

Designing and leading inclusive programs for disabled and neurodivergent wildlife viewers

Offer different styles of wildlife viewing programs

Disability-specific programs



Neurodivergent-specific
programs

Beginner-specific
programs



Mindful birding
programs

Virtual wildlife viewing
programs



Wheelchair accessible
tram tours

Design programs to incorporate a variety of access needs

Hold programs at
different times of the day



and on different days
of the week

Incorporate breaks
near rest areas



Travel at the speed
of the slowest person

Provide
loaner equipment



Use multiple formats for
sharing information

Remove common barriers

Hold programs near public
transit or offer busing or
car pooling



Share far and wide about
programs, including with
disability organizations

Use welcoming language in
marketing material and
provide detailed information
(see over for more)









Providing detailed information for all wildlife viewing programs




In 2024, we held focus groups with 32 disabled and neurodivergent wildlife viewers from across the United States and asked them about inclusive wildlife viewing programs. Overwhelmingly, they reported a lack of detailed information about programs kept them from participating. This is the information they need to know ahead of time for programs.




Program structure

- ☐ Start and end time 
- ☐ Where will the program be held. Is it classroom-based? Outdoors? Both?
- ☐ Distance to be travelled 
- ☐ Brief overview of the program/content to be covered 
- ☐ Primary audience: e.g. kids? Beginners? Neurodivergent folks?
- ☐ Maximum/expected group size. Will a large group be broken into smaller groups? 
- ☐ Social expectations, e.g. being quiet, designed to build community, stay with the group or roam beyond
- ☐ Amount of standing involved. Will seating be available during these periods? 
- ☐ Are breaks built in? If yes, how long will they last? Will seating be available?
- ☐ What to bring 

Physical accessibility

- ☐ If conducted on a trail, provide all necessary trail information
- ☐ If conducted indoors: 
 - ☐ Are there steps into the building? Is a ramp available?
 - ☐ Door width for all doors necessary to travel through
 - ☐ Bathroom information. Are they ADA compliant?

Additional information

- ☐ Is any loaner equipment available? How does someone obtain it? 
- ☐ What accommodations are available? How does someone request them? 
- ☐ Who the leader/s will be. Do they have any relevant experience?
- ☐ Contact person for questions: phone number and email address 

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For more info visit viewing.fishwild.vt.edu/disabled-wildlife-viewers

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