

COMMUNITY Wildlife HABITATS

*Creating Healthier Communities,
One Wildlife Habitat at a Time*

Enjoy listening to birds sing, watching butterflies flit from flower to flower, or walking through a park knowing that wildlife and nature are thriving? You can ensure wildlife and natural places continue to have a place in your community by helping your community become a National Wildlife Federation certified Community Wildlife Habitat™. A Community Wildlife Habitat is a place where people, flora and fauna can all flourish.

When your community becomes a certified Community Wildlife Habitat, it receives national recognition held by a select group of communities for making a commitment to transforming properties of homes, schools, businesses, and public spaces into welcoming spaces for wildlife. By providing habitat for wildlife, reducing chemicals, adding native plants, and conserving water, you can make your community a healthier place for wildlife and humans alike.

What is a Community Wildlife Habitat?

A Community Wildlife Habitat is a community-wide project which aims to achieve three goals: 1) provide habitat for wildlife throughout the community—at homes, on school grounds, at businesses and in public areas such as parks, community gardens, and places of worship; 2) raise awareness and educate citizens through workshops and community events about the value of having a healthy and balanced environment that includes nature and wildlife; and 3) engage citizens in community service projects such as stream cleanups to provide hands-on help for community greening efforts.

What can I do to help my community become a Community Wildlife Habitat?

To become a certified Community Wildlife Habitat, a community encourages a number of properties in the



Community Wildlife Habitats

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Photographs on this page: butterfly by John C. Magee, frog by Christina Rollo, chipmunk by Vladimir Mikhaylov

Community WILDLIFE Habitats



community—homes, schools, businesses, and common spaces—to become a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat™. To become a Certified Wildlife Habitat, a property needs to provide the four primary elements that wildlife need to survive—food, water, cover and places to raise young.

If you have a yard, or even a small patio, you can turn it into a haven for wildlife. One essential way you can help is by planting native plants which support many of the basic needs wildlife have – especially for food and cover. Some wildlife species like butterflies need particular native plants to survive and thrive. When you plant a native, you will notice an immediate change in the numbers and variety of wildlife visiting your yard.

Each yard that becomes a Certified Wildlife Habitat helps the community with its goals toward becoming a certified Community. Learn how to turn your yard into a Certified Wildlife Habitat at www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife.

If you don't have a place to create a habitat where you live, you can lead an effort to create a Certified Wildlife Habitat at your place of business or place of worship or at a local school or park or help to spread the word to your neighbors. To learn more about how you can volunteer with NWF in your community, please go to: www.nwf.org/volunteer.

To view a list of all the certified Community Wildlife Habitats, please go to: www.nwf.org/community/certified. To view a list of all the registered communities, please go to: www.nwf.org/community/registered.

To learn more about the national Community Wildlife Habitats initiative, please visit: www.nwf.org/community.

How does a Community Wildlife Habitat benefit my community?

Conservation — A Community Wildlife Habitat project can restore and connect corridors of habitat for wildlife across your community. It also creates a forum for introducing your community to a variety of green practices, such as conserving water, reducing fertilizer and pesticide use, and planting native plants.

Community Building — Engaging community members in projects like creating a wildlife-friendly public garden is a great way to get to know your neighbors. Working together creates a community conversation, brings community members together and encourages more people to spend time outside.

Health — Greening your community by adding more native plantings and reducing fertilizer and pesticide use has the potential to help improve water and air quality, creating a healthier environment for people and wildlife. Native plants, once they're established, usually need less water and fertilizer than non-native plants like turf grass, which can also save you money in the long run.

Connecting with Nature — Providing habitat for wildlife in backyards, schoolyards, and the properties of businesses and places of worship also means providing many more places for people to connect with nature in their community. Opportunities to connect with nature are particularly important for children, who are spending increasing amounts of time indoors and losing their connection with nature.

Beautification — Creating habitat for wildlife with native wildflowers, trees and shrubs, adding water features such as ponds and streams, and welcoming wildlife like butterflies and birds enhances a community's overall appearance.

