

Steps to implement accessible and inclusive birding

Below are our suggestions for how to implement accessible and inclusive birding in your local community, whether you're part of an Audubon chapter, a bird club, or you're a motivated individual wanting to make change! Make sure you explore the additional Birdability Guidance Documents too:

[Access Considerations for Birding Locations](#), [Language Use and Communication tips](#), and [Welcoming and Inclusive Birders](#).



Photo: Melanie Furr.

Step 1: Ask the experts and collaborate

If you're a member of an Audubon chapter or bird club, invite members who experience accessibility challenges to work with you on this. Let their experiences inform your work.

Step 2: Read up about access considerations for birding locations

Read our [Access Considerations for Accessible Birding Locations](#), or the criteria in the Birdability Site Review Checklist to learn about what makes a location truly accessible.

Step 3: Scope out accessible birding locations to hold your outings

Identify potential accessible sites near you by phone or website, or via the [Birdability Map](#). Don't forget county, city, State and National parks, and privately owned locations.

- National Parks: Information about the accessibility of facilities, programs, and services in each park can be found on the [park's website](#) by selecting "Plan Your Visit" in the site navigation. There is an Accessibility Coordinator at every National Park who may be able to suggest trails for you to visit.
- State Parks: Each state runs its own state parks differently. Try contacting the State Park Accessibility Office to find out which trails may be worth a visit.
- County and City Parks: Each city and county will operate differently. Try the Recreation Inclusion Unit or the main office for information about accessible parks worth visiting. They may run 'Seniors in the Park'-type events, which may be a good fit for an accessible bird outing as part of that program.

Step 4: Complete a Birdability Site Review and submit to the Birdability Map

Complete on-site, in-person Birdability Site Reviews of these potential sites, and add them to the [Birdability Map](#). If you're part of an Audubon chapter, bird club, or a nature center,

include the same level of accessibility information on your own website. Link to the Birdability Map from your website so visitors can find out about other accessible birding locations nearby (or far away!).

Step 5: Hold monthly accessible bird outings!

Check out our other Guidance Documents (available at birdability.org) for more ideas on how to make sure these outings are inclusive and welcoming to all. It may take some time for word to get out that you are holding these events, but don't give up! Consistency is important; even if no one with an accessibility challenge shows up, you can still go birding!

Step 6: Reach out and invite folks with access challenges to come birding

Reach out and collaborate with local disability organizations. Introduce their members or clients who are potential future birders to the joys of birding – that's what this is all about! Try your local:

- School for the Blind, or School for the Deaf;
- Easterseals, or adaptive sports organization (like Southern Arizona Adaptive Sports, who were invited by Tucson Audubon to team up to hold accessible bird outings);
- Community-based support groups, including those for people with spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, recovering from a stroke and disabled veterans;
- Rehabilitation hospitals, or assisted living centers. Connect with the occupational therapists, recreation therapists or horticultural therapists, who are often the best staff to help make this happen;
- Local businesses or community groups – such as physical therapy clinics, yoga studios, churches, or Rotary clubs – may be happy for you to put a flyer on their community notice board to promote your events.

At Birdability, much of our work is about being welcoming and inclusive to everyone. This includes being inclusive of birders who don't experience accessibility challenges! However, as the leader of an accessible outing, your focus will be on those birders who *do* experience accessibility challenges, not on the able-bodied birders.

Please note: Please describe your event as an "accessible bird outing." The word "Birdability" should not be used unless the outing is being held in collaboration with the nonprofit Birdability.

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