

What is the Twitchathon?

The Twitchathon is just around the corner, and this year the competition is going national! On the weekend of the 29th and 30th of October, dozens of teams of keen birders from all experience levels will be racing across the countryside, birding in the name of conservation. The Twitchathon is a race in which teams aim to tick off as many species as they can in the allotted time. This year there are three different events so anyone (no matter how experienced or time-restricted), can compete!

- The **24hr Twitchathon** is a marathon of overnight driving and massive species totals – winning teams regularly see over a quarter of all Australia’s birds, driving hundreds of kilometres at over 8.3 birds per. hour!
- The **12hr ‘Champagne’ Twitchathon** caters to those with less time, wherein teams have half a day to tick up their species. It also removes the need for overnight driving, and teams have the option of a lunch break, with the end result being a more relaxed version of the 24 hour event.
- The **Birdathon** is a super-strategic event that could take teams all day, or as few as three hours. Whether you’re on the south-coast of Tasmania, or the middle of tropical rainforest in Queensland, every teams has an even chance of winning!

Why do people compete?

The primary goal of the Twitchathon is to raise money for a chosen conservation initiative within each state, which in some years means over \$20,000 going towards the specified project. For information on the conservation programs and to donate, please visit the BirdLife homepage and follow the links to the National Twitchathon.

Twitchathon Tips & Tricks

- Cover as many diverse habitats as possible to maximise the suite of possible species
- Put a large distance between your start and end points to increase your range of targets
- Find species as quickly as possible, and don’t forget that hearing a bird counts too
- Don’t waste time looking for one bird that is eluding you – focus on the next one
- Make sure to actually go birding, not just drive hundreds of kilometres between sites
- Have backups for even the most guaranteed birds - they tend to disappear on race day
- Top teams often spend weeks ‘oiling’ their route to pin down nests and flowering trees
- Prepare - don’t waste time buying food during the race, and make brief petrol stops
- Remember the common species – a House Sparrow at the local shopping centre is worth just as much on Twitchathon as a Grey Falcon hundreds of kilometres away!

How do I get involved?

To enter a team in the twitchathon, please email Rochelle Stevens, the Queensland coordinator at twitchathon.qld@gmail.com and ask for a 2016 registration pack, which includes rules and entry forms as well as the official bird list.

Twitchathon Fundraising 2016

This year the fundraising is being conducted through a special website (Justgiving) arranged by Birdlife Australia. Northern Queensland Birdlife Australia has a page on this website where teams and individuals can donate funds for the bird conservation outcomes.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Twitchathon-QLD>

When making a donation be sure to fill in your Team Name (or the name of the team you are sponsoring) to make sure that your donations count against your team. Otherwise the funds will simply go into the general campaign and will not be credited against your team.

Every branch member can help raise funds by sponsoring a team for a small amount (for example 10 cents a bird would raise \$10 if your team saw 100 species in their race). Branch members, even those not participating in the races, can help the teams raise funds and promote the sponsorship of teams amongst friends and family, or local businesses etc.

Each team needs to register (come up with a team name) and then start raising funds and donating for the campaign.

Funds raised in Queensland will go to support conservation action for two species: the Eungella Honeyeater and the Yellow Chat (Rockhampton population).

Our branch has set a target of \$1,000 for our 2016 Twitchathon - let's all work together to raise the necessary funds.

Teams can email the BirdLife Queensland Coordinator for a Registration form and a copy of the rules and the Species List.