

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Organization Requesting Grant: <i>(Please list parent/sponsor organizations in parenthesis)</i>	Whistler Naturalists
Name of the program (if applicable):	Bird Studies
Society Registration Number:	S40150
Organization Mailing Address:	Box 845 Whistler BC V0N 1B0
Contact Name & Title:	Kristina Swerhun and Bob Brett – Board members
Organization Phone Number:	
Organization Email Address:	whistlernaturalists@gmail.com
Organization Purpose or Mandate: <i>(Please provide this answer in one sentence.)</i>	To increase the knowledge of and appreciation for the natural world in the Whistler area through education and research.
Organization Category <i>(choose between Environment, Social Service, Community Service, Recreation and Sports, Arts and Culture)</i>	Environment

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

How many years has the organization existed?	25
How many active members/participants does the organization have in the current year? <i>(e.g. how many athletes have signed up for this year)</i>	Approximately 1,500 are participants at our events. Our active Facebook "Whistler Naturalists Community" has 1,824 members.
For sport organizations, how many youth (U18) participants are enrolled in your programs?	n/a
How many Whistler residents members does the organization have in the current year?	We do not ask if people are local to become a free member but can in the future if it's important to our funders. 48 of our 61 paying members live in Whistler, Pemberton or Squamish.
How many volunteers/executive/staff are required to administer the organization in the current year?	7 board members
Age range of participants in the organization:	1-99

Please list active website URLs and active social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.):	www.whistlernaturalists.ca https://www.facebook.com/groups/whistlernaturalists (1,824 members) https://www.facebook.com/whistlernaturalists
What are the membership and participation requirements?	An interest in nature. We have two membership options: a) join the WNS mailing list for free b) join the WNS under the umbrella of BC Nature and additionally receive the BC Nature quarterly newsletter (\$20 individual/year; \$30 family/year).
Does the organization have any outstanding debts or other means of funding from the RMOW? If yes, please state the amount and reason. <u>Note</u> : Please include any Value In Kind support that you receive from the RMOW (eg. reduced rent, utilities in RMOW buildings)	No

GRANT INFORMATION

1. Purpose of Grant	<i>Explain in detail how the funding will be spent. Please refer to Council Policy A-7 Community Enrichment Program, available at www.whistler.ca/cep for funding criteria and eligibility. Please be as concise as possible using the space below.</i>
<p>There are more than 30 years of bird research in Whistler that fell under the umbrella of the Naturalists when we formed in 1999. Our bird studies program consists of three main elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: Occurs mid-December and involves a day of intense bird observation by a large group of birders spread out over Whistler. Data is also collected for three days before and after the Christmas Bird Count and submitted to the Christmas Bird Count international database. Funding will go towards food for hard working volunteers after a long day of birding at a wrap up party. Normally the wrap up party is at someone’s house starting in 2023 we needed to rent a space since we needed more space due to increased participation. 2. BREEDING BIRD SURVEY: Occurs early June and involves a group long-term Whistler Breeding Bird Surveyors collecting observations along Highway 99. Data is submitted to the Breeding Bird Survey international database. Funding will go towards transportation and accommodation for the birding team that come from out of town. Why do BBS birders come from out of town? The BBS started in the late 1970s and most of that same group of six bird experts are still involved. Two live on Vancouver Island, one on the Sunshine Coast, and three live in the Greater Vancouver area. Each year they meet in Horseshoe Bay to ride in the same rental van to Whistler. Ferry and ancillary costs to get to that meeting point are not included in our funding application, nor is all the time these experts donate. The funding covers rental vehicle; gas, and accommodation. No birders of their caliber and physical ability (most identifications are made by sound; hence good hearing is necessary) reside in Whistler and are willing to donate their time. In addition, continuity from year to year improves accuracy and consistency of the data. 3. MONTHLY BIRD COUNTS: Occur the first Saturday of each month where we walk from the bottom of Lorimer Road to Rainbow Park and back. Takes roughly 3 hours each month. We introduced a second monthly bird walk to Green Lake on the third Saturday of the month in 2023 to highlight the wonderful diversity of birds in the area, and in response to unauthorized cutting of bird habitat (riparian vegetation) and off-leash dogs disturbing nesting shorebirds. The Green Lake bird walks are now on hold until spring. Though our monthly bird walks happen most regularly, there is no cost to run them. We include them here, so you have a full picture of our birding program. Data is entered into eBird, a collaborative enterprise with hundreds of partner organizations, thousands of regional experts, hundreds of thousands of users, and is managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 	

2. Is This a New Program or Activity?	<i>If yes, what are your targets and goals for this program/activity?</i>
No	

3. Current Year Highlights and Community Benefits:	<i>Detail the specifics of activities and community benefits your organization provides.</i>
<p><small>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTION: Our Bird Study Programs are run by volunteers who eagerly pass knowledge from older generations to younger, and from more to less knowledgeable birders. All welcome to attend our events and while most of our participants are residents or second homeowners, we get a few visitors as well. This sharing strengthens connections within communities and encourages and strengthens a shared love of nature and commitments to stewardship. Many of our older birders, some in their 80's, are not only making contributions to birding data that are enormously valued, but they report that bird watching is great exercise and helps keeps the mind sharp.</small></p> <p><small>NATURE PROTECTION: Birders, according to a recent study, are five times more likely than non-birdwatchers to participate in wildlife and habitat conservation' to recycle and engage in other eco-friendly activities; and to vote for wildlife-positive regulations and policies (Audubon.org).</small></p> <p><small>DATA COLLECTION TO INFORM MANAGEMENT DECISIONS: Birds are environmental indicators, and changes in their behavior and migratory patterns can provide valuable insights into the effects of climate change. Bird watchers play a crucial role in monitoring these shifts, contributing to our understanding of this global challenge. Our Bird Study Programs monitor bird species in Whistler and the Sea to Sky corridor. Our birders provide real and useful data that documents the range of species in Whistler and corridor and informs land use decisions. Our data goes to our long-term monitoring of birds provides essential data towards conservation. As an example, Evening Grosbeak is a species that breeds in Whistler and whose population in Canada has declined precipitously in the past 50 years. An excerpt from the Species at Risk Management Plan says that: "In Canada, long-term trends based on the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) indicate an 82% decline since 1970-1992 while Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data indicate an 87% decline over a similar time period" [p. iii, emphasis added].</small></p> <p><small>This is just one example of the way our bird studies contribute to efforts to prioritize conservation efforts. The Provincial government uses a similar assessment process for birds and other species, and these assessments would be much less accurate without local bird studies.</small></p> <p><small>Local conservation priorities are mainly informed by Federal and Provincial listings of species-at-risk, but Whistler Naturalist bird surveys have also led to direct efforts to conserve habitat. Some examples include protection of critical habitat at the Fitzsimmons Creek Delta and reporting of sightings of rare species such as Northern Goshawk and Green Heron.</small></p>	

4. Existing Funding and Grant Applications:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>List the specific grants, funding and fundraising planned, approved or pending for the existing year, and</i> <i>Please also list rejected or non-approved funding (with reasons).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resort Municipality of Whistler Community Enrichment Program: \$1,000 (pending) • Whistler Community Foundation Environmental Legacy Fund: \$2,200 (pending) 	

GRANT INFORMATION (CONTINUED):

5. Grant Request Amounts and Financial Breakdown:			
<i>Please ensure numbers provided in this table coincide with the required financial documents you provide in your application</i>			
	Annual Operating Budget	Grant Requested	<i>Provide a brief description of the specific amount requested. (Ex: Products, services, staffing roles, advertising, etc.)</i>
Salaries/contracts:			
General operations:			
One-time project / program:	3,200	1,000	Costs related to the Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey – transportation, accommodation, meals
Physical assets:			
Rent (RMOW facilities):		N/A	
Rent (other facilities):			
Other:	20,500		In kind
Total	\$ 23,700	\$ 1,000	4.2 % <i>(Grant request ÷ Annual budget amount)</i>
Reminder: The grant amount requested cannot be more than 50% of the annual operating budget of the organization.			

6. Additional Information:	<i>Please list any additional information, details or explanations regarding your grant request that you would like to be considered by Council.</i>
	<p>CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS: Bird populations are declining around the world. And while many factors contribute — from habitat loss to pesticides, outdoor cats, and window collisions — it is increasingly clear that climate change is an important driver behind this worrying trend.</p> <p>Climate patterns have shifted throughout Earth's long history, but the speed of human-caused climate change in the Anthropocene is unprecedented, making it more difficult for birds to adapt. So how do changing climatic conditions affect birds? Our Bird Study Programs helps find that out by entering all our observations into databases that are available for study. Changes in climate can affect ecosystems by influencing animal behavior and ranges. Birds are a particularly good indicator of environmental change for several reasons:</p> <p>Each species of bird has adapted or evolved to favor certain habitat types, food sources, and temperature ranges. In addition, the timing of certain events in their life cycles—such as migration and reproduction—is driven by cues from the environment. For example, many North American birds follow a regular seasonal migration pattern, moving north to feed and breed in the summer, then moving south to spend the winter in warmer areas. Changing conditions can influence the distribution of both migratory and non-migratory birds as well as the timing of important life cycle events.</p> <p>Birds are easy to identify and count, and thus there is a wealth of scientific knowledge about their distribution and abundance. People have kept detailed records of bird observations in Whistler for more than thirty years.</p> <p>There are many different species of birds in Whistler living in a variety of habitats, including lakes, wetlands, alpine, forest and meadow. If a change in behavior or range occurs across a range of bird types, it suggests that a common external factor might be the cause.</p>

7. Attachments:	<i>Please indicate the attachments you are including with your Grant Application Form:</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Financial Statement (audited preferred) or Organization Budget (Required) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Proof (copy) of registered not-for-profit society status or registered charity status (Required) <input type="checkbox"/> • Other:	

COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

<p>8. Please list how your organization may improve Community Performance Indicators:</p>	<p>Please visit https://www.whistler.ca/municipal-gov/strategies-and-plans/strategic-plan/ to learn about the four priority areas of RMOW 2023-2026 Strategic Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing 2. Climate Action 3. Community Engagement 4. Smart Tourism <p>Please determine how your grant (or organization) can contribute to fulfilling any priorities described in the four areas listed above. Each priority has numerous specifications to choose from while describing how your grant (or organization) may help to improve Strategic Plan.</p>
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Example: This grant addresses the priority of “Community Engagement” because it strives to connect locals to each other. Specifically, this is because...

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT: Because people only care FOR what they first care ABOUT. Through nature educating we help people care ABOUT the environment and in turn those people are much more likely to become stewards. Because to make environmental management planning decisions that protect the environment, you need good data. Our Bird Study Programs have a research component, and this unbiased data is invaluable when making environmental management planning decisions.

ENRICHING COMMUNITY LIFE: Because our community loves to learn, through our programs and online resources we give the community access to learning opportunities. Since we are completely volunteer run, we have diverse volunteer opportunities where volunteers feel a sense of belonging with likeminded people who love nature.

ENHANCING THE RESORT EXPERIENCE: Our programs and online information give visitors the opportunity to participate in community events and/or explore on their own with a much deeper appreciation of the natural world in Whistler. This promotes a positive atmosphere for the visitor who will feel more connected to the community after participating.

ENSURING ECONOMIC VIABILITY: The more the community learns about the natural environment in Whistler, the more we can collectively act as curators of this wonderful place to visitors that come here primarily for a natural experience.

SUPPORT FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The RMOW is committed to working with the Líl'wat People, known in their language as L'il'wat7úl and the Squamish People, known in their language as the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

9. How has your organization considered truth and reconciliation with the Indigenous Nations?

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee reconciliation is about “establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country.” While reconciliation is not part of our mission, we do seek to increase local knowledge of and appreciation for the natural world to inspire stewardship. Respect for nature is something we share with First Nations, and we feel this shared goal can only help while working towards reconciliation.

GRANT APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION:

Submitted by:	Kristina Swerhun
Phone number:	[REDACTED]
Email:	WhistlerNaturalists@gmail.com
Acknowledgement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that the information provided in this CEP Grant Application Form is true;<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that a representative is required to present this grant request at a future Council Meeting;<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that if any amount is granted that the Grant Reporting Form is due by December 1 of this year;<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that if any amount is granted, it will be used only for its intended purpose unless otherwise approved by Council.
Signature:	[REDACTED]

Funding decisions will be announced during a Regular Council Meeting in April 2024.

Please contact the Legislative Services Department at corporate@whistler.ca if you require any assistance.

Personal and third party information provided in this application form is collected under the authority of Section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Should you have any questions regarding the collection, use and disclosure of this information please contact the Legislative and Privacy Coordinator at 604-935-8118 or at 4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler.