
Bird Team Structure Template - Terms of Reference

This document provides a Terms of Reference (TOR) template for Bird Friendly Teams (Bird Team) aiming to achieve certification for their municipality through Nature Canada's Bird Friendly City Program. Alterations to team structure must be shared with Nature Canada annually and can be redesigned with all parties in agreement at any time. Creating a Terms of Reference for your volunteer Bird Team will help to establish clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities of both members and Nature Canada.

1. Purpose

1.1 Background

Each local Bird Team is dedicated to protecting, restoring, and advocating for the conservation of local bird populations and their habitats. The Bird Team will seek to complete its mission by: (1) addressing and mitigating key threats to birds in their municipalities, such predation by free-roaming cats, window and vehicle collisions, light pollution, habitat loss, and pesticide use; (2) protecting and restoring natural habitat to increase climate resiliency in their municipalities; and (3) conducting community outreach and education initiatives to the general public about the importance of taking action to protect birds.

1.2 Objective

The main objective of each local Bird Team is to reduce key threats to birds in their built environment, campaign, advocate and promote municipal policies and practices that protect birds and their natural habitats, as well as education and outreach related to bird conservation issues to achieve Bird Friendly City or Town Certification from Nature Canada.

2. Scope

2.1 Scope of Work

- Assess and document current Bird Friendly actions, policies and practices in your municipality
- Work towards completing Nature Canada's Bird Friendly City application criteria for review
- Collaborate and/or partner with local organizations, institutions and businesses to support and promote Bird Friendly initiatives and events
- Engage with your municipal government to advance bird-friendly policies and practices
- Organize public education events, outreach and workshops on bird-friendly practices
- Conduct and/or participate in citizen-science projects to monitor local bird populations
- Engage in habitat restoration and stewardship projects to protect birds in your community

3. Membership

3.1 Composition

- Membership in a Bird Team can consist of, but is not limited to naturalist groups, birding clubs, environmental organizations, non-profits, municipal representatives including staffers and council, Indigenous groups, businesses, educational institutions, researchers, and individual community members.
- Membership in a Bird Team is strictly voluntary and open to everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, age, religion, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, economic status and other diverse backgrounds.
- A Bird Team should consider electing the following positions through general membership:
 - An annual Chair; Co-Chair(s) or a rotational system for the chair position;
 - A municipal representative (if none, a member should be elected to liaise with the municipality)
 - Nature Canada liaison (see more details below)
 - Communications Lead (social media, traditional media)
 - Volunteer Recruitment & Onboarding Lead (community outreach, assist new volunteers)
 - Secretary (prepare and distribute meeting agendas & minutes)

3.2 Member Requirements

- A strong interest in working towards completing Nature Canada's application for Bird Friendly City and Town Certification alongside municipal government and other stakeholders
- Residence or have a working connection to the local municipality
- Interest and knowledge of birds, bird conservation issues, environmental stewardship, biodiversity, environmental advocacy, urban planning and community engagement
- Ability to commit time to Bird Team activities and meetings
- Goal-orientated, innovative and proactive to drive political and community actions for birds

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

NATURE CANADA ORGANIZER WILL:

- Facilitate national Bird Friendly City workshops, webinars, and Community of Practice meetings;
- Establish and maintain national and local partnerships to support bird conservation;
- Provide technical support and guidance to Bird Friendly Teams through the application process, eligibility criteria, and public, municipal and press relations;
- Develop tools and resources to support Bird Friendly Team outreach, advocacy & programming;
- Foster a network of bird advocates to support bird friendly efforts in their municipalities;
- Process, review and communicate results of Bird Friendly City grant applications;

ALL OTHER BIRD TEAM MEMBERS WILL:

- Work towards implementing bird-friendly actions and practices as per certification criteria;
- Ensure a safe, inclusive and accessible working environment for all to share their thoughts;
- Advocate for the development and implementation of municipal bird-friendly policies;
- Volunteer for and lead specific bird-friendly projects and tasks;
- Promote the Bird Team's objectives within their wider community and networks;
- Maintain regular communications with each other and Nature Canada.

CHAIR WILL:

- Call and lead Bird Team meetings to discuss and strategize ongoing efforts toward certification;
- Communicate (verbal/written) with Nature Canada at least quarterly on project updates;
- Oversee the implementation of initiatives related to Bird Friendly Certification criteria;
- Represent the Bird Team at events and municipal meetings (if there is no municipal liaison).

NATURE CANADA - LIAISON WILL:

- Accurately represent the local Bird Team and provide updates to Nature Canada's Organizer;
- Highlight important considerations and context of the Bird Team's efforts;
- Assist with identifying new members and volunteer recruitment;

MUNICIPAL - LIAISON WILL:

- Be the communicating bridge between the local Bird Team and the municipality if no municipal representative is a member of the Bird Team;
- Highlight important considerations and context of the Bird Team's efforts in the municipality;
- Represent local Bird Team at municipal council or committee meetings
- Assist with identifying champions and allies in the municipality;
- Recruit municipal representatives on the Bird Team.

4. Meetings

4.1 Decision-Making Process

- Within the Bird Team, each member has equal voice and power to make and influence decisions;
- Make decisions by arriving at a consensus (100% agreement) as much as possible and when needed, through a majority vote (50%+ agreement);
- Protecting, restoring and defending local bird populations should always be considered;
- Nature Canada's representative can provide support and consultation (if need be).

4.2 Meeting Frequency

- The members will establish the frequency of meetings; however, the Bird Team must officially meet at least four times yearly to ensure all is going according to plan.

4.3 Agenda and Minutes

- The secretary will circulate the agenda at least two days before each meeting and record minutes to be distributed within one week after the meeting ends.

5. Reporting

- The Liaison with Nature Canada or the Bird Team Chair will provide Nature Canada with, at minimum, quarterly reports on the Bird Team's efforts (this can be done verbally).
- After achieving Bird Friendly Certification, Bird Team will provide an in-depth annual report that includes information on the team's status, reporting on planned and current actions, challenges, and next steps.

6. Amendments

Any committee member can propose amendments to this TOR, which a two-thirds majority of the Bird Team must approve.

Signatures:

By signing below, I, the (Co)-Chairs, have read and understood the 2024 Bird Friendly Team Terms of Reference and will ensure that all Bird Team general members have read, understood, and agreed to these terms and conditions.

Name	Position	Signature	Date

Nature Canada is pleased to acknowledge the support of Environment and Climate Change Canada for the Bird Friendly City program and World Migratory Bird Day.

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