

Bird City Texas

Part of the Bird City Network

How to apply for designation

All applications and renewals must be submitted ONLINE.

Contact us to set up an account.

**** Please note as of Aug 2025 our application has been under edits and will be cleaned and finalized online by Oct 10th 2025 ** Thank you for your patience and understanding.**

Applications are open! Applications are opened annually in February and are due mid-July. Our 2025 applications will be due on Tuesday July 15th at 5:00pm.

If your city is having difficulty accessing the application, please contact us!

Read below to learn more about the requirements to become a Bird City in Texas.

APPLICATION STEPS:

1. Review requirements below and the full list of actions (scroll down and click "View Action List").
2. Assemble your Bird City Team – this is the collaborative group that works together to coordinate actions and complete your application. Use this [Dream Team Worksheet](#) as a guide.
3. Contact Us when you're ready to get started (you'll need access to the website to fill out the online application).

4. Login to the website and fill out your application.
5. All applications are due by July 15th.

REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW:

- **Bird City TEXAS designation requires a total of 19 actions (10 required + 9 additional)**
- In the 9 additional actions, (3) must come from Habitat, (3) must come from Threats, and (3) must come from Education & Engagement
- However, you can replace any 1 action with an action in the Sustainability Category
- Any community is welcome to complete actions marked HF (High Flyer)

- **High Flyer designation requires a total of 27 actions (10 required + 13 additional in BCT + 4 marked HF)**
- In the 13 additional actions, (5) must come from Habitat, (5) must come from Threats, and (3) must come from Education & Engagement
- However, you can replace any 1 action with an action in the Sustainability Category
- Action 2.1.2 (no TNR) is REQUIRED for HF and counts towards the 4 HF actions. The other 3 actions marked HF can come from any category.

TIMELINE FOR ACTIONS

All actions must be completed before submitting your application. Actions for the 2025 submission must be completed between January 2024 – June 2025 unless otherwise stated in the individual criteria.

REQUIRED ACTIONS for all communities at either level:

Category 1 (Habitat)

- (1) Action 1.1.7 (Bird City team)
- (1) Action 1.3.1 (Promote native plants)

- (1) Action 1.4.1 (Control invasive plants)

Category 2 (Threats)

- (1) Action 2.1.1 (Promote Cat's Indoors)
- (1) Action 2.2.1 (Education about glass collisions)
- (1) Action 2.3.2 (Education around light pollution)

Category 3 (Education & Engagement)

- (1) Action 3.1.1 (Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day)
- (1) Action 3.2.9 (Create demonstration garden)
- (1) Action 3.2.4 (Establish Online Resources)
- (1) Action 3.7.1 (Bird City Resolution with initial application then letter of support following recertification)

RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

- Annually, each October certified communities will be asked to update their Bird City (collaborative body) team information and share milestones from the year with a Year in Review tile.
- Every 3 years, recertifying communities will be asked to edit their full applications online by July 15th including updating:
 - All narrative descriptions
 - Supporting images and documents
 - Provide a letter of support from your community's governing body
- Recertified cities will be asked to provide highlights at the November Round Up following recertification

KEY FOR ACTION LIST

† = Credit will be given even if accomplished, or first implemented anytime before the application or renewal years. Credit will be given during the whole certification timeframe. Upon renewal credit is only given if action is done again in its entirety.

** = Evaluative metrics are suggested. Communities should ID their own metrics that can help evaluate the success of each activity (i.e., # acres, # people engaged, # native plants installed, etc.)

Example of Passing and Non Passing Narrative

New Applicants	Renewals
Submission: July 15, 2025	Submission: July 15, 2025
Review: July - October	Review: July - October
Fee: FREE! Thanks to the support of Audubon Texas and TPWD.	Fee: FREE! Thanks to the support of Audubon Texas and TPWD.

1. Habitat

1.1. Promote best management of community habitat

1.1.1 - 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. (HIGH FLYER)

1.1.2 - Manage all recreational areas (including sports areas) in public park system to include at least 5% contiguous area designated as natural habitat. (HIGH FLYER)

1.1.3 - Develop a bird-centric wildlife or habitat management plan for all lands owned or managed by the community and/or implement it on at least 25% of these properties, starting with designated natural areas/trail systems.**

1.1.4 - Create overlays and other zoning and land use restrictions so that nature preserves are buffered against negative impacts of development.†

1.1.5 - 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. (HIGH FLYER)

1.1.6 - Community has created and implements a Smart Growth development plan to protect and manage watersheds, open space, and habitat areas. (HIGH FLYER)

1.1.7 - Community forms/maintains a collaborative body that supports the application development and management of their Bird City enrollment. Attach a contact list of your collaborative body with affiliations. (MANDATORY)

[Use the Dream Team Worksheet as a guide](#)

1.1.8 - 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. (HIGH FLYER)

1.1.9 - Community has enacted a \$2 per capita dedicated fund for habitat conservation, enhancement, or restoration** (HIGH FLYER)

1.1.10 - Under the guidance of a Wildlife Management Plan, community actively uses prescribed fire that benefits birds and native ecosystems.

1.2. Create and protect habitat

1.2.1 - Review properties slated for municipal development to avoid impacting quality bird habitat where possible and recommend adjusting siting of buildings to avoid existing habitat.

1.2.2 - 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.

[Improve the micro-ecology of yards and landscapes](#)

1.2.3 - Create and/or conserve corridors and connectivity between habitat areas to promote movement and migration of birds, wildlife, and native plant communities.†

1.2.4 - Designate a new nature park primarily managed for the benefit of native plants, wildlife, and ecosystems.† (HIGH FLYER)

1.2.5 - Manage a municipal or public golf course for the benefit of native birds.

1.2.6 - Community has at least 1 golf course within its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) certified as an Audubon Certified Cooperative Sanctuary. (HIGH FLYER)

1.2.7 - Acquire long-term habitat (through purchase or easement) for birds, wildlife, and native plant communities representative of the local ecosystem (wildscapes and demonstration gardens will not count).**†

1.2.8 - Enact and enforce city ordinances protecting existing bird habitat.

1.3. Promote native plants

1.3.1 - Promote the use of native plants in landscaping through community websites, social media, public events and refer the public to the National Audubon Society's PLANTS FOR BIRDS program and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's native plant database.** (MANDATORY)

[Plants for Birds](#) and [LBJ Wildflower Center Native Plant Database](#)

1.3.2 - 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).†

1.3.3 - Community requires the use of native plants for landscaping in all new landscapes in publicly owned or managed spaces, buildings, and properties.** (HIGH FLYER)

1.3.4 - On existing protected properties, actively manage or improve existing habitat for birds, wildlife, and native plant communities representative of the local ecosystem.

1.3.5 - Incentivize residents, businesses, and community group participation in local habitat enhancement / restoration programs.**

1.3.6 - Sponsor at least one habitat restoration project of at least 1 acre in size in the community to improve bird habitat over the 3 year period.**

1.3.7 - Host at least one community-wide native plant sale or give-away with high emphasis on a variety of native plants including shrubs, grasses, trees, flowering plants, etc. (at least 75% native plants available).**

1.4. Control invasive plants

1.4.1 - Provide and promote information on the importance of controlling invasive species (both plant and animal). (MANDATORY)

1.4.2 - Implement an active invasive plant species removal program on public lands.

1.5. Provide nesting habitat

1.5.1 - Implement seasonal management practices (such no mowing, no pruning or trimming of trees, etc.) that protect nesting birds during nesting season, typically March - July.

Note 1.5.1 this is different than encouraging the growth of native plants and implementing a No Mow season for native plants as in action 1.2.2

1.5.2 - Where public safety allows, implement a policy and training to park staff that ensures dead trees are left standing in parks/natural areas to provide foraging and nesting habitat.

[Texas Parks and Wildlife Information on Snags](#) and (example) [South Carolina Wildlife Mgmt Guide on Snags and Downed Logs](#)

1.7. Ensure clean water in natural waterways

1.7.1 - Community stormwater management plan implements actions from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Menu of Best Management Practices for Stormwater

[U.S. EPA National Menu of Best Management Practices for Stormwater](#)

1.7.2 - Reduce municipal water use for landscaping by implementing a permanent reduction in allowable landscape watering citywide.

1.7.3 - Implement wetland habitat restorations or installations to mitigate flooding rather than stream channelization.**†

2. Threats to Birds

2.1. Address disturbance by harmful species

2.1.1 - Implement an educational program on "Cats Indoors" - a program about the dangers of free-roaming cats and the benefits of keeping them indoors - through educational outreach to residents utilizing available resources online or creating your own. (MANDATORY)

[Solutions to keep Cats Indoors](#)

2.1.2 - 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. (HIGH FLYER REQUIRED)

Campus actively prohibits the formation, maintenance, or support of outdoor cat colonies on campus grounds. (BIRD CAMPUS REQUIRED) (MANDATORY)

2.1.3 - Active program to remove invasive or harmful animal species to bird populations, including harmful or invasive bird species, deer, and/or wild pigs.

2.1.4 - Monitor and limit the release of native wildlife and prohibit the release of domestic and non-native 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.

2.1.5 - Community actively and intensively traps brown-headed cowbirds on several community owned lands. (HIGH FLYER)

2.1.6 - Implement adaptive feral hog population control plan that encompasses several community owned lands. (HIGH FLYER)

2.1.7 - Prohibit feeding of ducks on community-managed properties to decrease domestic disease transfer to migrating waterfowl.

2.1.8 - Enact and enforce a city-wide ordinance requiring domestic cats to be kept indoors or in a pet-friendly enclosure and that all pets leaving private property be on a leash. (HIGH FLYER)

2.1.9 - 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. (HIGH FLYER)

2 . 2 . Address collisions with glass

2.2.1 - Provide residents information (e.g. presentations, online links, brochures, etc.) about why birds collide with glass and how to reduce collisions at their office or home.

Note this action specifically focuses on glass (MANDATORY)

[Stop Bird Collisions](#) - *Bird Collision Prevention Alliance*

2.2.2 - Educate building owners, architects/designers, and planners about Bird-Friendly Buildings Design and the conservation value of reducing collisions through educational events/presentations, publications, guidelines, etc.

[Bird Friendly Design Guide - starting place](#) *Note this action should differ from 2.2.1 as it focuses on buildings owners, designers, architects, and planners.*

2.2.3 - ****DO NOT USE ACTION. It is redundant and falls into 2.2.2****

Provide businesses/builders applying for a new building permit with bird-friendly design guidelines with best practices to reduce bird collisions

2.2.4 - Retrofit building windows in community to reduce the risk of bird collisions with approved market products or creative retrofit. (HIGH FLYER)

[Retrofit solutions and ideas](#)

2.2.5 - Document that at least one municipal or major public building has been certified as bird-friendly with a LEED Credit for Bird Collision Deterrence or comparable (during review period).†

2.2.6 - Put in place a construction ordinance that requires new public buildings seek LEED certification (silver or higher) must meet seek the LEED Credit for Bird Collision Deterrence. (HIGH FLYER)

2.2.7 - Pass a building code or policy that requires all new buildings to install bird-friendly glass in the first 3 stories of a building. (HIGH FLYER)

[*Database of U.S. Bird Friendly Building Policies*](#)

2 . 3 . Address light pollution

2.3.1 - 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.†

2.3.2 - Educate businesses and residents about Lights Out, Texas!—a statewide initiative that raises awareness about the harmful effects of light pollution on migratory birds—through targeted outreach and a communications campaign that promotes practical ways to reduce nighttime lighting during migration. (MANDATORY)

[*Lights Out, Texas! webpage and resources*](#)

2.3.3 - Actively participate in Lights Out, Texas! by turning off non-essential lighting or following other practical solutions to reduce excess nighttime lighting from buildings, stadiums, etc. across community between 10pm–6am during migration season. (MANDATORY)

2.3.4 - All city owned buildings participate in Lights Out, Texas! by turning out non-essential lights during 10pm–6am or implementing other practical solutions so reduce excess nighttime lighting. (HIGH FLYER)

2.3.5 - Reduce light pollution by using DarkSky Texas approved shielded lighting year-round with recommended Kelvin throughout community and/or publicly-owned properties (this includes buildings and/or street lights).†

[*DarkSky Texas information*](#)

2 . 4 . Address direct human-related threats

2.4.1 - Community prohibits distribution of single-use plastic through regulatory action (straws, shopping bags, balloons, etc.) and provides clean-up containers for microfilaments, when applicable. (HIGH FLYER)

2 . 5 . Address the threat of pesticides and other toxins

2.5.1 - 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.

[*Pesticides and Birds 101*](#)

2.5.2 - Implement Integrated Pest Management strategies to minimize use of pesticides and herbicides on city-managed property.

[*Integrated Pest Management \(IMP\) Principles*](#)

3 . Education & Engagement

3.1. Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day

3.1.1 - Community recognizes and celebrate World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) either in the spring or fall by hosting or participating in a public event on an annual basis. (MANDATORY)

[*World Migratory Bird Day resources from Environment Americas*](#)

3.2. Increase awareness of birds and their habitats

3.2.1 - *DO NOT USE. NO LONGER AN ACTIVE CRITERIA*

Implement an annual communications campaign about issues and actions related to Bird City Texas, creating Bird Friendly Communities, and the criteria that the city adopts to encourage community engagement and support.

3.2.2 - Engage the public with on-going programs that are appropriate for children, youth, and/or families on environmental conservation topics.

3.2.3 - 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.

3.2.4 - Include noticeable information on a main page of a website of your choosing that would be visited often by residents and visitors (ie, municipal tourism and/or Chamber of Commerce, Audubon, or Native Plant Society websites). (MANDATORY)

See examples from cities in their achievements un 3.2.4 such as Galveston, Surf Side, Bastrop and others.

3.2.5 - Include a recurring (at minimum quarterly) native bird education themed section in a community newsletter, social media platform (i.e., Facebook, NextDoor, etc.).

3.2.6 - Sponsor an annual bird festival that promotes community stewardship and appreciation of native birds and their local habitats.

3.2.7 - Install bird watching amenities in public parks and/or trail systems, such as bird blinds, observation decks, interpretive signs, binocular loan out programs, and birding/trail guides.†

3.2.8 - 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.

3.2.9 - Create and maintain an active native plant demonstration garden to show value of natives to birds and pollinators. The landscape must include at least 75% native plants on at least one highly visited community property and include informational signage.** (MANDATORY)

[*Example of Native Demonstration Garden*](#)

3.3. Educate and engage all ages

3.3.1 - Conduct a speaker or workshop series open to the public (minimum 3 events per year) with topics focusing on issues relating to birds, wildlife, habitat, environmental stewardship, etc.

3.3.2 - 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. (HIGH FLYER)

3.4. Ensure access to nature

3.4.1 - Work alongside traditionally underserved or disenfranchised communities or partner(s) to increase engagement and connection with green spaces, parks, ecological education, and birding resources.

3.4.2 - 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.** (HIGH FLYER)

3.4.3 - Offer multilingual programs and/or materials that share information about environmental science and conservation. Program could be a bird walk, native plant tour, children's story time, etc.

3.4.4 - Develop one or more accessible nature / birding sites for visitors regardless of physical abilities. Utilize resources from Birdability and put your accessible trail/birding location on their website map.

[Birdability Map](#)

3.5 . Involve the community in conservation and stewardship

3.5.0 - Designate a community "mascot" of a local bird species selected through a public engagement process. Share the process, the outreach efforts, and how/why the bird species was picked.

[See local example from Fort Worth](#)

3.5.1 - Host one community volunteer planting event 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.**

3.5.2 - 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.** (HIGH FLYER)

3.6 . Promote scientific research and monitoring

3.6.1 - Initiate community participation in at least one community science program annually: Audubon Climate Watch, Christmas Bird Count, Globe at Night, Great Backyard Bird Count, Hummingbirds at Home, Invaders of Texas, Swifts Night Out, City Nature Challenge, Texas Nature Trackers Projects**

3.6.2 - Engage community and partners in long-term (greater than 5 years) local bird monitoring programs, habitat monitoring, or other similar nature-based surveys that incorporate eBird and/or iNaturalist on select properties. (HIGH FLYER)

Note if claiming this action is cannot double dip with same community science action in 3.6.1

3.6.3 - Community conducts an inventory of city lands (using iNaturalist or comparable platform) to document plant and animal species present and assesses habitat quality.

Note this is and should be different than 3.6.1 and 3.6.2.

3.7 . Mobilize support / funding for community bird conservation

3.7.1 - Community creates one officially-enacted resolution (proclamations not accepted) passed by their appropriate municipal council/board that recognizes and supports their community's designation as a Bird City in Texas. The resolution must be passed every three years or the municipal council/board must provide a letter of support recognizing the past resolution.†

BIRD FRIENDLY CAMPUS - Campuses seeking Bird Friendly Campus designation must provide a letter from Provos or similar administration office supporting the campus initiative. (MANDATORY)

4 . Sustainability

4 . 1 . Educate residents about climate impacts and renewable energy

4.1.1 - Educate residents about climate change, effects on birds / biodiversity, and solutions. Please be specific on what this looks like in your community and an estimate on how many people you think this reaches.

4 . 2 . Reduce energy use and carbon emissions

4.2.0 - Create a campus sustainability plan to reduce energy use and carbon emissions through operational or building design changes, nature-based solutions, renewable energy use.

Note this action is only available for Bird Campus Applications

4.2.1 - Demonstrate that your community participates in a community renewable energy program or that municipal buildings receives a significant percentage of its electricity from renewable energy. (High Flyer)

4 . 3 . Promote sustainable infrastructure and practices

4.3.1 - Community has adopted nature-based solutions (e.g. keeping water at surface, creating green roofs, adding tree cover, adding wetlands); adding natural features and/or processes into the built environment to promote adaptation and resilience to climate change while increasing local biodiversity.

4.3.2 - Provide alternative transportation throughout the community (e.g. hike and bike trails, rideshare programs, bike lanes).†