



Bird City Wisconsin Newsletter

January 2020

World Migratory Bird Day focuses on bird-tracking technologies

By **SUSAN BONFIELD**
Director, Environment for the Americas

In 2009, scientists captured a **WHIMBREL** in coastal Virginia, an important stopover site for the species. When the bird, a female nicknamed Hope, was released, she carried a satellite transmitter that provided details about her future travels.



Shuttling between breeding grounds in Canada and a wintering site in the Virgin Islands, Hope demonstrated both the spectacular journeys that migratory birds make each year and the threats they face.

In 2020, World Migratory Bird Day launches its annual campaign with the slogan “Birds Connect Our World.” Throughout the year, we will focus on the tracking technologies researchers use not only to learn about migratory routes but also to examine the hazards along these routes and to im-

plement conservation actions that help migratory birds throughout their journeys. “Birds Connect Our World” will be celebrated across the globe (see logo at right), including in every Bird City community in Wisconsin. Plans already are underway to launch the event through meetings and festivals, school programs, and presentations.

In the Western Hemisphere, World Migratory Bird Day is spearheaded by Environment for the Americas, a Colorado-based non-profit organization that has been coordinating the program since 2008. Environment for the Americas focuses its efforts on the Americas Flyways, working with more than 700 groups from Canada to Argentina and the Caribbean – including 109 Bird City Wisconsin communities.

Through education materials, trainings, social media and connections with program coordinators, World Migratory Bird Day works to raise awareness of migratory birds and to promote actions that protect our feathered travelers.

At the program’s heart is artwork that reflects the conservation theme. Selected through a rigorous, competitive process, artists from Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, the United States, Canada and other countries have portrayed issues ranging from the impacts of climate change to the benefits of shade coffee. The final images feature the species that reflect these topics.



Photo to by Lisa Yntema
Hope in August 2017 after arriving at Great Pond, two weeks before the arrival of Hurricane Irma.

In 2020, self-taught printmaker and compulsive wanderer of landscapes Sherrie York is developing the design that will be used to highlight “Birds Connect Our World.”

Using linocut blocks, she has created portraits of 12 focal

bird species: **NORTHERN PINTAIL, AMERICAN KESTREL, BARN OWL, WESTERN SANDPIPER, BAR-TAILED GODWIT, ARCTIC TERN, PURPLE MARTIN, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD, FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER, CANADA WARBLER, YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT and BAIRD’S SPARROW.**

Each represents a different method of tracking birds, including banding, geolocators, feather analysis and citizen science. Throughout the year, we will highlight these species, the tracking methods and communities on the ground that are working to make their journeys safer.

Which brings us back to Hope. She was tracked over more than 50,000 miles but disappeared in 2017, when Hurricane Maria struck St. Croix in the Virgin Islands. Increasingly intense storms like Maria, pane-glass win-

dows, loss of habitat, free-ranging cats and plastic pollution are just a few of the factors that World Migratory Bird Day will tackle in 2020.

We invite all Bird Cities to join our growing network of activities in 2020. You can learn about Environment for the Americas at www.environmentamericas.org and about World Migratory Bird Day in the Americas at www.migratorybirdday.org.

The Bird Day site provides information about this year’s theme, downloadable educational and promotional materials, and a way to register your World Migratory Bird Day event on our global map. For more information, write to info@environmentamericas.org

Bird City Wisconsin renewals are due at the end of the month!

Winter has come, the holidays have passed, a new year has been rung in -- which means the deadline for completing annual renewals for recognition as a Bird City Wisconsin community is fast approaching.

Don’t put off this important task! Renewals are due Jan. 31!

Now’s the time to gather your team, list all the bird- and people-friendly actions your community completed in 2019, and update

your narrative on the Bird City website.

To get started, go to birdcitywisconsin.org and click the “APPLY/RENEW” tab in the orange band at the top. This will take you to the Apply & Renew Page. Then click the blue “Renew Here” button to log in. After logging in, you’ll see a number of tabs. We recommend starting with the tab on the left, the instructions.

If you’ve forgotten your password, or

if you’re taking over as your community’s representative from someone else, send an email to Bird City Director Chuck Hagner (director@birdcitywisconsin.org). He can send you a new password or change the email address associated with your account.

The fee for applications and annual renewals is \$125. We accept payment by check or credit card. If you send a check, please make it out to “Bird City Wisconsin.”



Want to know more about Bird City Wisconsin?

Check out our website at birdcitywisconsin.org

Where can I send news about my Bird City?

Send pictures, stories, anecdotes and other information to editor **Barbara Schwartz** at dembkischwartz@gmail.com We would love to hear from you!

What are the dates for application and renewal?

New applications can be submitted at any time but are reviewed the first of March, July and November. Annual renewals are due on January 31.

What criteria does BCW use to evaluate applications?

1. Habitat creation, protection and monitoring;
2. Community forest management;
3. Limiting or removing threats to birds;
4. Public education;
5. Energy and sustainability
6. Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day.

7 Simple Actions to Help Birds #2. Keep cats indoors

In less than a single lifetime, North America has lost more than one in four of its birds, according to a report in *Science*, the world's leading scientific journal. The findings show that 2.9 billion breeding adult birds have been lost since 1970. This is the second in a series of seven articles on simple actions each of us can take to make a difference.

THE CHALLENGE: Cats are estimated to kill more than 2.6 billion birds annually in the U.S. and Canada. This is the #1 human-caused reason for the loss of birds, aside from habitat loss.

THE CAUSE: Cats make great pets, but more than 110 million feral and pet cats now roam in the United States and Canada. These non-native predators instinctively hunt and kill birds even when well fed.

SOLUTIONS THAT ARE GOOD FOR CATS AND BIRDS: Save birds and keep cats healthy by keeping cats indoors or creating an outdoor "catio." You can also train your cat to walk on a leash.



Keep your cat indoors. Save both cats and birds.

TAKE IT FURTHER: Speak out about the impacts of feral cat colonies in your neighborhood and on public lands. Unowned cats' lives may be as short as two years because of disease and hardship, and they are responsible for more than two-thirds of birds killed by cats in North America.

New grant program recognizes YOU!

By **CHUCK HAGNER**, BCW Director

Bird City Wisconsin is taking applications now for the newest benefit it is offering to its recognized Bird City communities: a small-grants program!

The goal is to provide a hand to Bird City communities that are just a modest funding boost away from accomplishing something really great in three categories -- launching or completing a project that creates and protects bird habitat, educating residents about the interactions between birds and people, or protecting birds by reducing such threats as window collisions and outdoor cats.

In 2020, we'll award grants totaling \$500 in each of these three categories. More than one grant may be awarded in each category, and if multiple grants are awarded, the total amount awarded in that category will be \$500.

The grants are intended to support work that will be performed in 2020. *Grants will be awarded only to Bird City communities that have completed their renewal for 2020.*

How to apply: Submit a Word document of no more than two pages or 500 words containing the following:

* **Title and category:** Provide the title of your project and its category: Habitat Creation and Protection, Education, or Bird Protection.

* **Description:** Tell us how the project will create and protect habitat, educate your residents, or protect birds, and estimate its total cost.

* **Expected impact:** For a habitat project, tell us the size of the habit to be created or protected, its type and location, its ecological significance, and the birds and other wildlife that will benefit. For an education project, describe your target audience and the number of people you expect to educate. For a bird-protection project, tell us the nature of the threat, its scope, and the birds at risk.

* **Project timeframe:** What dates in 2020 will your project begin and end.

* **Leaders:** Provide names, titles, and contact information for your project's leader or leaders.

* **Funding:** Finally, list other sources of funding, if any.

Apply by email: Submit your application as an attachment to an email to director@birdcitywisconsin.org. Please use the following subject line: "Grant Application: [Insert Bird City Community name]"

Deadline for applying: March 31. Applications received after that date will not be considered.

Members of the Bird City Board of Directors will evaluate applications and award grants based on the urgency of the project, its potential impact, a community's ability to complete it, the need for funding, and the number of applications received.

Grant winners will be announced at the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory's celebration of World Migratory Bird Day on May 17.

One more thing: Grantees agree to submit, no later than Nov. 1, a Word document no more than two pages or 500 words long describing the completed project and comparing actual results to what was described in the application, along with three publishable photos taken during the project.

Questions? Write to us at director@birdcitywisconsin.org