



Department of
Environmental
Conservation



Nomination Guidelines for Site Inclusion in the New York State Birding Trail

The New York State Birding Trail provides information on places anyone can go to find birds amid their natural settings. The trail is not a physically connected or actual trail; but rather a network of promoted birding locations in each region of the state that can be accessed by car or public transportation and provide an inclusive experience for all.

In addition to state-owned and managed locations, other publicly and privately owned locations can complete the simple self-nomination process to be considered for inclusion as part of the trail. Sites will need to meet certain criteria to ensure a positive experience for visitors throughout the state. We also hope each site will have simple signage to identify it as an official location on the birding trail.

Below are the general guidelines for identifying potential locations to be included as part of the New York Birding Trail and website. The visitor experience should be the primary consideration when determining eligibility for inclusion. Overall final decision on whether to include a location will be based on the site's ability to provide a positive, user-friendly experience and NYSDEC's professional judgement on site suitability for this purpose.

All New York Birding Trail sites should:

- Have an ability to provide visitors with a positive outdoor recreation experience and association with New York State;
- Be a productive birding site that will provide visitors a reasonable level of success;
- Be open to the public;
- Have an appropriate level of amenities and/or conservation elements; and
- Be easy to get to and welcoming to beginner birders of all ages, abilities, identities, and backgrounds.

Please complete the nomination form using the guidance below and submit via email to birdtrail@dec.ny.gov. If unable to submit via email, please mail a hard copy, with photos to: Adventure NY, 625 Broadway, 14th Floor, Albany, New York 12233-1010. Completion of this information will allow for an assessment of the site.

Guidance for completing the nomination form

Site information:

- **Site common name:** The common name the site is known by to the public.
- **Contact person name:** Person nominating site that is familiar with it and can answer questions.
- **Contact person title**
- **Contact person entity (if different than property owner)**
- **Contact person phone**
- **Contact person email**
- **Property owner/manager:** This is the entity that is the land manager for the property.
- **Property owner/manager address**
- **Property owner/manager phone**

LOCATION INFORMATION

- **County**
- **Location webpage URL:** This is the link for more information and should be the direct link to the site's webpage.
- **Latitude and Longitude:** Needed to populate Google Map. Use site entrance as point (exception would be if there is a large facility with multiple access points and you want to direct visitors to a specific location, provided it has parking or public transportation access. All coordinates provided should be in decimal degrees using NAD83/WGS84 datum.
- **Directions:** Use simple directions to help visitors find site.
- **Narrative description:** Short description of what makes this site special for birding (3-4 sentences). This is a very important piece of information that should be well-communicated. It will describe the site, why it should be visited, and set out expectations.

BIRDING INFORMATION

- **Predominant species or species group:** List 5 to 10 species or species groups that the site may be known for or that you're most likely to see when you visit.
- **Season present:** Note winter (W), spring (SP), summer (S), fall (F), or year-round (YR).
- **Viewing reliability:** Excellent, good, poor.
- **eBird link:** Link to the eBird list for that particular location.

SITE AMENITIES AND FEATURES:

Indicate Yes/No for each and provide any additional notes as applicable.

- **Staff present:** Are staff available on site and what days and hours.
- **Visitor/nature center:** Does the site have a visitor or education center and when is it open.
- **Wheelchair Accessible:** Note if the site has any wheelchair accessible areas and what they are.
- **Restrooms:** Note if flush toilets or pit privy.
- **Trails:** How many trails and how long.

- **Viewing platforms/lookouts:** Any special features for bird watchers.
- **Blinds:** Are any present.
- **Interpretive signs/kiosks:** Note those that are specific to birding.
- **Accessible by public transportation:** Especially important for urban areas and sites near underserved communities. Only note if it is a practical alternative.
- **Parking**
- **Pets allowed:** Yes or no and under conditions.
- **Fee charged:** Is there a fee charged for entry or parking, how much.
- **Hunting:** Are there hunting season times/dates that the public should be aware of (e.g., first week of May)?
- **Other items of note:**
 - Any related site information that is of interest to users.
 - Any special notes about potential overcrowding or seasonal variations.
 - Additional information on parking levels of use (e.g., is parking far from birding destination? How far? Does parking get full?).
 - Times of day when location is less crowded/more crowded.