

# World Series of Birding **RULES** of Competition

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. **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.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

### RE: ACCESS TO GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We have received notification from the Fish & Wildlife Service of the following permanent changes to access to Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge during the World Series of Birding.

- Access to Great Swamp will be by foot only.
- All vehicles will be required to park in designated Refuge lots. Additional secondary lots will be made available for parking during the event.
- Gate keys will no longer be issued.
- All participants must be members of an officially registered World Series of Birding team.

Anyone who does not adhere to these rules automatically eliminates their team from the competition and possible future events.

## I. Counting

- a. Count only full species as indicated by the current ABA 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 ABA checklist and/or have been established in New Jersey for a minimum of ten years. FOR EXAMPLE: Peregrine Falcon, reintroduced in 1975, is countable.
- 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 World Series or while scouting prior to the event. The use of digital or electronic song detection devices, including IPODs or similar tools, 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 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).
- g. All birds tallied must be identified by at least two members of the team. Identifications made by one team member do not count.
- h. Ninety-five percent of all birds recorded by a team must be tallied and identified by all members of the team. 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 colla-borated by at least one other team member**, then Belted Kingfisher has been recorded unanimously.
- i. Teams are entitled to count in their official total only **one** species not listed on the official World Series of Birding checklist and not recorded by any other Level I team. WSB officials will review "write-in" accounts at the Finish Line. Additional "write-in" entries will be deleted from the teams total by event officials.
- j. A detailed account of all "write-in species" must be submitted with the teams checklist **before** midnight. All questions must be addressed. All "write-in" species must be recorded and identified by all team members. All species accounts must be signed by all team members.

- k. To minimize disturbance to nesting raptors, teams that know the location of such species whose nest must be approached within flush distance to be viewed need not physically view that species on the day of the competition **ONLY** if the species was seen simultaneously by at least any two people from participating WSB teams on the week preceding (scout week) the official World Series day. Teams need only park in close proximity **DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS**, and wait in or beside their vehicle for as long as it would have taken for all members of the team to view the species. The team must wait a minimum of five minutes.

- l. Flushing birds from nests or cavity nest sites for the purpose of getting an identifiable look is grounds for disqualification. This applies during the event and during scouting. Other than the nesting raptor rule above, if a species is not visible, wait. If you run out of time, leave. The bird does not count.
- m. 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. Locations of any species that are sensitive to intrusion and/or necessitate approach to within or close to flush distance should not be divulged to other teams.

*Continued on next page*

# RULES of Competition Continued

## II. Time

All registered competing teams must turn in their checklists by midnight on the day of competition to count officials at the WSB Finish Line, by fax (609-884-6052) or e-mail through [www.worldseriesofbirding.org](http://www.worldseriesofbirding.org). Fax and e-mail documents will be time stamped. Only the current official checklist will be accepted at the Finish Line, 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. If you are unfamiliar with the fax or e-mail process, test it the week prior to the event but clearly mark TEST on the transmission.

## III. Geographic Area

- a. Only birds recorded by observers conducting their counts within New Jersey may be counted.
- b. Teams may begin and end their route anywhere in New Jersey.
- c. A team may cross into another state for convenience or expedience but, no birds may be counted unless the team is within New Jersey.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. Teams that elect to compete in any of the Level I categories must indicate the category on their team registration and checklist. Any team not designating a category will be counted under full state totals.
- g. Teams that elect to compete in the Limited Geographic Area must limit their route to a single New Jersey county. The category and selected county must be designated on their team registration form. Any team not designating a county will be counted under full state totals.

## IV. Travel

- a. All vehicles except aircraft may be used with the exception of those competing in the Carbon Footprint Cup category.
- 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 IV(b) above.
- d. All teams must comply with New Jersey highway laws. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

## V. Participants

- a. Teams must consist of a minimum of three registered members. Designated drivers are not included in these counts.
- 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). 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.
  - 2). Teams will at all times be comprised of a minimum of three individuals in the field.
  - 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 (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.
- 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.**

## VI. Conduct

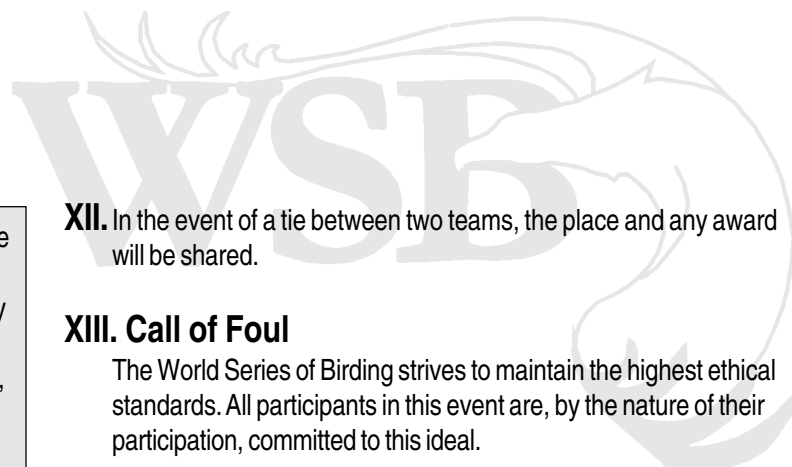
- a. Team members must remain within voice contact of all other members at all times.
- b. Team members must count only birds personally and unquestionably identified.
- c. Team members must be familiar with the rules of the competition before the event and abide by them at all times.
- d. No team may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

## VII. Outside Information

- a. During the competition, teams must make every reasonable effort to avoid receiving bird finding help from other sources. These sources include, but are not limited to birding hotlines, internet sites, listservs, blogs, and e-mails. Phone, e-mail, or radio 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 V(b). 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.

*Continued on next page*

# RULES of Competition Continued



b. No team may use their cell phones or e-mail to solicit or procure information relating to birds in the state of New Jersey. They cannot be used for any birding hotlines, blogs, or updates. They may be used to gain information regarding weather or traffic. If during their use, the presence or whereabouts of a bird is divulged, the information MAY NOT be used by the team and, if located, the species cannot be counted on the team's WSB checklist.

- c. The bird sighting sheets at Forsythe (Brigantine) National Wildlife Refuge, Sandy Hook, Cape May Point State Park, and other locations where bird sighting sheets are regularly found may be referenced during the World Series providing information appearing on these sheets has not been prearranged.
- d. Any information received prior to the count may be used during the count.
- e. **Outlaw Birds** – The ethic of sharing an uncommon or highly desirable species is fundamental to birding and the World Series of Birding 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 VII(a) is waived for this specific bird but the “outlaw bird” cannot be counted in the official total of the team receiving the information.

## VIII. Ethics

Each participant must maintain proper birding ethics at all times as defined in the ABA Code of Ethics, a copy of which is found following these rules.

- IX.** All competing teams must submit their totals to WSB officials by midnight on the day of WSB at the Finish Line, by fax (609-884-6052) or e-mail through the WSB website tool ([www.worldseriesofbirding.org](http://www.worldseriesofbirding.org)). Only the current official checklist will be accepted at the Finish Line, by fax or through the web site e-mail tool. 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 e-mail 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.
- X.** Totals are considered final when they are submitted. No alterations or corrections may be made after checklists have been turned in at Finish Line, faxed or e-mail.
- XI.** Team members or surrogates may not seek or solicit information relating to team standings before crossing the Finish Line and while the team's signed and completed checklist is still in hand.

**XII.** In the event of a tie between two teams, the place and any award will be shared.

## XIII. Call of Foul

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.

- 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 World Series Rules by another team may file a written protest to New Jersey Audubon Society. A review panel, drawn from World Series participants and New Jersey Audubon staff, will consider the charges. Because of time considerations, a call of foul may not affect team standings at the Awards Brunch; however, the panel is empowered to disqualify a team within twenty (20) 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.

## XIV. 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 World Series participants, World Series 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; 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.

*Continued on next page*

# RULES of Competition Continued

## XV. Eligibility, Fees and Deadlines

- a. The World Series of Birding is open to any birders of good character.
- b. **Registration Fees**  
Registration fees are required for all competing teams. Level II (non-competing) requires registration, no registration fee, but all money raised must benefit New Jersey Audubon and may be designated to the center of your choice. Anyone wanting to raise money through the World Series of Birding for any other cause or organization must register as a competing team and pay the applicable entry fees.
- c. All registrations must be received by April 25; all fees must be received by May 5. Corporate Sponsored teams will be charged an additional \$125 fee; independent (no sponsor) teams will be charged an additional \$25 fee after May 5. Payment in full is required by May 5 unless an exception is granted. Any team whose fees are not paid in full (including Corporate Sponsorship) and have not advised the event organizers in advance, may be disqualified from the competition. Teams who register after the April 25 deadline are not guaranteed to have their team listed on the official WSB shirt.
- d. Competing teams may secure Corporate Sponsors or co-sponsors to offset costs. Registration fees as outlined in the Registration and Fees section apply. Only sponsors who have paid the Corporate Entry Fee to New Jersey Audubon will be recognized as such.
- e. All participants (team members, designated drivers and any individuals accompanying teams) must sign, date, and submit a HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT at least 48 hours prior to the competition. Signed agreements may be faxed (609-884-6052) or e-mailed to [birdcapemay@njudubon.org](mailto:birdcapemay@njudubon.org). Individuals who fail to comply have no standing as participants and their team is disqualified. **Note:** Anyone under the age of 18, regardless of their participation, must have a Hold Harmless Agreement signed by a parent or guardian. ■

