

Birding Ethics

It's important to be respectful of the birds and the areas they live in when birding. In any conflict of interest, the well-being of the birds and their habitats must come before the ambitions of the birder or bird photographer. Here are some basic guidelines.

1. Keep your distance.

- Use binoculars, telephoto lenses, or spotting scopes to get a good look without approaching the bird.
- If the bird is reacting to your presence, you're too close. Back away and give it time to settle down. Do not approach or attempt to flush birds from resting or feeding spots.
- Patience will usually be rewarded.

2. Keep the mute on.

- Avoid playback devices or loud talking.
- Carry a cell phone but turn it off or to vibrate when on the trail.
- Blend into the background (except in hunting areas where you'll want to be easily seen).

3. Keep healthy and safe.

- Stay hydrated and wear appropriate shoes and clothing.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Park only in designated areas. Pull off the road completely before stopping.

4. Keep nesting birds safe

- Keep a respectful distance from the nest.
- Avoid flushing the adults, scaring the young, or doing anything to draw the attention of predators to the nest.
- Do not move or remove anything around the nest, as it may be providing both essential camouflage and protection from the elements.

5. Practice good neighborly conduct.

- Respect private property and do not trespass. Respect public property by being aware of local regulations, hours, and closed areas.
- Be considerate of others and share your sightings. In group situations, be considerate of other birders and photographers who may be watching the same bird. Also note, that large groups of people are potentially more disturbing to birds, so it may be necessary to keep a greater distance.