



Bird Friendly City: A Certification Program

Rebecca Parker, Nature Nova Scotia & Bird Friendly Halifax
Autumn Jordan, Bird Friendly City Organizer - Nature Canada



May 5th 2022



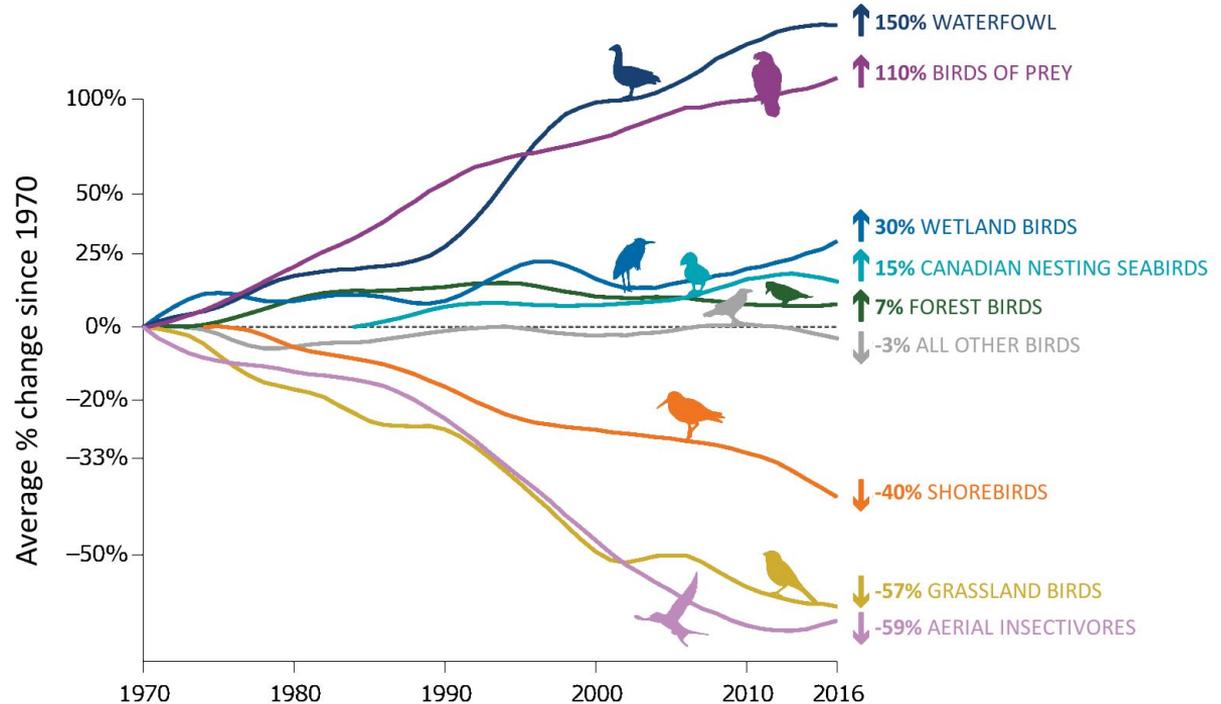
VILLE AMIE DES OISEAUX
BIRD FRIENDLY CITY

NatureCanada.ca/BFC



Overview

- A 2019 report published in *Science*, described the loss of 3 billion birds in North America since 1970.
- **State of Canada's Birds Report:** Aerial insectivores, grassland birds, and shorebirds have **declined the most**
- The main factors are loss of habitat, predation by cats, window collisions, pesticides, etc.
- Cities have become **danger zones for birds.**



State of Canada's Birds, 2019



Bird Friendly City: Vision

1

We envision cities and towns across Canada that are safe places for birds, where key threats are effectively mitigated, nature is restored and native bird populations can thrive.

2

Residents are involved in celebrating and helping birds while monitoring their populations and threats through on the ground-coalitions called *Bird Teams*

3

Point-based criteria where Nature Canada provides a flexible template for municipalities to address key bird population threats. Cost-free program led by enthusiastic individuals who are leaders in their community to address biodiversity declines

4

3 Criteria Categories with 3 thresholds: Threat Reduction, Habitat Protection, Restoration & Climate Resiliency, Community Outreach/Education
Entry (50% points), Intermediate (65-80%), High (80%+)



VILLE AMIE DES OISEAUX
BIRD FRIENDLY CITY

Locally Driven, Nationally Supported



-  Bird Team (13)
-  Other (12)
-  Pending-Certification (9)
-  Certified (7)

Bird Friendly City Partners, Certified Cities & Bird Teams in Canada



VILLE AMIE DES OISEAUX
BIRD FRIENDLY CITY



Municipal Action Across Canada

- Toronto:
 - City of Toronto's Council Approved **Ravine Strategy (2017)** implemented in 2020
 - Toronto **Bird Friendly Development Guidelines (2007) & Biodiversity Strategy (2017)**
 - **Strategic Forest Management Plan (2012)** that calls for increasing the number of trees and area of urban forest canopy with a target of 40% tree cover
- London's **Climate Emergency Action Plan (2022)**
- Hamilton's **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (2021)**



Certification Benefits



- Certification is a badge of honor and source of community pride. It tells the world that Halifax is leading on the efforts to reverse bird population declines.
- Rigorous standard that measures impact and progress of work, while offering flexibility.
- Financial benefits – ecotourism, bird watching, etc.
- Health benefits – research shows that access to nature improves physical, mental and emotional health in humans.

Birds in HRM

Halifax is a rapidly growing city, adding the equivalent of Truro to its population every year. This development pressure, combined with lacking biodiversity policy, puts birds and other wildlife at risk.

400+ bird species live in HRM, many coming here to breed

270 eBird “hotspots” collect bird data across HRM , from 2,500 birders

1/3 of bird species found in HRM are declining across Canada

Countless native Nova Scotian plants depend on local bird species for pollination and seed dispersal





Assessing HRM for “bird friendliness”



Strong green spaces

Lots of parks and good infrastructure for bird viewing activities. Strong urban tree plan resulting in good canopy across city

Supportive citizens

Strong birding community and growing public interest in birds.



Pristine habitats

Ample pristine habitat exists for even our most cryptic migratory birds at the outskirts of the city core (if they are left undisturbed)





Assessing HRM for “bird friendliness”



No bird-related development standards

New public buildings, lights, and other infrastructure still pose strike hazards



Lack of biodiversity planning

Wildlife are not prominently featured in otherwise progressive policies and plans



Connectivity planning gaps

Green space connectivity is well thought-out in HRM, but “green spaces” may not necessarily be bird habitat, and we still are waiting on the Green Network Plan



Opportunities

12 citizens, a mix of residents, researchers, environmental professionals, and city representatives formed the

Bird Friendly Halifax Coalition

We meet regularly to work on collaborative projects that benefit Bird Friendly City goals

Halifax could become a recognized Bird Friendly City with some work in a few key areas: integrating wildlife and biodiversity considerations into city plans/policies, adoption of design standards that mitigate hazards, and active promotion of birds as a recreational and tourism opportunity.

Through our meetings, we worked through Nature Canada's criteria and have established a

Baseline Assessment

We already have easily-actionable recommendations for planning and practice improvements, including the "Red Book", Urban Forest Management Plan, and Green Network Plan

Our coalition draws from the expertise of 6 organizations and can mobilize

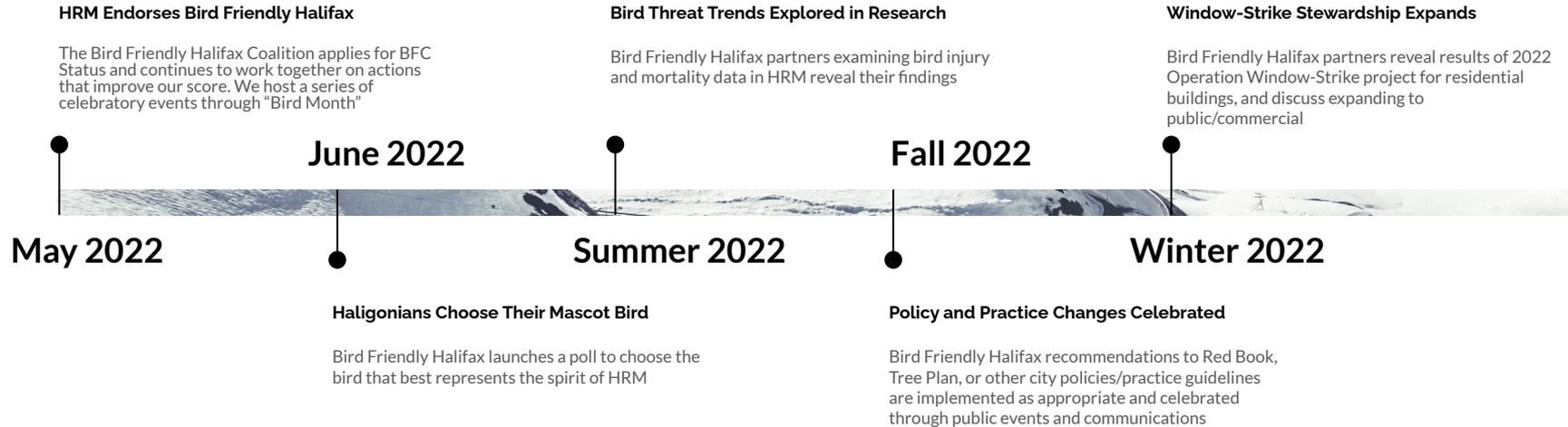
Hundreds of Supporters

Giving power to citizens to take on actions that benefit birds



Our Request

We want the municipality to officially endorse the Bird Friendly Halifax movement, recognizing the importance of the cause



Thank you for listening! Any questions?

