Beat: News

Snowbirds Final Season, 2026

Canadians Speak Out

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USPA NEWS - In this article, Part 3 of a five-article series, USPA24 News will share insights from Canadians, amplifying their voices and perspectives. This article is informed by valuable contributions from anonymous sources close to the RCAF and engaged citizens who are passionate about the topic.

This morning I had the chance to speak with John, on the Halifax Waterfront, who is a former Royal Canadian Air Force mechanic. He shared some of his thoughts on the Snowbirds retirement at the end of the 2026 Air Show Season. Here is some of his insights;
"Since 1971, the Snowbirds have showcased Canadian aerial excellence at airshows globally. As a premier recruiting tool for the military, they inspire youth to pursue careers in the Canadian Armed Forces. However, their current fleet is scheduled for retirement after 2026, with the replacement aircraft not anticipated until the 2030s. Why is there a delay? The Liberal government rejected the replacement aircraft proposal in 2019, resulting in a six-year postponement of the request for proposal for the new aircraft. Notably, the replacement aircraft will be a turboprop, rather than a jet. Consequently, Canadians will miss several Snowbird seasons, and this iconic symbol of Canadian aviation excellence will be absent for a few years due to bureaucratic delays."

I also spoke with Veronica, who lives near 14 Wing CFB Greenwood, and she had this to say;
The Snowbirds' Tutor jets have been soaring through the skies since the 1960s. Throughout the years, the team has evolved into a powerful symbol of Canada's military and cultural identity, taking part in air shows across Canada, international destinations, and flyovers at major national events.
The decision reflects growing aspirations for: aircraft innovation, maintenance excellence, long-term safety, and modernization advancements. Many Canadians have a profound emotional connection to the Snowbirds, whose precision flying performances have inspired audiences for generations. Now, the grounding marks the beginning of a transformative journey for one of the country's most revered aviation teams.

In my last interview with Captain Jennifer Casey, Public Affairs Officer for the Snowbirds team, at the June 2019, Snowbirds Over Debert, production, she explained that the Snowbirds demonstration team was founded 49 years ago and have used the Tutor jets since the beginning. She continued by saying, "The Canadian Forces Snowbirds mission is to be ambassadors for the Canadian Military. "The goal is to show the skill, professionalism and team work that not only makes up the Snowbirds team, but the entire armed forces." She also emphasized that "skill, professionalism, and team work" is needed to keep the team in the air.
During my journalism career, I can honestly say that my interview with Captain Casey was one of my most inspiring, uplifting, and enthusiastic conversations. She was the embodiment of the true spirit of the Snowbirds mission, and I consider it a privilege to have had the chance to watch her do the job that she loved by which inspiring so many.

For many generations, the Snowbirds have embodied a powerful message of inspiration and patriotism that has been intricately woven into the very fabric of what unites Canadians as a vast and diverse nation recognized around the world.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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