

The Complete List of Ethical Birding Guidelines

Mindful Birding presents ethical birding guidelines from around the world, and offers awards to birding festivals that demonstrate improved or superior ethics. We encourage birdwatchers to have gratifying birding experiences while maintaining the ability of birds to behave naturally.

In this document we present a list of ethical birding guidelines compiled from an extensive online search of guidelines used by organizations, birding festivals, and nature tour operators. Explore this compilation by subject area below.

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1. Mindful of Wildlife

How aware are you of the "bird" in birding? The ethical guidelines presented here focus on increasing awareness of the needs of birds and on minimizing disturbance to wildlife.

a. Putting the Birds First

"The principal ethical rule for bird-watchers should be to have no impact on birds." (Sibley's Birding Basics, accessed 2014)

"...remember that the interests of the bird must always come first." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"...always put the health and wellbeing of birds first..." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"...the birds' interests should always come first." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"We should first think of the bird, its well-being, and the potential it has for successfully nesting." (Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, accessed 2014)

"The birds' welfare is the highest priority." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"The welfare of birds must come first." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"Whether your particular interest is photography, ringing, sound recording, scientific study or just birdwatching, remember that the welfare of the bird must always come first." (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

b. Awareness of the Lives and Needs of Birds

"Respect the birds' territories, do not approach too closely." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Bear in mind that in order to find most birds you will be encroaching on their territory, so tread lightly and respect boundaries." (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Repeatedly playing a recording of bird song or calls to encourage a bird to respond can divert a <u>territorial</u> bird from other important duties, such as feeding its young." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Disturbance can keep birds from their <u>nests</u>, leaving chicks hungry or enabling predators to take eggs or young." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"No birds should be disturbed from the <u>nest</u> in case opportunities for predators to take eggs or young are increased." (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"Take extra care when in potential or active <u>nesting</u> area. It is hard enough for birds to compete with each other for mates and space; human interference causes additional stress." (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"If you locate any <u>nesting</u> bird, avoid getting too close, the scent you leave behind may attract predators such as raccoons that may prey on the eggs." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Be especially conscious of your actions around <u>nesting</u> and roosting birds, which are more sensitive to disturbance then at other times." (Sibley's Birding Basics, accessed 2014)

"Avoid using methods such as flushing, spotlighting, and call playback, particularly during <u>nesting</u> season when birds may be called off incubation duties, or even abandon the nest altogether." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"Do not use recordings during breeding season of your target species, as that may disrupt their activities. In many cases, males responding to the calls may leave a nest unattended and within easy reach of predators." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"A bird on territory perceives this taped voice as a competitor in their territory, and they may expend time and energy investigating and challenging this 'intruder;' time and energy that could have gone into recovering from migration, attracting a mate, nest building, or feeding a mate and/or young." (Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, accessed 2014)

"During cold weather or when <u>migrants</u> have just made a long flight, repeatedly flushing birds can mean they use up vital energy that they need for feeding." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Migrants may be tired and hungry and should not be kept from resting or feeding." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"In very cold weather disturbance to birds may cause them to use vital energy at a time when food is difficult to find." (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"...recurring disturbances can cause the birds to leave that area, and they may not return for a very long time after." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird... and proceed only if disturbance can be minimized." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Think about the interests of wildlife before passing on news of a rare bird." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Consider the wellbeing of the bird before making the knowledge of rare bird sightings more publicly available." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

c. Noticing Bird Behavior

"If you are approaching birds, and they adopt an upright alarmed posture, it is time to stop and allow them to settle back down." (Sibley's Birding Basics, accessed 2014)

"Avoid going too close to birds or disturbing their habitats – if a bird flies away or makes repeated alarm calls, you're too close." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Birds have ways to tell you when you're too close, respect these signals." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Do not harass birds by flushing." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Don't make [the birds] fly." (Mangalajodi Eco Tourism, accessed 2014)

"How to Recognize Stressed Bird Behavior: Birds try to attract your attention by flying in front of you, birds try to lure you away from a position, birds carrying food, perched at one position for a long time, birds carrying nesting material, perched at one position for a long time, birds giving alarm call – it's important to learn your calls!" (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Second, do not disturb your subject... For instance, if you approach a bird head-on and make a lot of noise, the bird will either fly away or will begin to behave unnaturally, which defies the purpose of observing their behavior in the wild." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

<u>Limpkin</u>: "...a Limpkin will usually raise its heads, become motionless, and if you continue to approach it may call, followed by a quick departure." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

d. Dress, Posture, and Lessening Your Impact

"Wear muted colors; no white (a danger signal to birds), red, or other bright colors." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"In no-hunt areas, blend in with your surroundings. Wear neutral-colored clothing and move slowly and quietly." (Indiana Dunes Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"No... bright colors. They scare away birds and spoil yours and others' chances of watching the birds. Wear drab clothes." (Mangalajodi Eco Tourism, accessed 2014)

"Sit or crouch so that you appear smaller." (Florida Birding Trail, accessed 2014)

"If viewing from your car, stay inside as long as possible. It acts as a viewing 'blind' and the birds are less likely to fly if they don't recognize you as human." (Florida Birding Trail, accessed 2014)

"Walk around groups of birds on the <u>beach</u> rather than forcing them to fly." (Florida Birding Trail, accessed 2014)

"When <u>beach</u> walking watch for and avoid ground-nesting birds." (Experience the Wild Nature Tours, accessed 2014)

"Keep movements slow and steady rather than fast or sporadic." (Florida Birding Trail, accessed 2014)

"Birders should keep an appropriate <u>distance</u> from all species they observe." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Maintain a distance from wild birds." (New York City Audubon, accessed 2014)

"View birds from a distance to avoid disturbing them." (Indiana Dunes Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"Keep appropriate <u>distances</u> from nests and nesting colonies, [do] not <u>disturb</u> them or expose them to danger." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Be extra cautious when in the vicinity of nests." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Use common sense and extreme caution around <u>nests</u>." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"Keep well back from <u>nests and nesting colonies</u>, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Stay back from concentrations of <u>nesting</u> or resting waterbirds – a spotting scope may be a better choice than binoculars." (Florida Birding Trail, accessed 2014)

"Avoid chasing, repeatedly flushing... especially during <u>nesting</u> season." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"No approaching nests, roosts, and display areas." (Mangalajodi Eco Tourism, accessed 2014)

"All bird watchers have a responsibility to... <u>avoid causing any negative impact</u> on the birds they are watching..." (Experience the Wild Nature Tours, accessed 2014)

"Avoid visiting known sites of rare breeding birds unless they can be viewed from a distance <u>without</u> <u>disturbance</u>." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"Avoid any behavior that may <u>disrupt</u> birds." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Observe birds without disturbing them." (Mangalajodi Eco Tourism, accessed 2014)

"Observe... birds without knowingly disturbing them in any significant way." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Bird watchers should make every effort to reduce the <u>disturbance</u> their presence causes for birds, especially in areas visited by large numbers of people." (New York City Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"To avoid <u>stressing</u> birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Avoid stressing the birds." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Avoid chasing and repeatedly flushing birds." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Do not deliberately <u>flush</u> birds." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"To avoid <u>stressing</u> birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Rare <u>migrants</u> or <u>vagrants</u> must not be harassed. If you discover one, consider the circumstances carefully before telling anyone. Will an influx of birdwatchers disturb the bird or others in the area? Will the habitat be damaged? Will problems be caused with the landowner?" (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"If you discover a rarity, consider the circumstances carefully before releasing the information. You must take responsibility for the decision to release the find. You should consider whether an influx of birders will disturb the bird, people or other species in the area; whether habitat will be damaged; and where people will park. Inform the landowner of the find, explain what may happen and obtain permission to tell other birders." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"The best action to take when finding a new bird is just to enjoy its presence without shouting it to the world." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Share your lunch only with other humans." (Indiana Dunes Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"If possible, leave <u>pets</u> at home." (Indiana Dunes Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"No dogs or pets allowed on any Chautauqua event, workshop, or program. Please leave Fido with friends or family and *not in the car* during a field trip." (Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, accessed 2014)

e. Use of Audio Playback, Laser Pointers, Pishing, etc.

"Refrain from using audio playback." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Do not use any audio or mechanical device to attract birds." (Yosemite National Park, accessed 2014)

"Avoid using... call playback." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"Do not use recorded calls to attract birds. It stops them from important activities like feeding." (Mangalajodi Eco Tourism, accessed 2014)

"Do not imitate Northern Pygmy-Owl calls." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Never use playback to attract a species during its breeding season." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014 and British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"[California] state law strictly prohibits broadcasting recorded vocalizations of an endangered species, such as the great gray owl." (Yosemite National Park, accessed 2014)

"Avoid... excessive use of squeakers, 'pishing', and recordings, especially during nesting season." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Avoid the use of recordings, calls, or whistles to attract birds, as they can disrupt the birds' normal feeding, mating, and brood-rearing activities." (Indiana Dunes Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"Avoid the use of recorded songs, especially in areas visited by large numbers of people." (New York City Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Audio playback devices should not be used by participants, and used only under limited circumstances by field trip leaders." (Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, accessed 2014)

"At a minimum, use of sound recordings will be accompanied by a clear explanation of what it is, how it works and why it is being used. This explanation should cover potential harm to the birds that could result from their misuse." (Portland Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"The use of playback can distress the species whose call is being played and may disrupt feeding or breeding activity. Calls should not be played for extended periods and never at louder volume than that of the target bird. Use of playback should be kept to a minimum, especially in areas of high visitation, or where its use has occurred in the recent past. Responsible use of playback can be valuable

in locating cryptic birds without serious harm, however, it is a skilled activity and should not be taken lightly." (Experience the Wild Nature Tours, accessed 2014)

"Limit use of recordings and similar methods of attracting birds, especially in heavily birded areas or in known locations of rare birds or those that are easily disturbed." (Wilson Society for Ornithology, accessed 2014)

"Sparingly use recordings and similar methods of attracting birds and not in heavily birded areas or during breeding seasons." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Avoid... excessive use of squeakers, 'pishing' and recordings, especially during nesting season." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"We do not advocate use of audio recordings. That said, there are a very limited number of cases where use of audio recordings may be considered appropriate: Owling, attempting to see a very secretive species in a remote area, trying to verify the identity of a suspected unusual/out-of-range species." (Portland Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Do you occasionally use recordings to attract birds? If so, remember not to overuse them, or to try to attract rare or protected species. Avoid using recordings in heavily birded areas, and do not use them to attract birds during migration and the breeding season." (Florida Birding Trail, accessed 2014)

"Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"If playback will be used, minimize disturbance to birds: (1) have a plan – choose your spot and know your quarry, don't just play sounds; (2) play snippets of sound – less than 30 seconds at a time, then a long pause before the next snippet (more silence than playback) and after five minutes or so give it a rest (but stay alert); (3) be subtle – you are trying to tease the bird into the open, not stir up a fight." (Sibley's Birding Basics, accessed 2014)

"Use audio playback sparingly, never in heavily birded areas. Never use audio playback near nesting areas. Never use audio playback to attract threatened or endangered species." (Bird Fellow, accessed 2014)

"Tape recordings and similar methods of attracting birds may cause stress for territorial birds. They should be used sparingly and avoided in heavily birded areas." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"The group leader is the only one who pishes." (Bird Fellow, accessed 2014)

"We ask that trip leaders refrain from using <u>laser pointers</u> in any and all situations." (Portland Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Do not harass birds by pointing lasers." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Spotlighting disturbs individual birds and animals which may be sleeping or resting and may interfere with the night vision of nocturnal species. Effects of spotlighting have not been well studied; however it is possible that dazzling by spotlight may leave some birds more susceptible to predation or damage itself due to temporarily impaired vision. If using a spotlight on wildlife, keep the time the animal is held in the spotlight to a few seconds rather than minutes. Lower intensity spotlight, red filters and directing the light to the side of the subject will reduce discomfort." (Experience the Wild Nature Tours, accessed 2014)

"Do not view birds... with a flashlight or spotlight." (Yosemite National Park, accessed 2014)

f. Handling Wildlife

"No handling birds or animals. This is absolutely prohibited." (Mangalajodi Eco Tourism, accessed 2014)

"Refrain from handling birds or eggs (except for recognized research activities)." (Wilson Society for Ornithology, accessed 2014)

"Refrain from handling birds and eggs unless in recognized research activities." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Birds, nests, or eggs must not be handled except for recognized research." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Avoid handling birds." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"Birders should never physically touch a bird without extreme caution." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Do not handle injured birds or other wildlife." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

g. Photography

"Refrain from using flash when photographing birds." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Avoid using <u>flash</u> photography that may disturb birds." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Use <u>artificial light</u> sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Use <u>artificial light</u> sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups. High intensity spot lights should not be shone directly on a bird, but at an oblique angle, when carrying out night photography." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"No flash, no nest photography." (Mangalajodi Eco Tourism, accessed 2014)

"Be aware of the impact photography can have on birds – avoid lingering around nests or core territories for long periods and limit the use of artificial light." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"Every effort should be made to ensure the subject is not stressed in any way... At the first signs of stress by the bird, back off!" (Experience the Wild Nature Tours, accessed 2014)

"Use flash sparingly when photographing birds." (Bird Fellow, accessed 2014)

"...photograph birds without knowingly disturbing them in any significant way." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"When photographing birds, study their reaction and if they become agitated, back off." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"Avoid the use of flash photography on owls." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

2. Mindful of People & Safety

Of course no one would describe *you* as an "insufferable" birdwatcher. The ethical guidelines presented here focus on keeping you and others safe, and on keeping the outdoors harmonious for all.

a. Private Property, Restricted Areas, and Rules and Regulations

"Do not trespass." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Respect private property; do not enter without express permission." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Respect private property. Don't enter private property without permission." (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, accessed 2014)

"Thank you for not trespassing." (John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Make sure you are not trespassing on private property. Some bird sanctuaries are located on someone's land, whose owners may not enjoy strangers with binoculars trekking around their backyard. Make sure you have the permission to bird beforehand." (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Private property means just that. Your benign intent is not a passport to trespass." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Consider and respect the rights of landholders." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"Do not enter restricted areas. Respect the rights of all land owners, including traditional owners, and do not enter private land without permission. Obey the laws governing access to the area being visited." (Experience the Wild Nature Tours, accessed 2014)

"Obtain permission to enter private property, follow posted rules on public and private lands, observe all laws and regulations, etc." (Wilson Society for Ornithology, accessed 2014)

"Stay on marked trails and avoid entering restricted areas, no matter how tempting it may be to venture closer to a bird." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Follow rules and regulations of public areas." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Learn... of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g., no sound devices allowed)." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Know the law and the rules for visiting the countryside, and follow them." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Follow regulations for public lands, including leash rules for dogs." (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, accessed 2014)

"Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Observe all laws, rules, and regulations for public and private birding areas." (Wilson Society for Ornithology, accessed 2014)

"Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"The wishes of landowners and occupiers of land must be respected. Do not enter land without permission. Comply with permit schemes. If you are leading a group, do give advance notice of the visit, even if a formal permit scheme is not in operation." (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

b. Driving and Parking Behavior

"Never, never, never stop your vehicle in a traffic lane to view birds." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Never stop your vehicle in a traffic lane to view birds. Always pull completely onto the shoulder to conduct short-term or long-term viewing. No shoulder? Don't stop." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"When bird watching from a road, pull safely to the side or use a gate to approach when you stop. Make sure hills and curves don't hide you from behind." (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, accessed 2014)

"If driving, please do not interfere with the flow of traffic." (John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Park your car only in approved sites. Park tight so that other people have space, too." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Pull as far over onto the shoulder as possible." (John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Drive cautiously." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

c. Dress, Preparedness, and Decisions for Safety

"Wear appropriate attire for outdoor activities, including footwear." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Wear sun protection gear such as sunscreen and sunglasses." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Stay hydrated on long birding hikes." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Inform others of your plans in case you fail to return." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Carry a cell phone if possible." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Wear visible, bright clothing if birding during hunting season." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Stay with the group. Don't wander off." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Stick together: try not to stray far so you do not become lost on unfamiliar trails." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Remain on marked, safe trails at all times." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

d. Etiquette Toward Birders and Non-birders

"Practice common courtesy in interactions with other people." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"Practice <u>common courtesy</u> in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Practice courtesy in our contacts with others." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Be an <u>exemplary ethical role model</u> for the group. Teach through word and example." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Be a <u>birding ambassador</u>, promoting good relations with non-birders and the general public." (Bird Fellow, accessed 2014)

"Be an ambassador for birding." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Always behave in a manner that will <u>enhance the image of the birding communities</u> in the eyes of the public." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Well behaved birdwatchers can be important <u>ambassadors</u> for bird protection." (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"Avoid any <u>behavior that may distract</u> other birders." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Be courteous to other recreationists." (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, accessed 2014)

"Be <u>courteous</u> and deferential to people engaged in other wildlife-related pursuits." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"An ethical birder is a <u>polite</u> one." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as those of people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Be <u>courteous</u> to others in your group; your actions affect their birding experience." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Have <u>proper consideration for other birdwatchers</u>. Try not to disrupt their activities or scare the birds they are watching." (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"Be polite to other birders and helpful to beginners." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"Try not to disrupt other birders' activities or scare the birds they are watching." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"When birding on a trail, <u>step slightly off the path</u> to observe a bird so that hikers, joggers, bikers and other birders are not forced to go around you. This gives everyone the space to enjoy their hobbies in the same outdoor spaces." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Leave what you find so others can enjoy it." (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, accessed 2014)

"Leave nothing behind but footprints." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

<u>"Express gratitude to individuals, institutions, and businesses</u> that go out of their way to accommodate your interests or needs." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"<u>Patronize businesses</u> that are supporters of bird conservation. Let them know support travels both ways." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Wear binoculars everywhere. It is the best way to <u>bring the importance of ecotourism home</u>." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Share your excitement with non-birders. Let them know how important open space is to you and to wildlife." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Many other people enjoy the outdoors; do not interfere with their activities." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"If you see people obviously disturbing birds or significantly damaging habitat, explain to them the effect of their actions but be courteous, they may not be aware of the effect they are having." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"Being quiet is simple courtesy. In residential areas, before 9:00am, keep voices low, vehicle noises to a minimum." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Keep <u>conversation</u> to a minimum." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Keep conversations minimal and voices soft." (Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, accessed 2014)

"Bird quietly." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Hold conversations in low tones." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Being <u>quiet</u> is simple courtesy. In residential areas, before 9 a.m., keep voices low, vehicle noises to a minimum." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Minimize unnecessary talk and noise to avoid disturbing birds so that they can be seen by all participants." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Word of the day... Silence. Whether alone or in a group, walk as quietly as possible and please use an inside voice." (John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Don't be a peeping Tom! Avoid <u>pointing your binoculars</u> at other people or their homes." (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Please avoid pointing [binoculars] at people or homes." (John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Avoid <u>aiming optics</u> at people, residences, and businesses." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Be careful not to point optics toward people or houses." (New Jersey Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Turn off your mobile phone." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Turn off cell phones." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"<u>Cell phones</u> – turn them off or to vibrate. If you must take a call, please move away from the group and talk quietly. Keep the conversation short." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"When carpooling, chip in to cover the cost of the trip." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Think about the interests of <u>local people</u> before passing on news of a rare bird." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to other people in the area, and proceed only access can be controlled, disturbance can be minimized, and permission has been obtained from private land-owners." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Stick together: try not to stray far so you do not hold up others in your group." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Stay with the group. Don't wander off. If you are lagging behind you may spook the bird everyone is trying to see as you reunite with the group. It can also be frustrating for the group to have to constantly be waiting for folks to catch up. If the group leader is moving too quickly, ask him or her to slow the pace a little." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Stay behind the leader, so when a bird is spotted, everyone can stop and get a chance to see the bird. If you spot a bird the leader has missed, let him or her know so everyone can see it.

When using someone else's field scope, take a quick look at the bird, then move aside until everyone has taken a look, then go back for a longer look. And offer to carry the scope if it's a long hike." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Help the leader make sure everyone who wants to see a bird gets <u>an opportunity to see</u> the bird, especially new birders." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Offer a Bird's Eye View: Keep others' views clear by not walking in front of them to find your own vantage point. When a small bird is particularly secretive it can be difficult to find a position to see it well, and it is rude to step in front of someone else's binoculars to get your own view. If you do have a good view of a shy bird, offer to move aside once you've had your look so others can see just as well." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Share your knowledge." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Share the best views with other birders." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Share and Share Alike: Be willing to share field guides, scopes and other birding equipment with other birders in your group. Not everyone will have the same resources and while one birder should never expect to use another's equipment, it is polite to offer a peek through a scope or to share a field guide reference. At the same time, come to the field prepared with your own materials so you are not dependent on the generosity of others for your observations." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Share Sightings: When you see a bird, or even just a flutter of movement or flash of color, share your observations with other birders in the group. More pairs of eyes focused on the area means more birders ready to contribute to the bird's identification and a greater likelihood that the bird can be carefully observed. When you see a bird, offer clues to its location based on surrounding trees, brush, or other landmarks so everyone can spot it easily. A polite birder is one who is courteous not only to the birds, but also to other birders and individuals who share the same trails and paths. Courteous behavior is contagious, and by following good birding etiquette birders can share their love of birds in a polite and enthusiastic way." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"While some birders prefer solitude, others bird in groups and enjoy <u>sharing</u> their findings. If you are new to birding, don't be shy; there is sure to be a more knowledgeable birder in the group willing to pass on tips and sightings." (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Remember that the group leader is responsible for the behavior of the group." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Keep groups to a size that does not interfere with others using the same area." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"As group leaders we will limit groups to a size that does not threaten... the peace and tranquility of others." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Keep <u>Groups Small</u>: Many organized birding field trips have limited participation numbers for good reason: the more people there are in the group, the more likely it is that the birds will be easily disturbed and difficult to see. While it is perfectly acceptable to invite guests who are interested in birding, avoid bringing individuals who are not prepared for the birding. In particular, very young children may not have the attention span or patience for an intense birding trip and their presence may be distracting to other avid birders." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Third, when <u>birding in a group</u>, be mindful of the other members of the group. For instance, if a person comes running in desperately to try to see the bird that the group is watching, the bird may be frightened and fly off, which does not make for a very happy group." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Be patient of other birders." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Be <u>Patient</u>: Along any birding trail, in any group and on any field trip there will be birders of all experience levels. When a bird is spotted that you are familiar with, do not assume that everyone else also knows the bird well. Be patient with new birders so they have the opportunity to see even

everyday birds well, and never disparage a common bird they find just because you've seen it before." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Avoid using flash photography that may <u>disturb other birders' viewing devices</u>." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"If you <u>witness unethical birding behavior</u>, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

3. Mindful of Personal Birding Experience

Did you remember to stretch your neck so your body feels good for the party tonight? The ethical guidelines presented here will help you relax and enjoy your time in the delightful company of birds.

"Bird quietly, walk slowly." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Silence is golden. The keen senses of birds alert them to your presence, often long before you have a chance to see them. Whether alone or in a group, walk as quietly as possible and whisper." (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Quiet walks will also help when listening for bird calls." (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"And most important, enjoy yourself! Don't be too concerned about finding that rare bird, or spotting more species than last month. Birding is meant to be informative, but also fun. (National Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

Be patient, take the time to observe." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Keep the volume down, silence is golden." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Patience is often rewarded." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

4. Mindful of Nature Protection

Of course you've been doing great things for conservation, but how can you do even more to help the birds you love? Guidelines presented here show the pathway to becoming a conservation birder.

a. Support Conservation

"Support the protection of important bird habitat." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Support the protection of important bird habitat." (Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Council, accessed 2014)

"Support the protection of birds and their habitat." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"All bird watchers have a responsibility... to contribute to the future well-being of birds and the environment." (Experience the Wild Nature Tours, accessed 2014)

b. Carpooling

"Carpool whenever possible. This is a great way to get to know new folks, swap birding stories, and learn a lot." (Mecklenburg Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Share rides: carpooling is environmentally conscious." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

c. Damaging Habitat

"Its habitat is vital to a bird and therefore we must ensure that our activities do not cause damage." (Hungarian Birdwatching, accessed 2014)

"Habitat is vital for the existence of birds and we must ensure that our activities cause minimum damage to our environment." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

"Do not damage habitat (breaking branches, trampling vegetation)." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Do not move dead branches, brush or tree limbs in order to see birds more clearly." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Keep habitat disturbance to a minimum." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Avoid disturbing bird habitats." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Leave all habitats as we find them." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Protect their habitat." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)

"Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to... the surroundings, and proceed only if disturbance can be minimized." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"As group leaders we will limit groups to a size that does not threaten the environment." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

d. Staying on Paths and Trails

"Stay on existing roads, leave habitats in as good or better condition as we find them." (Wilson Society for Ornithology, accessed 2014)

"Stay on established paths and roads." (Mountain Bird Festival, accessed 2014)

"Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist." (American Birding Association, accessed 2014)

"Stay on roads and paths where they exist." (British Bird Lovers, accessed 2014)

"Stay on roads, trails, and paths to minimize habitat disturbance." (Florida Birding Trail, accessed 2014)

"Stay in existing roads, trails and pathways to avoid trampling or disturbing fragile habitat." (BirdLife South Africa, accessed 2014)

"Stay on trails and paths." (New York City Audubon, accessed 2014)

"Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist." (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, accessed 2014)

"Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist – ...keep habitat disturbance to a minimum." (BirdLife Australia, accessed 2014)

"Minimize adverse effects to the environment by staying on existing roads, trails, and pathways whenever possible." (Wilson Society for Ornithology, accessed 2014)

"Use trails to avoid tramping vegetation." (Ontario Field Ornithologists, accessed 2014)

e. Littering

"Avoid leaving litter along a birding trail." (Birding ethics article on about.com by Melissa Mayntz, accessed 2014)

"Dispose of waste properly." (Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, accessed 2014)

"A birder must understand that they are in the bird's world, and in order to preserve this world for years to come, things that are out of place, like wrappers and bottles, should not be left behind. This simple rule also extends itself to include picking up trash that may be found on trails." (Lake Region Audubon Society, accessed 2014)