

## BE SAFE!

### Huron Fringe Birding Festival 2020

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The Festival strives to ensure that all events are conducted as safely as possible. All participants should be aware of and follow the guidelines and safe practices outlined below.

#### General

All events are assisted by an Event Coordinator (EC):

- The EC will take attendance and provide the group with general instructions and advise of safety procedures prior to departure. It is important that you arrive **15 minutes prior** to each event to receive these instructions.
- The EC carries a basic First Aid kit.
- If you need 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 EC is generally in the 'sweep' position on the trail or in the car convoy.

#### Preparations

- Be on time. Events have full itineraries to follow. Other groups must assemble in the area after your group departs.
- Bring your pack &/or personal essentials with you to the meeting area – (bug spray, snacks etc).
- Having water with you is recommended for *all* outings.
- Your car should have a full tank of gas.

#### Event Difficulty Levels

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

Should you for any reason need to withdraw from an Event let the Event Coordinator know. The Event Coordinator may provide some assistance where necessary, however, will also have to remain attentive to the group as a whole.

The Festival seeks to provide for various levels of physical abilities across our many Events. We offer shorter all-day Events, mobility-limited Events and, for your guidance, we rate our Events as Easy, Moderate or Difficult:

- **Easy** – Walking leisurely on groomed and maintained trails. Participants should be able to walk up to 1.5 kilometres (1 mile) without any problems. *Please note:* some Events marked **Easy** may involve long periods of walking & standing over the course of the Event. Take note of the start and end times and be mindful that 5 hours of walking, even over a relatively short, flat distance may be challenging to your level of endurance.
- **Moderate** – Walking on maintained trails some of which may be rough or rocky. Brisk walking may be required to get from one location to another in a timely manner. Participants should be able to walk up to 4.5 kilometres (3 miles) without any problems.
- **Difficult** – Walking on trails that have uneven terrain. There may be some walking off trail. Participants should be able to negotiate walking where there is unsure footing, on slippery surfaces or where climbing over rocks and logs or up & down steep sections is required.

#### Trail Events

Trail surfaces vary from relatively level wood-chipped, boardwalk, unsurfaced earthen, stone dust to more challenging, less maintained, sometimes steeper boulder pavement and exposed bedrock.

- Appropriate footwear should be worn to provide support, traction and protection from the environment.
- Be prepared for wet/slippery conditions and alert others behind you about these conditions.
- Be aware boardwalks can be slippery when wet or damp. Be on the lookout for rotten or missing boards.
- Stay on the trail to avoid hazards such as poison ivy, ticks, tangles and thorns or downed branches.
- It may be necessary to travel off trail. Be alert at all times noting surface condition changes.

## Vehicle Travel Events

### Vehicle Convoys:

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

- The lead vehicle will establish the route and maintain a speed consistent with the speed limit and road conditions.
- The Event Coordinator will travel 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!
- Additionally, to ensure that the group stays together, a protocol for re-grouping will be established. Generally, this will be a waiting point beyond a congested area. The waiting point may be a parking area or the shoulder of the road. Ensure you use your signal! Move onto and off of the shoulder in a safe manner.
- Do not hurry to catch up! Obey all traffic laws and signage - stop lights and stop signs. The group will wait for you.

### Road Shoulders:

When events require stopping along the road shoulder and getting out of vehicles, vehicle occupants are asked to use the following safe procedures:

- Be aware of oncoming or following vehicles. Be sure to signal!
- Pull off the roadway as far as is practical. Be aware of road stability and ditch construction.
- Pull up to be reasonably close to the vehicle in front of you.
- Ensure the roadway is free of vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians before opening your doors into the roadway. On the shoulder side, check for ditches and ensure you have firm footing.
- As pedestrians, it is important to stay as close as is practical to the shoulder, and to move as a group.
- All participants should be on the **same side** of the roadway to allow ease of negotiation by any approaching drivers. The group should move as far as possible to the edge of the roadway and stand still so that the driver knows their intention of remaining out of their way.
- Call out to announce the approach of traffic so that everyone is aware.
- The lead car and sweep will use flashers when stopped alongside the road to alert oncoming traffic.

### Walkie-Talkie Use:

The Festival uses walkie-talkies. Ontario laws related to their use must be observed, i.e., walkie-talkies are hand-held devices; drivers must not operate the walkie-talkie.

- Walkie-talkies provide added safety to vehicle convoy events by allowing the lead vehicle to provide directions and safety instructions en route, enable the sharing of observations while in transit and allow participants to communicate within the group.
- All messages should be clear and concise and provide necessary information only.
- Festival walkie-talkies will be distributed by the EC prior to the Event.
- Assign a **passenger** in each vehicle to operate the walkie-talkie.
- If range becomes an issue, those in the middle of the group should repeat the information for the benefit of those behind them.
- Borrowed walkie-talkies are to be returned immediately after each Event, to the Event Coordinator or registration tent.
- The channel for the Festival is **11-22**.

The Festival retains the right to develop procedures for dealing with 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!

**BE SAFE!**