

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIELD SEMINARS

LEARN ♦ EXPLORE ♦ ADVENTURE

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

JULY 9, 2008

COURSE LEVEL: I COURSE #: 08-025

FEE: \$85*

INSTRUCTOR: KEVIN J. COOK

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

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

TIME: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION: As part of the Core Curriculum, this seminar emphasizes skills development, particularly as these skills apply to refining personal knowledge and ability. Participants will learn how to detect the presence of various seldom-seen mammals which are nearly invisible because of small size and cryptic behavior. Emphasis will be directed toward finding and interpreting signs of mammal activity. Weather permitting, all instruction will be afield.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate search techniques used for finding various mammals.
2. Watch easily observed mammals as a basis for interpreting various life-activity signs.
3. Look for various mammal signs as a practical application of wildlife observation.
4. Learn how to use classification as an aid for finding and identifying mammals.
5. Find mammals or their signs representing five orders and 14 families.

TAKE-HOME OUTCOMES

1. Improved ability to find and identify mammals
2. Functional introduction to the art and science of finding and interpreting mammal signs
3. Better comprehension of how classification affects finding and identifying mammals

COURSE LEVEL: I

The seminar will include short-distance walks on maintained trails and/or indoor classroom sessions in accessible buildings.

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.

INSTRUCTOR'S WEBSITE: www.wildlifewindow.com



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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:

8:30-8:45 AM	Welcome: introduction to RMNA and meeting the participants
8:45-9:00 AM	Restroom break; then convene outside Seminar Center
9:00-11:30 AM	Explore Seminar Center grounds for the following target species groups: Shrews – what they are, how to find them, how to tell them apart Voles – what they are, how to find them, how to tell them apart Chipmunks – how to distinguish Colorado’s five species Ground squirrels – how to distinguish Colorado’s five species
11:30-Noon	Lunch and restroom break
12:00-12:30 PM	Review and summarize morning’s observations and handout worksheets
12:30-12:50 PM	Drive to Rocky Mountain National Park
1:00-3:30 PM	Explore selected areas for the following target species: Shrews, lagomorphs, ground squirrels, weasels, bears
3:30-4:30 PM	Test; discussion of for-credit projects; return to Seminar Center; summarize and conclude seminar; fill out evaluations.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Sack lunch, snacks, energy bars, & **WATER**
 - Binocular
 - Notebook
 - Camera (optional)
 - Wear comfortable, natural-colored clothing, particularly avoid white.
 - Footwear appropriate for rocky trails and maybe a little mud
 - Clipboard or sturdy three-ring notebook for organizing and using worksheets in the field
 - Field kit as described in separate handout
 - 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. Comfortable footwear suitable for walking on and off trail and clothing appropriate to seasonal weather and spending the entire day outdoors are essential. Expect to get somewhat dirty from kneeling and sitting on the ground.*

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
- Extra layers of clothing
- Sack lunch, snacks, & water

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:

Fitzgerald, J.R., C.A. Meaney, and D.M. Armstrong. 1994. *Mammals of Colorado*. Denver Museum of Natural History and University Press of Colorado.

Note: This is a large book best used at home as a standard reference work. For the serious naturalist or wildlife enthusiast who wants to develop a personal library relevant to Colorado wildlife, this book is essential.

TEACHER RECERTIFICATION CREDIT

Most seminars 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. **This seminar is one of six in Thread B.**

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 knowledge of 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