

1. Counting

A. Birds counted must be alive, wild, and unrestrained.

B. Only species found on the [PA Ornithological Records Committee \(PORC\) Bird List](#) with numerical abundance codes 1-6 will be accepted. This means **Northern Bobwhite** (code 7/extirpated) is not a valid entry. And while eBird no longer recognizes **Ring-necked Pheasant** as a wild bird found in PA, the PA Bird List does, making the pheasant an eligible bird to report for the Blitz.

C. Birds must be conclusively identified by sight or sound. **Generic species or hybrids** will only be accepted in the absence of a full species. (Example I: Carolina/Black-capped Chickadee will only be accepted if there are no Carolina or Black-capped Chickadees listed. Example II: Brewster's Warbler will only be accepted in the absence of Blue-winged or Golden-winged Warblers.)

D. For a species to count for the team total it **must be identified by at least 2 members of the team during the count period**. It need not be the exact same bird, just the same species. For Big Day teams it will be on the specific day. For Cumulative Count teams it will be over the course of days the team is birding.

E. **Playback of songs and calls** may not be used to attract birds or entice them to vocalize. **The exception** to this is for nocturnal birds such as owls and rails. Even then, playback should not be excessive. **Pishing** and other human produced sounds may be used but please do so sparingly to avoid over-stressing the birds.

F. **Online, phone apps, and AI assisted products** (i.e. Merlin, PUC etc.) may not be consulted until a team has made an initial identification. Such technology is to be used as an aid in identification rather than the primary means of making an identification. All species identified by Merlin, or the like must be verified by at least 2 team members.

G. **Species located by Thermal/Night Vision optics** will NOT be included in the total of species identified regarding the contest portion of the B4C.

H. Species identified by **"Smart Binoculars"** will NOT be included in the total of species identified regarding the contest portion of the B4C.

I. Only submit **birds physically located within the boundary of the count** (County or Region). The location of the bird is where the bird is located (ABA/PSO standard), not where the observers are located (eBird standard). Be aware of county, region, and state lines.

2. Areas

A. Two different geographic areas may be covered during the Blitz (County or Regional).

B. County entries will include all birds identified in a particular county.

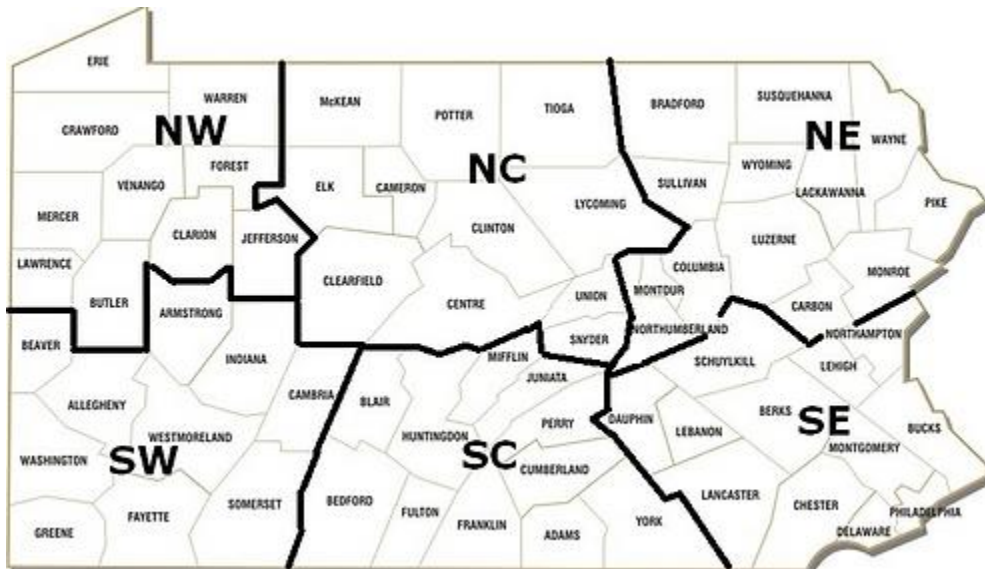
(Example: Crawford County).

C. Regional entries will include birds identified from at least 2 counties of that region.

(Example: NE Region; Sullivan, Wyoming, and Luzerne counties).

D. A Team may participate in more than one region and/or county over the course of the Blitz.

(Example: A Big Day in Bradford on day 2, and a Cumulative Count in Warren on days 5-8).



3. Time

A. Counting for **Big Day** entries must be within **a single 24-hour period, on a single calendar day**. An entry turned in for a specific day must have taken place entirely on that day. (Example: A Saturday entry cannot have Whip-poor-wills heard on Friday night, nor owls heard on Sunday morning).

i. A team may participate in county and/or regional competitions.

ii. County and Regional Entries may be for any amount of time on a particular day.

iii. Your time birding does not need to be consecutive as a time out may be taken but birds identified during the time out may not be added to the team trip report.

B. Counting for **Cumulative Count** entries must be done on **2 or more calendar days**.

i. A team may participate in either the county and/or regional competitions.

ii. Birds added to the cumulative trip report can only be added to the when identified by 2 or more team members AND officially participating in the contest. (Example: Your team birded together for the contest that morning. After disbanding for the day, you and another team member drive to the grocery store. On the way you have an incidental sighting of a Red-shouldered Hawk. This bird cannot be added to your cumulative team report).

4. Travel

A. Travel may be by any means unless a Low Carbon Team.

B. All birds identified while traveling may be included in the count report, if positively identified by at least 2 team members.

5. Participants

A. Two or more participants may constitute a team.

B. All **team members must bird together** (in visual sight of one another), no forming of subgroups at any time.

C. Participants may bird only part of the day as long as there are at least 2 participants left on the team at all times.

D. A participant who leaves the team may rejoin the team later.

E. Only bird species that are identified by participants while with the team may count be counted.

F. **Team composition may vary** on different days as long as it conforms to B4C rules.

6. Low Carbon Teams, Additional Rules

A. Team members may use a motorized means to travel to/from a start or end location. (Example: You are birding a 6-mile portion of the Appalachian Trail, and you leave a car at the end destination for the day.)

B. Team members cannot take a break from the team by using motorized means to leave or rejoin the team.

C. Birds identified while using a motorized means of travel will not be included in your trip report.

7. Youth Teams, Additional Rules

A. The team must be always composed of at least 2 youth from with the age range of **6 through 17 years old** inclusive.

B. At least 2 youth on a team must identify a species for it to count.

C. **Accompanying adults** may assist in identification or correct wrong identifications. However, the youth should be allowed to make the initial discovery of the bird, and their knowledge should be primary in confirming the identification. Adults play a supporting role in helping youth reach a correct identification only as needed to do so. If the youth miss a species in a specific location an adult can identify the bird, explain what leads to that identification (visual and/or auditory). That species will not be included on the official team count unless at least 2 youth identify the bird later in the count.

8. Atlas Block-Boosting Teams, Additional Rules

- A. eBird Checklists MUST be submitted to the [Pennsylvania Bird Atlas portal](#).
- B. Provide a count or estimate of the number of individuals reported instead of 'X.'
- C. Keep separate eBird checklists for different habitat patches within a block.
- D. Keep your traveling distance short – 1 mile or less.
- E. Take care to stay within boundaries of a single block for each checklist.
- F. eBird hotspots frequently cover multiple blocks and therefore should generally not be used when you select your location. Instead, create separate checklists for each block and assign a more specific personal location to each checklist.
- G. Use Breeding Codes. See page 12 and Appendix A of the [Volunteer Handbook](#) for more information.

9. Checklists and Trip Reports

- A. The sharing of **eBird Checklists** with **PSO Birding Data** allows the tabulation of all species identified by all teams during the Breeding Bird Blitz. **Please do NOT** share eBird Trip Reports with PSO Birding Data.
- B. An eBird or B4C Trip Report is used (one per team) to submit the species count for contest entries.

10. Contest Entries

- A. **Big Day teams**, turn in **one B4C or eBird Trip Report** for the day of their count.
- B. **Cumulative Count teams**, turn in **one B4C or eBird Trip Report** for the days they birded together.
- C. Send all entries no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 16th** to blitz4conservation@gmail.com

11. Submitting Entries (2 methods to do so)

- A. Method 1: Submit an **eBird Trip Report**, that includes the following in the Trip Report comments.
 - (i.) Team name, Team Members, and Date(s) of Trip Report.
 - (ii) If it is a Big Day or Cumulative Count.
 - (iii.) If a County or Regional Count, listing the County or Counties covered by the report.
 - (iv.) Include any of these that apply: Low Carbon, Youth, and/or a Block Boosting entry.
 - (v.) Include the number of Accepted Species for the report. This may differ from what was submitted to eBird. (See 1.B. above)
- B. Method 2: Use the **B4C Trip Report** (in excel or pdf format) that is available for download on the website under the [Forms and Contact](#) tab.

12. Using eBird

- A. Please keep checklists at 5 miles or less for traveling counts otherwise the data you submit will be less useful and may be invalidated by eBird. If Block Boosting, try to keep them to a mile.
- B. Though not required you are strongly encouraged to use breeding codes. The only exception is **Block Boosting entries** where breeding codes are required, along with following other [Atlas guidelines](#).
- C. Share your eBird checklists with **PSO Birding Data** so we can tabulate and share the data on species reported during the B4C. (This is not an additional means of contest entry to items 10 and 11 above but a means of pooling our eBird data together).

Send all questions to blitz4conservation@gmail.com