



Bird Friendly Halifax

A SCORING RUBRIC TO ASSESS "BIRD FRIENDLINESS" IN ATLANTIC CANADA'S LARGEST CITY

Bird Friendly Halifax Coalition

Our coalition includes representatives from Birds Canada, Ecology Action Centre, Dalhousie University, Halifax Regional Municipality, Hope for Wildlife, Nature Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Bird Society, and bird-loving private citizens. In 2022, HRM was declared a Nature Canada-certified Entry-level Bird Friendly City. We are working to improve this status by addressing priority bird threats in our city, including but not limited to habitat loss, predation by roaming cats, and window strikes.

HRM's Current Score (2022)

ENTRY LEVEL: 28/50 POINTS (56%)

High scores in community outreach, low scores in habitat protection & threat reduction

Certification process

Nature Canada has set criteria to determine Bird Friendly Cities based on three major categories: reducing threats to birds, habitat protection and restoration, and community outreach/education. There are three levels of Bird Friendly City status: Entry (50% of possible points in each category), Intermediate (65-80% of possible points), and High (above 80% of possible points).

Community Outreach:

What HRM scored and why:

Migratory Bird Day events	3/4	• BFH Coalition hosts annual Bird Week event
Schools/youth engaged in bird conservation	3/3	• Local groups like Hope for Wildlife conduct school visits • Many Haligonians participate in the Christmas Bird Count and other citizen science initiatives • DUC hosts the Wetland Centres of Excellence program
The public has access to resources, signage, learning opportunities	3/3	• HRM hosts bird-themed signage and resources at various parks • HRM hosts many eBird hotspots • Birds Canada coordinates Marsh Monitoring, Plover, and Swift Watch programs
Business promotion	1/1	• HRM hosts a growing number of small businesses that operate plastic free and sell bird friendly products

Total score

11/15

Intermediate Level

Room for improvement

Bird-friendly Halifax wants to improve our Community Outreach score by collaborating with local businesses to sell more bird-friendly products, establishing public demonstration sites for bird-friendly practices like bird-safe windows, and by continuing to host educational events.

Habitat Protection :

What HRM scored and why:



Parks and protected areas	2/3	- Halifax Green Network Plan provides planning and design guidance for a connected network of green spaces - Halifax's regional planning strategy includes objectives for the environment that may benefit birds
Climate change	1/3	HalifACT sets emission targets for the city that may benefit birds in the long term
Habitat management	2/4	- Halifax's progressive Urban Forest plan ensures long-term tree cover in urban areas - HaliACT includes tree planting goals
Biodiversity Areas, native plant projects, breeding habitats	3/3	- HRM is home to both the Musq. IBA and E. Shore Islands IBA - Citizen-led programs encourage native species planting, such as the Downtown Dartmouth Milkweed Project - HRM recently launched a naturalization program for its parks and groups like the Young Naturalists Club often coordinate citizen-led native plantings and nest box installations

Total score

8/17

Entry Level

Room for improvement

Bird Friendly Halifax wants to improve our Habitat Protection score by improving several city strategies, plans, and other guiding documents, particularly: better incorporation of biodiversity considerations in municipal plans and design guidelines, more emphasis on nature-based climate solutions, and more assistance for homeowners and residents to steward biodiversity at home.

Threat Reduction:

What HRM scored and why:

Window collisions	2/5	Groups like NatureNS run programs like Operation Window Strike, mitigating bird deaths through citizen engagement
Pesticide use	1/1	- Halifax has an integrated pest management plan for public lands, prioritizing low-impact methods - NS Non-Essential Pesticides Control Act limits the types and use of pesticides allowed on public and private lands
Light pollution	1/3	- City had already transitioned to LED streetlights before '22 - Royal Astronomical Society promotes light pollution mitigation in the Halifax area
Humans, cats and dogs.	3/7	- Bylaws control off-leash dog activity in public green spaces - Provincial legislation for human- and pet-wildlife interactions protects wildlife from harassment - Halifax operates a municipal trap and spay/neuter program - Groups like the SPCA coordinate cat owner education programs, spay day

Total score

9/18

Entry level

Room for improvement

Bird Friendly Halifax wants to improve our Threat Reduction score by: collaborating with the city on light pollution mitigation projects & improved construction standards, improved data on HRM's roaming cat population, and by helping more residents install window collision solutions.