

In-person Birding Event Listing

Considerations & Template

When planning a birding event and writing an event description, here's a template that you can edit and adapt as necessary. Not all of the suggestions will be relevant to your event, but we still recommend considering all the questions in order to plan the most inclusive event possible. [Sample text will occasionally be provided in square brackets.]

Add the LOCATION (include town and state), DATE, DAY OF WEEK and START/ END TIMES for the event in the listing.

Parking/travel: Include parking information, including directions to the meeting site. Is it easy to get lost on your way here? GPS coordinates and street addresses are best! Things to consider: Around how many parking spaces are there? Is it street parking, a parking lot, or roadside pullout? Is it paved, and is there room for a van or designated wheelchair accessible spaces?

Is this location on a bus route? Where is the nearest bus stop? Is carpooling possible - and who do folks contact if they need/want to?

(Optional) Trip leader: Include name(s) of trip leader(s), if applicable.

What to expect: What kind of birds are you hoping to see here? Approximately how many miles of walking and at what pace? Or are you birding in place? It's helpful to include a brief description of the trail that you'll be on, both in terms of bird habitat and the type of trail.

Can the event be modified if necessary? For example, you might be able to choose from several trail options depending on participant interest, or you might have another leader who could simultaneously run a stationary count with some birders.

Is the event tailored to beginners and/or are beginners welcome? Is it family-friendly? Can participants join if they are running late? How can they catch up? Can they leave early?

What to bring: [One or more masks (regularly changing out of damp masks is recommended), binoculars if you have them.] If this is on more rugged terrain, are hiking boots needed? Water, snacks, cameras, portable stools, bug spray, sunscreen? [If folks need to borrow binoculars, please reach out to [...] at least 24 hours before the event.]

Pandemic precautions: What pandemic precautions will be in place to protect folks who are at high risk for COVID complications? Is social distancing encouraged and possible at this location? [This event is only open to vaccinated participants.] [Please note that you will be expected to be masked and socially distant even if you have been vaccinated.] [If you have traveled outside the state during the previous 3 days, please do not attend this walk.] [If a disability prevents you from meeting these requirements, you are still welcome here, but please contact [...] [2 days] prior to the event so we can talk through how we can best support you and your safety!]

Accessibility: Not every birding site is going to be 100% accessible—in fact, most are definitely not! You won't always be able to include everyone and that's okay. The two main principles to remember are:

- (1) make detailed, objective, accurate, up-to-date location information easily noticeable and easily accessible so that anyone can make an informed decision about whether they can safely join your event (with or without accommodations). Include these details in social media posts, emails or on a website, not just in a graphic or flyer— these are more accessible to folks who are print-disabled and rely on screen readers.
- (2) Trust that folks' lived experience is valuable and that they will know what they need. Then, listen. Make sure potential participants know who to contact with accessibility or safety questions and concerns. Reaching out for help or admitting a limitation is hard, so we're trying to create a culture where it's safe to ask and safe to receive. It's okay to not know how to help in the moment, but you'll learn from each conversation how to make your events more inclusive, next time.

Questions to consider include: Is this a wheelchair accessible trail? Is it flat, or sloped and uneven? (What is the maximum slope on the trail?) Are there gates that wheelchair users can't navigate around? What is the terrain like—paved, boardwalk, packed dirt or gravel, rocks and roots, muddy? Are there benches available for resting or pullouts? Are bathrooms available, and are they accessible? Are ticks a concern? Is it likely to be loud, crowded, or visually overwhelming? Is there anything else about this location that might give participants pause (ie, proximity to a police station or military base)? Will bilingual folks be in attendance who can interpret (Spanish, ASL etc) if necessary?

For more information about access considerations, check out

<https://www.birdability.org/access-considerations!>

Inclement weather considerations: Is there a rain date? Does the accessibility of this location change drastically depending on the weather? If the forecast predicts the possibility of dangerous weather or commute: include how/when participants will be contacted in case plans change.

(Optional) Acknowledging Indigenous stewards of the land: Check <https://native-land.ca/> for a useful map of native lands, but keep in mind that trying to understand Indigenous Nations through the lens of Western colonialist land ownership can be futile. This section is only recommended if you've done your research on the land you're birding on, and want to provide clarity on the cultural or historical significance of the location, link to additional resources, or encourage folks to donate to Indigenous-led movements and organizations.

[If you have any other accessibility needs or questions please reach out to [trip organizer].]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: If you include a flyer or header image, please include an image description in the caption. Also, add alt-text to the image if possible.

Adapted from the event listing template for the Feminist Bird Club's Western Mass chapter (also known as the Anti-racist Collective of Avid Birders') created by Sam McGullam and Meghadeepa Maity.