



# Virginia Living Museum Birding Cup

## April 10-11, 2015

### *Rules & Guidelines*

The Birding Cup is a fund raising event to support the care of our animals and the educational mission of the Virginia Living Museum. There is a **registration fee of \$20 per person** to help defer costs. In the spirit of the fundraiser, teams are asked to solicit pledges and contributions to support Museum programs. In lieu of outside support, teams can simply make an in-kind donation.

The Birding Cup is awarded to the team that counts the most bird species during the 24 hours of the event. The following set of rules establishes the standards and practices under which all Birding Cup participants must comply. The rules are adapted from the Big Day Count Rules established by the American Birding Association and the World Series of Birding. All participants must be familiar with and willing to comply with all rules in order to compete in the Birding Cup.

#### ***I. TERRITORY***

##### **1. GEOGRAPHY**

Newport News	Hampton	Williamsburg
York County	Poquoson	James City County

2. Only birds recorded in the above city/counties will count. Birds seen over the city/county line from inside the count area cannot be included.
3. Teams may begin their route anywhere in their count area.
4. Any team may count anywhere in the 6 area territory.

#### ***II. PARTICIPANTS***

1. Teams must consist of three to five individuals at all times. Please contact Dan Summers, VLM Education Director, with questions at 757-534-7415 or [dan.summers@thevlm.org](mailto:dan.summers@thevlm.org). Please register your team online at [www.thevlm.org/museum-events](http://www.thevlm.org/museum-events).
2. Any number of non-birding participants may join the team, but these participants may not assist the team in any way in the location or identification of birds. A designated driver who is a member may assist in the identification or location of birds, as long as they drive safely.
3. Participants may join the team throughout the day, as long as the birds sighted and recorded are in accordance with the counting rules. Any time during the count period you may have your three to five team members.

#### ***III. EVENT SCHEDULE***

All counting must take place between 6:30 p.m., April 10, and 6:30 p.m. April 11, 2015 – 24 hours. All teams must turn in their checklist to the Virginia Living Museum by 7:00 p.m. Saturday to be official and to enjoy a light dinner and good company.

#### ***IV. COUNTING PROCEDURE***

1. Count only full species as indicated by the current checklist.
2. Electronic or recorded birdcalls **may not** be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during the Birding Cup. Bird recordings may be used to help in the identification of birds and may be included among your gear. However, you may only use the recordings as a reference. Please keep the volume low.

3. Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or sound. A bird identified as to one of a species or group (e.g., 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, spp. counts as one bird. Greater Scaup and scaup, sp. still counts as one bird.
4. Introduced or reintroduced species may be counted providing they appear on the current checklist.
5. Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained. Sick or injured birds may not be counted. Birds in cages or eggs cannot be counted.
6. All birds tallied must be identified by and agreed upon by at least three members of the team. Identifications made by one team member do not count.
7. Any bird tallied must be seen and/or heard by at least three members of a 3 or 4-person team and four members of a 5-person team. It is not necessary for all team members to record the same individual bird. If three members of the team hear a Downy Woodpecker and a fourth person does not BUT manages to record another Downy Woodpecker later in the day, then Downy Woodpecker has been recorded successfully.
8. To minimize disturbance to nesting, threatened and endangered species, teams that know the location of these species whose nests must be approached within flush distance to be viewed need not physically view the adults or young. Teams need only approach in relative close proximity during daylight hours, (or during the night if the species is considered nocturnal, e.g., Barred Owl) and wait for five minutes or for as long as it would have taken for all members to view young or attending adults.

## **V. TRAVEL**

1. All vehicles except aircraft may be used. Participants are not required to travel in the same vehicle so long as they make an effort to stay together and comply with other travel rules when counting birds.
2. Team members must remain at distances that permit direct, unamplified voice contact at all times.
3. Please travel safely and use good judgment. All teams **must** comply with Virginia highway and biking laws. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

## **VI. CONDUCT & ETHICS**

1. Team members must remain within voice contact of all other members at all times.
2. Team members must count only birds personally and unquestionably identified.
3. Team members must be familiar with the rules of the competition before the event. A copy of the American Birding Association Code of Ethics may be found at: <http://www.aba.org/about/ethics.html>
4. All teams should enjoy themselves and have fun. This event is not a strict competition, but rather an enjoyable educational fundraiser and opportunity to go outside, test our skills and appreciate the healthy outdoors with friends.

## **VII. OUTSIDE INFORMATION**

1. Any information received **prior** to the count period may be used. **During** the competition, teams must make every reasonable effort to avoid receiving bird finding help from other sources. Phone, radio contact, and prearranged field encounters, except encounters whose purpose is to gain access or entry to private or restricted areas, are not permitted. When other birders are encountered accidentally, participants may not solicit bird finding information and should avoid receiving any information from them.
2. Exceptions: The bird sighting sheets at state parks, and other locations where bird sightings are regularly listed may be used.

*Thank you for being a part of this fun and important day. Have a great time, see lots of birds and enjoy being outside.*