



Top 10 Ways for Local Government to Enhance Conservation of Birds & Biodiversity

Birds are an essential part of our biodiversity and birdwatching is a fast growing leisure activity. This list includes suggestions for activities, policies and programs that Local Governments could implement or support to conserve birds and their habitats for the benefit of residents, local economies and ecosystems.

- 1. Ecotourism:** Birdwatching and bird related tourism has experienced rapid growth since the 1980s and is projected to continue to grow.
 - ✓ Develop partnerships with local businesses and organizations to enhance the economic development potential from ecotourism, wildlife viewing and nature experience.
 - ✓ Promote local parks as ecotourism destinations.
 - ✓ Ensure measures are in place to protect sensitive areas from human disturbance.

More info: Canadian Biodiversity Info (biodivcanada.ca)
US Fish and Wildlife Service Reports on Wildlife-related Recreation (tinyurl.com/o2efu5g)
- 2. Pets Under Control:** Free-roaming outdoor cats cause significant mortality to birds and other small wildlife, and off-leash dogs can disturb resting flocks and nesting birds.
 - ✓ Establish a licensing bylaw for cats and encourage residents to keep cats indoors or under control (e.g. Town of Creston).
 - ✓ Establish dog leash bylaws and locate dog off-leash parks in areas with little or no value for birds and wildlife.

More info: American Bird Conservancy: Cats Indoors (abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats)
City of Parksville: Dogs in Parks (city.parksville.bc.ca/cms.asp?wpID=444)
- 3. Land Development Practices:** Loss of habitat is the main cause of many bird species declines. Impacts to bird habitat can be minimized with careful land clearing, site preparation and construction.
 - ✓ Identify sensitive ecosystems and establish Development Permit Areas to protect sensitive areas.
 - ✓ Identify any local Important Bird Areas as environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. see Cowichan Bay).
 - ✓ Encourage developers and builders to follow environmentally sustainable development guidelines and best practices such as Develop with Care 2012 or Green Shores practices.

More info: Ministry of Environment Best Management Practices (tinyurl.com/l3y95bo)
Green Shores Program (stewardshipcentrebc.ca/Green_shores)
Green Bylaws Toolkit (greenbylaws.ca)
Important Bird Areas (ibacanada.ca)
- 4. Parks and Green Space:** Parks, greenways, community gardens and street trees provide important green space that enhance wildlife value and improve human health.
 - ✓ Retain and enhance native habitats and urban forests.
 - ✓ Support local habitat restoration projects.
 - ✓ Improve habitat connectivity along local parks and greenspace.
 - ✓ Consider establishing a tree retention bylaw and a Regional Conservation Fund.

More info: Regional Conservation Fund (sosc.org/conservationfundguideforbc)
- 5. Building Guidelines & Night Lighting:** About 1-10 birds are killed annually for every building in North America when they fly into glass with unbroken reflections during the day, or lighted buildings at night.
 - ✓ Encourage architects and builders to use bird friendly building designs/materials (e.g. see City of Toronto, Calgary).

More info: Fatal Light Awareness Program (flap.org)
Audubon Society Bird Friendly Designs (bird-friendly.audubon.org/bird-friendly-design)

- ✓ Install down directed lights, especially near natural areas/watercourses, turn off lights at night in municipal buildings, and encourage residential and commercial building owners to do the same.

Lights out Portland program
(audubonportland.org/issues/hazards)

6. Bird Friendly Landscaping: Plants and structures can benefit birds by providing shelter, nesting areas, water, and food like seeds & berries.

More info: Wildlife Tree Stewardship
(wildlifetree.ca)

- ✓ Encourage landowners to consider wildlife in their landscaping, such as preserving wildlife trees, planting species that attract birds and retaining structures used by birds (e.g. barns).
- ✓ Discourage the use of exotic invasive species, some of which can harm birds and their habitat.

Invasive Species Council of BC
(bcinvasives.ca)

7. Avoid Pesticides and Herbicides: These poisons kill beneficial insects, can harm wildlife including birds, and pollute waterways.

More info: Pesticide Free BC
(tinyurl.com/o78g2po)

- ✓ Establish a bylaw to limit cosmetic pesticide use and implement public education programs.
- ✓ Encourage the use of natural or organic alternatives for pest control and lawn care.
- ✓ Provide information on proper disposal of hazardous materials.

More than 40 municipalities in BC have established bylaws or education programs to limit cosmetic pesticide use, from Victoria to Salmon Arm.

8. Reduce Waste, and Promote Recycling and Clean-ups: Birds and wildlife can become entangled in plastic bags, fishing line and other garbage, resulting in injury, strangulation or easy predation.

More info: Recycling Council of BC
(rcbc.ca)

- ✓ Encourage recycling and composting programs.
- ✓ Support education programs aimed at reducing use of plastics and other waste.
- ✓ Support the removal of human refuse from beaches, streams and other natural areas.

US EPA Marine Debris information
(water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris)

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup
(shorelinecleanup.ca)

9. Public Education: Increasing awareness of local biodiversity will improve the understanding of impacts and promote environmental stewardship.

More info: State of Canada's Birds
(stateofcanadasbirds.org)

- ✓ Develop programs and partnerships to increase awareness of the importance of local habitats and biodiversity through educational programs, interpretive signage on pathways and in parks, and public participation in Citizen Science programs.
- ✓ Support local nature festivals and events like Migratory Bird Day celebrations.

Bird Studies Canada
(birdscanada.org)

Important Bird Areas (ibacanada.ca)

BC Nature (bcnature.ca/projects/iba)

10. Utilize Resources and Biological Data: As the leading non-government organization dedicated to advancing the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of wild birds and their habitats, Bird Studies Canada provides data & resources to assist land use managers.

More info: naturecounts.ca (data for owls, coastal waterbirds, and breeding birds)

- ✓ Make use of data available online.
- ✓ Contact us for more information.

eBird.ca & speciesatrisk.bc.ca

ibacanada.ca (maps & data)

The BC Programs Manager can be reached at 604-350-1988/877-349-2473 or bcprograms@bsc-eoc.org.

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