

Monadnock Region Birding Cup

Rules of Competition

(2020 COVID-19 Edition)



I. Overview

- a. The following rules apply to all teams. These rules establish clear standards and practices under which all Monadnock Region Birding Cup participants must comply. Failure to do so in this regard may result in the disqualification of a team. All participants must be familiar with and comply with all the rules to maintain eligibility to complete in the Monadnock Region Birding Cup. Note that some categories of competition may have additional rules that govern participation in that category.

II. Time and Date of Contest

- a. The Monadnock Region Birding Cup is a 12-hour contest that runs from 05:00 AM to 05:00 PM (EST) on Saturday, September 12. This is a rain or shine event. No species may be counted before or after the specified time period. Scouting of the contest area before the event is allowed and encouraged, as is the sharing of sightings to the local birding community (eBird, NH Birds Listserv).

III. Location of Contest (Geographic Area)

- a. The contest area is restricted to the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire. This includes the entirety of Cheshire County and portions of Hillsborough County, including the cities and towns of: Alstead, Antrim, Bennington, Brookline, Chesterfield, Deering, Dublin, Fitzwilliam, Francestown, Gilsum, Greenfield, Greenville, Hancock, Harrisville, Hillsborough, Hinsdale, Jaffrey, Keene, Lydenborough, Marlborough, Marlow, Mason, Milford, Nelson, New Ipswich, Peterborough, Richmond, Rindge, Roxbury, Sharon, Stoddard, Sullivan, Surry, Swanzey, Temple, Troy, Walpole, Wilton, Westermoreland, Winchester, and Windsor.

IV. Social Distancing and Covid-19 Precautions

- a. All individuals and teams are expected to follow social distancing guidelines for New Hampshire. The following recommendations specific to birding are strongly encouraged:
 - i. Participants from separate households should maintain a minimum distance of 6-ft apart.
 - ii. No sharing of optics (scopes, binoculars, cameras).
 - iii. Teams made up of members from multiple households should split into multiple vehicles (one vehicle per household).



- iv. Wear a mask that covers the mouth and nose at all times.
- v. Avoid touching public surfaces, such as railings and door handles, without gloves.
- vi. Frequently wash or use >60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer to cleanse hands.
- vii. Always cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing, and immediately dispose of tissues.

V. Team Composition

- a. Each team shall consist of 1 or more individuals; there is no upper limit on the number of team members if all team members are active participants.
- b. The team must remain together for the entirety of the contest. Teams may not be split to bird different areas simultaneously. Travel between areas need not be in one vehicle, but vehicles must travel together, taking the same route.

The use of radios and/or cell phones is allowed only to stay in contact with team members or to access publicly available resources. Birds identified when traveling from one area to another can be counted, if the birds are identified by the majority of the team members.

- c. Designated drivers are allowed for all competition categories. Designated drivers may be added, switched, or released at any time. Designated drivers cannot alter or contribute to route planning or strategy of the team; their job is to drive.
- d. Mentors are allowed for the Fledgling and Youth competition categories only. Each Fledgling or Youth team is allowed one mentor only. Mentors are allowed to facilitate route planning and strategy of the team but are encouraged to let the team decide for themselves.
- e. Any number of non-birding participants (photographers, journalists, parents, life partners) may accompany the team, but these participants may not assist the team in any way in the location or identification of birds.
- f. Team members must remain at distances from one another that permit direct, unamplified voice contact always.



VI. Ethics

- a. Each participant must always maintain proper birding ethics as defined in the American Birding Association (ABA) Code of Birding Ethics (<http://listing.aba.org/ethics/>).
- b. Teams visiting state parks, state forests, conservation lands, private properties and other identified places must abide by the landowners' own rules and regulations.

VII. Objective

- a. Each species on the official checklist has a value of one (1) point. All accepted write-in species all have a value of one point as well. The team that has the greatest number of species (points) will be declared the winner of the Monadnock Region Birding Cup, regardless of which competition category a team was registered for.
- b. Each team must complete its online official contest checklist AND email (antiochbirdclub@gmail.com) the judges notifying them of completion by 08:00 PM on the day of the contest. Teams that do not check in with contest officials by 08:00 PM will be penalized one point for each full minute they are late.
- c. Special Rule for Townie Award Participants- The Townie Award is intended to encourage local patch birding, saving energy, and getting to know the local spots. To compete for the Townie Award, team captains must email event organizers by the Friday before the Monadnock Region Birding Cup to declare which municipality they intend to bird.

VIII. Identification of Species

- i. Each species must be conclusively identified by sight and/or sound by the majority of the participants on each team. "Conclusively" means that sufficient field marks are observed, or sounds heard, to eliminate the possibility of the bird being any other species. The bird must be alive, wild, and unrestrained when encountered. Team members may use publicly available resources during the competition such as NHBirds, the Voice of Audubon, eBird, etc. Deliberately gaining assistance or an unfair advantage from non-team members during the event is prohibited. For example, a non-team member may not stake out a bird for the team or tell the team about a bird's location.
- ii. Use of Mechanical Devices to Attract Birds is Prohibited. The use of mechanical devices, tapes, electronic calls, or other recordings to lure or attract birds is strictly prohibited. Teams that utilize these devices will be disqualified.
- iii. Checklists and Rarity Reporting. To keep track of species throughout the competition, all teams are encouraged to print the Official Monadnock Region Birding Cup checklist available on the event website. If the species is not on the list, it should be written in at the end of the print checklist and typed at the bottom of your digital checklist.



IX. Prize Categories

- a. **Monadnock Region Birding Cup-** The main event! This is awarded to the team that counts the most bird species between 5am and 5pm the day of the competition
- b. **Carbon Footprint Challenge-** A green contest where teams cannot not use any fossil fuels during the 12-hour competition. Get creative; bike, canoe, skateboard! The team with the most species counted will win, but all will be recognized for their environmental awareness efforts. To level the playing field, electric vehicles and other motorized equipment are off-limits. Cars may be used for transportation prior to 5am and after the team decides to finish competing.
- c. **Fledglings-** Brand new to birding? This category is for you! Each team must have a maximum of five years combined birding experience. The team with these qualifications and the highest species tally will win.
- d. **Big Sit-** A stationary bird count where the team will create or imagine a 17-foot circle and birdwatch from within. Birds must be viewed from within the circle but can be physically outside the circle. Grab a scope and some chairs and join in the tailgating of birding! The team with the most birds counted from within a circle will win.
- e. **Townie-** Due to the regional nature of our competition, a town-centric category is available for those that want to count as many birds as they can within the boundaries of one town within the Monadnock Region.
- f. **Youth-** All team members of this category must be younger than 18 years of age. Mentors are allowed for this team to drive underage participants and verify identifications of team members but cannot point out or identify birds themselves. The winning team will tally more species than all other youth team.

When submitting your team's online checklist at the end of the contest, please be sure to indicate the awards for which you are competing (e.g., Carbon Footprint Challenge, Townie).

X. Judging

- a. A panel of judges will be appointed for the Monadnock Region Birding Cup by the Antioch Bird Club. The panel will verify each team's checklist and point total and will determine the winner in each award category. In event of a tie, the team who submitted their species checklist first will win.



Important Note to Team Leaders

The staff of the Monadnock Region Birding Cup and volunteers for the Antioch Bird Club have developed these rules to ensure that the event is an enjoyable celebration of our fall birds. The rules create an environment for strong competition among the teams. Rule II sets the time limits for the event. Under this rule, each team must plan its itinerary carefully to ensure that it gets to the meeting place on time. In fairness to the other teams, the beginning and ending times are strictly enforced. Please read these rules carefully and share them with your team members. We want every team to get full credit for their observations. If you have any questions about these rules before the event, please email Antioch Bird Club at antiochbirdclub@gmail.com.

