

Application of the Code of Birding Ethics to Photography

Photography can disturb birds

Bird photographers must recognise that their activities are in many instances different from those of bird observers. Typically, a photographer will usually spend more time in close proximity to a bird.

In order to capture the best images photographers may inadvertently:

- move too close to birds;
- spend too much time near birds; and
- intrude on other birds while concentrating on those they wish to photograph.

- ❖ **Nesting sites should not be altered or interfered with in any way**
Usually, photography at a nest should be avoided. It is important to remember the removal of foliage around the nest site is not acceptable. Birds choose nesting sites because of the protection offered: altering the site may result in the elimination of shade or open the nest to predators.
- ❖ **Great care should be taken if birds are to be fed**
The feeding of birds to encourage them into a more 'photogenic' position, should only be practised with the greatest of care. Where feeding a bird may expose it to danger, feeding should be avoided.
- ❖ **The use of temporary hides requires careful consideration**
Birds should not be stressed by the use of a hide. Birds can become accustomed to a hide over a period of days, by gradually moving it into position for photography. Care must be taken to ensure the hide is not so close as to cause disturbance to the bird.
- ❖ **Care needs to be exercised if a flashlight is to be used**
Use of a flashlight may cause birds to be temporarily blinded, putting them at risk. Using a flashlight near a nest may cause birds to abandon the nest or cause the young to fall.
- ❖ **On group outings, the group leader must accept responsibility for enforcing the BOCA Code of Birding Ethics**
The leader must take into account the cumulative effect of a number of people approaching a bird. It may be acceptable for one person to spend 10 minutes photographing a particular bird, but 10 photographers each spending 10 minutes, could cause the bird distress.

Photographers must be aware of the stress caused to birds by their presence and move back at the first indication that a bird is becoming unduly stressed or agitated.

The above points should be read in conjunction with the Code of Birding Ethics.