G. Demonstrate that the city is educating farmers, land owners and homeowners regarding planting riparian buffers.
- (1-2 Points) H. Document that the city is collaborating with energy companies to manage power line right of ways as bird habitat.
- (1-2 Points) I. OTHER: Demonstrate in an attached narrative.

## Category 3: Limiting or Removing Threats to Birds

- (1 Point) A. Demonstrate that your city provides property owners with information on how to protect birds from window strikes (e.g., online links, brochures).
- (1 Point) B. 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) C. Demonstrate that your city provides property owners information about the dangers of Nandina/Heavenly Bamboo to berry-eating birds.

- (1 Point) D. Describe your city's educational program to control free-roaming cats and/or the manner in which you actively publicize the [Cats Indoors!](#) Initiative or the Catio Challenge.
- (1 Point) E. Show that your city does not allow the planting of Nandina/Heavenly Bamboo on municipal or public property.
- (2 Points) E. Document that a municipal or major public building has been awarded LEED certification as a bird-friendly building ([LEED SSpc 55](#)).
- (2 Points) F. Document a program that effectively reduces feral cat populations (Note: See 3G for enforced ordinances). (Exclusions: Trap, neuter, release/return programs)
- (2 Points) G. Demonstrate that your city enforces an ordinance that requires domestic cats to be kept indoors, on a leash, or in an enclosure to prevent them from spreading disease and preying on birds and other wildlife.
- (2 Points) H. Show how your city regulates communication tower construction, siting, [and lighting](#) to mitigate their risk to migrating birds.
- (2 Points) I. Document that your city 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 city has an [outdoor lighting ordinance](#) to reduce the impacts of light pollution.
- (2 Points) K. Demonstrate that your city has enacted a bird collision monitoring program and has treated problem windows to reduce collisions with municipal and commercial buildings.
- (2 Points) L. Document that your city has registered a municipal building(s) in the Safe Skies Maryland Bird-Friendly Building program.
- (1-2 Points) K. Attach your city's ordinance that requires new buildings to be built following bird-safe design, construction, and operation guidelines (see [Bird-Friendly Building Design](#) guide by American Bird Conservancy).
- (1-2 Points) L. Demonstrate that your City provides a location for people to recycle used fishing line and hooks. <https://www.boatus.org/clean-boating/recycling/fishing-line-recycling/>
- (1-2 Points) M. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

#### Category 4: Public Education

- (1 Point) A. Demonstrate that schools in your city participate in the [MAEOE Maryland Green School Program](#) (includes programs such as [Flying WILD](#), [Project Learning Tree](#), Birds and Humans in the Changing Watershed) or that your community organizes its own substantial education and outreach program for young people.
- (1 Point) B. Illustrate a program that involves schools in bird conservation activities (other than 4A).

- (1 Point) C. Provide web links or a city newsletter demonstrating that your city educates property owners on methods to create and enhance backyard habitat for birds.
- (1 Point) D. Demonstrate that your city is represented in and promotes at least one community science bird monitoring program (e.g., the [Christmas Bird Count](#), [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), [Swift Night Out](#)).
- (1 Point) E. Describe your city-sponsored annual bird festival. This must be an all-day or multi-day event. The event may NOT be the same event as the World Migratory Bird Day event in Category 6 unless it is a multi-day event.
- (1 Point) F. Illustrate a program that involves garden clubs, museums, aquariums, historic sites, or other organizations that have bird conservation programs or activities.
- (1 Point) G. Demonstrate that your city 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 [Xerces Society](#) and the [Pollinator Partnership](#)).
- (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) L. Document that at least 25% of the schools in your community are certified Maryland Green Schools.
- (2 Points) M. Demonstrate that your city actively raises awareness of its bird assets. Examples include placing a remote web camera on a nest platform, offering bird watching field trips, or creating a significant educational resource on your community's bird life.
- (2 Points) N. Show that your city works with traditionally underserved communities to increase their access to natural areas, environmental education, birding resources, and local environmental experts.
- (1-2 Points) J. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

## Category 5: Energy & Sustainability

- (1 Point) A. Document an energy audit for a municipal building and show that your city is working to implement its recommendations.
- (1 Point) B. Show that your city 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 city is exceptional because standard practice will not receive credit.
- (1 Point) C. Document that a municipal building is [LEED certified](#) (silver or higher).
- (2 Points) E. Show that your city has implemented a sustainability plan that improves your city's energy efficiency and/or increases the use of renewable energy.
- (2 Points) F. Demonstrate that your city participates in a community solar program (and has a solar Integrated Best Management Practice ordinance) or that a municipal building receives a significant percentage of its electricity from renewable energy.
- (2 Points) G. Discuss your city's ordinance that requires new buildings to seek [LEED certification](#).
- (1-2 Points) K. OTHER: Demonstrate in your narrative.

## Category 6: World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)

**\*BOTH A and B are REQUIRED**

- (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 city'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 city.
  - 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](#).

## Signature & Partners

Signature

Title

Date

**Online Presence**

City website: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Bird City page: \_\_\_\_\_

Links to local birding, ecotourism, or other relevant sites: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Contacts**

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

