

BE SAFE!

Huron Fringe Birding Festival 2022

The Festival strives to ensure that all Events are conducted as safely and smoothly as possible.
All participants should follow the safe practices outlined below.

1. Covid Health and Safety Protocols

- All participants in any part of the Festival must be fully vaccinated as per government guidelines. No exemptions.
- Masking is required in the Visitor Centre, at evening Events, and in any situation where social distancing is not possible.

2. Registration

- Arrive at the Registration Tent at least 30 minutes prior to your first Event to complete your registration, receive your name badge and your parking pass. This will allow sufficient time to minimize congestion and maintain safe distances, in compliance with Covid protocols.

3. Preparations for your Event(s)

- Be on time. This includes **arriving 15 minutes before your Event(s)**. There will be instructions and Events have full itineraries to follow and must leave on time to clear the meeting area for other groups to assemble safely.
- Bring your pack &/or personal essentials with you to your Event meeting area – (water, bug spray, snacks etc). Be ready to roll.
- Having water with you is recommended for *all* outings.
- Your car should have a full tank of gas if your Event involves vehicle transportation.

4. Event Coordinators

The majority of Events are assisted by an Event Coordinator (EC):

- The EC will take attendance, provide the group with general instructions, advise of safety procedures and introduce the Leader prior to departure. It is important that you arrive **15 minutes prior** to your Event(s) to receive these instructions.
- If you need any type of assistance during an Event, advise the EC.
- If you depart from the group, you **must advise the EC beforehand** as we need to ensure you are not lost or in trouble. The Event Coordinator may provide some assistance where necessary, however, will also have to remain with and attentive to the group.
- The EC will have a basic First Aid kit on hand.
- The EC is generally in the 'sweep' position on the trail or in the car convoy.

5. Event Difficulty Levels

We rate each of our Events for their general level of difficulty. Please consider these ratings, as well as your own abilities and comfort when selecting and participating in any Event.

The Festival seeks to provide for various levels of physical abilities across our many Events. We offer some shorter early-bird and mid-morning Events, some shorter all-day Events ☆, and mobility-limited Events ♿. For your guidance, Events are rated as Mobility Limited, Easy, Moderate or Difficult:

- **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 groomed and 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 obstacles need to be negotiated.

6. Trail Surfaces and Walking Conditions

- Trail surfaces and walking conditions vary from relatively level, wood-chipped, boardwalk, unsurfaced earthen, stone dust trails to more challenging, less maintained, sometimes steeper boulder pavement, exposed bedrock, rough shorelines and sandy beaches. Be alert at all times to surface condition changes.
- Appropriate footwear should be worn to provide support, traction and protection from the environment.
- Be prepared for wet, slippery or other hazard conditions and alert others behind you about these conditions.
- Boardwalks can be slippery when wet or damp.
- Stay on trails to avoid hazards such as poison ivy, ticks, tangles and thorns or downed branches.

7. Vehicle Travel Events 🚗

a) Walkie-Talkies: (Channel 11-22)

The Festival uses walkie-talkies for safety and communication between vehicles. We recommend each car have one or borrow one from us. Ontario law must be observed, i.e., walkie-talkies are hand-held devices; drivers must not operate the walkie-talkie.

- If you don't have your own walkie-talkie, Festival walkie-talkies will be signed out to you by the EC prior to your Event.
- Walkie-talkies provide added safety to vehicle convoys by allowing the lead vehicle to provide directions and safety instructions en route, and to communicate as necessary. All messages should be clear and concise.
- Assign a **passenger** in each vehicle to operate the walkie-talkie.
- If your vehicle falls out of reception range, request that a closer vehicle in the group repeat the information for the benefit of those behind them.
- Signed out walkie-talkies must be returned immediately after each Event, to the EC or Registration Tent.

b) Vehicle Convoys:

Traveling in a group with multiple vehicles requires special attention to safety.

- All participants should be aware of which car is the lead vehicle in their group prior to departure.
- The Event Coordinator will be in the rear vehicle and act as sweep to ensure all vehicles are present and accounted for.
- 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!
- To ensure that the group stays together, waiting points will be used as necessary. These will be after a slow or congested area (e.g., traffic lights in a town) and will be a parking area or the shoulder of the road.
- Always check for traffic when moving off and onto the road or the shoulder. Use your signal!

c) Road Shoulders:

There may be stops along roads for viewing birds. When stopping along the road shoulder and getting out of vehicles, occupants should use these safety procedures:

- Listen for notice from the lead vehicle and prepare to pull over.
- Always check for following vehicles. Be sure to signal!
- Pull off the road as far as practical.
- Pull up reasonably close to the vehicle in front of you.
- Ensure the road is free of vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians before opening your doors.
- Be aware of shoulder stability, ditch depth and firm footing when stepping out.

d) Birding on Roads:

- As pedestrians, stay off the road and as far onto the shoulder as is practical.
- Move as a group. All participants should be on the **same side** of the roadway to not distract approaching traffic. When 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.
- Call out to announce the approach of traffic so that everyone is aware. "CAR!"
- The lead car and sweep will use their hazard lights when stopped to alert approaching traffic.

The Festival has additional procedures in place for use in special or specific circumstances that may affect the safety and welfare of any individual event participant, or the group as a whole.

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

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