

World Series of Birding **RULES** of Competition

New Jersey Audubon's



Please note, New Jersey Audubon is in the process of developing a World Series of Birding app to allow all teams to input their official WSB

tally through a team member's handheld phone. The app will be tested throughout the month of March and we will provide all registered teams the opportunity to practice with the app as soon as it is ready. Rules related to Checklist Submission and Team Totals, the 95% rule, and documentation of geographically rare species are subject to change/clarification as we test the app.

The following rules establish the standards and practices under which ALL World Series of Birding participants must comply. The rules are in fundamental accord with Big Day Count Rules established by the American Birding Association (ABA). Changes, where they occur, have been made to meet the needs imposed by team competition. Note that some categories of competition may have additional rules that govern participation. Youth teams must familiarize themselves with the new rules and information contained in the document "Zeiss Youth Birding Challenge."

ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH AND COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE RULES IN ORDER TO COMPETE IN THE WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING. Failure in this regard may result in the disqualification of the team.

I. Ethics

- Each participant must maintain proper birding ethics at all times as defined in the ABA Principles of Birding Ethics
- Teams visiting National Wildlife Refuges, Wildlife Management Areas, private properties and other identified places must abide by the landowners own rules and regulations. For those planning to visit the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, please be aware of the latest access instructions.

II. Participants – What Makes a Team?

- In order to compete in any of the Level I: Bird Conservation Challenge awards categories, a majority of any teams' members must be 18 years old or older.
- Teams must consist of a minimum of three registered members; there is no upper limit on the number of team members as long as all team members are active participants. Designated drivers are not included in these counts.
- Team members need not remain together for the entire 24-hour period. One or more team members may leave the team at any point during the competition and members may join the team in accordance with the following stipulations:

- One or more team members joining a team in the field must do so before 4 AM. These team members may not have used the time between midnight and 4 AM for scouting or the team will be disqualified.
 - Teams will at all times be comprised of a minimum of three individuals in the field, not including designated drivers or mentors.
 - Designated drivers may be added and released at any time. Designated drivers cannot alter or contribute to the route or strategy of the team. Their job is strictly to drive.
 - Team members leaving the team for reasons of health, fatigue, appointment (whatever) cannot rejoin the team during the competition; but will remain an official member of the team. This includes drivers who are "birding" members of the team, not acting in a role of strictly designated driver.
- d. Any number of non-birding participants may accompany the team, but these participants may not assist the team in any way in the location or identification of birds. Designated drivers are considered team members but cannot aid or contribute in location or identification of birds in any manner during the competition or the team will be disqualified.

III. Geographic Area

- Only birds recorded by observers conducting their counts within New Jersey may be counted.
- Teams may begin and end their route anywhere in New Jersey.
- A team may cross into another state for convenience or expedience but, no birds may be counted unless the team is within New Jersey.
- Birds seen in the Delaware or Hudson Rivers may be counted providing the observer is standing in New Jersey or short of midpoint on any bridge.
- Birds seen in Delaware Bay or the Atlantic Ocean to a distance of 100 miles may be counted as long as the team is within New Jersey territorial waters.
- Teams that elect to compete in any of the Level I categories besides statewide (Limited Geographic Area, Cape Island, etc.) must indicate the category in which they plan to compete, and teams can only compete in one category. Any team not designating a category will be counted under full state totals.

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IV. Travel

- a. All vehicles except aircraft may be used during the competition. Those competing in the Carbon Footprint Cup or Carbon Free Kids category may not use any motorized conveyances.
- b. Team members must remain at distances that permit direct, unamplified voice contact at all times.
- c. Participants are not required to travel in the same vehicle so long as there is compliance with Rule III above.
- d. All teams must comply with New Jersey highway laws. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

V. Counting

- a. Count only full species as defined and indicated by the current New Jersey Records Committee checklist. Non-native or re-established species may only be counted in accordance with the current New Jersey Records Committee list.
- b. Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or sound. A bird identified as to one of a species or group (i.e., scaup either greater or lesser) may be counted as a species, if no other bird in that group appears on your list. FOR EXAMPLE: Scaup, sp. counts as one bird. Greater Scaup and scaup, sp. still counts as just one bird.
- c. Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained. Sick, injured, or oiled birds may be counted if still at large in the countryside and not in captive confinement. Eggs do not count as birds.
- d. Electronic or recorded bird calls (such as iPods, phones, or similar tools) may not be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during the World Series. Pishing is allowed. Bird recordings may ONLY be used to help in the identification of birds when not actively birding outdoors (e.g. sitting in a vehicle, traveling between destinations, etc.)
- e. The use of spotlights, Q-beams or other bright hand held lights are strictly prohibited at any time during the competition. Small, handheld flashlights may be used as needed for personal safety only (i.e., walking trails).
- f. All birds tallied must be identified by at least two members of the team. Identifications made by just a single team member may not be counted.

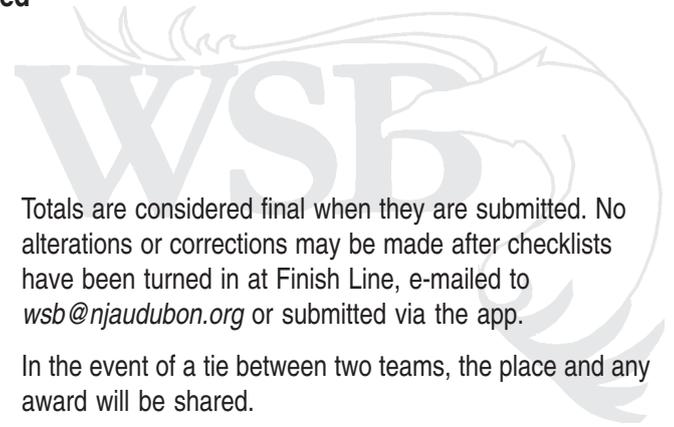
- g. Ninety-five percent of all birds recorded by a team must be tallied and identified by all members of the team - called the 95% Rule. This is your OFFICIAL TOTAL. In essence, it means that for every twenty birds recorded, you may count one bird that was heard or seen by fewer than every member of a team (in accordance with Rule 'f' above). It is not necessary for all team members to record the same individual bird. If three members of a team hear a Belted Kingfisher and a fourth member does not BUT manages to record another kingfisher later in the day, and this sighting is corroborated by at least one other team member, then Belted Kingfisher has been recorded unanimously.
- h. Birds that are deemed regionally restricted, generally rare, or otherwise difficult to identify, now require a minimal amount of documentation; time of sighting (hh:mm am/pm) and location (general location, nearest town, and county). These birds are noted as "Flagged" on the new WSB app, and noted on the official World Series of Birding checklist with space to provide the information. Birds seen or heard that are not on the official World Series of Birding checklist, are considered "write-in" birds and will be flagged by the new WSB app as "Rare". The app will allow you to submit a detailed account of the bird in a comment with your list as well as a way to provide a photograph. Teams not using the app should carry several copies of the Write-In Species Form, and include the form and a photograph (if possible) to the Finish Line. Photo and audio documentation are acceptable addendum if they are able to be submitted before midnight. All "write-ins" are subject to a review by our judges, and may not be accepted.
- i. The primary interest of all teams should be the welfare of birds. Endangered, threatened or sensitive species (such as raptors) may not be harassed or disturbed at any time (before or during) the event for the purpose of counting them. See New Jersey's Listing of State and Federally Endangered and Threatened Species. Documentation of disturbance or harassment will lead to a team disqualification. While not a complete list, harassment/disturbance includes getting too close to sensitive species such as nesting raptors, flushing birds from nests or cavities, and/or spotlighting birds during nighttime hours. If you witness a team disturbing birds, you should lodge a "Call of Foul." See item IX below.

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- b. Totals are considered final when they are submitted. No alterations or corrections may be made after checklists have been turned in at Finish Line, e-mailed to wsb@njudubon.org or submitted via the app.
- c. In the event of a tie between two teams, the place and any award will be shared.

VI. Outside Information

- a. While the World Series of Birding is a competitive event, the event organizers encourage collaboration and sharing of information using open-source or globally-accessible platforms such as eBird, Twitter, Facebook, and other non-pay-for-service listserves and bird alerts, such as IMO. It is strictly prohibited to share information between individuals or one or two teams privately. NOTE: World Series of Birding event organizers accept no responsibility for unverified bird sightings; use of open-source information is a risk that is the sole responsibility of the team.
- b. No team shall pre-arrange to have someone scout ahead on the day of the event to tell them about stake-out birds.

VII. Branding

- a. All teams are required to refer to this event as "New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding." Teams raising funds for organizations other than New Jersey Audubon must reference the event properly and use the official logo. Please see branding requirements here.

VIII. Checklist Submission and Team Totals:

Please note, this section was revised in 2016 to include list submission through our new WSB App, which is the preferred method of submission. The information here does not apply to the WSB Photo Big Day on April 30th, although the app will be available for use.

- a. All competing teams must submit their final list for the day, whether via the app or otherwise, to the Finish Line by midnight on the day of competition. If using paper, only official WSB checklists will be accepted. Checklists can be submitted in person, e-mailed to wsb@njudubon.org. E-mail documents will be time stamped. If taking a photograph of a list and sending it via e-mail from your phone, be sure it is well lighted and readable, otherwise it will not be accepted. In case of duplicate transmissions, the earliest time stamped document is the only one accepted. If you are unfamiliar with the e-mail process, test it the week prior to the event, but clearly mark TEST on the transmission.

IX. Call of Foul and Protest

The World Series of Birding strives to maintain the highest ethical standards. All participants in this event are, by the nature of their participation, committed to this ideal. Likewise, accuracy and honesty are fundamental to birding and this event.

If a team is perceived to be NOT following World Series rules (either during scouting or on the day of the event), a "Call of Foul" can be brought to New Jersey Audubon Society for review and action. In the event that any team's total is for whatever reasons suspect, a minimum of three team captains (with the full support of their respective team members), may file a protest with event organizers.

Allegations will be reviewed by a panel of New Jersey Audubon staff and other individuals deemed necessary to review the protest and make a determination.

- a. A written Call of Foul must be received by event organizers no later than 5 days after the event. The affected team's Captain will be given 5 days to present a defense of the allegations and the WSB panel will make a ruling within 5 days of receipt. Because of time considerations, a call of foul or protest may not affect team standings at the Awards Brunch; however, the panel is empowered to adjust a team's standing and/or disqualify a team at a later date if evidence warrants.
- b. In the event that allegations related to a Call of Foul are found to have substance, the team and its members will be banned from WSB participation for a minimum of one year. If the infraction is assessed to have given the team unfair advantage, their record for the year in which the infraction occurred will be voided.
- c. In the event that allegations related to a "protest" are found to have substance, then the following may happen depending on severity: 1) the team's total is adjusted to delete suspect birds from the team list, 2) the team is disqualified; its total, standing and any awards nullified, and/or 3) the team and/or its members may be banned from any number of future competitions.
- d. The decision of the review panel is considered final.

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X. Conduct – Final Reminder

- a. Team members must be familiar with the rules of the competition before the event and abide by them at all times.
- b. Team members must count only birds personally and unquestionably identified.
- c. No team may intentionally harass or disturb a bird, or flush or drive into hiding any bird to prevent another team from finding it.
- d. This is a family-friendly event and all participants must comport themselves accordingly.
- e. Team members must remain within voice contact at a conversational level of all other members at all times.
- f. Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or substances, and weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited at this event. ■

