



Bird City Wisconsin Newsletter

April 2023

Your Bird City could win a \$500 native habitat package

By **CHARLES HAGNER**
Bird City Wisconsin Director

Among all the actions a Bird City might take for birds, perhaps the most beneficial is creating and maintaining habitat featuring native plants -- that is, plants that occur naturally in the region in which they evolved.

Not only are native plants beautiful, but they generally require little maintenance once established. They need less water than non-native plants and do just fine without artificial fertilizers or synthetic chemical pesticides and herbicides.

Best of all, they serve up nectar for pollinators, including butterflies, moths, and native bees; they provide shelter for many mammals; and their nuts, seeds, and fruit are eaten by all forms of wildlife, including birds.

That's why we're delighted to partner with SOS Save Our Songbirds and White Pel-

ican Farm Native Plant Nursery, located in Wyocena, in Columbia County, to provide a \$500 habitat package to a Bird City in 2023.

Our goal is to help a Bird City launch or complete a project aimed at creating or restoring bird habitat. The grant is intended to support work that will be performed between June 2023 and June 2024.

If your Bird City could benefit from a habitat package, have your Bird City representative apply by May 12. Applications will be considered only from Bird Cities that have completed their 2023 renewal applications. Complete rules for applying are on the Bird City Wisconsin website at <https://birdcity-wisconsin.org>

SOS Save Our Songbirds is a campaign launched last month by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and other major bird and nature conservation organizations, including Bird City Wisconsin, to raise

awareness of birds' dire situation and to spur action at home.

White Pelican Farm is a nursery that specializes in native woodland and prairie plants. The farm grows its plants outside, not in a greenhouse, using seeds or cuttings from plants on the farm, so you can be sure they are hardy and grow well in the state. The nursery also grows its plants organically, without the use of pesticides, herbicides, or synthetic fertilizers, in a pot-in-pot system that requires no tilling.

Apply soon! Representatives from Bird City Wisconsin, SOS Save Our Songbirds, and White Pelican Farm will evaluate applications and award the grant based on the urgency of the project, its potential impact, a community's ability to complete it, and the need for support.

The grantee will be announced in late May.

Ready to take action to Bring Back Birds

By **JENNIFER LAZEWSKI**
Wisconsin Society of Ornithology
Executive Director

The 130 participants at last month's Bringing Birds Back Conference left Oshkosh invigorated to help protect Wisconsin's birds and ready to act.

With the shadow of 3 billion birds lost in the last 50 years hanging over bird conservation, we came out more hopeful after two days of listening, discussing and connecting.

Bird City Wisconsin joined with the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership to sponsor this conference, during which SOS Save Our Songbirds (sponsored by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin) launched its new campaign to influence birders and non-birders to support bird conservation efforts.

Common phrases and themes emerged over the two days. Bird conservation needs local champions to succeed — be one!

Enlist every ally you and your network can find, including more than just birders



Susan Haug of Wausau brought her Bird City Wisconsin success story to a full house at the Bringing Birds Back Conference on the UW-Oshkosh campus.

and conservationists.

Take a few small actions to start in any area where you are not already contributing: make one window in your house more bird-friendly, drink shade-grown coffee, plant a few more native plants (especially trees and shrubs).

Find ways to move to earlier decision-making points for use of land, design of buildings.

Build it and the birds will come to a space with more native plants and no pesticides.

The conference took place March 24-25

on the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh campus.

MIKE PARR, president of the American Bird Conservancy, opened the conference with a wider view of what it means to support bird conservation with some examples from Ecuador.

BRYAN LENZ, Bird City Americas director at ABC and also its glass collision program manager, closed the convention with great information on threats to birds and making windows more bird friendly.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Check out our website at birdcitywisconsin.org

HOW CAN I HELP?

Bird City is seeking to bolster its small-grant donations. Tax deductible donations can be made online at: <https://birdcitywisconsin.org/support-us> or by mail to BCW, 4230 N. Oakland Ave., #219, Shorewood, WI 53211

WHERE CAN I SEND NEWS ABOUT MY BIRD CITY?

Send pictures, stories and other information to director@birdcitywisconsin.org

WHAT ARE THE APPLICATION AND RENEWAL DATES?

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 ACTIONS DOES BCW ENCOURAGE?

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

A fun way for Bird Cities to raise funds

Bird City supporters need to get ready for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon! Hosted by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, the Great Wisconsin Birdathon is our state's largest fundraiser for bird conservation. Bird enthusiasts across Wisconsin set out to see how many species they can find while raising money to support our state's highest priority bird conservation projects.

The Birdathon is like a walk-a-thon, but instead of logging miles walked, teams log bird sightings. Everyone is welcome with no experience necessary to participate—all you need is a love of birds!

Nonprofit organizations, bird clubs, and Bird Cities also have the option to form a team and keep half the funds they raise for their



own conservation efforts. Teams can participate on any day between April 15 and June 15. Register your team at WIBirdathon.org, share your fundraising page with friends and family, then get outside and go birding!

Our goal is to raise

\$100,000 to support the Bird Protection Fund, which funds bird conservation projects including habitat creation, research, monitoring, education and outreach. Learn more about the Bird Protection Fund's current projects at wisconservation.org/grants/bird-protection-fund/

Learn more about the Great Wisconsin Birdathon and register your team at WIBirdathon.org. Have questions? Contact Soumi Gaddameedi at WIBirdathon@WisConservation.org.

Campaign aims to save songbirds

By **LISA GAUMNITZ**
Save Our Songbirds Coordinator

Madison - The beautiful songs and plumage of birds are welcome signs of spring, yet many bird lovers are noticing their feeders — and nearby fields and forests — have been growing silent as a 30% loss in North American birds hits home in Wisconsin.

To help reverse that loss, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership have launched an action campaign, SOS Save Our Songbirds, to make it easier for people to make small changes at home that help birds.

"Our songbirds are in crisis, in Wisconsin and everywhere," says NRF Executive Director **DAVID CLUTTER**. "The pleasure we get from seeing and hearing them will be lost if we don't act now. The other mental health, economic and environmental benefits that we get from birds will go away too."

SOS Save Our Songbirds asks people to take one or more of three actions at home and provides resources to make it easier, cheaper and more convenient.

The three actions are:

- **Add a few good plants for birds**
- **Reduce window threats**
- **Buy coffee grown in bird-friendly ways**

to protect Wisconsin birds' winter habitats in coffee-growing regions in Central and South America

The campaign website is found at: <https://sossaveoursongbirds.org>. People can sign up for free email updates to receive discount offers from native plant nurseries, retailers of products preventing bird-window collisions,



Bird City Wisconsin Madison resident **Kate Dike** and husband **Fred** returned from the **Bringing Birds Back Conference** in Oshkosh ready to spread the **Save Our Songbirds** message.

and coffee retailers.

"We're asking everyone to make one or more of these small changes at home," says **KAREN ETTER HALE**, chair of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership. "It all adds up. And if you're already taking these actions, thank you!"

"We ask, too, if you will please share what you're doing with your neighbors, family and friends so they can do good things for birds too."