

Tweet Home Chicago
Bird House Design + Build Competition
Registration Deadline 16 April 2010



tweet home chicago

www.cityofchicago.org/Environment
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Tweet Home Chicago Bird House Design + Build Competition

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The City of Chicago and its partners invite you to participate in an exciting bird house design and build competition: Tweet Home Chicago. We are hosting the competition as part of our ongoing effort to raise awareness about the importance of birds and bird habitat in Chicago in a tangible and fun way.

Chicago is a great city for birds and over 80 native species of birds nest here. Two hundred more use our city as a resting stop during migration every spring and fall, finding vital protection and food in the city's parks, river ways, lakeshore, school grounds, street trees, and backyards. Birds are an important part of the web of life — controlling insect populations and other pests, pollinating flowers, and bringing nature into people's lives.

The eight birds in color on the other side of this flyer are species native to Chicago that like to nest in bird houses and, thus, are the focus of this competition. The images show examples of important aspects of bird-friendly habitat found in the city – food, water, and shelter. The bird silhouettes in gray are a sampling of other important species that you may find nesting in and around Chicago's backyards, natural areas, and even skyscrapers.

Professional designers, carpenters, and artists, along with students and novices are encouraged to design and build a house for one of the eight species in the competition and be inspired by the bird-friendly habitat that exists throughout Chicago.

The Tweet Home Chicago panel of judges will include respected professionals from the design, art, and conservation communities.

Select houses will be displayed at high-profile public venues, installed near Chicago Park District field houses, and/or auctioned to raise money for bird conservation efforts in the city.

See cityofchicago.org/environment for more information, and please contact us with your questions at birds@cityofchicago.org.

Happy designing and building!

Important Dates

April 16 — Registration form due

April 29–May 1 — Bird house submittals due. Submittal location: Chicago Center for Green Technology (445 N. Sacramento Blvd.)
Submittal times: Thurs 4/29 3pm-7:30pm; Fri 4/30 10am-1pm;
Sat 5/1 1pm-3pm.

May TBD — Awards Ceremony

To register: surveymonkey.com/s/tweethomechicagoregistration

Prizes

Prizes will be awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in both the Adult and Youth categories.

1st prize: \$500 + a bonus prize
2nd prize: \$250 + a bonus prize
3rd prize: \$150 + a bonus prize

All winners pick from the following bonus prizes:

- Bird-friendly tree dedicated in your name at Chicago Park District park
- Attendance at private release of a rehabilitated bird
- Backyard suet feeder and fruit feeder hook
- Birds & Buildings Forum consultation for your home, school, or office on how to make more bird-friendly
- Tour of Flint Creek Wildlife Rehabilitation Center on Northerly Island
- Subscription to Audubon Magazine
- Birds of the Chicago River Canoe Ride*

*restrictions apply

Partners

- Chicago Park District
- Bird Conservation Network
- Nature House, Inc.
- Audubon Chicago Region
- ReBuilding Exchange
- Thirst and Moving Design
- U.S. Green Building Council
- UrbanLab
- Friends of the Chicago River
- Chicago Public Schools

Judging Criteria

All bird houses will be judged on the following criteria:

Functionality. Is it useful?

Each bird species likes to nest in a certain kind of house. See the Bird Species Table online for the dimensions and hole size preferred by each species as rough guidelines. Birds also like to nest in a house that is comfortable, durable, and non-toxic – see the Construction Guidelines online for suggestions.

Suitability. Is it site-specific?

The location of a bird house is vital to its success. Think about a location in Chicago that would be a welcoming, suitable place for your bird house to be mounted. Build a house for your favorite spot along the Chicago River, for your neighborhood pocket park, for your school yard, or for your mother's garden, as examples. The bird house and location should be suitable for the species chosen (as listed on the Bird Species Table). This item will be judged by the brief explanation given on your Entry Form.

Please note: This should be an actual location in Chicago, but the placement of the bird house is only hypothetical, e.g., you do not need approval from the landowner and likewise, the bird house submitted will not be installed in this location.

Resourcefulness. Is it made from sustainable materials?

The house should be made from sustainable materials that leave a small ecological footprint. Be resourceful and creative with materials that are, for example, locally sourced, might otherwise end up in the trash, or ones that were produced and harvested sustainably. Creativity of sources, general carbon footprint, and other factors will be considered.

Aesthetics. Is it wonderful?

The bird house should strive for excellence in form and function. Find inspiration in Chicago's many architecture legacies, in nature, and in your everyday life. The craftsmanship, creativity, overall aesthetic, relationship to location, and other factors will be considered.

Winners will be chosen for each of the following categories

Adult Any adult 18 and older may submit for this category, including college students.

Youth Any youth under 18 years of age may submit for this category.

Please note: If submitting as part of a school, club, or youth group effort, entries are limited to 5 bird houses per school or youth group. Consider having your own internal competition to pick the entries!

Contest is open only to City of Chicago residents, businesses, and students.

HOUSE WREN

SPECIES INFO

Bubbly and energetic, just like their songs. They hop quickly through tangles and low branches and, in spring and summer, frequently pausing to deliver cheerful trilling songs.



NESTING HABITAT

Near trees, shrubs and gardens for cover and in partially sunlit spot. Backyards and city parks are perfect for House Wrens.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE

SPECIES INFO

A bird almost universally considered "cute" thanks to its oversized round head, tiny body, and curiosity about everything, including humans.



NESTING HABITAT

Near trees or woody shrubs, from forests and woodlots to residential neighborhoods and parks. They frequently nest in birch or alder trees.

AMERICAN KESTREL

SPECIES INFO

Perhaps the most colorful raptor in the world, the American Kestrel is the most common falcon in North America.



NESTING HABITAT

Open fields and near grassy habitat where prey (grasshoppers, small rodents) may live.

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL

SPECIES INFO

Active at night, they eat a variety of small animals. Their trilling song, sometimes known as the Bounce Song, is used by members of a pair or a family to keep in contact.



NESTING HABITAT

In forested area, in a relatively secluded area.

TREE SWALLOW

SPECIES INFO

A common swallow of marshes and open fields, the Tree Swallow is a ready inhabitant of nest boxes.



NESTING HABITAT

Open areas near water and fields, especially wooded swamps and shorelines.

DOWNY WOODPECKER

SPECIES INFO

The most common North American woodpecker, and also the woodpecker reported most frequently at bird feeders. Eats a variety of insects from the bark of trees.



NESTING HABITAT

Near wooded areas, in woodlots and parklands, particularly among deciduous trees. They're also at home in city parks, backyards and vacant lots.

WOOD DUCK

SPECIES INFO

A colorful duck of wooded swamps and streamsides, the Wood Duck is one of only a few North American ducks that nest in trees. Many people consider it to be the most beautiful waterfowl.



NESTING HABITAT

Near wooded wetlands, river banks, or lake shores.

PURPLE MARTIN

SPECIES INFO

The largest of the North American swallows and a prodigious mosquito predator, the Purple Martin is a popular tenant of backyard birdhouses. In fact, in much of the U.S., it has nested almost exclusively in nest boxes for more than 100 years.



NESTING HABITAT

Open space, 30-150' away from buildings, preferably near water. Like to nest in groups, so "condos" are recommended.

Species Information and Nesting Habitat are adapted from Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "All About Birds."

Visit cityofchicago.org/environment for bird house specifications and construction guidelines, nesting information, competition logistics and registration, and more!
Questions? E-mail birds@cityofchicago.org