Helping Canada’s Birds

# **Letters to the Editors- Guidelines and TemplateApril 2018**

Dear Nature Canada Members:

Letters to Editors are an excellent way to encourage and promote discussion of nature topics you are passionate about. A Letter to the Editor can help create awareness about an important issue and help to influence public opinion.

Publishing a Letter to the Editor is not a simple process. Most editors of publications receive up to 300- 500 letter submissions daily.

You can significantly improve your chances of having your letter published by following these guidelines.

**Letters to the Editor Guidelines**

* A timely letter will be more likely to be chosen for publication. It is best to respond within seven days to a particular article or news event that was published by the newspaper.
* Try to make the letter concrete if you are commenting on a national issue, highlight the national significance and try to link it to a recent event or article that discusses the issue.
* If you are responding to a community event or issue, your local (community) newspaper is the best publication to submit your letter to.
* Be concise, try to keep letters to fewer than 150 words. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.
* Send letters by e-mail and include the contents of the letter in the body of the e-mail message as plain text only. Do not use Microsoft Word format or rich text format (RTF).
* Do not send letters as an attachment.
* Ensure you include your name, address and daytime phone number.

***Helping Canada’s Birds*Letters to the Editor - Template**

Name of Media Outlet or Publication

Attention: Editor

Address

City, Postal Code

Dear Editor:

RE: *[State your reason for writing your letter right at the beginning. If you are responding to articles or editorials by the media, use the first sentence to reference the title or topic of the article (such as Declining Bird populations), name of the author or source (i.e, Globe and Mail), and the date the article was published.]*

* In your [DATE] article [ARTICLE TITLE], columnist [NAME OF REPORTER/COLUMNIST] states [MAIN POINT OF ARTICLE].

*[If you responding to a current issue, state that you are responding to the issue and where the issue is being addressed.]*

* One in three bird species in North America need urgent conservation action according to the 2016 State of North America’s Birds research report conducted by agencies of the Canadian, U.S., and Mexican governments.

*State your points here. Include facts, references, or research here to establish credibility. Keep length in mind.]*

* Our birds in Canada face a number of threats and pressures such as pollution, pesticides, illegal hunting, collisions with human-built structures and vehicles, climate change, and domestic and feral cats.
* In Canada, over 65% of our Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas are not yet legally protected. This leaves these areas and birds vulnerable to industrial development, intensive agriculture and urban sprawl.
* These factors, together with threats in wintering grounds and along migration routes, have a cumulative impact on migratory bird populations. These are the reasons why we need to work together to conserve our bird populations across their flyways.

[*Include a CALL TO ACTION: asking readers to follow up with some activity, such as joining in calling on policymakers to address the issue.]*

* Help improve the state of birds in Canada right from your home by [making all your windows visible](http://www.flap.org/residential_new.php) to birds, and by watching your bird feeder and entering your observations on [eBird](https://ebird.org/canada/home).
* Consider signing Nature Canada’s petition calling for a [ban on neonics](http://naturecanada.ca/get-involved/take-action/sign-to-ban-neonics/) or calling for more [protected areas](https://act.protectedplaces.ca/page/19920/action/1) that will conserve critical habitat for birds and all wildlife.
* Contact your local nature group, or Nature Canada or other groups that protect birds to find out how you can volunteer your time for a project that suits you – or make a donation to help support this vital work.
* Visit an [Important Bird and Biodiversity Area](http://www.ibacanada.ca) and get to understand the many different habitats that support birds.

 [*End with a strong, positive STATEMENT in support of your case*]

* We need to work together to ensure our birds do not suffer steeper declines.
* In anticipation of the next State of Canada’s Birds report being released in 2019, we need to call on all levels of government to ensure that birds are protected.
* For 2020, keep your eye on the bird! It is time for Canada to make a serious investment in birds. They provide billions of dollars in ecological services, and we need to protect them.
* Please visit Nature Canada’s website to find out how you can help.

Sincerely,

*Signature*

Name of writer