



## FIELD TRIP CONVENER GUIDELINES

JANUARY 25, 2020

**P**hoebes Birding is a volunteer women's birding group based in Miami, supported by the local Audubon chapter - Tropical Audubon Society. Our goal is to provide a supportive network to connect women who love nature and being outdoors using birds as a medium to do so. We do this through regular field trips and occasional social events.

Our monthly field trips are to birdwatching spots within and around the Miami area, and are generally followed by a potluck picnic. We intend for our trips to reach a wide audience ranging from helpful expert birders to novice birders, with no prior experience required. Each trip and accompanying potluck is arranged by a volunteer convener, and just as we hope to include participants from a range of backgrounds, we also hope to encourage women from varying backgrounds to convene our trips. You do not have to be an expert birder to convene a trip for the Phoebes, but there are certain responsibilities that come along with the task. Our goal with this document is to provide detailed guidance for conveners at all experience levels in order to provide a consistent experience for participants and to advertise trips in a timely manner. Please feel free to contact us at [hello@phoebesbirding.com](mailto:hello@phoebesbirding.com) with any questions, or to request additional support for your first ventures.

Thank you for considering convening a trip for the Phoebes!

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### PROPOSAL PROCESS

- While knowledge of birds and the South Florida environment is certainly a plus, it is not a requirement for convening trips. Of more value is a leader's familiarity with her chosen field trip venue and her level of comfort with public speaking and organizing a crowd.
- Proposals may be submitted by more than one person for a given month, though please keep your planning committee small enough to be effective.
- There will be two open calls for conveners each year. Unless otherwise specified, the open calls will fall on December 1-15 (*for calendar events between February through July*) and June 1-15 (*for calendar events between August through January*). Please email [hello@phoebesbirding.com](mailto:hello@phoebesbirding.com) or visit [www.phoebesbirding.com/get-involved](http://www.phoebesbirding.com/get-involved) to submit your ideas during the open call period. Please provide your preferred month with a back-up option and your proposed venue. Precise dates are not required during the initial proposal period, only the month.
- While we prefer bird walks, we are open to alternate bird-related activities, such as craft or trivia gatherings, during the hot and buggy summer months (June – August). We are also open to a more social gathering around the December holidays, as well as having groups of Phoebes join in various local Christmas Bird Counts.
- All applicants will be contacted by the end of the call month (December or June) regarding their proposal. Once confirmed, the final schedule of conveners, months and venues will be posted on the Phoebes Birding website at [www.phoebesbirding.com](http://www.phoebesbirding.com). Exact dates will be added by the first day of the trip month, or at least two weeks prior if

the trip date lands early in the month.

- Once someone is confirmed to convene a trip, it is that person's responsibility to ensure that all related tasks are accomplished in accordance with the expectations outlined in this document. That is not to say that the leader has to do all the tasks herself, but it is her responsibility to delegate and follow-up to be sure that the tasks are being accomplished. Below is a bulleted summary of the tasks that can be used as a guiding checklist, full explanations follow:
  - Provide trip details, including exact dates and promotional imagery.
  - Manage trip RSVP list.
  - Coordinate sign-in list and greeting at the event.
  - Guide walk.
  - Manage event eBird list and photography.
  - Organize potluck picnic.
  - Submit event report with eBird list and photos.

## EVENT PREPARATIONS

- Trip details and at least one promotional image need to be provided to our website manager, currently Kirsten Vignes, at [hello@phoebesbirding.com](mailto:hello@phoebesbirding.com), by the first day of the event month, or up to two weeks prior as needed to ensure a two-week advertising window.
- Details should include at minimum: time, date, and location, both general and specifically where to gather. For private venues, instructions can be given to provide the specific address only upon RSVP. Please provide other helpful details such as clothing, gear and other needs particular to the trip, parking instructions, any fees that will need to be paid, picnic details and pot luck sign up instructions if any, participant limits if required, bathroom access, trail conditions, water availability and any other details that might aid a participant in her planning.
- A promotional image can be an image of a bird likely to be spotted on the trip, an environmental image of female birders, or anything else that would visually describe the event. This image will be used for promotions on the website, newsletter, and social media; you must own or have permission to use the image. If you do not have a high-quality promotional image (at least 1200 pixels wide on the long end), please provide a description of your desired imagery and we will assist you with sourcing.
- It is helpful if a leader visits the proposed venue before the trip to ascertain what birds are in the area, where and how best to see them, and if any site conditions have changed.

## EVENT DAY

- On the day of the trip, the convener, also acting as leader and director for the day, needs to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start time.
- Trips should begin with the provided sign-in sheet, a quick introduction to the Phoebes for any newcomers, introduction of the leader, an overview of the intended walk and schedule for the day, and an opportunity for all participants to introduce themselves.
- The convener should guide the group to the best areas for observing birds, and should compile the official E-bird list for the trip (or delegate the task).
- During the walk, leaders are encouraged to share their knowledge of the venue and any plant, animal, habitat or environmental issue encountered. It is helpful to have guidebooks, either print or app-based (though print works better for group sharing), available for identifying uncertain species and/ or showing species not well seen.
- We expect conveners to reinforce the culture of Phoebes birding. A main goal of the Phoebes is to provide a welcoming, caring and helpful environment for experiencing nature. This is not the venue to be a know-it-all, or to competitively tally bird sightings. We encourage participant discussion for the sharing of knowledge, allowing less experienced birders the time and space to learn identification techniques, and spending time observing bird behavior rather than ticking and moving on. Likewise, we expect participants to respect the convener's leadership.
- The convener needs to keep her party together and officially conclude the walk at the end, allowing those on a schedule an opportunity to leave and providing further picnic instruction for those who intend to stay.

## EVENT FOLLOW-UP

The official trip E-bird list should be made available to participants by the end of the trip day.

No later than two weeks after the trip, the convener is to submit a brief written report to [hello@phoebesbirding.com](mailto:hello@phoebesbirding.com) for posting on the Phoebes website and social media. The report may include a summary of birds seen, favorite or rare sightings and any other event highlights. The report should also include pictures, so please take photos during the trip or ask someone to do this for you. Please visit [www.phoebesbirding.com/musings](http://www.phoebesbirding.com/musings) for examples of past trip write-ups.

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If you have any questions, please email our Phoebes leadership team at [hello@phoebesbirding.com](mailto:hello@phoebesbirding.com).

We appreciate your participation and hope these guidelines will ensure many months of upcoming Phoebes birding! We look forward to receiving your proposals!

*Happy Birding.*