

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Birdathon Rules

Unlike most other competitions, the Birdathon heavily relies on the honor system with just a few rules in place. Even the official “World Series of Birding” in New Jersey follows these and similar rules.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy’s Birdathon primary objectives are to:

- Use the Birdathon competition as a way to support our mission of protecting birds and the habitat they require here in Loudoun County;
- Identify as many bird species as possible during either a single 24-hour time period or a single 48-hour time period (or a portion of the time period)
- Expand involvement of new and experienced birders in the annual Birdathon; and
- Have fun!

Birdathon participants must abide by the following rules in order to be eligible for awards:

I. Counting

- Count only full species as indicated on the Birds of Loudoun County checklist or by the current American Birding Association Checklist or as listed in eBird.
- Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or by sound. If you are not certain, do not count the bird.
- Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained. Birds observed by artificial light may be counted. Injured birds may be counted if wild and unrestrained. Eggs do not count as birds. Birds such as ornamental waterfowl or escaped cage birds (e.g., Peafowl) cannot be counted. Naturalized birds such as the House Sparrow, House Finch and Mute Swan are countable.
- Identifications made by just one team member do NOT count. This basically means that at least two team members must observe the bird and agree on the species.
- Only birds recorded by observers conducting their counts within Loudoun County may be counted. Birds seen in the Potomac River or outside the county may be counted provided the observers are standing in Loudoun County.
- A bird identified as one of a species group (e.g., Lesser/Greater Scaup, Empidonax Flycatcher, Western/Semipalmated Sandpiper, etc.) may only be counted as a species if no other in that group is counted. In eBird language this is like Flycatcher sp., Duck sp., etc.
- Bird count checklists and monies raised must be turned in by June 30 to be eligible for prizes.

II. Time - All counting must be within either a single 24-hour period or a single 48-hour period within the designated Birdathon period.

III. Area - Any geographic area within Loudoun County may be covered.

IV. Ethics

- Each participant should maintain proper birding ethics at all times and follow the American Birding Association’s Code of Birding Ethics (see <http://www.americanbirding.org/abaethics.htm>).
- Participants must abide by all endangered or threatened species laws and regulations and observe local rules on the use of tape recordings. The welfare of the birds comes first, above all fundraising activities. Excessive “pishing,” excessive use of digital playback, and chasing of birds are all discouraged. Since many are migrants, these birds are likely tired and in need of finding food.

V. Two Prize Limit - A team may win no more than two prizes.