



## JOPPA FLATS EDUCATION CENTER

Massachusetts Audubon Society

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978-462-9998

**MINOX**  
GERMANY

SUPERBOWL - CONTEST RULES - 2010

### SUPERBOWL OF BIRDING VII OFFICIAL RULES

#### **Rule 1: Time and Date of Contest**

The Superbowl of Birding is a 12-hour contest that runs from 5 A.M. to 5 P.M. Eastern Standard Time on Saturday, January 30 (snow date: January 31). No species may be counted before or after the specified time period. Scouting of the contest area before the event is allowed and encouraged.

**Note:** In case of inclement weather, postponement will be posted on Massbird and New Hampshire Birds by 5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 29.

#### **Rule 2: Location of Contest (Contest Area)**

The contest area is restricted to Rockingham County, New Hampshire, and Essex County, Massachusetts. Official maps will be provided to each team. To be counted, each bird must be in the prescribed area when observed. The prescribed contest area includes the immediately adjacent waters of the Atlantic Ocean. For safety reasons, teams are not permitted to use boats.

Teams competing for the "Sitting Duck Award" must detect all birds from within one fixed location (e.g., a home, the Joppa Flats Education Center, or, if outdoors, from within a 25-foot diameter circle).

#### **Rule 3: Team Composition**

Each team shall consist of 4 to 7 individuals. The team must remain together for the entire contest. Teams may not be split to bird two 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, access publicly available resources, or to call the Joppa Flats Education Center. Birds identified when traveling from one area to another are countable, if the birds are identified by a majority of the team members.

#### **Rule 4: Objective**

Each species on the official contest checklist has a point value of from one to five points based on the perceived difficulty of finding the species during the contest period. The team that amasses the greatest number of points will be declared the Minox Joppa Cup winner. Each species may only be counted once.

Each team must submit its contest checklist in person to the judges at the **Hope Community Church** (see map) by 5:30 P.M. of the contest day. Teams not submitting their checklists by 5:30 P.M. will be disqualified.

**Note:** Teams competing for the Sitting Duck Award may submit their results by fax or telephone by 5:30 P.M., if the team leaders have made specific arrangements with the judges prior to the event.

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#### **Rule 5: Identification of Species**

Each species must be conclusively identified by sight and/or sound by the majority (4 out of 6 or 7, 3 out of 4 or 5) of the participants of 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.

Deliberately gaining assistance 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 the location of a bird. However, team members may use publicly available resources during the competition such as Massbird, New Hampshire Birds, the Voice of Audubon, and bird sighting bulletin boards at the Joppa Flats Education Center and the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge.

The use of mechanical devices, tapes, electronic calls, or other recordings to lure or attract birds is prohibited.

#### **Rule 6: Checklists and Rarity Reporting**

To be counted, all species must be on the Official Superbowl of Birding Checklist. Please enter your sightings on the Superbowl of Birding Official Checklist by circling the point value for the species you have encountered. If the species is not on the list, it should be written in and assigned a point value of 5. Please total your results (page two of the checklist) before checking in.

**All five point birds must be called in to the Joppa Flats Education Center (978-462-9998), whether they are on the list or are write-ins, and regardless of whether another team has already reported the species.** If you do not call in, you will not score any points for that species. If your team is the first to call in a five-point species, you will receive three (3) bonus points.

The Superbowl of Birding judges may require the submission of a rare bird report (included in your packet) with your final tally. All birds called in will be posted to Massbird, New Hampshire Birds, and the Joppa Flats Education Center bulletin board.

- Notes:**
1. The purpose of this reporting rule is to ensure that we notify the birding community of any rarities observed as soon as possible and to keep tabs on the birds throughout the day, if they are observed by other teams.
  2. When calling in a 5-point species, the team must provide sufficient information so that other teams or individuals can find the bird. For example, it is not adequate to say that your team saw the 5-point bird in Gloucester. You must provide more detail such as: the bird was seen in Brace Cove, or along Atlantic Street near Bass Rocks.
  3. In the spirit of fair play and to ensure that your team receives the three bonus points, teams are required to call in their 5-point birds as soon as possible.

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**Rule 7: Prizes Categories**

The Superbowl of Birding includes the following prize categories:

- a.) Minox Joppa Cup: This award is given to the team that earns the greatest number of points. (See the Official Superbowl of Birding Checklist.)
- b.) Director's Award: This award is given to the team with the greatest number of species tallied.

**Note:** A team cannot win more than one of the team awards. For instance, if one team has both the most points and the most number of species, the team that has the second highest number of species will be declared the winner of the Director's Award.

- c.) Essex County Excels Award: This award is given to the team with the greatest number of points for birds in Essex County only.
- d.) Rockingham County Rocks Award: This award is given to the team with the greatest number of points for birds in Rockingham County only.
- e.) Seekers Award: This award is given to the first team that finds all of the species included on the Seekers Checklist.
- f.) Parker River NWR Award: This award is given to the team with the most points for birds on the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge only.
- g.) Sitting Duck Award: This award is given to the team that sees the greatest number of species from a fixed point.
- h.) NewBies Award: This award is given to the team with two or more members 18 years of age or younger that earns the greatest number of points.
- i.) Lifer Award: This award is given to the individual in a team who sees the most new birds ("life birds") during the competition.

- Notes:**
1. Full-time employees of the Joppa Flats Education Center can participate on a team (e.g., lead a NewBies team); however, they are not eligible to win awards.
  2. When submitting your team's checklist at the end of the contest, be sure to indicate the awards for which you are competing (e.g., NewBies, Lifer, etc.).

**Rule 8: Judging**

A panel of four judges will be appointed for the Superbowl of Birding. The panel will verify each team's checklist and point total and will determine the winner in each award category.

Ties will be broken by the most "rare" birds observed. For example, if two teams are tied with the same point total, the team with the most 8-point species will be declared the winner. If the teams are still tied, then the 5-point, 4-point, 3-point, and 2-point species will be compared until the tie is broken.

In all matters pertaining to the Superbowl of Birding, the decisions of the judges are final.

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### **Rule 9: Ethics**

All birds must be encountered under conditions that conform to Mass Audubon' Standards for Birding Programs and Leaders (supplied in registration packet). Failure to follow these rules may result in disqualification of the team.

### **Important Note to Team Leaders**

The staff of the Joppa Flats Education Center and the volunteer judges for the Superbowl of Birding have developed these rules to ensure that the event is an enjoyable celebration of our winter birds. The rules create an environment for strong competition among the teams. The rules also require cooperation among the teams. For example, Rule 6 rewards the team that sees a 5-point bird first with 3 bonus points, but also requires that the team share this information with the other teams. We want to be sure that everyone has a chance to see the rarity.

Rule 4 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.

During past Superbowl of Birding events, our judges have disqualified teams for being late and have disallowed points when teams did not call in their 5-point birds. 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 call Bill Gette, Sanctuary Director, at 978-462-9998.

Obey all rules and regulations on our national wildlife refuges (e.g., obey speed limits and parking regulations, do not enter closed areas).