

THE BIG SIT



The 2009 Big Sit is scheduled right as National Wildlife Refuge Week begins – Sunday, October 11. The Big Sit! is an annual, international, noncompetitive birding event hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest* and founded by the New Haven (CT) Bird Club. It is sponsored by Swarovski Optik, Alpen Optics and Wild Bird Centers.

Find a good spot for bird watching -- preferably one with good views of a variety of habitats and lots of birds. Mark off a circle 17 feet in diameter and sit inside the circle for 24 hours, counting all the bird species you see or hear. Not everyone needs to stay in the circle for the entire 24 hours – many people come and go, but only birds seen while the birders are within the circle can be included in the Big Sit count. *Bird Watcher's Digest* tallies the totals and identifies prizewinners in several categories (see below).

The Big Sit! can be held in conjunction with other Refuge Week activities. It provides an opportunity to promote interest in birding as well as volunteering at the refuge or joining the Friends organization. Some organizations used the Big Sit to raise money by having participants gather pledges for each species sighted.

This year there is a potential prize of \$500 for teams that see the “Golden Bird.” What is the Golden Bird? After all of the Big Sit! results are tabulated, a bird species will be selected by random drawing from the total list of all species seen in North America. All of the circles that listed that bird will be put into another random drawing. The randomly selected winning circle wins the Golden Bird prize of \$500. The winner is required to choose a non-profit, environmental organization to receive the \$500 donated by Swarovski Optik. Qualifying organizations include bird clubs, Audubon chapters, land trusts, etc.

Thirty-six national wildlife refuges registered for The Big Sit! in 2008. In 2007, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina counted 90 species – the most among Refuge System participants.

Bird Watcher's Digest

www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/funbirds/bigsit/bigsit.aspx