

World Series of Birding

2021 “Special Edition II”



The 2021 “Special Edition II” of the World Series of Birding is designed for a day of good birding, lots of communication and sharing, virtual camaraderie and FUN, all with the health and safety of everyone involved paramount during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether you look out the window, explore your yard or neighborhood, or venture to a nearby park, if open, set the day aside for the enjoyment of birds and raising critical funding for New Jersey Audubon or the conservation cause of your choice.

Once again, as with the 2020 Special Edition WSB, you can put together a team of birders each located anywhere in New Jersey, or in select states which are part of the Atlantic Flyway. Competitive teams must focus on their home states. Non- competitive teams (ie. Level II NJ Audubon Ambassadors) may compile a checklist from more than one state. All teams may take advantage of digital communication and social media to find new ways to communicate their sightings to each other and to one primary checklist manager.

A “Virtual Awards Ceremony” will take place on Tuesday evening, May 11, at 7pm, and teams will be recognized for achieving the highest total in their state within their chosen category.

Read on for more information and get creative about your approach. The most important things are to experience spring migration, be safe and have

FUN!

Rules of Competition

UPDATED FOR THE 2021 "SPECIAL EDITION II" OF THE WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING

The 2021 "Special Edition II" of the World Series of Birding invites teams to form in New Jersey or in any of the following states, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- Level I and Level III competitive teams must be comprised of a minimum of three and maximum of six members, stay within their state's boundaries and must use the WSB phone app.
- Level II non-competitive teams may have members in more than one state, may have an unlimited number of team members, and are required to use the WSB phone app.
- New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding is, and always has been, dependent on the Honor System in bird identification, which means *if you're not sure, don't count it*.
- All teams and team members must be registered by midnight, May 7th. Once the WSB event begins May 8th, no team or team member registration will be accepted.
- All teams must populate their team web page with a team photo, paragraph about the team, and their conservation cause at least two weeks prior to the WSB.
- All WSB participants are required to follow their COVID-19 orders, guidelines and restrictions to the letter on the day of the WSB event.

In a nutshell:

Competitive Teams

Teams in the Bird Conservation Challenge Level I and Zeiss Youth Challenge Level III can raise money for NJ Audubon or the conservation cause of their choice.

- Entry fee of \$100 per team member applies all teams in the Bird Conservation Challenge Level I.
- Teams in Level I will consist of at least three, but not more than six members, not including designated drivers.
- Team members need not bird together, but may do so if following all COVID-19 restrictions. They can be anywhere in one state, depending on COVID-19

restrictions at the time of the event.

- One person on each team is assigned the task of keeping the checklist and ensuring it is submitted by midnight. In the Youth Divisions for grades 1 –5, and 6- 8, a mentor must keep and submit the checklist by the “end-of-day” time limit for that Youth Division, which are 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm respectively. (See Zeiss Youth Birding Challenge Rules)
- If a team is participating outside the state of New Jersey, its team name must be registered beginning with the initials of its state of origin. Such as, “FL: The Miami Merlins.”
- All participants raising money for NJ Audubon should work toward raising a minimum of \$100 per person for their team.
- The Wakefern Food Corp./ShopRite Limited Geographic Area (LGA), Cape May County and Cape Island categories are open only to teams participating in New Jersey.
- An individual may only be a member of one team

Non-Competitive Teams

All teams in the NJ Audubon Ambassador Level II raise money for New Jersey Audubon and are considered non-competitive.

- There are no registration fees for Level II, but all team members must register by midnight May 7th.
- An NJ Audubon Ambassador Level II “team” may consist of one person, with no upper limit to the number of team members.
- Teams may consist of members participating from any of the states listed above, including more than one state per team.
- Team members may be of any age.
- The LGA, Cape May County and Cape Island categories are open only to teams participating in New Jersey.
- An individual may only be a member of one team.

All WSB participants are required to follow their local COVID-19 orders and guidelines to the letter. If you are prohibited from visiting some of your favorite spots, birding from your yard or window is acceptable!

The following rules apply to both competitive and non-competitive teams.

These 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 in

that category. Youth team members, and mentors, must familiarize themselves with the rules and information listed in the **Zeiss Youth Birding Challenge** document.

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. In addition, if birds are intentionally disturbed in order to gain a verifiable ID, team members may be banned from competition the subsequent year or more, depending on the nature of the infraction, and at the discretion of the event organizers (see Section X [Call of Foul and Protest](#), below).

I. Ethics

- a. Each participant must maintain proper birding ethics at all times as defined in the ABA Code of Birding Ethics <https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/>, with the following exception to the use of recorded sound;
- b. Electronic or recorded bird calls (such as iPhones, iPads, any hand-held phones, or similar tools) may not be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during the WSB event. To do so will result in elimination of the entire team if reported. Pishing is allowed.
- c. Teams and individual team members visiting National Wildlife Refuges, Wildlife Management Areas or the equivalent, 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 in New Jersey, please be aware of the latest access instructions. In short, teams must obtain whatever permits may be necessary for various spots in their own state.

II. Participants – What Makes a Team?

- a. In order to compete in any of the Level I: Bird Conservation Challenge award categories, ALL team members must be 19 years of age or older.
- b. Teams must consist of a minimum of three but not more than six registered members (except for the NJ Ambassador Challenge Level II where a team can consist of only one person, and there is no upper limit on the number of team members) as long as all team members are active participants and are able to maintain proper social distancing at all times in all locations, while following COVID-19 restrictions on the day of the event. Drivers and Designated drivers, if any, and mentors are not included in these counts.
- c. All participants must be listed on a team via online registration by 12 midnight on Friday, May 7th. Online registrations and submitted checklists are time stamped.
- d. An individual can be part of only one team.
- e. Driver vs. Designated Driver: *(This rule may not be applicable depending on the status of COVID-19 restrictions in May 2021)*. A team member can also be the team driver. However, when driving, the team member may not participate in identifying birds – they are driving. A designated driver is not a team member in terms of identifying birds. Designated drivers may not alter or contribute to the route or strategy of the team or identify species while acting as drivers. Their job is strictly to drive, as directed by the team.
- f. Each team must appoint an official designee who will enter the team's checklist on the WSB phone app. It is up to the teams to design their communications in a fashion that gets their total submitted via the WSB phone app before midnight or the designated time limit for their youth division.
- g. Any number of non-birding participants may accompany the team members, but these participants may not assist the team in any way in the location or identification of birds.

III. WSB Phone App

New Jersey Audubon introduced a World Series of Birding app in 2016 to allow teams to input their official WSB tally through a team member's handheld phone and submit their final list at the conclusion of their birding for the event. Teams who wish to participate in the Level I Bird

Conservation Challenge as well as the Level III Zeiss Youth Birding Challenge, are required to use the WSB phone app. Teams in the Level II NJ Audubon Ambassador Challenge are also required to use the WSB phone app. Every team must select one person to keep and submit the team checklist, even if team members are from more than one state. If a team does not use the WSB phone app, its results may not be reflected on the WSB website, and its results will not be included in the cumulative total. If absolutely necessary, teams can email their final checklists to wsb@njudubon.org.

IV. Geographic Area

- a. Only birds recorded by participants conducting their count within their chosen state or area may be added to their checklist and counted, except Level II teams, whose members may be in more than one state.
- b. Team members may be dispersed anywhere in their state, provided they abide by their state and local COVID-19 restrictions on the day of the event and practice social distancing.
- c. A team member may cross into another state for convenience, or expedience, but no bird may be counted until the team member is back within its chosen state.
- d. In 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. The same applies to participants in states that have river borders or are linked to another state by a bridge over a river or bay.
- e. Birds seen in the Delaware Bay or in the Atlantic Ocean to a distance of 100 miles may be counted as long as the team member is within New Jersey territorial waters. The same holds true for coastal states on the Atlantic Flyway.
- f. Teams may only compete in one category. Any Level I team not designating a category will be automatically included under the Boundless Birding category totals.

V. Travel during WSB

- a. All vehicles except aircraft may be used during the competition, if appropriate within local Covid-19 guidelines. Those competing in the Swarovski Carbon Footprint Cup or Zeiss Carbon Free Kids categories may not use any motorized conveyances from the time they begin birding until they finish. See clarifications under these categories.
- b. All team members must comply with the traffic rules and laws that apply to their state. Failure to do so will result in team disqualification.

VI. Counting

- a. In New Jersey, count only full species as defined and indicated by the current New Jersey Records Committee checklist, which is the basis of the WSB official checklist and WSB Phone App. Non-native or re-established species may only be counted in accordance with the current New Jersey Records Committee list. Teams participating in another state should consult their Records Committees if they encounter a rarity and complete a write-in entry. All rarities will be vetted by the WSB Judge; the judge's decisions are final.
- 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 one bird. Greater Scaup and Lesser Scaup count as two species.
- 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 iPhones, iPads, any hand-held phones, or similar tools) may not be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during the WSB event. To do so will result in elimination of the entire team if reported. Pushing is allowed.
- e. Audio enhancement devices, other than personal hearing aids, may not be used.

- f. Electronic or recorded bird calls may ONLY be used to assist in the identification of birds when not actively birding outdoors (i.e. it is OK when indoors, sitting in a vehicle, traveling between destinations, etc.). Online and phone app-based products may not be consulted until the team or team member has made its identification. They may be used after the fact to confirm the ID. If there is any question, the bird should not be counted.
- g. The use of spotlights, Q-beams or other bright hand-held lights is strictly prohibited at any time during the competition. Small, handheld flashlights may be used as needed for personal safety only (i.e. walking trails or local streets at night).
- h. Since team members may be remote from one another, it is up to fellow members to accept or question any dubious identifications before adding them to the official checklist. **The 95% Rule will not apply except below.**
- i. **The 95% rule applies only to the Big Stay Category in 2021.** This means ninety-five percent of all birds recorded by a Big Stay team must be tallied and identified by all members of the team. In essence, it means that for every twenty birds recorded, one bird may be counted that was heard or seen by fewer than every member of the team, but at least two. It is not necessary for all team members to record the same individual bird of any species. For example, if three team members ID a Belted Kingfisher and the fourth does not, the 95% rule applies. If the fourth team member later identifies a different Belted Kingfisher, the 95% rule can be lifted. The WSB phone app allows for this. Please note, the circle diameter for a 2021 Big Stay has been increased to 50 feet in an outdoor area. Big Stays can take place in any of the Atlantic Flyway states.
- j. The WSB phone app was created with New Jersey birding at peak spring migration in mind. The app allows for write-in species not included on the list and requires more detail be provided. Out-of-state teams may require more write-ins. Write-ins require a detailed account of the bird in a comment with your list, as well as the ability for the team's official phone app checklist designee to upload a photograph or audio recording. For species that are geographically common in a geographic area other than New Jersey, a team can make a note in its write-in account. For example, a Georgia team write-in can state: "Common in this area," which will be vetted by the judges and will be either accepted or rejected. Teams not using the WSB Phone App should carry several copies of the **Write-In Species** form and include the form and, if possible, a photograph, when submitting your final emailed checklist at the end of your day. Rare birds submitted on a list without a comment or photograph will not be counted. Comments and photographs will be reviewed by the WSB Judge regarding acceptance, and the judge's decision is final.
- k. Birds that are deemed regionally restricted, generally rare or otherwise difficult to identify, will require additional documentation such as time of sighting (hh:mm am/pm) and location (general location, nearest town, and county). In New Jersey, these birds are "flagged" on the WSB phone app and noted on the official WSB checklist with space to provide the information. If "flagged" birds are ID'd in other states where they may be more common, please fill in the extra information in the phone app or it will not accept the species.
- l. The primary interest of all teams should be the welfare of the birds. No birds, especially endangered, threatened or sensitive species, such as raptors and birds on nests, may be disturbed or harassed at any time before or during the event. See New Jersey's Listing of State and Federally Endangered and Threatened Species <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/tandespp.htm>, or the comparable list in your state. Documentation of disturbance or harassment, in the form of a Call of Foul or Protest, will lead to a team disqualification, as well as the potential for team members to be barred from WSB competition the following year or more. 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 participant disturbing birds, you should lodge a "[Call of Foul](#)." See Section X below.

VII. 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, Instagram and other non-pay-for-service listserves and bird alerts, such as the What's App that is specifically set up for the WSB. It is strictly prohibited to share information between individuals other than team members or between members of one or two teams privately (i.e. texting a sighting to a participant on another team). NOTE: World Series of Birding event organizers accept no responsibility for unverified bird sightings announced to the public; use of open-source information is a risk that is the sole responsibility of the team.
- b. No participant shall pre-arrange to have someone scout ahead on the day of the event to tell them about staked out birds.

VIII. World Series of Birding Branding Requirements

- a. All teams are required to refer to this event as "New Jersey Audubon's Special Edition 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](#) on the Rules/Forms tab on the WSB website.

IX. Checklist Submission and Team Totals

- a. All competing teams must submit their final list for the day via the phone app by midnight on the day of competition, or at the end of the time limit for their youth division. Checklists from non-competing teams can be emailed to wsb@njudubon.org. Checklist and email submissions will be time stamped. If taking a photograph of a list and sending it via email 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 or the phone app, be sure to test them at least one week prior to the event, and clearly mark TEST on any email.
- b. Totals are considered final when they are submitted. NO alterations or corrections may be made after checklists have been submitted via the WSB phone app or emailed to wsb@njudubon.org.
- c. In the event of a tie between two teams in a category that is competitive in 2021, the recognition will be shared.

X. Call of Foul and Protest

Note: A Call of Foul relates to a team or individual not following the rules, whereas a Protest means contesting a team's species total.

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 or individual team member is perceived to be NOT following WSB rules (either during scouting or on the day of the event), a "Call of Foul" can be brought to WSB event organizers for review and action. In the event that any team's total is for whatever reasons suspect, any *registered* WSB

participant may file a “protest” with WSB 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. During the scouting period one week prior to the event, any rules violation should be reported immediately in the form of a written Call of Foul sent to wsb@njudubon.org. Action in the form of a warning or penalty to the team or individual in question will be determined by the WSB event organizers. Photographic and/or video documentation, as well as the corroboration of others, will be taken into consideration. The final decision is the sole responsibility of WSB event organizers.
- b. If a violation occurs during the event, a written Call of Foul must be received by event organizers no later than 5pm on the Tuesday following the event. The affected team's Captain will be given 5 business days to present a defense of the allegations and the WSB panel will make a ruling within 5 business days of receipt. Because of time considerations, a call of foul or protest may not affect team standings in the days following the event. However, if the evidence warrants, the panel is empowered to adjust a team's standing and/or disqualify a team at a later date.
- c. In the event allegations related to a Call of Foul are found to have substance, the team and its members, or an individual team member, 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.
- d. 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.
- e. The decision of the review panel is considered final.

XI. Conduct – Final Reminders

- 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 or individual team member 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. Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or substances, and weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited at this event.
- f. All team members must conduct themselves within the COVID-19 restrictions in place in their state and area on the day of the event, and practice social distancing at all times and in all locations.