

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIELD SEMINARS

LEARN ♦ EXPLORE ♦ ADVENTURE

NATURAL HISTORY IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK
THE CORE CURRICULUM WITH KEVIN COOK:
IDENTIFYING BIRDS

JUNE 25, 2008

COURSE LEVEL: III COURSE #: 08-017

FEE: \$85*

INSTRUCTOR: KEVIN J. COOK

*IF YOU REGISTER FOR ALL SIX COURSES IN THE NATURAL HISTORY CORE CURRICULUM, AND ONE IS FREE!

LOCATION: Rocky Mountain Field Seminar & Conference Center
1895 Fall River Road, Estes Park, Colorado

TIME: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM



PAGE 1 OF 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Refine your personal knowledge of birds and the ability to identify them. Learn how to manage large volumes of complex information, to find specific birds on purpose, and to develop a disciplined observation protocol. Weather permitting, all instruction will be afield while looking at live birds.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

1. Learn and apply identification protocols and strategies.
2. Establish classification as a tool for using field guides more effectively, assisting identifications, managing information, and improving memories of birding experiences.
3. Connect the skill of how to find birds with the skill of how to identify them.
4. Consider birding as a multifaceted skills-based activity ranging from simple recreation to complex professional tasks.
5. Improve basic observation skills.
6. Improve basic information-management skills.
7. Extend bird-identification strategies and skills to other wildlife groups to achieve an integrated wildlife experience.
8. Find and observe birds of at least 10 taxonomic orders and 26 families.

TAKE-HOME OUTCOMES

1. Improved skills that will help you find birds deliberately
2. An enhanced ability to organize and manage essential identification information
3. A better understanding of how to use field guides
4. New insights on the diverse strategies for identifying birds
5. Refined comprehension of classification and its meaningful and productive applications

COURSE LEVEL: III

Moderate hikes of less than five miles per day with elevation gain of less than 1,000 feet

BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY (additional information available at www.rmna.org): Kevin has spent the past 33 years exploring Colorado in order to experience its wildlife firsthand. Realizing that no species lives alone, he studies all plant and animal groups with a special enthusiasm devoted to the myriad connections among all life. He writes natural history columns for newspapers and magazines, edits technical articles for scientific publications, leads wildlife observation tours, and teaches various bird and wildflower classes.

EXPECTATIONS: Professional conduct will be expected from participants at all times. Respect for individual ideas will be observed. Except during course breaks, cellular phones, pagers, and personal entertainment devices are strictly prohibited in the classroom and during field sessions.

CAR-POOLING: Rocky Mountain Field Seminars utilize car-pooling to limit vehicles traveling into the Park. Car-pooling makes it easier to keep the group together, reduces transit time, and allows courses greater access because fewer parking spaces are required at destinations. In addition, it provides an opportunity for participants to discuss seminar material in small groups during transit. Typically, a few participants from each course volunteer the use of their vehicles for car-pooling to course locations.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

8:00-8:15 AM	Welcome: introduction to RMNA and meeting the participants
8:15-8:30 AM	Introduction to and explanation of “Identifying Birds” seminar
8:30-8:45 AM	Restroom break; depart for Rocky Mountain National Park
9:00-Noon	Walk-and-bird west end Horseshoe Park and Endovalley; instructional topics will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliberate vs. serendipitous bird-finding• Observation strategies intended for reliable identifications• Using bird classification as an identification aid• Using field guides more effectively• Search for ducks, grouse, shorebirds, kingfisher, woodpeckers
Noon -12:30 PM	Lunch
12:30-1:00 PM	Summarize morning’s instruction.
1:00-1:20 PM	Drive to Beaver Meadows.
1:20-3:30 PM	Walk-and-bird Beaver Meadows area (alternative site may be chosen if scouting indicates better birding elsewhere); instruction will emphasize productive application of strategies and protocols discussed during the morning birding. Search for hawks, pigeons, nightjars, hummingbirds, songbirds.
3:30-3:45 PM	Return to Seminar Center.
3:45-4:30 PM	Test; discussion of for-credit projects; summarize and conclude seminar; fill out evaluations.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Sack lunch, snacks, energy bars, **WATER**
 - Hand lens (inexpensive and may be purchased at the Field Seminar Center)
 - Binocular (optional)
 - Notepad
 - Footwear appropriate for rocky trails and maybe a little mud
 - Clipboard or sturdy three-ring notebook for organizing and using worksheets in the field.
 - Your favorite field guides—trees, wildflowers, birds, mammals
- (You need not purchase field guides for this course. If you would like to purchase field guides before this course, contact Rocky Mountain Field Seminars for instructor recommendations.)*

Instructor’s Note: *Participants should expect an extended walk-and-stop routine conducted at a naturalist’s pace intended to encourage an instructional format of searching, finding, identifying, discussing, and moving on. Please wear comfortable footwear, suitable for walking on and off trail. It is essential to bring clothing that is appropriate to seasonal weather and spending the entire day outdoors. The character of birding programs is that they often run longer than planned, so participants are encouraged to use caution when planning other activities following the seminar.*

REMEMBER TO BRING THE 10 ESSENTIALS:

Rocky Mountain National Park recommends that hikers always carry the 10 essentials in their daypacks.

- Raingear
- Map & compass
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Sunglasses & sunscreen
- Candles
- Matches or other fire starter
- Pocketknife
- First-aid kit
- Sack lunch, snacks, & water
- Extra layers of clothing

Note: Rocky Mountain Field Seminars recommends that participants for all courses dress in layers and wear comfortable/sturdy hiking boots/shoes. Participants should be prepared for sudden changes in temperature and weather conditions.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Sibley, David A. 2003. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*. Knopf; New York.

Note: All field guides have some utility once you learn their strengths and weaknesses. However, because old field guides lack the most recent knowledge about ranges, plant associations, classification, species status, and other details, they actually become an information handicap. If you are not using a field guide published in this century, you are not doing yourself any favor.

TEACHER RECERTIFICATION CREDIT

All courses are eligible for teacher recertification credit through the Centennial Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). The new fee is \$25.00 per seminar (.5 units) or \$25.00 per series of threaded seminars (1.0 - 3.0 units). A list of threaded seminars can be found in the Field Seminar Catalog or online at www.rmna.org. Participants must enroll in all seminars of a threaded series in order to qualify for the \$25.00 multi-unit fee. Please be prepared to pay for this credit with a check, made payable to BOCES, on the first day of a seminar or on the final day of a threaded series of seminars.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS PURSUING CSU CREDIT

THIS COURSE IS ELIGIBLE FOR CSU CREDIT PROVIDED YOU REGISTER FOR AT LEAST TWO OF THE COURSES IN THE NATURAL HISTORY CORE CURRICULUM.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: See Above.

CONTACT HOURS: 8

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES: Students will be evaluated based on the identification techniques demonstrated in the course and will be expected to participate in a test and turn in a final project.

GRADING METHOD: Pass/Fail