



City Birding Challenge Rules

NYC Audubon thanks the New Jersey Audubon Society for allowing us to use their World Series of Birding rules as the basis for our City Birding Challenge rules.

1. Counting

- a. Count only full species as indicated by the current NYC Audubon checklist.
- 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. Introduced or reintroduced species may be counted providing they appear on the current NYCA checklist and/or have been established in New York City for a minimum of ten years.
- d. Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained. Sick, injured, or oiled birds may be counted. Eggs do not count as birds.
- e. Electronic or recorded bird calls may not be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during the City Birding Challenge or while scouting prior to the event. The use of digital or electronic song detection devices are also prohibited during the event. Bird recordings may be used to help in the identification of birds and may be included among your gear but are restricted to vehicles and may only be used as a reference when teams are traveling between destinations and may not be used while teams are actively birding. Pishing is allowed.
- f. The use of spotlights, Q-beams or other bright handheld 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).
- g. For any species to count on a team list, the bird or an identifiable portion of the bird must be seen or heard by at least two members on the day of the City Birding Challenge. Identifications made by one team member do not count.
- h. Teams are entitled to count in their official total only one species not listed on the official NYC Audubon checklist and not recorded by any other team. NYC Audubon officials will review these accounts at the close of the City Birding Challenge.
- i. Nests, cavities, and/or burrows alone do not count. The species must be present by sight or sound on the day of the City Birding Challenge.
- j. Flushing birds from nests or cavity nest sites for the purpose of getting an identifiable look is grounds for disqualification. If the bird is not visible, wait. If you run out of time, leave. The bird does not count.
- k. The primary interest of all teams should be the welfare of birds. Sharing information with regards to the locations of birds is encouraged (prior to the official Big Day), but secondary to the primary directive. Use your head. Nests of birds that are sensitive to intrusion and/or necessitate approach to within or close to flush distance should not be divulged to other teams.

2. Time

All registered competing teams must turn in their checklists and accounts of species not on the NYC Audubon checklist by midnight on the day of the City Birding Challenge by fax (212-924-3870) or email to mhusby@nycaudubon.org.

Fax and e-mail documents will be time stamped. Only the current official checklist will be accepted by fax or by e-mail. In case of duplicate transmissions, the earliest time stamped document is the only one accepted. No other checklists will be counted.

3. Geographic Area

- a. Only birds recorded by observers conducting their counts within New York City may be counted.
- b. Teams may begin and end their route anywhere in New York City.
- c. A team may cross into another state or city for convenience or expedience but no birds may be counted unless the team is within New York City.
- d. Birds seen in the Hudson or East River, Long Island Sound or other waters surrounding New York City may be counted providing the observer is standing in New York City or short of midpoint on any bridge.
- e. Birds seen in New York Harbor or the Atlantic Ocean to a distance of 100 miles may be counted as long as the team is within New York City.

4. Travel

- a. Any vehicles except airplanes and jet skis may be used.
- b. Team members must remain at distances which permit direct, unamplified voice contact at all times. Voice contact is defined as shouting distance.
- c. Participants are not required to travel in the same vehicle so long as there is compliance with Rule 4.b. above.
- d. All teams must comply with New York City traffic and transit authority laws. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

5. Participants

- a. Teams must consist of a minimum of two and a maximum of four registered members. This does not include designated drivers.
- b. 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:
 - 1) Any team member may join the team at any time during the day. This team member may not have used the time before joining the team for scouting or the team will be disqualified.
 - 2) Teams will at all times be comprised of a minimum of two individuals.
 - 3) 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.
 - 4) Team members leaving the team for reasons of health, fatigue, appointment, etc. 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.
- c. 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.

6. Conduct

- a. Team members must remain within voice contact of all other members at all times.
- b. Team members must count only birds personally and unquestionably identified.
- c. Team members must be familiar with the rules of the competition before the event.
- d. No team may intentionally flush or drive into hiding any bird to prevent another team from finding it.

7. Outside Information

- a. During the competition, teams must make every reasonable effort to avoid receiving bird finding help from other sources. Phone, e-mail, radio or other electronic contact and prearranged field encounters (except encounters whose purpose is to gain access or entry to private or restricted areas) are not permitted. Participants may not travel with or walk any substantial distances with non-participants except with companions as provided in Rule 5.c. When other birders are encountered accidentally, participants may not solicit bird finding information and should avoid receiving any information from them. If, despite all precautions, information is received during an accidental encounter, the team may use it.
 - b. Regarding the use of cell phones, no team may use their cell phones to solicit or procure information relating to birds in the City of New York. Cell phones may be used to gain information regarding weather or traffic. Cell phones cannot be used for birding hotlines. If during the course of cell phone conversation the presence or whereabouts of a bird is divulged by the person receiving the call, the information may not be used by the team and, if located, the species cannot be counted on the team's NYC Audubon checklist.
 - c. Any information received prior to the count may be used during the count.
 - d. Outlaw birds – the ethic of sharing an uncommon or highly desirable species is fundamental to birding and NYC Audubon has no desire to compromise it. If therefore, a team knows of the existence or whereabouts of an exceptionally desirable bird and encounters another team, they may inquire of the other team whether they wish details on an "outlaw bird." If so, then Rule 7.a is waived for this specific bird but the "outlaw bird" cannot be counted in the official total of the team receiving the information.
8. Ethics
- a. Each participant must maintain proper birding ethics at all times as defined in the ABA Code of Ethics, a copy of which can be found on their website at www.americanbirding.org.
9. All competing teams must submit their totals to NYC Audubon by midnight on the day of City Birding Challenge by fax (212-924-3870) or e-mail to mhusby@nycaudubon.org. Only the current official NYC Audubon checklist will be accepted by fax or through the above e-mail address. Teams that fail to meet the midnight deadline will forfeit one bird from their official total for every five minute period that they are late. The same rules apply to fax and email documents which will be time stamped. In case of duplicate transmissions, the earliest time stamped document is the only one accepted. No other checklists will be counted.
10. Totals are considered final when they are submitted. No alterations or corrections may be made after checklists have been faxed or e-mailed.
11. In the event of a tie between two teams, the place and any award will be shared.
12. Call of Foul
- The NYC Audubon City Birding Challenge strives to maintain the highest ethical standards. All participants in this event are, by the nature of their participation, committed to this ideal.
- a. A team, which in the course of the event, or while scouting before the event, observes what it perceives to be an infraction of City Birding Challenge rules by another team may file a written protest to NYC Audubon. A review panel, drawn from City Birding Challenge participants and NYC Audubon staff, will consider the charges. Because of time considerations, a call of foul may not affect team standings immediately; however, the panel is empowered to disqualify a team within twenty days of the competition if evidence warrants.

- b. If the charge is found to have substance, the team and its members will be banned from future 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. The decision of the review panel is considered final.

13. Protest

- a. Accuracy and honesty are fundamental to birding and this event. Accordingly, and in the event that any team's total is for whatever reasons suspect, three team captains with the full support of their respective team members, may file a protest with event organizers.
- b. This protest, detailing the nature of the charge and supporting evidence, must be submitted in writing, within ten days of the event. It will be forwarded to the captain of the team in question who may either offer a plea of "no contest" or submit a defense and rebuttal of the acquisitions in writing within thirty days.
- c. If a team whose total is questioned elects to defend, both the written protest and defense will be reviewed by a panel drawn from City Birding Challenge participants, City Birding Challenge organizers, and experts with standing to comment.
- d. If the captain of the team whose total is questioned refuses to comply, then the team is disqualified, and its total, standing, and any awards nullified.
- e. If, after review, the challenge to the team's total is determined to have merit, the panel is empowered to delete suspect birds from the team's list. If the situation warrants, the panel may disqualify a team and/or ban the team and its members from any number of future competitions.

14. Eligibility, Fees and Deadlines

- a. The City Birding Challenge is open to any birders of good character.
- b. Registration fees are required for all competing teams. The registration fee for each competing team is \$50 before April 11th and \$100 after the 11th.
- c. All registration forms must be received by May 9; all fees must be received by the same date unless a team notifies the event organizers in advance, in which case an exception may be granted at the discretion of the organizers.