

# 2023 Winter Wildlife Festival Team Birding Challenge

## Rules & Regulations

Join Winter Wildlife Festival in celebrating the abundant and diverse birds overwintering in Coastal Virginia by challenging yourself to get outdoors and observe as many bird species as possible in a day.

- **The Birding Challenge is a Team competition**
  - All Teams must have a minimum of 2 Team Members and a maximum of 5. **Teams of 1 are ineligible.**
  - Each Team must create a Team Name, designate a Team Captain for correspondence purposes, select a division, and register as a team (see **Registration Instructions**).
  
- **Cost and Registration Instructions**
  - Cost is \$15 per Team Member.
  - Challenge is open to all ages and levels of birders.
  - All registered participants will receive a Winter Wildlife Festival Birding Challenge t-shirt. Team Captain will select t-shirt sizes when submitting Team Registration Form.
  - How to Register:
    - Step 1: Pick your teammates and Challenge Division.
    - Step 2: Register and pay through ActiveNet.  
<https://apm.activecommunities.com/vbparksrec/Home> **Only one registration per team.** Team Member registering should select number of teammates and pay total fee.
    - Step 3: Team Captain must complete supplemental electronic Team Registration Form. Link to form can be found at [www.winterwildlifevb.com](http://www.winterwildlifevb.com)
  
- **Divisions:**
  - **Big Day** – Observe birds from 12am until 11:59pm on any eligible day (See **Eligible Dates**). Team does not have to bird for all 24 hours, but should bird for more than three.
  - **Mini Day** – Observe birds for any continuous 3 hour period; must indicate start and stop time on submission.
  - **Backyard Bird Count** – Observe birds at a private residence for any amount of time, not to exceed 24 hours on a single date. (See below for **Eligible Locations**)
  
- **Geographic Boundaries & Eligible Locations**
  - **Big Day and Mini Day** - Birding must occur within the boundaries of the City of Virginia Beach, including its inland and coastal waters. Please obtain permission before birding on private property.
  - **Backyard Bird Count** – Birding must occur at one private residence within Coastal Virginia (**Eligible Locations**). Coastal Virginia is defined as the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and

Williamsburg; and the counties of Accomack, Isle of Wight, James City, Northampton, Southampton and York.

- **Eligible Dates**

- Birding Challenge must be done from between Saturday, January 28, 2023 and Sunday, February 5, 2023.
- All registered Teams must indicate their selected date in an email to the Challenge Manager (kwebb@vbgov.com) no later than within 24 hours before their selected challenge day. Judges use a Team's Official Challenge Date to ensure e-Bird checklists are submitted on time.

- **Birding Rules**

- Birding must be done as a Team. All Team members must remain within vocal distance of each other during birding.
- 95% of species submitted by each group should be identified (using sight or sound) by **ALL** Team Members. The remaining 5% must be identified by **at least two** Team Members. Identification made by only one team member can **never** be counted.
- List of locations visited must be submitted by participants in Mini and Big Day Divisions.
- Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained.
- All birds listed in your official submission must be identified to species. (i.e. herring gull, not gull, species.) This is to avoid double counting.
- Electronic or recorded bird calls may not be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during Winter Wildlife Festival Birding Challenge or while scouting prior to the event.
  - Bird tapes and mobile phone apps with recorded bird calls may only be used while in a vehicles or with earbuds/headphones as a reference. The sound must not be projected aloud (i.e., instead use earbuds) while in the field. Recorded bird calls may not be used while teams are actively birding.
  - "Pishing" and other bird sounds made by mouth are acceptable.
- Spotlighting is prohibited at all times during the Winter Wildlife Festival Birding Challenge and while scouting prior to the event. Small, handheld flashlights can be used as a light source as needed for personal safety (i.e., while walking on trails).

- **Submissions**

- Team Captains will receive additional information on using e-Bird at least one week prior to January 28, 2023.
- Submit your bird species list through e-bird\*\*. <https://ebird.org/home>
  - Create bird list in e-Bird and share list to the official Winter Wildlife Festival Birding Challenge (WWFBC) e-bird account.
  - Detailed instructions on how to submit your list will be provided.
- Only **ONE** official list submission per Team will be accepted. Score is based on cumulative total number of species for your entire Challenge Period, so only a single final checklist is required for each Team.
- Must include the Team Name and Division in the "Comments" section of the "Step 2: Date and Effort" page of their e-Bird checklist submission.
- Lists must be submitted within 24 hours of completing the Challenge.

- Must indicate which species were not seen by ALL Team members (in the “Add Details” section for individual species).
- For any species considered uncommon, scarce, rare, or accidental during the winter in Virginia Beach, additional documentation must be included within your e-Bird checklist. Teams should add documentation details on the checklist itself by using the “Add Details” button next to each bird species needing additional documentation. Judges will be looking for this additional documentation and it may be used in the event of a tie.
- Must complete supplemental electronic submission form when list is submitted to e-Bird. Link to form can be found on [www.vbgov.com/winterwildlife](http://www.vbgov.com/winterwildlife)
- Be creative! We request you submit a Team Photo showing Team Members during challenge. All photos submitted will be entered to win “Best Team Photo” contest.

\*\*Paper submission is available for those who cannot use e-bird. Please contact [kwebb@vbgov.com](mailto:kwebb@vbgov.com) if your Team needs to use this option.

- **Judging/ Awards**

- All Birding Challenge submissions will be reviewed by a panel of judges.
- Judges decisions are final.
- In the event of a tie, judges may use additional documentation as a tie-breaker.
- Recognition will be awarded to the first-place team in each division as well as for the “Best Team Photo”.
  - Winning first place in a division is defined by identifying the most species of birds.
  - Team must submit a Team Photo by attachment to their electronic submission form to be eligible for the Best Team Photo Award.
- Birding Challenge Results and Team Photos will be posted on Festival Webpage and Festival Facebook Group.

- **Have FUN!!!** The Birding Challenge is a friendly competition to celebrate our winter birds.