

**MASS AUDUBON'S STANDARDS®  
FOR BIRDING PROGRAMS AND LEADERS**

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its habitat, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, **the welfare of the birds and their habitats comes first.**

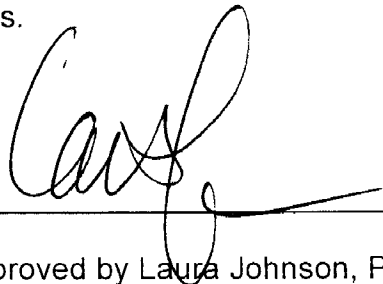
**1. Promote the welfare of birds and their habitats.**

- 1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat, and be knowledgeable and current with Mass Audubon bird conservation programs.
- 1(b) Exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming. If there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover. Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.
- 1(c) Minimize the use of sound recordings and attraction noises, especially during breeding season and inclement weather.
- 1(d) Do not use sound recordings to attract birds in heavily birded areas (e.g. Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Mass Audubon Sanctuaries) without the express permission of the landowner. Note that the Parker River NWR and some, but not all, other refuges have policies specifically prohibiting the use of sound recordings without a special permit.
- 1(e) Do not use sound recordings or other methods for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern (federal or state listings).
- 1(f) Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. Do not have a program group surround the bird(s).
- 1(g) Before advertising to a wider public audience the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from private landowners. The locations of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.
- 1(h) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist and otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.
- 1(i) Do not litter. Carrying and using bags to remove litter during a program is a proactive habitat protection step that provides a great role model for birders and the general public.

- 2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.** You are a visible representative of Mass Audubon, the conservation community, and birding enthusiasts!
- 2(a) Do not enter posted private property or approach residences without the owner's permission.
  - 2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.
  - 2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people.
- 3. Group birding requires special care.** Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out above, has responsibilities as a Group Member.
- 3(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Share your knowledge and experience and be helpful to beginning birders.
  - 3(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, 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, organizations, or authorities.

**Group and Program Leader Responsibilities.**

- 3(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.
- 3(d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment, and does not interfere with others using the same area.
- 3(e) Ensure everyone in the group knows of this code before the program commences and practices this code throughout the duration of the program.
- 3(f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g. no playing of recordings in some National Wildlife Refuges).
- 3(g) Promote the safety of the group as it relates to potential hazards associated with vehicles, watercraft, terrain, and weather conditions.
- 3(h) Acknowledge that Mass Audubon and its program and group leaders bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds ahead of any other birding concerns.

  
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Approved by Laura Johnson, President

Date: 11/29/06

@Adapted from The American Birding Association's Code of Birding Ethics  
<<http://americanbirding.org>>.

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