

Kitchener city councillors hear presentation on becoming 'bird friendly'



A female Anna's hummingbird rests on a feeder in Vancouver, B.C., Friday, Jan. 12, 2024, amid a cold snap in southern British Columbia. A wildlife rescue group says dozens of hummingbirds have been turned in suffering cold weather injuries in recent days. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Ian Young



By Josh Goeree

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A presentation made to the City of Kitchener's Climate Change and Environment Committee on Wednesday pitched ideas to make the city "bird friendly."

Dr. Jennifer Clary-Lemon, a professor in the Department of English at the University of Waterloo who studies rhetoric, investigates the relationship of birds and humans and how they persuade each other how to live together, specifically looking at how at-risk species of birds use infrastructure to nest.

'Bird Friendly Cities' take actions into reducing threats posed to local bird populations. The certification process is completed by [Nature Canada](#), who said North American bird populations have declined by 25 per cent over the last 50 years, equalling almost three billion birds. Specific species such as grassland birds and aerial insectivore birds have declined by [57 per cent](#) and [59 per cent](#), respectively.

Clary-Lemon said she's pushing for more change into helping local bird populations after researching alongside other bird enthusiasts.

"By working with 'bird people,' it really made me more aware of the plight of at-risk species of birds, particularly in Ontario, and the kinds of things that Ontarians will do because they love these creatures," said Clary-Lemon.

Successful 'Bird Friendly Cities' must meet seven [requirements](#), including formal municipal support, the establishment of a 'bird team', and completing annual reports. Actions that have been taken by 'bird friendly' cities include light pollution strategies, outreach programs, and reduction in pesticide use.

Guelph, Hamilton, London, Toronto and 24 other municipalities across Canada have been certified 'bird friendly' by Nature Canada.

The next steps are for Clary-Lemon to make a presentation to the full city council.