

Rules for the 2023 Rhode Island Cup Big Day Competition

A Big Day Competition involves putting together a team to identify as many bird species as possible during the allowed time period. The first annual RI Cup will take place on February 11, 2023. The deadline for registration is February 4, 2023. The rules are based upon the American Birding Association Big Day Count rules with some minor modifications.

1. Teams:
 - a. Teams will be made up of three birders.
2. Time Period:
 - a. All counting must take occur between 5:00 am and 5:30 pm on February 11.
 - b. Counts must be turned in at the central reception location in person by 6:00pm (location TBD).
3. Counting:
 - a. A count sheet will be provided, listing all Rhode Island birds that have been historically recorded in eBird on or around Feb. 11.
 - b. Each bird on the list will be assigned a point value ranging from 1 – 4. Rarer birds will be assigned higher point values. Birds recorded that are not on the list will be assigned a point value of 5. The team with the highest total point score will be declared the winner.
 - c. Rare birds (levels 4 and 5) should be shared with the other teams via the Group Me chat. The team that finds the rare bird first will receive a 3 point bonus. Rare birds will require additional photographic evidence or detailed field notes to be accepted.
 - d. Saw-whet owls and long-eared owls are not eligible for counting.
 - e. Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or sound. Use common sense, if in doubt about the bird's identity, do not count it! Identification may be confirmed after the original observation if there is photographic evidence and/or field notes that support the ID while the bird was living and unrestrained. The Big Day Judging Panel will determine if the sighting is allowed.
 - f. The 95% rule will be in place. At least 95% of all birds reported must be seen or heard by all three members of the team. Up to 5% only require positive ID's from at least two members of the team. Birds seen or heard by only one member may not be counted.
 - g. Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained. Birds attracted to feeders may be counted. Audio playbacks are not allowed and could be grounds for disqualification.
4. Area:
 - a. The contest area is the state of Rhode Island. Birds seen across the state line are allowed, provided you are physically in Rhode Island.
5. Conduct:
 - a. Each participant must remain within direct voice contact of all other participants at all times, except during time outs.
 - b. Make every reasonable effort to identify personally and to help other team members identify every species possible.
 - c. Count only birds personally and unquestionably identified.

- d. Review the RI Cup Rules before the start of the Count
 - e. All sightings will be verified by the RI Cup judging panel, whose decisions are final.
6. Outside Information:
- a. During the Count, teams must make every reasonable effort to avoid receiving bird-finding help from nonparticipants. Phone and radio contacts and pre-arranged field encounters are not permitted. Participants may not travel with or walk any substantial distance with non-participants. When other birders are encountered accidentally, participants may not share any information unless it pertains to a level 4 or 5 sighting.
 - b. Any information received prior to the Count may be used during the Count.
7. Ethics:
- a. Each participant should strive to maintain proper birding ethics at all times. Please do not harass any birds and respect private property.
8. Report Form:
- a. Each team will complete a report form and submit it in person at the central reception location by 6:00pm. The report form will include a pledge that all team members reviewed and complied with the RI Cup Big Day rules.
9. Cost:
- a. The entrance fee is \$20 for teams comprised entirely of OSBC members or \$25 for teams that have at least one non-member.
10. Judging:
- a. The RI Cup Big Day Judging Panel will review all submissions and make any rulings on questionable sightings. Rulings by the Panel are final.