



Shaver's Creek Birding Cup 2019

Rules and Guidelines of the Competition

The Birding Cup is Shaver's Creek Environmental Center's annual fund-raising event to support educational programming and related research projects. Although there is no participation fee, in the spirit of the fundraiser and to help defer costs, **teams are asked to solicit pledges and contributions of at least \$100** to support bird related programs and projects. In lieu of outside support, teams can 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 of the rules in order to compete in the Birding Cup.

I. Participants

1. In addition to the **Birding Cup**, categories for participation include the **County Cup** (see **rule III. 2.** for more details), the **Potter Mug** (if the team has two or fewer years of bird watching experience), the **Micro Cup** (see **rule III. 2.** for more details), or the **Birding Boot** (birding by non-motorized means). Birding Boot teams may use a vehicle before the count begins and to travel to the finish line after the counting has stopped.
2. Teams must consist of a minimum of three individuals at all times (with the exception of the Micro Cup, which is made of two individuals). Submit a list of members **no later than four days prior to the start**, and include the level of competition (see above). Please call or e-mail Doug Wentzel with questions at 814-865-4123 or djw105@psu.edu. To register your team, visit ShaversCreek.org/BirdingCupTeams.
3. In the event one team competes in multiple categories and sees the majority of species in more than one of them, the team will only "win" one category, and the second place team(s) will be awarded the prize in the other respective categories. In this situation, preference will be given in the following order: 1. *Birding Cup*, 2. *County Cup*, 3. *Birding Boot*, 4. *Potter Mug*. For example, a team stays within a single county yet still manages to record more species than any other team and is therefore awarded the Birding Cup. The County Cup goes to the team with the next highest tally that stayed within one county. Or, a team competes on foot within one county for the Birding Boot and County Cup and sees more than any other County Cup team. They would win the County Cup and the next highest Birding Boot team would win that category. This rule does not apply to the Micro Cup because of the rules for team size minimums.

4. 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 team member may assist in the identification or location of birds, as long as they drive safely.
5. Participants may join and/or leave the team throughout the day (i.e., to attend Penn State graduation), as long as the birds sighted and recorded are in accordance with the **counting rules IV.1. and IV.7.** For example, if your team started with five people, you should be tallying birds that are seen/heard by at least four team members. If two additional members join you from noon–3:00 p.m., the total team members that you now have is seven. In order to count a bird during that time frame, it must be seen or heard by $\frac{3}{4}$ of your team members, which would be at least six members. Members joining their team during the competition should not supply the team with information gathered after the start time.

II. Event Schedule

All counting must take place between 7:00 p.m. on Friday, May 3 and 7:00 p.m. on Saturday May 4, 2019 — twenty-four hours. (see **rule III. 3.** for exception.) To allow for out of county travel, all teams **must** turn in their checklist at Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center by **7:30 p.m.** Saturday to be official and to enjoy food and good company.

Friday of Birding Cup

7:00 p.m. — Start counting from anywhere within the seven county area!

Saturday of Birding Cup

7:00 p.m. — Stop counting.

7:30 p.m. — Turn in checklist at Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center.

7:00–9:00 p.m. — Share stories, review the checklist, eat snacks, and award prizes!

III. Geographic Area

1. Only bird species recorded in the following counties will count: Blair, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Huntingdon, Juniata, and Mifflin.
2. A team may compete for the County Cup by restricting their counting to one of the above counties. A team of two may compete for the Micro Cup by limiting their birding to a one-mile diameter circle within the greater count area. Teams should declare their intentions when they submit a list of team members at least four days prior to the start. (see **rule I. 2.**)
3. Teams may begin and end their route anywhere in the count area, but must finish counting promptly at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday and arrive at the wrap-up by 7:30 p.m. County Cup teams competing in Clearfield, Clinton, or Juniata counties may choose to begin and end at 6:00 p.m. to allow for travel back to Shaver’s Creek by 7:30 p.m. on Saturday.

IV. Counting

1. Teammates actively participating (in accordance with **participants rule I.5.**) must be within earshot of each other for any species to be counted during the Cup.
2. Count only full species as indicated by the current checklist. Species not found on the checklist are not typically found in our area in early May, and must be accompanied with proper documentation (e.g., photos and field notes) as outlined by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee (PORC) at <http://www.pabirds.org/records/>
3. Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or sound. A bird identified as 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, spp. 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 be counted. Birds in cages or eggs do not count.
6. Electronic or recorded birdcalls **may not** be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during Birding Cup. Bird recordings may be used to help in the identification of birds and may be included among your gear, but you may only use the recordings as a reference.
7. Any bird tallied must be seen and/or heard and identity agreed upon by at least 3/4 of the team members (all members of a 3-person team, and both members of a Micro Cup team!). So, if you have five members on your team, at least four people have to hear and/or see the bird and agree on the identification. 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.

V. Travel

1. All vehicles except aircraft or drones 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. Voice contact is defined as shouting distance.
3. Please travel safely and use good judgment. All teams **must** comply with Pennsylvania highway, biking, and boating laws. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

VI. Conduct and 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.
4. Each participant must maintain proper birding ethics at all times and be good ambassadors. A copy of the American Birding Association Code of Birding Ethics may be found at www.aba.org/about/ethics.html
5. All teams should enjoy themselves and keep the big picture in mind — the event is designed as a fun educational fundraiser rather than a strict competition. Your support and good conduct is greatly appreciated.

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**, including eBird, rare bird alerts, etc. If a rare bird occurrence is discovered in this way during the event, teams are welcome to choose to seek the bird, but may not tally the species. 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 (unless the other team is in a good mood and feeling generous). If an accidental encounter occurs, despite all precautions and in the spirit of raising money, the team may use the information received.
2. Exceptions: The bird sighting sheets at state parks and visitor centers may be used.

Congratulations, you made it through the rules. Good luck and good birding!

