



Tips for Entering Offshore eBird Checklists

Specific to SeaBC Surveys

The eBird data entry process is a bit trickier for offshore checklists. Below are some helpful tips:

- Be careful when inputting your location using Lat/Long coordinates. *South* latitude and *West* longitude need to be entered as *negative* (-) numbers.
- SeaBC-related eBird checklists can appropriately be entered as **Traveling Counts**, but for any checklists that are greater than 2 miles from shore and one hour or less in duration, the use of the **eBird Pelagic Protocol** from the **Other** dropdown menu is encouraged. See the link at the bottom of the page for more details.
- The checklist comments field is the best place to note your vessel's name, the location description, and that this checklist comes from a SeaBC survey. This field also can be used to enter weather observations, other sightings (e.g. marine mammals), and any bird sightings that cannot be narrowed down to more specific "sp." categories (see "add species" below).
- When entering data, if a species you observed is not on the list, click on the **Add Species** button. Type its name into the field provided, then select the appropriate choice from the list of options.
- General species (sp.) categories: the **Add Species** button is how you can find most of the larger "spuh" (sp.) categories, such as "shearwater sp.", "Pterodroma sp." or even "bird sp." Most taxonomic groups have "sp." categories available, but if you cannot find what you are looking for, please click on the back arrow at the bottom of the screen and add a note to the comments field about what you saw. You can use the arrows to move back and forth without losing the data you've entered.
- The eBird system of automatic regional filters will flag any rare species, or unusually high counts of a common species. Please include any notes about how you identified the bird (including field marks, flight style, etc.) in the **Comments** field provided below the species name, then select the box marked **Complete** next to the species. Any species added with the **Add Species** option will be flagged in this way, even if that group is common in your region. Often these automatic filters are better suited to land birding, so you may need to **Add Species** often. For truly rare sightings, you may receive an email from the local eBird reviewer about the sighting – please provide him/her with as many details as you can, and ideally a photograph.
- The regional filters are based on boundaries that extend out to 200 miles from shore. If your SeaBC takes you further than that, your checklist will be in one large region encompassing the entirety of the world's oceans, currently labeled as "unknown" (with the country code: XX). Until this area is split into smaller, more manageable units, eBird has a single filter for that entire region. Currently the filter is set to accommodate checklists from the Drake Passage (the location with the most open ocean submissions). This is why the standard list of options is Southern Ocean seabirds, even if your checklist comes from 300 miles east of Hawaii. Use the **Add Species** button to find the birds you would like to add to your checklist.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- The eBird contact email address: eBird@cornell.edu
- The eBird quickstart guide: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/ebird-quick-start-guide>
- The eBird Pelagic Protocol: <http://help.ebird.org/customer/portal/articles/1375503>
- The SeaBC website: <http://www.birdingaboard.org/index.html>
- Michael Schrimpf (volunteer eBird reviewer for the open ocean region) michael.schrimpf@gmail.com