



# Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds

*A program working with cities and partners to conserve migratory birds through education, hazard reductions, citizen science, conservation actions, and conservation and habitat improvement strategies in urban/suburban areas.*

## INTRODUCTION - Urban Bird Treaty Program

The Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds (Urban Bird Treaty) program was created to help municipal governments conserve birds that live and nest in or overwinter or migrate through their cities. Launched in 1999, the first treaty was signed with New Orleans, and the second treaty was signed with Chicago. The treaties are a partnership agreement between a U.S. city and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to conserve migratory birds through education, habitat improvement and bird conservation actions.

Designed to increase citizen awareness and understanding of the importance of bird conservation through partnerships between the Service and municipal governments, other agencies, and non-government organizations, the Urban Bird Treaty program will help finance education and outreach projects with a focus on the migratory bird protection and conservation as well as help with the creation and restoration of habitats within the urban/suburban area.

The Urban Bird Treaty program is dedicated to conserving birds in or passing through our cities. Each of us makes decisions in our daily lives that have the potential to either help or harm wildlife. In the case of birds, it can be something as simple as keeping pet cats inside, turning off the lights of a high-rise office building at night, buying shade-grown coffee, and being sure to choose bird-friendly native plants for a backyard or schoolyard garden.

Cities can become effective sanctuaries for birds and other wildlife, with an environmentally aware citizenry dedicated to conserving and enhancing natural resources. Urban Bird Treaties can help cities enhance the livability for the migratory birds that nest, overwinter, or pass through municipal and urban/suburban neighborhoods. This is not only good for the birds, but also for the quality of life of people living in and visiting our cities.

## **OVERVIEW - Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds Program**

### **An Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds**

The Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds (Urban Bird Treaty) is a unique, collaborative effort between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and participating U.S. cities, bringing together private citizens, Federal, State, and municipal agencies, and non-governmental organizations to conserve migratory birds through a variety of actions including; education, conservation, and habitat improvement. Urban Bird Treaty Cities, in addition to working to conserve, protect and restore and enhance habitat, reduce bird hazards, and educate urban residents on the importance of migratory birds, cities and their partners will promote outdoor bird-related experiences, foster environmental education with a focus on birds, and build natural resource career development opportunities when possible. Partners work to increase awareness of the value of migratory birds and their habitats, especially for their intrinsic, ecological, recreational, and economic significance. Urban Bird Treaty cities and their partners develop and implement bird conservation projects and provide matching dollars and in-kind support. The Service provides financial challenge grants with a one to one match and technical assistance.

### **Urban Bird Treaty Program Component Goals**

The program component goals of the Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds are:

- **Protect, restore, and enhance urban/suburban habitats for birds**
- **Reduce hazards to birds**
- **Educate and engage citizens in monitoring, caring about, and advocating for birds and their conservation**
- **Foster youth environmental education with a focus on birds**
- **Manage invasive species to benefit and protect birds**
- **Increase awareness of the value of migratory birds and their habitats, especially for their intrinsic, ecological, recreational, and economic significance**

The goals of the Urban Bird Treaty program may overlap and one or more will be a natural part of and complement another goal. Each of these program goals are listed separately however, to highlight the activities that can do the most to conserve migratory birds, and to emphasize that success in bird conservation depends on a coordinated approach that considers and addresses multiple issues. The emphasis placed on each area is up to each city. For example, an ideal habitat project will help create, protect and restore habitat by using native plants and shrubs, removing non-native or invasives, or by using non-lethal deterrents to overabundant or nuisance animal and plant species. Fostering education and increasing awareness of the value of birds should include an International Migratory Bird Day festival or fair and projects designed to get students involved in creating habitats at school or local businesses.

### **FUNDING - Urban Bird Treaty Cities Challenge Grants.**

Based on a competitive grants proposal process, chosen cities are awarded Service "challenge" grants. The Urban Bird Treaty city is "challenged" to raise an amount equal to or greater than the

amount of funds awarded by the Service. The matching support raised by the Urban Bird Treaty city must be of non-federal origin. Matches may consist of cash, "in-kind" contributions of goods and services from the Urban Bird Treaty city and its partners, or a combination of cash or in-kind donations from other institutions or businesses. The Urban Bird Treaty program offers a great deal of flexibility to incorporate the best combination of projects that are appropriate for the city and that will also have the greatest benefits to birds.

The Urban Bird Treaty program offers a great deal of flexibility to incorporate the best combination of projects that are appropriate for the city and that will also have the greatest benefits to birds. For example, a project may include landscaping a city park with local native plants and shrubs, removing non-native and invasive species from a wetland or riparian area, working with local park departments to switch to non-lethal deterrents to protect plants from overabundant or nuisance animal species, reducing chemical fertilizers and pesticides in a demonstration garden. Area partners can work with schools where students may be responsible for planning, development and upkeep of the garden. They may work with local ornithologists to lead bird walks and provide a bird feeding station within the habitat area. Working with a local printing and artisan community, they may develop and produce educational products for the area.

The grant opportunity will be posted at a national level on grants.gov. The Urban Bird Treaty cities are selected based on the intent of their proposal and for their commitment to follow the national guidelines. Each city must develop a proposal that articulates partner involvement and outlines specific projects that will be accomplished. Cities and their partners must identify at least 75% of each of the items listed below each goal criteria to include in their application and action plan. Proposals should contain a detailed outline of partners, what partnership contributions will be, and what they and the city will collectively do to address the Urban Bird Treaty program goal components and priorities stated above (these must be included in each application proposal).

### **Urban Bird Treaty Criteria**

While any city can work to become a bird friendly city, only a select few are chosen to receive challenge grant funds. Funding from the Service may not always be available on a regular basis. When funding is available, Urban Bird Treaty cities are selected based on the content of their proposal, and for their commitment to conserve birds and educate and involve citizens in conservation plans and actions. Proposals are accepted based on how well they address the Urban Bird Treaty program goal components and how effective they will be in facilitating Urban Bird Treaty partnerships that can bring money and other resources to the Urban Bird Treaty program.

Cities must work with partners to accomplish the Urban Bird Treaty goals. Cities can include the suburban areas (considered metropolitan areas) around the major city. Another criteria is the availability of Service personnel to provide technical assistance and guidance in achieving Treaty activities.

In addition to filling out the grant proposal form and filing the required forms listed in grants.gov, the Urban Bird Treaty applicant proposals must include the following for each goal component:

1. *Project Scope*: How will the proposed conservation proposal projects meet the goals of the program and how will it benefit birds, and provide for long-range conservation and monitoring? How will this be measured? How will the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Urban Bird Treaty program be recognized?

2. *Community Involvement*: How will the proposed program, and projects within, involve the community - general public, schools, local businesses, and public and private landowners? What types of projects will ensure public participation and how will this be measured? How will the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Urban Bird Treaty program be recognized?

3. *Conservation Programs and Partners*: How will proposed projects utilize and involve existing conservation programs and partners - federal, tribal, state, and local governments; corporations and non-profit or nongovernmental groups? Describe how the goals of the Urban Bird Treaty program will specifically involve partners. How will this be measured? How will the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Urban Bird Treaty program be recognized?

### **Proposal Process for Funding**

Urban Bird Treaty cities are selected based on the intent of their proposal and for their commitment to follow the national guidelines. Each city must develop a proposal that articulates partner involvement and outlines specific projects that will be accomplished. Cities and their partners must identify at least 75% of each of the items listed below each goal criteria to include in their application proposal. Proposals should contain a detailed outline of partners, what partnership contributions will be, and what they and the city will collectively do to address the Urban Bird Treaty program goal components and priorities stated above (these must be included in each application proposal).

### **Selection of Cities for Funding**

A national Urban Conservation Treaty Team, made up of experienced wildlife biologists, environmental educators, and grant administrators from the Service will review and rank the new proposals based on how well they address the Urban Bird Treaty program goal components and how effective they will be in facilitating Urban Bird Treaty partnerships that can bring money and other resources to the Urban Bird Treaty program.

### **After a City is Chosen for the Program**

Each city will work with Service personnel to discuss the proposal and finalize any details needed to complete the application to receive funding. Cities will sign a cooperative agreement with their Service office located in their region.

### **Opportunities for Public and Media Recognition**

Awarded cities are encouraged to have an award acceptance ceremony to acknowledge the beginning of the Urban Bird Treaty program. For existing cities, a ceremony acknowledging the additional funds is suggested to highlight actions on the part of the city and their partners to continue the work started through the Urban Bird Treaty program.

Throughout the grant period, local and national Service public affairs representatives will work with their counterparts in the city to promote treaty activities to the media and the general public. Treaty cities are encouraged to take advantage of existing nationally recognized events, such as International Migratory Bird Day to draw public and media attention. Treaty cities are encouraged to mentor newer fledgling Treaty cities, and to team together on national awareness campaigns.

### **Recognition for U.S. Fish and Wildlife**

Each project funded through the Urban Bird Treaty grant program will be recognized in the following ways:

All printed material including educational signs must acknowledge the Urban Bird Treaty program and 'U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Urban Bird Treaty' must appear in the acknowledgement.

All press releases announcing any aspect of the Urban Bird Treaty Program must acknowledge the support of the grant monies from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Urban Bird Treaty program in addition to other significant partnership funds received.

Awarded cities must address the Urban Bird Treaty program at some level on their city website. A link should send viewers to the national Urban Bird Treaty program located at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/Partnerships/UrbanTreaty/urbantreaty.html>

**To view the Urban Bird Treaty Handbook and Resources visit -**