

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIELD SEMINARS

## LEARN ♦ EXPLORE ♦ ADVENTURE

### BIRDS AND BIRDING FOR LONGTIME BEGINNERS

JULY 12 , 2008

COURSE LEVEL: I      COURSE #: 08-026

FEE: \$85

INSTRUCTOR: KEVIN J. COOK



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

TIME:        **Saturday:    7:30 AM-3:30 PM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** You own two field guides, one published in 1966 and the other arranged according to color of the birds; you are thinking about getting a new and better binocular; you have traveled to see birds; you started a life-list but are not now sure where it is; you can't seem to get into gulls and avoid sparrows like the plague; and you would like to go birding more but are tired of seeing the same old birds again and again. *Does ANY of this sound even a LITTLE BIT familiar!?! Then you are a longtime beginner who needs a jump-start to get your birding moving forward again. And this seminar is for you—because you are not alone!*

#### **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](http://www.rmna.org)):** Since 1974, Kevin has explored Colorado 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. To understand these connections, he studies fungi and protists as well, taking his passion from the textbooks and journals into the field to find the creatures for real. 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. He contributed one of the essays to Houghton Mifflin's 2007 book, *Good Birders Don't Wear White: 50 Tips from America's Top Birders*.

#### **SEMINAR OBJECTIVES**

1. Explore attributes of recreational birding that involve the gamesmanship of listing.
2. Explore attributes of bird interests other than recreational birding and listing.
3. Develop meaningful criteria for assessing personal bird and birding interests.
4. Develop meaningful criteria for assessing personal knowledge and skills relevant to finding and identifying birds.
5. Identify strategies for cultivating personal motivation relevant to birds and birding.
6. Identify strategies for developing personal skills relevant to personal bird and birding interests.

**TAKE-HOME OUTCOMES**

Participants should expect that everything previously understood about their individual bird interests will be challenged to its roots. From this approach of reflective birding, each participant should:

1. Understand more clearly the source of personal gratification that connects him or her to birds;
2. Realize that, under normal circumstances, there are no right and wrong ways to engage birds, but there are meaningful and meaningless ways to engage them;
3. Acquire a more defined sense of the direction to go to realize the greatest personal fulfillment from time spent with birds;
4. Develop personal standards for assessing personal accomplishment.

**EXPECTATIONS:** Professional conduct will be expected from participants at all times. Individual ideas will be respected. 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 course 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:**

- 7:30 AM Welcome and introduction to RMNA; meet participants; seminar description, explanation of motivation, expected outcomes and procedures for the day
- 8:00 AM Go afield for a day of birding.
- 3:00 PM Return to Seminar Center for summary, question-and-answer session, and completion of course evaluations.
- 3:30 PM Seminar concludes.

**NOTE CONCERNING INSTRUCTION AND SCHEDULE:** *Individual bird findings, identifications, and observations will be used as springboards for the discussions germane to the seminar objectives (see above). Participants should be prepared to spend the entire day afield; only the most extreme weather will drive us indoors.*

**GENERAL PREPARATION:** Each participant should bring a lunch, snacks and water, and clothes suitable for the season; light, misty rains are just a part of being a naturalist afield. Dry shoes, socks, and pants can be a welcome comfort for driving home at the end of a rainy day. Expect up to three miles of walking at a pace suitable for finding, identifying, and discussing birds.

Participants should be prepared to discuss the following credo: "I would rather see the meadowlark a thousand times than to see a thousand different birds once." [This is paraphrased from a writer whom I can neither recall nor relocate, though Howard Ensign Evans and Sue Hubbell both come to mind. I'll buy dinner for the person who can track down its origin!]

**WHAT TO BRING:**

- Sack lunch, snacks, energy bars, & **WATER**
- Notepad, pen/pencil
- Brimmed hat
- Binocular, if you have one. If you do not have one or are planning to buy a new one, wait until after the seminar. Specific information in the seminar may help you make a better selection.
- The field guide you use the most. It is important to the pedagogical gist of this seminar that you bring *your* favorite field guide.
- Clipboard or sturdy three-ring notebook for organizing and using both handouts and worksheets in the field

**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.*

**SUGGESTED BOOKS AND WEBSITES**

A handout of book titles and websites will be provided on the day of the seminar.

Reading chapters 1,3,5,7, 13, and 15 of Howard Ensign Evans' book, *A Naturalist's Years in the Rocky Mountains* (2001. Johnson Books. Boulder) would be excellent preparation.

**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](http://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 two in Thread C.**