



## Vote for Vaughan's favourite bird!

As part of our Bird Friendly City initiatives, you're invited to help choose Vaughan's favourite bird! Based on input from the Vaughan Bird team, the community, City staff, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation, we have narrowed the list down to the top five contenders. These birds represent the diversity of species that can be seen and heard in Vaughan. Read about each bird below, and then cast your vote.

### American Goldfinch (Aginjibagwesi - "Leaf Counter")

- The American Goldfinch is common at backyard feeders, where it loves sunflower seeds
- The spring males are vibrant yellow, while the females and all winter birds are duller.
- Their habitat is in weedy fields, open plains and overgrown areas where they can find sunflower, milkweed and thistle seeds.
- According to teachings from Hiawatha First Nation, the American Goldfinch is considered the language bird and keeper of the language and culture through Annishinaabe stories and teachings.
- Fun fact: paired-up goldfinches make virtually identical flight calls.



## Northern Cardinal (Misko-Bineshiinh - "Red Bird")

- The Northern Cardinal is a long-tailed songbird with males that are bright red and females that are pale brown with warm red accents.
- Cardinals don't migrate, so you can see their brilliant colours all winter long!
- Their habitat is in dense shrubby areas such as forest edges or overgrown fields and they eat mostly seeds and fruit.
- According to Hiawatha First Nation, this bird is a reflection of the importance of community and relationships through stories and teachings and having a special connection to the spiritual world.
- Fun fact: these birds are very territorial, and you may see one fighting its own reflection in a window.



Male © Suzie McCann eBird S57032844 Macaulay Library ML 257386271

## Red-winged Blackbird (Asiginaak - "Red Shoulder Bird")

- The Red-winged Blackbird is one of the most abundant birds across North America and can be spotted along wet roadsides and atop telephone wires.
- Males have the striking red and yellow shoulder patches, while females are a streaky brown.
- During breeding season they like wet places like freshwater marshes or ponds and in fall and winter you can find them in agricultural fields or grasslands.
- Red-winged Blackbirds eat insects and seeds.
- These birds were often used to understand the relationships between humans and the natural world and show up in Anishinaabe stories and teachings that show a connection to nature.
- Fun fact: Red-winged Blackbirds roost (sleep or rest) in flocks and during the winter can be found in congregations of several million birds including other blackbird species and starlings.



### Broad-winged Hawk (Bijigigwane - "Fish Hawk")

- The Broad-winged hawk is a small hawk with bold black and white tail bands and has a straight leading edge of wing when in flight.
- During breeding season, you might hear a high-pitched, two-part whistle coming from woodlands.
- These hawks nest far from human disturbance but have been spotted in North Maple Regional Park and the William Granger Greenway.
- Hawks hold a significant place in Anishinaabe culture representing the connection to the land and traditional culture. According to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, hawks represent deliberation and foresight.
- Fun fact: Late Pleistocene fossils of Broad-winged Hawks have been discovered, up to 400,000 years old.



### Sandhill Crane (Ajijaak - "Echo Maker")

- The Sandhill Crane is a large, long-legged bird shaped like a heron with a red crown and rusty staining on the body.
- These birds like open wetlands and agricultural fields where they can find seeds and grains to eat.
- In Annishinaabe culture, cranes represent wisdom, communication and leadership. They are one of the original clans, referred to as the "outside chiefs" which took care of affairs outside the community.
- Fun fact: Sandhill Cranes are good dancers - when courting, they stretch their wings, pump their heads and leap into the air in a graceful dance!



Adult © Lorri Howski eBird S60053465 Macaulay Library ML 180195071

## You Spoke, We Listened!

When we started on this journey, we used data from eBird and our own birding activities to generate a list of eight birds commonly observed in Vaughan: Blue Jay, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Black-capped chickadee, American Goldfinch, European Starling, Song Sparrow and Common Grackle. We asked attendees at Winterfest to vote on the list and provide suggestions for other birds, we also consulted with Indigenous partners, the Vaughan Bird Team and other Bird-Friendly certified cities to update the list to include: Red-winged Blackbird, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, American Robin, Downy Woodpecker, Sandhill Crane, Broad-winged Hawk. Then, we asked attendees at Earth Hour to vote on the updated list. From that, we have decided on the top five contenders! Cast your vote below.

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Cast your vote! What is your favourite bird? \*

- ☐ Northern Cardinal
- ☐ Red-winged Blackbird
- ☐ Broad-winged Hawk
- ☐ Sandhill Crane
- ☐ American Goldfinch

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