



## JOPPA FLATS EDUCATION CENTER

Mass Audubon  
1 Plum Island Turnpike  
Newburyport, MA 01950  
978-462-9998



SUPERBOWL - CONTEST RULES - 2018 (01/02/2018)

### SUPERBOWL OF BIRDING XV OFFICIAL RULES - 2018

#### **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 27 (snow date: January 28). 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 NHBirds by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 27.

#### **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 registered team. The contest area includes the immediately adjacent waters of the Atlantic Ocean. For safety reasons, teams are not permitted to use boats.

To be counted, each bird must be seen from within the prescribed contest areas.

**Teams competing for the Townie Award must detect all birds from within one municipality (town or city).**

#### **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 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 can be counted, 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 1 to 5 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 Joppa Cup winner. Each species may only be counted once.

**SUPERBOWL OF BIRDING XV OFFICIAL RULES**

**Rule 4: Objective (Continued)**

Each team must submit its contest checklist in person to the judges at the **Hope Community Church** by 5:30 p.m. on the day of the contest. Teams that do not check in with contest officials by 5:30 p.m. will incur a penalty.

**Penalties:**

- a. Teams that do not report to the Hope Community Church on time will be penalized two 1-point species for each full minute that they are late. (Examples: If a team reports when the official clock indicates 5:30 p.m., there is no penalty. If the clock indicates 5:31 p.m., the team is penalized two, 1-point species. If the clock indicates 5:34 p.m. the team is penalized eight, 1-point species.)
- b. Teams that report after 5:45 p.m. will be disqualified.

**Note:** Members of disqualified teams are encouraged to stay for the door prize drawings, for which they are eligible, and for the pizza party.

- c. Team members competing for the Lifer Award will not be penalized on their individual checklists.

**Rule 5: Special Rule for Townie Award Participants**

**The Sitting Duck Award is intended to encourage local patch birding, saving energy, and getting to know the local spots.**

**To compete for the Townie Award, team captains must announce by the Friday before the Superbowl of Birding that their teams will be competing for the award and what municipality they intend to bird.**

**Rule 6: 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 on 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.

Team members may use publicly available resources during the competition such as Massbird, NHBirds, the Voice of Audubon, bird sighting boards at the Joppa Flats Education Center and the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, and information about 5-point birds available from Superbowl of Birding judges.

**SUPERBOWL OF BIRDING XV OFFICIAL RULES**

Deliberately gaining assistance or an unfair advantage 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.

**Rule 7: Use of Mechanical Devices to Attract Birds is Prohibited**

The use of mechanical devices, tapes, electronic calls, or other recordings to lure or attract birds is strictly prohibited. Teams that utilize these devices will be disqualified.

**Rule 8: Access to the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge:**

a. Refuge Headquarters:

The grounds of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters located at 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, are open to competition.

b. Mainland Portion of the Refuge:

The only other area on the mainland portion of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge that is open to Superbowl of Birding participants is the parking area at the eastern end of Stackyard Road. The marsh trail that leads from the parking lot toward Nelson's Island is closed to birders every day except Sunday due to hunting. Hunting Areas A and B on the mainland side of the refuge (consult a refuge map) are also closed.

Note: Stackyard Road, Patmos Road, and Mass Audubon's Rough Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary in Rowley are open to Superbowl of Birding teams.

c. Island Portion of the Refuge:

Under normal conditions, the island portion of the refuge is open to the public starting at sunrise. However, under a Special Use Permit issued to the Joppa Flats Education Center for the Superbowl of Birding only, access to the island portion of the refuge is permitted as soon as the main gate opens.

Note: Under federal law, licensed hunters are permitted to enter the refuge before sunrise to set up their decoys, launch boats, etc.

Note: When planning your team's itinerary, please be aware that the main gate to the refuge may close well before sunset.

c. Penalties:

Teams that violate the statutory regulations of our national wildlife refuges will be disqualified and will be subject to prosecution under federal law.

**SUPERBOWL OF BIRDING XV OFFICIAL RULES**

**Rule 9: 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 with the judges.

**All 5-point birds must be called in to the Joppa Flats Education Center (978-462-9998), whether they are on the checklist 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 5-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, NHBirds, and the Joppa Flats Education Center sightings 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 Road near Bass Rocks.
  3. In the spirit of fair play and to ensure that your team receives the three bonus points, you are required to call in your 5-point birds as soon as possible.

**Rule 10: Prizes Categories**

The Superbowl of Birding includes the following prize categories:

- a.) Zeiss 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.

**SUPERBOWL OF BIRDING XV OFFICIAL RULES**

**Rule 10: Prizes Categories (Continued)**

- c.) Essex County Award: This award is given to the team with the greatest number of points for birds in Essex County only.
- d.) Rockingham County 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.

**Note:** If no team sees all 30 species on the Seekers Checklist, then the team that sees the most birds on that checklist will be declared the winner. Please read and follow the reporting requirements listed on the Seekers Award Rules and Checklist.

- f.) **Fledgling Award: This award is given to the first youth team (at least two team members must be 15 years old or younger) to find all of the species included on the Fledgling Checklist. (Note: This is a half-day program.)**
- g.) 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.
- h.) **Townie Award: This award is given to the team that sees the greatest number of species from in a single municipality (town or city).**
- i.) **NewBies Award: This award is given to the team with two or more members 16 years of age or younger that earns the greatest number of points.**
- j.) 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; however, they are not eligible to win team 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).
  3. Time permitting, the Superbowl of Birding judges can assist the team captains in determining the awards for which they are competing. Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of each team captain to decide on the prize categories.

**Rule 11: 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.

**SUPERBOWL OF BIRDING XV OFFICIAL RULES**

**Rule 11: Judging (continued)**

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.

**Rule 12: Ethics**

All birds must be encountered under conditions that conform to Mass Audubon’s 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 9 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 any rarities reported.

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 competitions, our judges have disqualified teams, disallowed points for not calling in 5-point birds, and penalized teams for taking unfair advantage of birding opportunities.

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 David Moon, Sanctuary Director, at 978-462-9998. If you have any questions about the rules during the contest, please call the Superbowl of Birding judges at 978-462-9998.

The Superbowl of Birding judges recommend that you take the time either before or during the event to be sure you know where the Hope Community Church is located. We don’t want any team to be penalized or disqualified for being late.

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