

**Halifax River Audubon Society
Field Trip Leader Checklist**

**COMMON SENSE, SAFETY,
AND THE BIRDS' WELFARE PREVAILS OVER ALL ELSE --
AND HAVE FUN**

New and experienced leaders -- don't be intimidated by this list or the responsibility. This list is comprehensive and covers the many considerations for field trips. Use common sense and take what you need.

There is much experience and knowledge in our groups. Take advantage of it. Encourage participants to share their knowledge and equipment. When using someone's optics be extremely careful and respectful. Remember optics are expensive and fragile.

The leader, as well as all members, should be helpful and patient with less experienced participants. The goal is a positive experience for all participants (to see the birds, see them well plus know and understand what they saw).

Finally, read the *American Birding Association Principles of Birding Ethics*. Use these guidelines when conducting our field trips.

Before the trip

- Contact the agency responsible for the destination site, if needed
(coordinate with Field Trip Chair)
- Secure permission, if necessary
- Anticipate potential problems (flooding, road closures, controlled burns, etc.)
- Note restrictions
- Get birding advice from local staff

Scouting the destination

- Plan the driving route, checking for traffic issues or road closures
- If there is the potential of vehicles getting separated: consider printing a map and driving instructions
- Assign predetermine spots to regroup
- Locate restrooms and check for suitability (clean & properly supplied)
- If a lunch is suggested, locate a place for the group to eat -- (tables, shade, restrooms, water)
- Check the trails to be sure they are passable, look for potential problems or hazards
- Determine the best observation spots for target species
- Adjust the trip route, if necessary, to enhance the birding experience
- Look for unusual birds or behaviors that would interest the group
- Are there any natural or historical features that the group might find interesting?
- Anticipate questions -- research and prepare answers

Check Supplies

- Sign-in sheets
- Bird checklists

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- Radios & batteries
- Field trip and program schedules
- Membership forms
- Water

Optional

- Maps & checklists of destination
- Literature from the agency responsible for the site
- Hand sanitizer
- Paper towels, toilet paper
- Advanced bird guides

At the Meeting Site

Depart the meeting destination promptly and efficiently:

- Begin a brief introduction promptly at (or slightly before) the designated time
- Make sure everyone signs in
- Ask for email address of first-time participants
- Make vehicle assignments as people arrive
- Give drivers a cell phone number for the lead vehicle
- Have a cell phone number for all vehicles
- Make vehicle assignments as people arrive
- Make sure every vehicle has a radio
- Reduce the vehicles to as few as possible
- Be on the road as quickly as possible

Before Ending the Trip

- Compile a trip list with the group
- Assign someone to send the bird list to Bob North knorth8@cfl.rr.com
- Send a thank you and trip report to responsible agency if applicable
- Send the number of trip participants to Paula Wehr paulawehr@cfl.rr.com
- Give/send the sign-in sheet to Joan or Chuck Tague babyowl@mac.com