



BE SAFE!

Huron Fringe Birding Festival 2024

The Festival strives to ensure that all Events are conducted as safely as possible. All participants should be aware of the following protocols to ensure the safety of you and your group.

1. Preparations for your Event

- Arrive 30 minutes before your first event to check in at Registration for your Festival Name Badge. Meet 15 minutes before your other Event(s). (Events must leave on time to clear the meeting areas for other groups to park and assemble safely).
- For car-travel events, walkie-talkies will be distributed for safety and convenience. Bring your own if you have them!
- Ensure your car has a full tank of gas or is fully charged, to avoid unnecessary delays or safety issues.
- Have water, sunscreen, bug spray, lunch, walkie talkies or other essentials as required with you. Be ready to roll!

2. Event Convenors and Event Coordinators

The Event Convenor (Convenor)

- In-Park events will be coordinated by an Event Convenor, who will gather the group, provide basic instructions, introduce the Leader, then send you off on your Event. They will not accompany the Event as an assistant or sweep.

The Event Coordinator (EC)

- Out-of-Park Events are accompanied by an Event Coordinator who will do the above, and additionally accompany the group on the Event, act as sweep and provide basic assistance if necessary. The EC may provide some assistance where necessary, however, will also have to remain with and be attentive to the group as a whole.
- If you need to leave the Event, advise the EC, as we need to ensure you are not lost or in trouble.
- The EC has a basic First Aid Kit.

3. Vehicle Travel Events 🚗

a) Vehicle Convoys:

Road travel events require special attention to safety and the rules of the road! Drive very mindfully!

- We encourage car-pooling to minimize safety concerns (and for environmental and social benefits). Carpooling reduces the number of cars stopping roadside and pulling out again onto busy roads.
- Maintain as tight a group of vehicles as can be safely done to ensure the group remains together. Don't tailgate, but don't lag behind!
- Walkie-talkies aid safety in vehicle convoys by allowing the lead vehicle to provide instructions and directions en route, as necessary. Keep your walkie-talkie turned on (Channel 11-22).
- Ontario law notes walkie-talkies are hand-held devices; drivers must not operate the walkie-talkie. Assign a passenger to speak if there should be any questions en route. Keep communications to a minimum to avoid distractions.
- The Event Coordinator will be in the rear vehicle and act as sweep to ensure all vehicles are present and accounted for, and to advise of traffic and safety issues as necessary.

b) Roadside Stops:

- Pull off the road as far as practical, while being aware of narrow shoulders and roadside ditches.
- Pull up reasonably close to the vehicle in front of you to minimize the distance passing traffic has to get by.
- When passengers step out of vehicles be aware of shoulder stability, ditch depth and ensure you have firm footing.
- Drivers and passengers should be aware of approaching traffic before opening their doors.
- The lead car and the Event Coordinator sweep car will activate their hazard lights at stops.

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c) **Birding on Roads:**

- The Event Coordinator will be wearing a High-Visibility vest as an added safety measure for group stops on roads.
- The Event Coordinator will call out “**CAR**” to announce approaching traffic so that everyone is aware. As traffic approaches, the group must move as far off the road as possible and stand still so that drivers know your intention of remaining out of their way.
- Stay on the road shoulder as much as possible while birding.
- Move as a group. All participants should always be on the **same side** of the roadway to not distract approaching traffic.

4. **Trail Events**

- Appropriate footwear should be worn to provide support, traction and protection from the environment.
- Stay on trails to avoid hazards such as poison ivy, ticks, tangles, thorns, downed branches, etc. Be alert at all times for varying trail conditions, wet, slippery or other hazard conditions. Alert others behind you about poor conditions.

5. **In Case of an Emergency**

The Festival has a virtually incident-free history of medical or other emergencies. To maintain this record, our policies include:

- Requiring all participants to read this **Be Safe** document and be mindful of the safety precautions provided herein when participating in any Event.
- Asking participants to consider any medical or physical limitations they may have when choosing Events, to ensure their personal safety and that of the group. And to also consider the Difficulty Level rating for each Event they may choose.
- All participants are required to provide Emergency Contact information upon registering for an event.
- The Event Coordinators or the Leaders carry a basic First Aid kit on all Events
- During out-of-Park Events the Event Coordinator will provide assistance in the case of a medical or other issue, including calling 911, advising the Festival contact number, and the emergency contact person, as required.
- During in-Park events the Leader will provide assistance including calling 911, contacting the Park Warden, advising the Festival contact number, and the emergency contact person, as required.
- The Festival has additional procedures in place for use in special or specific circumstances that may affect the safety and welfare of any individual participant, or the group as a whole.

6. **Event Difficulty Levels**

The Festival seeks to accommodate various levels of physical abilities across our many Events. We offer some mobility-limited Events  and some shorter All Day Events★.

For your guidance, Events are rated as Mobility Limited, Easy, Moderate, or Difficult. Be aware that trail surfaces vary from unsurfaced earthen, stone dust or wood-chipped trail, boardwalks, level to sometimes steeper with more challenging, less maintained surfaces, exposed bedrock, boulder pavement, rough shorelines, and sandy beaches, etc.

Please consider these ratings, as well as your own abilities and comfort when selecting or participating in any Event:

- **Mobility Limited** –  Intended for those who have difficulty walking.
- **Easy** – Participants should be able to walk up to 1.5 kilometres (3 hours) without any problems. Generally walking is leisurely on maintained trails.
- **Moderate** – Participants should be able to walk up to 4.5 kilometres (3+hours) without any problems. Brisk walking may be required to get from one location to another in a timely manner. Generally, walking will be on maintained trails, some of which may be rough or rocky.
- **Difficult** – Participants should be able to walk distances where there is unsure footing or where terrain or obstacles need to be negotiated.

**Thank you for observing these protocols
to ensure the safety of you and your group!**