

Media Release

Energizing People and Green Spaces – The Toronto Bird Celebration –

For immediate release

Toronto, ON April 1, 2021

Despite strict travel restrictions and testing protocols, Toronto will soon be visited by millions of feathered celebrities. These *celebirdies* don't need to stay in approved hotels, and we can all safely enjoy the sights and concerts they bring. The Toronto Bird Celebration is on from May to July, offering a range of activities to people in Toronto and beyond to take advantage of the wonders of spring. The goal of the Celebration this year is to connect people with their gardens and local spaces and the happiness that can be found there.

Most of the Celebration's activities are free. Among them is the popular quest for the Celebirdies. Torontonians can look for signs on the TTC and social media posts to discover how to participate by sharing your bird photo. You could win great prizes like *Field Notes from an Unintentional Birder* by Julia Zarankin and Kanken Backpacks from Fjällräven.

Jimmy Vincent from the Humber Arboretum is excited to see another Celebirdy Quest unfold in 2021: "Each year Celebirdies stop in Toronto on their way North to their breeding grounds or to stay for the summer. There are few nature spectacles as big and as magnificent as the 50 million performers arriving in the city." He adds, "This is the only massive concert you can join during COVID."

Like the birds themselves, many of the Celebration events can be seen beyond Toronto. The Celebration includes free online sessions for a range of audiences, including new and experienced birders, families, and people with disabilities. Don't miss:

- A featured presentation by "The Urban Birder", David Lindo, on how to connect with birds in cities
- A panel discussion on how to engage with birds if you have a disability
- Creative writing workshops with Julia Zarankin
- Science communication with a focus on birds with Rosemary Mosco

For people in Toronto, there will also be opportunities to take part in COVID-19-safe paddlebirding expeditions in the Toronto Islands. And much more! All the details can be found at torontobirdcelebration.ca.

The Celebration calendar is a tribute to the role birds play in our lives, guiding us to experience incredible things right in our neighbourhoods. According to Emily Heidendahl, Forestry Data Collector for the City of Toronto, "We live in Canada's largest city, the fourth largest in North America, and home to a diverse population. It is a global centre for business, finance, arts and culture and is consistently ranked one of the world's most livable cities. Yet, it is also a magnificent hotspot and superhighway for birds. We have a responsibility and opportunity to

make a space that allows birds to continue to bring the gifts of songs, colour, and wonder. In return, we get the everyday inspiration of seeing remarkable birds in our neighbourhoods."

This year, the Toronto Bird Celebration is turning five – marking five years of connecting people to nature through birds. During these five years, the Celebration and the over 15 partners that make it a reality have taken over 15 thousand people into Toronto's most birdy places.

"This is the most important year for the Celebration" acknowledges Andrés Jiménez, Urban Program Coordinator for Birds Canada. He adds, "after the most challenging year of our lives, we want people to share the love for birds and nature. To discover hopeful moments, if you love birds and know about them, pass this spark of interest to your friends, families, and communities."

The Toronto Bird Celebration is an annual festival coordinated by Birds Canada and made possible by the participation of 15 Toronto conservation organizations. *Thanks to the support of Armstrong Bird Food, Acart Communications and Pattison Outdoor; the Celebration is supported by creative communication strategies and a dedicated website, www.torontobirdcelebration.ca. Here you'll find a full calendar of events and FREE ONLINE resources such as a multilingual gardening guides for bird-friendly gardens and a Map Guide to the Birds of Toronto.*

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More about the Celebration:

- Why a celebration? Around the world, cities are being recognized for their important role in sustaining ecosystems. In addition, it has been clearly demonstrated that **urban biodiversity is critical to city dweller's health and well-being**. With most Canadians living in cities, we must increase the public's understanding and appreciation of urban nature for the benefit of human and wildlife city dwellers alike.
- Birds Canada coordinates the Toronto Bird Celebration and is Canada's leading national charitable organization dedicated to bird science and conservation.
- The Toronto Bird Celebration is delivered by a large partnership of Toronto conservation organizations led by a steering committee: Birds Canada, City of Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto Ornithological Club, Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto Zoo, Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada, High Park Nature Centre, Humber Arboretum.