

# Staff Report



Infrastructure Services Department

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**REPORT TO:** Committee of the Whole

**DATE OF MEETING:** May 5, 2025

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jeffery Silcox-Childs, Director Parks & Cemeteries, 519-783-8877

**PREPARED BY:** Rachel Voros, Natural Areas Project Manager, 519-783-8883

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** All Ward(s)

**DATE OF REPORT:** April 14, 2025

**REPORT NO.:** INS-2025-194

**SUBJECT:** Kitchener City Bird – The Dark Eyed Junco

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## RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorse the Dark Eyed Junco as Kitchener's Official Bird, as outlined in the staff report, INS-2025-194.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to receive Council endorsement of the Dark Eyed Junco as the Kitchener City Bird.
- The key finding of this report is that in support of Kitchener's Bird Friendly Status, a public voting campaign was successfully completed to select Kitchener's City Bird.
- There are no financial implications to the recommendations in this report.
- Community engagement included social media posts and a public voting campaign to select a City Bird.
- This report supports **Cultivating a Green City Together: Focuses a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city; enhancing & protecting parks & natural environment while transitioning to a low-carbon future; supporting businesses & residents to make climate-positive choices.**

## BACKGROUND:

At the January 18, 2024, Climate Change and Environment Committee (CCEC) meeting, a member of the committee presented on the 'Bird Friendly Cities' Certification Program through Ontario Nature. Following the presentation, a recommendation was put forward by the committee and the committee resolved "*That the Climate Change and Environment committee support bringing the exploration of Kitchener becoming a Bird City to council.*"

The request was presented in report DSD-2024-081 at the February 26, 2024, Planning and Strategic Initiatives Committee meeting, and approved "*That staff be directed to investigate the benefits and feasibility of Kitchener becoming a 'Bird Friendly City' including any resource and budgetary considerations as outlined in Development Services Department report DSD-2024-081.*"

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Nature Canada granted Kitchener Bird Friendly City Certification which was endorsed by council after the request was presented in report DSD-2024-480. In this presentation a public campaign to recognize a citizen- elected City Bird was initiated.

**REPORT:**

In November, 2024, to fulfill section 3.7 (page 48) of the Bird Friendly City Application (Attachment A) the following action was initiated:

*“You must provide proof that a campaign to select a “City Bird” is underway or has been successfully completed, evidence of community engagement, the name of the “City Bird” species, and proof that it is officially the “City Bird” through Council support/recognition.”*

The Bird Friendly Kitchener (BFK) City Bird Vote (Attachment B) described the characteristics of each bird and asked the public to choose from the Killdeer, the Merlin, the Dark-Eyed Junco, and the Chimney Swift.

The BFK Poll (Attachment C) shows the votes cast for each bird; a total of 1,265 votes were received. A summary of the polling results is provided in the table below.

<i><b>Bird</b></i>	<i><b>Total Votes</b></i>
<i>Dark-Eyed Junco</i>	<i>45.1%</i>
<i>Merlin</i>	<i>27.1%</i>
<i>Chimney Swift</i>	<i>17.5%</i>
<i>Killdeer</i>	<i>10.3%</i>

With 45.1% of the vote, the Dark-Eyed Junco is the citizen-elected City Bird.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report supports Cultivating a Green City Together: Focuses a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city; enhancing &protecting parks & natural environment while transitioning to a low carbon future; supporting businesses & residents to make climate positive choices.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget or Operating Budget.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council/committee meeting. Staff will work with BFK members to promote the Dark-Eyed Junco through a press release.

CONSULT – From November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, a public campaign to elect a City Bird took place. There were 1,265 responses to the poll.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

- DSD-2024-081 Kitchener becoming Bird Friendly
- DSD-2024-480 Becoming a Bird Friendly City and World Migratory Bird Day

**APPROVED BY: Denise McGoldrick, General Manager, Infrastructure Services**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Bird-Friendly City Application REVISED  
Attachment B –The Bird Friendly Kitchener City Bird Vote  
Attachment C –The BFK Poll