

LOGISTICS PLANNING

(or Everybody Needs Anita)

by Anita Guris

Supporting my husband Paul Guris and the Nikon / DVOC Lagerhead Shrikes World Series of Birding team is not only a pleasure but it is also a necessity. Having watched them reach the victory podium on several occasions and remain in the top five for many years is an honor. Frankly, I like to think my assistance (and Jeanne Fritz's brownies) has helped them reach the winner's circle. For any team that wants to cross that Finish Line, you will be glad to learn the secrets of their WSB Logistics Coordinator.

Ultimately, a well organized birding machine-like team is what every team should strive to achieve. Having the essentials taken care of for them makes the job of the team members easier, and narrows their responsibilities to THREE

1. Scouting

2. Scouting and yes,

3. More Scouting.

On game day, having the necessities organized and easily accessible makes a world of difference!

Follow my suggestions outlined here and I assure you that your team will at least look good, eat well, and be as organized as possible on game day. The only thing they team will need to worry about will be the birding and navigation skills they need to bring in the high scores which we all know translates into much needed funds for conservation.

Be an Early Bird

The real work begins early in the year, often starting in January or February. Depending on the location of the team members this process may sometimes even start earlier if air fares are involved.

For any team that wants to cross that finish line with the class and abounding birding energy that the Nikon/DVOC team does, you will be glad to learn the secrets of their WSB Logistics Coordinator.

January – Apparel

Start planning for team shirts. If someone you know has artistic talent, ask them to donate their efforts on behalf of your cause. You can even design a logo on your computer, but please respect all copyrights. If you have a corporate sponsor, check with them to see if they will pay for the cost of the logo and team shirts. It's a great way for them to have their names on display. If they agree, make sure you have a few shirts made up for the corporate sponsor too. Don't forget to ask what sizes they want.

You can even put your logo on other items like hats, totes, and outerwear to truly promote your team. We have even started to sell our shirts to DVOC club members to help raise even more money for our conservation causes.

If the cost of shirts is too expensive for those of you without a corporate sponsor, there are lots of alternatives to making your team look uniform and spiffy. Ask everyone to wear the same color on game day and at the brunch. Your shirt is like a field mark, and helps others to identify you as a member of a team. Any helpers should get shirts too!

January / February – Lodging Setup

Arrange for accommodations early. Check out birder friendly businesses for accommodations on the Cape May Bird Observatory website (www.birdcapemay.org).

Depending on the route, you may need to arrange lodging for any team members that plan on scouting an area far away from their home. This could include campsite reservations and motel rooms. Reserve a room right near the action.

March – Contact Information Gathering

To speed the completion of WSB application and any mailings, ask all team members for all of their contact information including cell phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses, directions to pickup points or drop-off points, emergency contact persons, etc. Add contact information for the corporate sponsor, all lodging, car rental, hotlines, and every phone number that you can think of that is related to WSB. Put all of this in ONE place. It will help you later, trust me! This is a good time to ask for driver's license copies from all team members that plan to drive a rental vehicle during the event. File the copies in a safe place (like your WSB LOGISTICS folder).

Late March – Rental Vehicle Setup

Reserve the team rental vehicle for game day now! The price may even be lower if you book early. If it is difficult for you to have all of the team members present at

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the rental agency, find a company that will accept copies of their driver's licenses. This makes life much simpler when arranging to pickup the van. Be sure to tell them why you are renting their vehicle and maybe they will be kind enough to donate the vehicle for game day.

Ask for the vehicle that will work best for the event. For example, vans with manual doors or power override allow for much faster access than vans with full power doors.

April – Forms Completion and Mailings

This is the most important step next to game day itself. WSB forms are available online (www.worldseriesofbirding.org). Be sure to send in the completed application and make a copy of it for your records. Make sure you send it in by the deadline.

Mid-April – Check-up and Verification

Call either Sheila or Marleen at CMBO (609.884.2736) to verify that they have received your entry application and all the hold harmless forms from your team members. Be sure to follow-up with any late team members and start nudging them to send in their form.

End of April – Permission Formalities

If you use areas that require permission to gain access, now is the time to request this permission. A letter is another way to handle this step, although calling will give you immediate results and should be followed-up with a letter.

In addition, inform the local police that your team will be in certain areas birding for New Jersey Audubon at an approximate time, to help ease the way, should someone find it strange to see a group of people similarly dressed standing by the side of a road at 3 AM.

End of April – Food Planning

Your team should work as a cohesive unit as much as possible, birding, eating and sometimes even relieving the stress on kidneys. The easiest way to handle food on game day is to ensure that everyone eats roughly the same thing. This works great for our team, but may have to be modified for your team. The more specific foods required, the more difficult it is to plan in advance and track on game day. Come up with food that travels well, and that requires little preparation. Pack a cooler of snacks, one



cooler of food, and one cooler of water and drinks. The folly of many teams is having too many single coolers and many individual items to track, which creates havoc. It's hard to eat healthy on game day, but by providing lots of water, cheese cubes, nutritious sandwiches, and

some fruit & nuts, your team will be able to eat a fairly normal diet, not be weighed down by heavy foods, and won't go into a sugar coma before midnight! Having one person handing out food is always helpful – EYES not gazing perplexedly into a cooler can be looking for birds! Keep in mind that keeping the vehicle neat and easy to jump in and out of is key. Put a stack of plastic grocery bags through the headrest posts and hang off the back of the front seats. When the driver stops to fill the gas tank, remove the first bag and toss it.

After Midnight...

Sit back and relax, enjoy the feeling of accomplishment for you and your team. Be proud that you were a part of the ongoing legacy of raising awareness and funds for a great cause.

Go to the brunch and wear your team shirt proudly, whatever your final score, and remember the most important thing is raising money and you play a huge part in helping secure the future of our avian allies.

Good luck and keep coming back to WSB! ■

