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**Item No. 15.2.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**May 31, 2022**

**TO:** Mayor Savage Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor Mancini, Chair, Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

**DATE:** May 19, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Application for Halifax as a Bird Friendly City

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**ORIGIN**

May 5, 2022 meeting of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee, Item 10.3.1.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Administrative Order Number One, the Procedures of the Council Administrative Order:*

Parks and Open Spaces

5. The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee shall:
  - (a) encourage the appropriate policy structure to address amount, use and protection of parks, forests (urban and rural) and open spaces for the use and enjoyment of the residents of the municipality.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report evaluating the application from Halifax to Nature Canada for certification as a bird friendly City.

**BACKGROUND**

On May 5, 2022 the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee received a presentation from Rebecca Parker, Coordinator Nature Nova Scotia and Autumn Jordan, Bird Friendly Coordinator, Nature Canada respecting the application by HRM to Nature Canada for certification as a bird friendly City.

Certification is granted to cities that have demonstrated a commitment to reducing threats to birds within their municipalities, protecting natural habitat and increasing climate resiliency, and actively engaging the

community in bird friendly initiatives. Other municipalities that have received this certification include Vancouver and Calgary.

### **DISCUSSION**

Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee considered Nature Nova Scotia and Nature Canada's presentation at their May 5, 2022 meeting and approved the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications will be explored in a future staff report.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Risk considerations will be explored in a future staff report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The agenda and reports of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca, and draft minutes of the meeting will be made available on Halifax.ca within three business days.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications will be explored in a future staff report.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The Standing Committee did not discuss alternatives.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Nature Nova Scotia – Application for Halifax as a Bird Friendly City Presentation

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Jill McGillicuddy, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.483.2810

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# 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



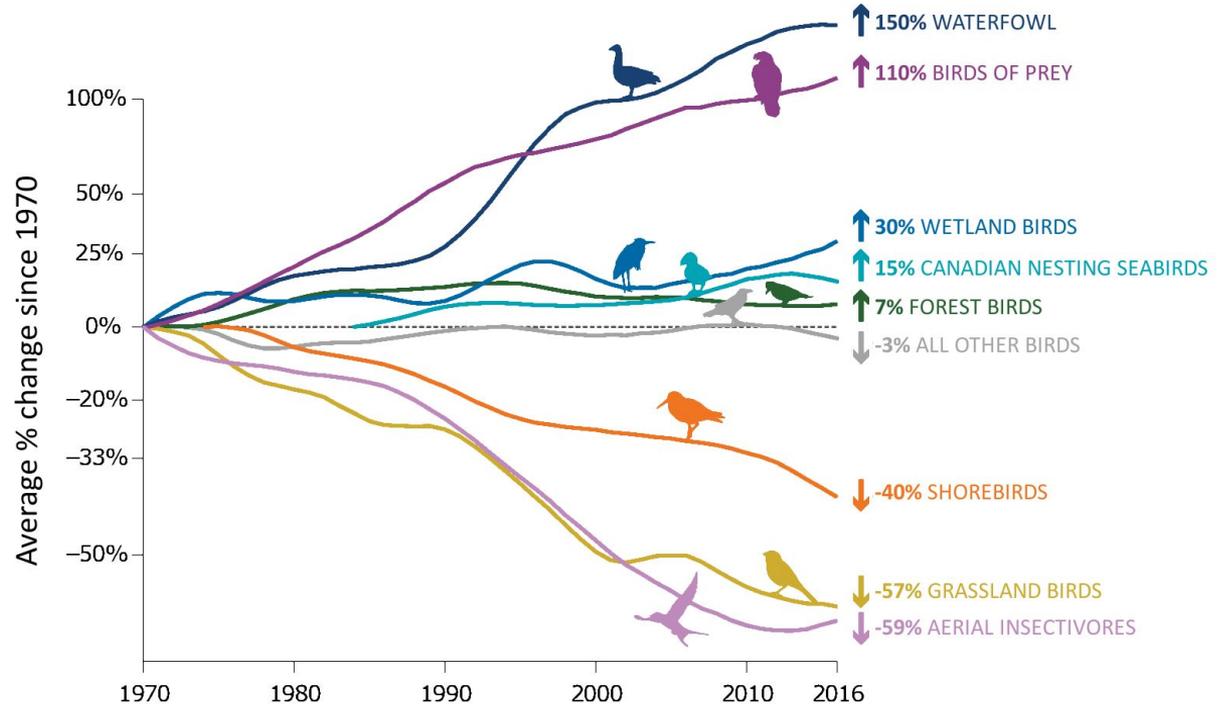
VILLE AMIE DES OISEAUX  
BIRD FRIENDLY CITY

[NatureCanada.ca/BFC](https://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.

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

2

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

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





# 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)**



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# 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.

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## 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

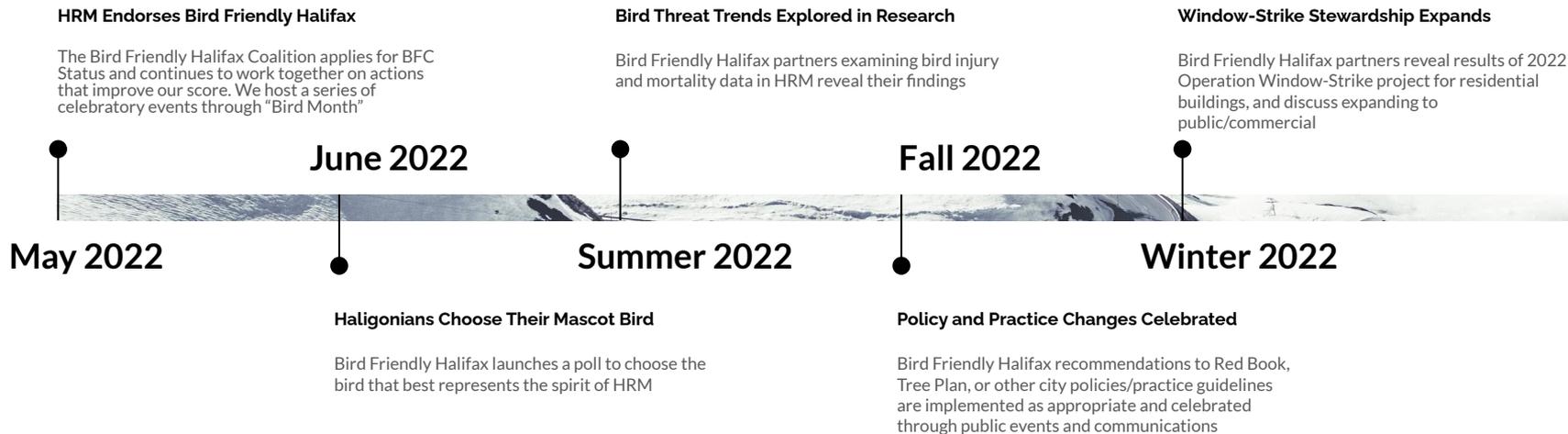
## Hundreds of Supporters

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?

