



Annual Student Quiz Bowl Rules November 2026 – Des Moines, IA

The Quiz Bowl (a wildlife version of *Jeopardy*) is a fun and exciting event where you can watch colleges/universities compete in wildlife trivia.

If your team would like to test your skills this year, please contact QuizBowl@wildlife.org.

The coordinating committee will communicate frequently with registered teams as the conference dates approach. We encourage early registration (which makes our planning easier), and we tend to provide a few hints in our messages sent throughout the summer. If for any reason your team does not receive an acknowledgement of your registration within ten days, we request that you contact the coordinators once again.

Registration will OPEN on June 1st at 12 p.m. EDT and CLOSE at 11:59 p.m. EDT, on October 1st (or sooner! **THIS IS IMPORTANT:** due to the one-day event schedule, we are almost certainly going to limit the competition to 16 teams. We will maintain an alternatives list to compensate for late cancellations, but register early to ensure a space in the competition).

Please provide the committee the following information to register your team:

1. The name of your university/college or student chapter of TWS
2. The name and email address of your team coordinator. **IMPORTANT:** Ensure that this individual will receive and respond to e-mails throughout the summer. This can be an advisor; it does not need to be a competitor.

Quiz bowl will be a tournament in which teams gain points by answering questions asked by a moderator. After successfully answering a “toss-up” question, the team will be given a multi-part “bonus” question. Toss-up and bonus questions will cover material relevant to wildlife and natural resource management. A list of subject matter and approximate percentages of questions is included at the end of this document.

Quiz Bowl will likely occur on the Monday or Wednesday during the conference week this year. We intend to randomly sort entered teams into “pods” of four teams. Each team will play a minimum of three 7.5-minute matches. Only the highest-scoring team of each pod will advance to the “final four.” We expect to complete all rounds in one day, with the championship match beginning in the early evening.

We hope that there will be a *Round-Robin* tournament among the “*Final Four*” teams to determine pairings for the final two matches. We will not know this for certain until after the “pod” competitions have concluded, the final four may need to be conducted as a simple head-to-head match if the overall event is behind schedule for any reason. If we’re able to conduct a Round-Robin, each of the final four teams will play every other team in shorter, 7.5-minute matches. Each team’s combined score from all 3 matches will be used to determine the championship match (two highest-scoring teams) and the consolation match (third and fourth ranking teams).

In the early evening of the competition, we will stage the two final matches, the 3rd/4th place match (ten minutes) followed immediately by the championship match (15 minutes).

Please note, schedule subject to slight changes due to logistics and the number of teams in the competition.

General Rules

1. Participation is open to teams composed of either: (a) members of a single student chapter of TWS or (b) student members of TWS (dues-paying members of the main/international organization) from a single university or college that doesn't have a student chapter. Only one team is allowed per university or college. Each team (one team/school) may consist of up to five players with no more than four participating at once (i.e., one team member will be an alternate). Graduate students (any person that already holds a four-year degree or is enrolled in a Master's or PhD program) are not eligible to compete in Quiz Bowl (but graduate students can make GREAT team assistant advisors and coaches!).
2. Team pairings will be chosen at random for the first round.
3. Matches in the round one pods will each last 7.5 minutes. The third/fourth place match will take 10 minutes and the championship match will be 15 minutes long.
4. Once a question is read completely, it will not be repeated.
5. On all questions, the first answer given will be the one accepted (i.e., there will be no second thoughts). The moderator reserves the right to ask the respondent to "be more specific."
6. If the pronunciation of the answer is unclear to the moderator, the respondent may be asked to spell the answer. Only correctly-spelled answers will be considered correct.
7. Small notepads will be provided for team members to use during the match. Competitors may not bring notes or notepads to the stage. Also, books, mobile phones, laptop computers, etc. may not be used. The committee plans to provide each team with an unofficial electronic match timer. Official match time and question timing is kept at the moderator's table.
8. Toss-up questions will not be projected on the screen until the moderator has read the entire question.
9. The moderator may be interrupted, at which point he/she will stop reading. If the moderator is interrupted and the answer is incorrect, a five-point penalty will be assessed. Then, the moderator will read the question in its entirety and allow the players on the opposing team (only) an opportunity to answer.
10. There is no penalty for a correct answer at any time, or an incorrect answer if the moderator has completed reading the question.
11. When the match time expires, the match is over. If the match ends while a question is being asked, the match ends at that point. If the final bell rings while a toss-up or bonus question is being answered, the match ends after the allotted time for the answer has expired. For the purpose of this rule, players who have signaled, but have not been acknowledged, will be allowed to answer. Should time expire while a toss-up question is being answered correctly, a bonus question will be awarded only if it has bearing on the outcome of the match.
12. The team with the highest score at the end of the match is the winner. If the score is tied at the end of a "pod" match, the game will conclude (i.e. ties in Round 1 will be allowed, it is the combined score of a team's three matches that will determine which team will advance. In the

final two games, or if the final four is “head-to-head,” the match will be extended an additional three minutes. If after the additional three minutes, the score is still tied, a sudden-death round will be held in which the first team to correctly answer a question wins the match.

13. A judging committee of wildlife faculty, professional wildlife biologists, etc., will be the referees of any challenges that may arise.

14. All team members are expected to behave in a professional manner, be cordial with their opponents after each match, refrain from name-calling, etc.

15. Teams are expected to manage and if needed, control the behavior of their supporters in the audience. *Inappropriate behavior from supporters can result in a team being disqualified!*

Specific Rules for Toss-up Questions

1. Matches begin with a toss-up question open to both teams. Each toss-up question is worth 10 points. Full points are earned for a correct answer. No points are lost for an incorrect answer, unless the buzzer interrupts the moderator (for which a five-point penalty is assessed).

2. Following the reading of a toss-up question, five seconds will be allowed for a team to signal for an answer. A team member signals to answer by pressing a button that activates a buzzer and light. The first team member to respond is indicated by their individual light and only this person may answer the question (but only after being acknowledged by the moderator).

3. If no one signals within the allotted time, the moderator will give the answer and proceed to the next question.

4. The moderator will acknowledge the signal by verbally announcing the team member’s school and name/number of the player*. If the player answers before being acknowledged, the moderator will state the answer cannot be accepted and the opposing team will be given a chance to signal (five seconds), be verbally acknowledged, and answer. This rule applies irrespective of whether the unaccepted answer given is correct or incorrect! (*Note: this can also be, for example, “green-four” meaning the fourth player on the team with green signal lights).

5. The team member acknowledged has 10 seconds to answer the question and is the only individual who can answer the question; they may not confer with their teammates during toss-up questions. If the answer is heard from the audience by any Quiz Bowl official, the question will be discarded. If any discussion occurs between members of a team on a toss-up question, that team forfeits the right to gain points and the opposing team will be given the chance to signal (five seconds), be verbally acknowledged, and answer (ten seconds).

6. Should a team member give a wrong answer to a toss-up question, the opposing team has five seconds in which to signal after the moderator announces that the answer is incorrect. The team member will then be verbally acknowledged and allowed ten seconds to answer the question. No points are lost for incorrect answers.

7. A team member may signal to answer a toss-up question as it is being asked. When this occurs, the moderator stops reading at that point. If, after being acknowledged, the answer given is wrong, five points are lost, and the entire question is repeated for the opposing team. As in all toss-up questions, a team member must signal and be acknowledged before answering the question. In the event that a member of the opposing team signals before the question has been repeated or repeated completely, the moderator stops reading the question and acknowledges that team member for an answer. Once the question is read completely, it is not repeated.

8. The team that answers a toss-up question correctly is given a bonus question.

Specific Rules for Bonus Questions

1. A bonus question usually consists of four parts. Bonus questions are worth a total of 20 points with points divided equally among the parts (unless otherwise specified). Points are earned for each part answered correctly according to the value of the part. No points are lost for incorrect answers. On occasion, a bonus question may have more than four correct answers, for example “Name any four of the seven extant members of the Genus xxxx.”
2. Bonus questions are a team effort, but the answer decided upon for each part can only be accepted from the team captain. The team will have 30 seconds after the question is read to answer all parts.
3. Answers can be given for any part of the question in any order at any time, even while the team members continue to discuss other parts.
4. Bonus questions will include oral, video/slide, or carry-on specimen(s).

Challenges

1. For toss-up questions: If an answer ruled incorrect is believed to be correct by a team member, the team captain may challenge the moderator’s ruling by appealing to the judging committee. Challenges may be made only after the opposing team has had an opportunity to answer. Also, if a member of the opposing team believes an answer ruled correct to be incorrect, the team captain may challenge the moderator’s ruling by appealing to the judging committee. The match clock is stopped until the judges make their final decision. Challenges must be made before the bonus or next toss-up question is read.
2. For bonus questions: If an answer ruled incorrect is believed to be correct by a team member, the team captain may challenge the moderator’s ruling by appealing to the judging committee. Also, if a member of the opposing team believes an answer ruled correct to be incorrect, the team captain may challenge the moderator’s ruling by appealing to the judging committee. The match clock is stopped until the judges make their final decision. Challenges must be made before the next toss-up question is read.
3. Challenges are not a “strategy” or an acceptable manner of stalling or “psyching” the opposing team. The quiz bowl committee reserves the right to admonish, penalize or even eliminate a team that initiates challenges inappropriately.
4. In all cases, the decision of the judges is final!

Subject Matter

Questions will be drawn from the categories listed below in these approximate percentages. Often a handful of toss-up and bonus questions will be focused on the unique habitats, species, and conservation issues of the host state or region.

Biogeography / Biodiversity / Population Ecology: 10

Biology/ Taxonomy/ Ecology: 30

Current Events + Conference: 10

Human Dimensions / Conservation Policy: 5

International: 5

Management Techniques/ Wildlife Damage Management / Wildlife Diseases: 10

Soils/ Geology/ Botany/ Forestry/Fire/Rangeland Management: 10

Host/state and Regional: 10

Stats / Biometrics: 5

TWS Trivia: 5

REFERENCES / AUTHORITIES: The committee will use the following authorities to prepare the questions and the quiz bowl participants should be providing their answers accordingly based upon these taxonomic references (i.e., common name, scientific name, family, order, etc.).

- Fish: FishBase -- <https://www.fishbase.se/search.php>
- Reptiles: The Reptile Database
 - <http://www.reptile-database.org/>
- Amphibians: Amphibian Species of the World: an Online Reference. Version 6.1, 2021
 - <https://amphibiansoftheworld.amnh.org/>
- Mammals: ASM's Mammal Diversity Database
 - Current version: v1.12.1, released 30 Jan 2024
 - Mammal Diversity Database. (2023). Mammal Diversity Database (Version 1.12.1) <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10595932>
 - DOI, <https://www.mammaldiversity.org/taxa.html>
- Birds: The eBird/Clements checklist of Birds of the World: v2023
 - <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist/download/>
 - Clements, J. F., P.C. Rasmussen, T. S. Schulenberg, M. J. Iliff, T. A. Fredericks, J. A. Gerbracht, D. Lepage, A. Spenscer, S. M. Billerman, B. L. Sullivan, and C. L. Wood. 2023.