

Mecklenburg Audubon Bird Walk Etiquette



Here are a few things to keep in mind when we are on the trail to ensure everyone on the field trip has a productive and enjoyable outing.

- Contact the leader. Make sure you let the leader know you are coming even if it's only a possibility. We don't want to leave you behind. Also, some field trips may need to be limited due to habitat constraints.
- We would hate to turn you away after you got up early.
- Be on time. Try to be at the meeting place a little early. If you need directions ask the leader or check the MAS web site for a map.
- Carpool whenever possible. This is a great way to get to know new folks, swap birding stories and learn a lot. And with gas prices nowadays
- offer to chip in to cover the cost of the trip.
- Wear muted colors; no white (a danger signal to birds), red or other bright colors.
- Silence is golden. The keen senses of birds alert them to our presence long before we have a chance to see them. Whether alone or in a group, walk as quietly as possible and whisper. Take cues from the leader who might signal for quiet as the group approaches a bird. Quiet walks also make it easier to hear the birds when they are not easily being seen. Save the chit-chat for mealtime or when we're in the car.
- Cell phones - turn them off or to vibrate. If you must take a call, please move away from the group and talk quietly. Keep the conversation short.
- Stay with the group. Don't wander off. You will see more birds when there are more eyes to look and ears to hear. Also, if you are lagging behind you may spook the bird everyone is trying to see as you reunite with the group. It can also be frustrating for the group to have to constantly be waiting for folks to catch up. If the group leader is moving too quickly, ask him or her to slow the pace a little.
- Stay behind the leader, so when a bird is spotted, everyone can stop and get a chance to see the bird. If you spot a bird the leader has missed, let him or her know so everyone can see it.
- When using someone else's field scope, take a quick look at the bird, then move aside until everyone has taken a look, then go back for a longer look. And offer to carry the scope if it's a long hike.
- Help the leader make sure everyone who wants to see a bird gets an opportunity to see the bird, especially new birders.

So, the next time you are out birding with a group, whether it's an MAS field trip or not, keep these things in mind. They will help you see more birds and be more relaxed which is exactly what we want.

