

Birdability

Inclusive organizations

Small and large organizations can set the example for accessibility and inclusivity in your community. By consistently doing this you ensure anybody with an accessibility challenge can *opt in* to participating! Don't forget: it's not enough to just think we're being inclusive; we have to be *intentionally* inclusive.

Make a commitment to inclusion and diversity

- With your Board of Directors, staff, members and other stakeholders, make a commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA).
- Include people with disabilities, people who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), people who are LGBTQIA+, women and beginners.
- Use specific, measurable actions and make this statement public.
- Review these commitments annually, and re-commit!



Photo: Rhianyon Larson.

Hold regular accessible bird outings

- Hold intentionally inclusive and accessible bird outings as part of your regular programming; once a month is ideal.
- In the event description, include detailed accessibility information about the site.
- Invite someone who experiences an accessibility challenge to lead or co-lead.
- Reach out to local disability organizations and community groups and invite them birding. Ask these folks what they need from you to feel welcome to attend.
- Be consistent, even if you think nobody with an access challenge is attending.

Website and social media

- Include an image description and alternate text for any photos or graphics on your website and in social media posts.
- Include captions for any videos shared on your website, YouTube or social media.
- Use Camel Case with your hashtags, by capitalizing the first letter of each word. Rather than #birdingisforeverybody type #BirdingIsForEverybody
- Use colors with strong contrast between the text and the background color.

- Include a land acknowledgement in social media posts about specific places, and on your website, acknowledging the Indigenous peoples of your organization's area.

Zoom calls and webinars

- Invite people to share their pronouns (she/her; they/their etc) during introductions.
- Don't rely only on images, graphics or text in PowerPoint presentations to convey your message. Describe out loud information that is presented visually.
- Provide closed captions for all virtual meetings, webinars and presentations.
- Keep videos on when possible, but microphones off.
- Presenters should do their best to position their camera and body so that light falls on their whole face. Avoid being backlit, especially by a window behind.

Remove financial barriers to access

- Whenever possible hold free events, use a pay-what-works model, or have a suggested donation for attendance.
- Seek grants or sponsorships to cover your costs, or create a scholarship fund.
- Have loaner binoculars, scopes or adaptive birding equipment available for free.

Provide honorariums for speakers and consultants

- It is unfair to expect someone — especially someone with a disability, or who is BIPOC or LGBTQIA+ — to share their lived experience or knowledge for free.
- Like everyone else's, their time is valuable, and the information they impart is often *invaluable*. Demonstrate your respect for them by offering an honorarium. (The exposure or experience they might gain from participating is not a replacement.)
- State the honorarium amount (or lack thereof) in your initial contact.
- How much you should provide depends on your budget, the amount of time you're asking of the person, and how much emotional labor they will put in.
- As a starting place: \$100 for participation on panels when no preparation is required, and \$250 for presentations — which require many hours of preparation.
- Yes, it is an expense. So include it in your program budget!

Thank you for your work to ensure that birding and the outdoors truly is for everybody!