

Caloosa Bird Club Guide for Field Trip Leaders

Thank you for volunteering to be a field trip leader. Distributing the work makes it fun for all without too much work for anyone. Here are a few things that will help to make the trip more relaxing and better organized.

RESERVATION LIST: If your field trip requires that the number of participants must be limited, a reservation list for trips must be prepared for the monthly meeting prior to your trip. You or your co-leader must be present to answer any questions. A waiting list with phone numbers should accompany the trip list so you can call the next person in line if there is a cancellation.

DIRECTION SHEET: Prepare a written sheet with specific directions and meeting times. If more than one site is to be visited, please include directions for the other sites. Include information about entrance fees or tolls that may have to be paid on the trip. Give this sheet to participants as they sign the reservation list or express interest in the field trip.

VISIT THE SITE: The week before the trip is scheduled, you and your co-leader should visit the site to scope it out. Check for the bird species present, the availability of parking, any closures of roads or parks that might affect the trip, and the availability of bathroom and picnic areas. If there is a problem, contact the Field Trip Chairperson.

PLAYBACK: The use of sound recordings, "playback," is forbidden on field trips unless approved by the field trip leader. That means it's your responsibility to find out if a site allows the activity and to monitor its use if allowable by site managers. Here are some helpful suggestions when playback is used in the field:

Pish or play songs in moderation. We often have guests or may have other people near by, so set an example. Gather the group, announce your intention, give an introduction to what you are going to do with the audio device and why. Explain the ethical issues and why only the leader should use the device. Hold the device above your shoulder while it plays (to avoid any confusion or false alarms)

Play snippets of sound at low volume – less than 30 seconds at a time, then a long pause before the next snippet (more silence than playback) and after two minutes or so give it a rest - you are trying to tease the bird into the open, not stir up a fight. Do not broadcast loud or continuous sound. Overplaying a song can wear out a territorial songbird who will try to find the invisible rival singing in his territory.

Use of playback is prohibited in many parks and refuges. It is also illegal to disturb any endangered or threatened species (and playback can be interpreted as disturbance). Any potential negative impacts of playback are more likely to occur in areas with a lot of birding pressure, so avoiding playback entirely in those places is a good idea.

For more information, go to David Sibley's article at:

<http://www.sibleyguides.com/2011/04/the-proper-use-of-playback-in-birding/>

PARTICIPANT SIGN-UP SHEET: As participants arrive at the site, have them sign their names to the participant sign-up sheet. Guests should sign their names, identify their host for the trip, and give contact information.

FIELD CHECKLIST: After lunch, an official field checklist will be made. Two individuals must have seen a bird for it to be counted. Call off the names of birds and have people answer that they have seen the bird.

The day of the field trip bring with you:

1. the reservation list
2. the enclosed participant sign-up sheet with a clipboard and pencil. Give the sign-up sheet to the Membership Chairperson at the end of the trip, or mail it to the Membership Chairperson if he/she is not present.
3. the enclosed field checklist. Give it to the Field Trip Chairperson at the end of the trip or mail it to the Field Trip Chairperson if he/she is not present.
4. the field trip report. This organizational form will help others who may lead the trip in the future. Include any information that may be helpful or that you wish you had known before planning the trip. Give this form to the Field trip Chairperson or mail it to the Field Trip Chairperson if he/she is not present.

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