

# **Birding Is for Everybody: Broadening Horizons of a Popular Pastime**

## ***Birdability and American Bird Conservancy Collaborate on Interview Series***



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Virginia Rose (left), founder of Birdability, will be the first guest in a new webinar series co-hosted by ABC and Birdability. She and other guests will be interviewed by Birdability Coordinator and occupational therapist Freya McGregor (right). Photo by Wayne Jeansonne.

**September 24, 2021**

Birdability and American Bird Conservancy (ABC) are launching a partnership in October that begins with a co-hosted online interview series entitled “Birdability Birders: Conversations about Birding with Access Challenges.”

Through the partnership, ABC and Birdability aim to promote accessibility, inclusion, and representation within the birding community. The six-part live webinar series will be the two

organizations’ first collaboration.

The series launches on October 5 with the founder of Birdability, Virginia Rose, as its first guest, interviewed by Birdability Coordinator and occupational therapist Freya McGregor.

“Birding made me happier than I’d ever been, and consistently shows me my best self. If everybody found their own joy and used it as a springboard to make change, just imagine what we could do! Understanding the unique perspectives of all kinds of people with access challenges is the first step, and this interview series will be a wonderful way to do that,” says Rose, a manual wheelchair user who has been birding for 17 years.

Disability itself is diverse and intersectional. This series aims to highlight this complexity by featuring the perspectives of birders of different backgrounds who have various disabilities and other health concerns, and who bird in different ways.

“We are so excited about this series!” says Naamal De Silva, Chief Diversity Officer for ABC. “Birding is for everyone. At ABC, we want to bring the joys of birding to more people, to recognize and honor the diverse individuals who care about birds, and to protect birds and their habitats. We see this webinar series and our broader partnership with Birdability as an important step toward accomplishing these goals. I am looking forward to learning from our guests about their lived experiences and aspirations.”

Throughout the series, interviewees will discuss their birding experiences, what everyday life is like living with their disabilities or other health concerns, and what they need from the birding community and the outdoors to feel welcome, included, and able to access birding locations.

“We hope that birders (and people who aren’t birders — yet!) with similar access challenges will experience the power of representation, and may learn of other ways they might engage with birding — using similar adaptive birding equipment, for example, or how to advocate in the birding community for what they need,” says series host Freya McGregor. “These interviews should be a great learning opportunity for nondisabled birders, too, who want to ensure they’re as welcoming and inclusive as possible.”

New interviews will be held live online on the first Tuesday of every month from October 2021 to March 2022. [Individuals can register to view the first episode here.](#)

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[American Bird Conservancy](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. With an emphasis on achieving results and working in partnership, we take on the greatest problems facing birds today, innovating and building on rapid advancements in science to halt extinctions, protect habitats, eliminate threats, and build capacity for bird conservation. Find us on [abcbirds.org](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) (@ABCbirds).

Through education, outreach, and advocacy, [Birdability](#) works to ensure the birding community and the outdoors are welcoming, inclusive, safe, and accessible for

everybody. We focus on people with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, chronic illness, intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental illness, and those who are neurodivergent, deaf or hard of hearing, or who have other health concerns. In addition to current birders, we strive to introduce birding to people with disabilities and other health concerns who are not yet birders so they too can experience the joys of birding. Learn more, and access resources, at [birdability.org](https://birdability.org). Follow Birdability on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) (@birdability).