



## NSW & ACT 2024 Twitchathon 30 HOUR “Big Weekend” RULES

### Brought to you by BIGnet, A Loose Affiliation of NSW & ACT Birdwatching Clubs and Organisations

1. Teams must consist of two or more members.
2. All species must be unquestionably identified.
3. Each Twitchathon must be confined to NSW and the ACT, with no air travel allowed.
4. All team members must remain within direct voice contact throughout the Big Weekend. The use of mobile phones, walkie talkies and similar for this purpose is considered indirect voice contact and is not permitted.
5. Teams must make every effort to avoid receiving bird-finding help from non-participants.
6. Before a species may be counted, an individual, pair or flock must be identified by sight or sound by **more than 50%** of the team members.

***The Twitchathon Big Weekend relies on an honour system. You must be 100% sure of the identification of each bird. If you are not sure, don't put it on the list.***

**TIMING.** The Big Weekend must be held within any single **30 hour period between 8am Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October and 6pm Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October. A sleep break that comprises six consecutive hours must be taken by all team members sometime between 10pm and 6am.** No birds can be counted on team lists during the 6hr sleep break and teams are not permitted to travel during this time.

Teams must finish the Twitchathon not more than 30 hours after the start time on the Saturday.

During registration, your team will be required to nominate a start time, as well as approximate start, end, and overnight locations. The start time nominated on the registration form is final; teams may not change their start time on the day of the event. Please use the species list provided. Your team's final tally must be sent, by text or e-mail only, to the Twitchathon Coordinator before **11:59pm on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> October**. Your final list must be submitted by email to the Twitchathon coordinator by **11:59pm on Friday 1st November**.

**COUNTABLE SPECIES** must be alive, unrestrained and from free-living established populations of full species. You cannot count birds that are road killed, beach washed, captive, trapped or escaped. Please note, for example, that pure and wild Mallards can be counted, but domestic ducks and geese, and hybridised ducks cannot. Similar rules apply for most free-flying populations of Guineafowl, Peafowl, Pheasant and Junglefowl, which in most instances should not be counted on a species list.

**NON-COMPETITORS.** Any team member may retire if required, in which case the size of the team will be treated as if the person was still present. The retired member may not re-join or aid the team. Non-participating companions (retired or otherwise) may accompany the team, record species, or drive the vehicle. Non-competitors must not assist in the identification or location of species.

**ETHICS.** For the birds' sake keep disturbance to a minimum. Recorded calls or the use of mechanical devices to attract birds are prohibited. Be careful not to obstruct or otherwise affect other teams. It is your responsibility to obtain permission beforehand to access areas with restricted access.

**SAFETY. For safety reasons, as outlined above, all teams must stop and may not travel for a consecutive 6 hour sleep break sometime between 10pm and am. All teams must also rotate drivers at intervals of, at most, 2 hours.** Teams booked for traffic offences during the Twitchathon or failing to stop for the required breaks will be disqualified.

**See below for all safety and Covid safe protocols**

**CHILDREN.** We are not able to include teams which include one or more children unless they are accompanied by their parent or legal guardian

## **Your Big Weekend NSW & ACT Coordinator**

Elisabeth Hodson

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0421 665553 (Texts only please)

## **TWITCHATHON SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The Twitchathon is a fun competitive event to raise funds for the conservation of birds, but it's also important to us that you come home safely. We are committed to the health, safety and welfare of all participants and members of the public.

**This briefing acts as a common-sense reminder to ensure the safety of all participants before we get caught up in the competition. Please carry this sheet with you and brief your team on the day.**

- Drive within in your limits, taking into account the weather conditions, and always obey road rules and regulations. Teams booked for traffic offences during the Twitchathon or failing to stop the vehicle for rest breaks will be disqualified.
- The Big Weekend race requires that all teams must stop and may not travel for a consecutive 6 hour sleep break sometime between 10pm and 6am.
- Alternate drivers every two hours. You must not drive if fatigued. If you feel fatigued alternate drivers or take a break.
- Sign-on to a team register and, keep it in the car.
- First aid kits including a snake bite kit should be available in each vehicle.
- Care should be taken on entering and leaving the vehicle. Never jump from any moving vehicle. Seat belts must always be worn during travel.
- Ensure all persons and equipment are well clear of the vehicle before driving off. Stow the equipment and packs carefully within the vehicle.
- When parking reversing or turning watch out for low limbs or stumps or rocks, try to park on level ground and avoid parking alongside ditches or large drop-offs.

- Travel at a safe and visible distance, particularly when dust obscures vision. When travelling in the dark especially at dawn and dusk look out for wildlife to avoid collisions. Use headlights and hazard lights when additional visibility is required.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing (long pants or gaiters, sturdy boots, hat, gloves). Bring appropriate rain weather gear and warm clothing.
- Use sunscreen, hats, eye protection (glasses or sunglasses) and insect protection.
- Drink sufficient water throughout the day according to your level of activity; notify another participant if feeling ill.
- Each vehicle should carry more than one mobile phone and charger, a torch and spare batteries
- Discuss any pre-existing medical condition(s) with the team before entering the field. Provide yourself with all required medication and personal care items.
- Observe others in your team or work group for signs of stress, fatigue or dehydration, ask how they are and let the supervisor know about the situation.
- Prioritise your health over the activity.

**EMERGENCY CONTACTS: POLICE, AMBULANCE, FIRE: Dial 000**