

Birding the Grand - Code of Ethics

Birding Code of Ethics

- **The welfare of the birds must come first.** Whatever your interest, from casual birding, to listing to scientific study, always consider the impact of your activity on the birds. Here are some guidelines:
- **Keep disturbance to a minimum.** Although some birds can tolerate human activity, this varies from species to species and from season to season. Use common sense and extreme caution around nests. Migrants may be tired and hungry and should not be kept from resting or feeding. When photographing birds, study their reaction and if they become agitated, back off. Avoid the use of flash photography on owls. Tape recordings and similar methods of attracting birds may cause stress for territorial birds. They should be used sparingly and avoided in heavily birded areas. Do not deliberately flush birds. Patience is often rewarded. Use trails to avoid trampling vegetation.
- **Rare birds:** Rare migrants or vagrants are the species highly sought after by birders. If you discover a rarity, consider the circumstances carefully before releasing the information. You must take responsibility for the decision to release the find. You should consider whether an influx of birders will disturb the bird, people or other species in the area; whether habitat will be damaged; and where people will park. Inform the landowner of the find, explain what may happen and obtain permission to tell other birders. Ask the landowner for a list of "dos" and "don'ts". For example, where birders may stand to get a good view and what restrictions there may be on time of day. Also ask which areas are off limit. If you decide to release the news, give precise directions and instructions. If possible include a phone number. At all times make as little noise as possible. Remember, most non-birders will be surprised by the number of visitors who wish to see a rare bird.
- **Rare breeding birds:** If you discover a rare breeding bird, do not feel under any obligation to report your find to other birders. Record the details of your discovery. Avoid visiting known sites of rare breeding birds unless they can be viewed from a distance without disturbance.
- **Respect the rights of public and private landowners.** Respect posted signs in conservation areas and do not trespass on private property without prior permission from the landowner. Leave gates as you find them and do not damage fences.

Pair of Blue birds
Photo: John Millman