

“Keep your eyes on the sky and your butt close to home!”

## American Birding Association Guidelines on Birding and Social Distancing

The basic principles of “quarantine” birding are already well covered in the ABA Code of Birding Ethics:

### *3. Respect and promote the law and the rights of others.*

and

*3(b) <in part>* Familiarize yourself with and follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing activities at your birding location.

Even so, there are gray areas and places where reasonable, caring birders will differ. Here are a few thoughts to help guide your birding as we all get through these challenging, rapidly changing times together:

1. Birding is a GREAT thing to do right now, whether you’re a lifelong birder or someone who has just started noticing birds out your window. Keeping a connection with birds and nature is a valuable way to improve mood, lower stress, and gain perspective on our current troubles. As such, birding should be strongly supported and encouraged.
2. Some types of birding and birding locales are specifically to be avoided now, particularly any situation or location that would encourage or require people to violate physical distancing guidelines or travel away from one’s local area. These should be scrupulously avoided.
3. There is no “one size fits all” prescription for how to accomplish this. People are in many different types of living situations, from high-density urban dwellings to very lightly populated, rural landscapes. Exactly what is appropriate will vary significantly from place to place.
4. Please remember that every time you hike into the wilds or get on the road to drive to go birding, you have the potential to require emergency services. This could put pressure on an already strained group of emergency personnel at this challenging time. As such, work to stay as close to home as possible.
5. People’s judgement of what is safe will vary. There is little to be gained from birders attacking each other on social media and elsewhere about perceived lapses in physical distancing. However, thoughtful discussion, promotion, and modeling of one’s own “quarantine” birding practices are welcome and appropriate.

In short, bird as much as you are able, close to home, and without exposing yourself or anyone else to risk. We look forward to seeing you in person in the field once these difficult times have passed!

**The American Birding Association Recording Standards and Ethics Committee**