

2017 MONTEZUMA MUCKRACE RULES COMPETITIVE LEVEL (revised 7/27/17)

The following rules establish the standards and practices under which all Montezuma Muckrace competitive level participants must comply. These rules are adopted pursuant to the New Jersey Audubon Society's World Series of Birding regulations.

ALL COMPETITIVE LEVEL PARTICIPANTS MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH AND WILLING TO COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE RULES IN ORDER TO COMPETE IN THE MONTEZUMA MUCKRACE. Failure in this regard may result in the disqualification of the team. New in 2016, there is a Collegiate Division that operates under the Competitive Level rules with a reduced entry fee.

Competitive teams consist of three or more participants. All teams must register at the Montezuma Audubon Center before 3:00 p.m. the day of the race (Saturday).

I. Counting:

- a.** Count only full species as indicated by the current New York State checklist (compiled by the New York State Ornithological Association).
- b.** Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or sound. A bird identified as one of a group of species (i.e., scaup instead of the more precise Greater or Lesser Scaup) may be counted as a species, if no other bird in that group appears on your list. For example, Scaup sp. counts as one bird. Scaup sp. and Greater Scaup would still count as one bird species.
- c.** Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained. Eggs may not be counted as birds.
- d.** Electronic or recorded bird calls may NOT be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize during the Muckrace or while scouting prior to the event. Bird recordings may be used to help in the identification of birds and may be included among your gear, BUT recordings are restricted to vehicles and may only be used as a reference when teams are traveling between destinations. Recordings may not be used when teams are actively birding.
- e.** All birds tallied must be identified by at least two members of the team. Identifications made by one team member do not count.
- f.** Ninety-five percent of all birds recorded by a team must be tallied and identified by all members of the team. This is your OFFICIAL TOTAL. In essence, it means that for every twenty birds recorded, you may count one bird that was heard or seen by fewer than every member of the team (but at least two members). It is not necessary for all team members to record the same individual bird. If three members of a team see a Belted Kingfisher and a fourth member does not, BUT manages to see another Kingfisher later in the day, and this sighting is collaborated by at least one other team member, then Belted Kingfisher has been recorded unanimously.

II. Time:

All counting must begin and end between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. of the Montezuma Muckrace dates. Teams may elect to begin and finish at any time within this timeframe. All teams must turn their checklists in at the finish line at 7:15 p.m.

III. Geographic Area:

- a.** Only birds recorded within the Montezuma Wetland Complex Focus Area may be counted.
- b.** Teams may begin their route anywhere in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, but must finish at the Montezuma Audubon Center, the designated finish line.
- c.** A team may cross over the boundary for convenience or expedience, but no birds may be counted while a team is on the wrong side of the boundary line.
- d.** Boundary roads or streams are considered inclusive. That is, any bird seen on or over a boundary road is considered "in bounds" and may be counted. The boundary across Cayuga Lake shall be the railroad bridge, inclusive.

IV. Travel:

- a. All vehicles except aircraft may be used.
- b. Team members must remain at distances which permit direct, unamplified voice contact at all times. Voice contact is defined as shouting distance.
- c. Participants are not required to travel in the same vehicle as long as there is compliance with Rule "IVb".
- d. All teams must comply with New York highway laws. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

V. Participants:

- a. Teams must consist of a minimum of three.
- b. Collegiate Division teams must consist solely of currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate students from a single College, University or Community College.
- c. Any number of non-birding participants may attend the team, but these participants may not assist the team in any way in the location or identification of birds. A designated driver who is not a team member may not assist in the location of identification of birds.

VI. Conduct:

- a. Team members must count only birds personally and unquestionably identified.
- b. Team members must be familiar with the rules of the competition before the event.
- c. No team may intentionally flush or drive into hiding any bird to prevent another team from finding it.
- d. No special access privileges are implied from Montezuma, the DEC, or any other landowner, unless specifically noted.

VII. Outside Information:

- a. During the competition, teams must make every reasonable effort to avoid receiving special bird finding help from other sources. Phone, radio contact and prearranged field encounters (except encounters to gain access or entry to private or restricted areas) are not permitted. When other Competitive teams are encountered, participants may share information. If information is offered, especially information regarding a rarity, it may be used freely. Remember, we are fellow birders first, competitors second!
- b. Exceptions: The bird sighting sheets at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and other locations where bird sighting sheets are regularly found may be referenced during the competition providing the information appearing on these sheets has not been prearranged.
- c. Any information received prior to the event MAY be used during the Muckrace.

VIII. Ethics:

Each participant must maintain proper birding ethics at all times as defined in the ABA Code of Ethics, a copy of which is included in the registration packet.

IX. Official Totals:

- a. **All teams must submit their totals in person to officials at the finish line before 7:15 p.m. of the Muckrace day. Teams arriving later than 7:15 p.m. will forfeit one bird from their total and an additional bird for every full five-minute period thereafter.**
- b. Totals are considered final when they are submitted. No alterations or corrections may be made after checklists have been handed over to officials.
- c. In the event of a tie between two teams, the place and award will be shared.

X. Call of Foul:

- a. A team which, in the course of the event, observed what it perceives to be an infraction of the Montezuma Muckrace rules by another team may file a written protest to the Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex. A review panel, drawn from Montezuma Muckrace participants, will consider the charges. The panel is empowered to disqualify a team within ten days of the competition if evidence warrants.
- b. The decision of the review panel is considered final.

XI. Eligibility, Fees, and Deadlines:

- a.** Competitive teams can be sponsored by a birding club, Audubon Chapter, a not-for-profit organization, an environmentally conscious business or enterprise, or self-sponsored, and must pay an entry fee of \$100.00. The entry fee for Collegiate Division teams is \$50.00.
- b.** All participants (team members and those accompanying teams) must sign, date, and submit a RELEASE & HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT prior to the competition. Individuals who fail to comply have no standing as participants and their team is disqualified.
- c.** Entry fees must be paid in full before the commencement of the event.