



## Stratford Earns National Recognition as a Bird Friendly City by Nature Canada

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**(Stratford, ON)** Destination Stratford is pleased to announce Stratford's recognition from [Nature Canada](#) as an official **Bird Friendly City**, a designation supported in part by the creative vision behind the newest light installations for the upcoming 6th annual [Lights On Stratford Winter Festival of Lights](#).

Across Canada, people are coming together to make their cities bird friendly. Nature groups, municipal officials, and other community groups are teaming up with Nature Canada to ensure our urban environments are safe havens for birds rather than a source of threats.

*"Stratford's dedication to advocating and protecting its local and migratory birds is inspiring,"* said Autumn Jordan, [Bird Friendly City](#) Program Organizer at Nature Canada. *"Bird Friendly Certification showcases the many actions community members and municipal decision makers have taken to protect, defend and restore biodiversity. Nature Canada is delighted to have Stratford join the 36 other municipalities Certified Bird Friendly communities across Canada."*

### **A Bird Friendly City is a community where:**

- Key threats to birds are effectively mitigated;
- Nature is restored so native bird populations can thrive;
- Residents are actively engaged in admiring and monitoring local bird populations;
- Organizations are creating events to protect birds;
- Progressive municipal policies are created to protect urban bird populations; and
- A Bird Team has been created to oversee and lead these initiatives

*"We are thrilled and extremely proud that Stratford has been certified as a Bird Friendly City by Nature Canada," said Martin Ritsma, Mayor of Stratford. "Our community cares deeply about protecting the natural environment and wildlife along the Avon River, as well as in our region's 115 acres of parkland and 60 acres of natural areas, which are home to many species of birds year-round and during migrations. The Bird Friendly City certification supports the municipality's conservation efforts, while improving the quality of life of the people who live there or come to visit us."*

*"Our community has always supported and stood up for our wildlife residents, so when the BIRDS OF A FEATHER exhibit began taking shape for the upcoming Lights On Stratford Winter Festival of Lights, it was a natural fit for Destination Stratford to also focus on bird preservation," said Christina Phillips, Destination Development Manager, Destination Stratford. "Throughout the Bird Friendly City application process, we had the opportunity to engage and connect with many environment- and birding-passionate residents, organizations, and businesses that all share a common desire for increased bird education and protection. We look forward to experiencing how this designation grows those connections and efforts to help improve the quality of life for all our residents."*

This year's world premiere installation, **BIRDS OF A FEATHER**, will illuminate Tom Patterson Island throughout the winter season. The featured species include: the Black-Capped Chickadee, Goldfinch, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Cardinal, and Snowy Owl. The six birds were selected for their vibrant appearance, recognizable calls, and their presence in Stratford and the surrounding area during the winter months.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER will be featured on Tom Patterson Island this winter as part of the [Lights On Stratford](#) festival, running from **December 12, 2025 - January 18, 2026**.

**Thursdays through Sundays from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.** Free to the public.

To learn more about Stratford's official application, check out the [map of certified cities](#).

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For more information, please email [hello@visitstratford.ca](mailto:hello@visitstratford.ca).