



Colorado Birding Challenge Official 2024 Rules

Version 2.0



Following are the official rules for the 2024 Colorado Birding Challenge governing the three competitive categories: The Challenge, Green Challenge and Under-25 Challenge. There is a fourth category, Bird As You Like, that is considered non-competitive and is not required to follow the official rules.

ELIGIBILITY

To participate in the COBC, teams must register on the CFO website by September 1, 2024.

REGISTRATION

The leader for each team will complete registration using the [COBC Registration Form](#) that can be found on the CFO website and providing the team name, the category you will compete in and the county you will bird in. A nonrefundable registration fee of \$75, \$50 for CFO members, will be charged at the time of registration. Under-25 and non-competitive "Bird As You Like" teams will not be charged a registration fee.

CATEGORIES

The Challenge. Teams of all ages compete to find the most species within their chosen Colorado County within the 24-hour COBC timeframe.

Green Challenge. Same as The Challenge, but all participants must use human-powered transportation throughout the competition. Vehicles may be used to get to the county that you are competing in, but no birds can be counted from the vehicle nor can vehicles be used to relocate once the team has begun its count.

Under-25 Challenge. Same as The Challenge, but all participants are 25 or under. Teams may have a non-participating adult driver who does not contribute to finding or identifying birds.

Bird Your Own Way (non-competitive). Anyone who wants to participate in the COBC, either as an individual or part of a team, without following the official rules is encouraged to have a great day birding and raise money for CFO! Bird Your Own Way teams can be of any size and can bird wherever they like!

FUNDRAISING

One of the main goals for the COBC is to raise funds for CFO programs and our conservation initiatives. In 2024, CFO will support the [Conejos River Restoration Project](#) in partnership with the [Rio Grande](#)

Headwaters Restoration Project and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. All registered teams will receive a link to set up their team's COBC website. Here you can list the members of your team, the Colorado County you will bird in, your species goal for the day and your fundraising target. Share this team page with your friends, family and co-workers as you seek sponsors for your team.

COMPETING

The three competitive categories, The Challenge, Student Challenge and Green Challenge, will have 24 hours on September 14, 2024, to identify and count as many bird species as possible within the Colorado County they chose.

ABA Big Day Rules

The ABA has published rules for how to conduct a Big Day Count. COBC teams must follow the ABA Big Day Rules with the following exceptions:

- The geographic area will be the Colorado County that your team selected.
- Merlin or other bird-finding or bird identification apps may not be used.
- Sightings throughout the day must be recorded on eBird checklists. Any species flagged as "rare" in eBird must be documented with photographs, videos, audio recordings or a very detailed written description. These submissions will be reviewed by the COBC committee and/or the Chairman of the Colorado Bird Records Committee to determine if they are accepted.
- Each team must submit an eBird Trip Report to the COBC Committee by noon on September 15, 2024 as its official species total.

Of particular importance is **the 95% Rule**. Teams are encouraged to have all members positively identify each species on its list throughout the day. This means if one member hears a Gray Catbird, s/he should try to have each team member hear it and confirm the identification. When the team reviews its official species total, 95% of the species must have been seen/heard by all team members. For example, if your team reports 100 species for the day, just five that were seen/heard by only some of the team members can count toward your total.

County Par

Not all Colorado Counties were created equal! Our great state has 64 unique counties, some are bigger than others, some have mountains, some have reservoirs. All have different habitat types and given the geographic diversity, the number and timing of migrants may be very different on September 14. In an effort to create as level a playing field as possible, the COBC Committee has developed a proprietary formula that we call "par." Using 10 years of eBird data, and taking into account how intensely each county has been birded, we've determined how many species might reasonably be expected to occur in each county in September 2024. Each team's official total will be compared with the par value for the county birded, and this is how we will determine which is the winning team. For example, if one team competes in Conejos County (par 62) and reports 75 species, that represents 120% of par. A team birding in Larimer County might have a higher total, say 95 species, but since the par value for Larimer is 109, that would represent 87% of par. Thus the team birding in Conejos would finish higher.

For clarification of any rule or resolution of any conflicts in interpretation of these rules, or the ABA Big Day rules as they relate to the COBC, please contact the COBC Committee by emailing cobc@cobids.org.