

MM31.22 Officially Recognizing Toronto as a Certified Bird Friendly_Submission Lenka Holubec

Apr 7, 2021

VIA E-MAIL: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

RE: MM31.22 Officially Recognizing Toronto as a Certified Bird Friendly City - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Jennifer McKelvie, City Council consideration on April 7, 2021

Dear Mayor Tory and Council Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the motion by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Jennifer McKelvie.

This communication is in support of the motion.

*“As the City of Toronto is widely recognized as a leader in bird conservation, Nature Canada would like to celebrate and award the City’s efforts by certifying the City as a Bird Friendly City, once they complete their evaluation of the application. The bird team in Toronto is currently in the process of filling out the application, however, **Nature Canada has requested that the Toronto City Council makes a resolution in support of becoming a Bird Friendly City, one of the requirements of the program.**”*

This is very important and timely motion building on the City of Toronto protection of biodiversity [OPA 262](#) was approved by the Province in May 2016. The OPA is in full force and now part of The February 2019 Office Consolidation:

"Bird-Friendly

Toronto is on a major migratory flyway and during the annual spring and fall migration the City experiences a significant influx of migrating birds. Most migrating bird species are unable to adapt to urban conditions and become confused by a combination of the lights and glass of buildings. They are attracted by the lights while flying at night, land and then fly into the glass of buildings which reflect trees and sky in the daytime. Bird ‘collisions’ or ‘strikes’ have become a serious issue in Toronto and to address this, the City prepared the Bird Friendly Development Guidelines and requires bird-friendly design in all new development subject to site plan approval." <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/981f-cp-official-plan-chapter-3.pdf>

Toronto is playing a pivotal role in North America migratory birds annual stopover location because of the Lake Ontario proximity and being at the right location between winter and summer nesting and foraging grounds:

"The City of Toronto is an annual stopover location for thousands of migratory birds. Seasonal migration is a critical component of many birds' life cycles in North America, and elsewhere, and yet this phenomenon is often overlooked as an important consideration in habitat and wildlife conservation initiatives. The diversity and abundance of birds that continue to migrate through Toronto means that the City has both an opportunity and a responsibility to support the safe passage of these birds. The City has already begun to undertake a number of initiatives targeted at migratory bird conservation (e.g., Bird-friendly Development Guidelines, Bird Flyways Project). The purpose of this report is to summarize the current understanding of bird migration, analyze the available data on migratory birds in the City, and develop recommendations to build on existing migratory bird conservation efforts based on the findings of this report." [Migratory Birds in the City of Toronto, A Literature Review & Data Assessment, FINAL REPORT August 2009 DOUGAN & ASSOCIATES](#)

Recently published ***"The first-ever [comprehensive assessment of net population changes in the U.S. and Canada reveals across-the-board declines that scientists call "staggering."](#)*** *Common birds—the species that many people see every day—have suffered the greatest losses, according to the study. More than 90% of the losses (more than 2.5 billion birds) come from just 12 families including the sparrows, blackbirds, warblers, and finches."*

The motion by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Jennifer McKelvie **"Officially Recognizing Toronto as a Certified Bird Friendly City"** is an important step in the City of Toronto's *"opportunity and a responsibility to support the safe passage of these birds".*

Thank you for your attention to these considerations.

Sincerely,

Lenka Holubec, member of [ProtectNatureTO](#)