



**DESERT INSTITUTE**  
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL  
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,  
Yucca Valley, 92284

## ADVANCED BIRD BANDING

**FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: STEPHEN MEYERS**

**APRIL 20TH (LECTURE 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM)**

**APRIL 27TH & MAY 11TH (FIELD 6:30 AM - 1:00 PM)**

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A focus on molt limits and other characteristics in North American birds as they relate to accurately determining their ages. We will cover plumage topography, molt terminology, and molt strategies among songbirds and their close relatives. We will discuss additional aging techniques such as skulling and morphometrics, and how to determine skull, fat, and molt scores. Time will also be spent on banding ethics, safe handling of birds, prevention and treatment of stress and injuries, color banding, blood and feather sampling, and MAPS banding.

This course builds on the information presented in the introduction to bird banding class. The lecture session in Yucca Valley will be followed by two days of hands-on experience capturing, handling, and banding birds in the field. The banding location will be in Whitewater Preserve (directions below). All banding equipment will be provided.

### PROGRAM AGENDA

#### **Saturday, April 20, 10a - noon**

The classroom session will be conducted at the Yucca West Office in Yucca Valley. A two-part PowerPoint presentation will begin at 10a, and we'll take a brief break between each presentation. The lecture session will prepare students for the weekend's banding sessions and allow the instructor and students to become acquainted.

#### **Saturday, April 27th, 630a-1p**

The first day of banding will start at 630a with a brief orientation, which will include guidelines for safe banding, location of restroom facilities, and other site-specific information. We will then spend the rest of the morning studying and handling birds.

#### **Saturday, May 11th, 630a-1p**

The second day of banding will begin at 630a with another brief orientation around a campfire, which will address questions students may have after the previous day's banding activities before we get into the hands-on work for the day.

## MEETING LOCATION

- **Classroom lecture:** [Yucca West Office](#), 55922 29 Palms Hwy, Yucca Valley CA 92284
- **Banding sessions:** [White Water Preserve](#), 9160 White Water Canyon Rd, White Water CA 92282

*Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and in the case of hikes or other classes on the go, we cannot wait for students who arrive late.*

## REQUIRED PREPARATION

**Waiver:** All participants must complete the [participation waiver](#) at least 24 hours before a class begins. *Failure to do so may forfeit your right to participate.*

**Park Pass (\$30 per vehicle):** For classes inside Joshua Tree National Park, participants are now required to purchase a [park pass](#). You can purchase a park pass [online](#), or pay at a park entrance. If you have an existing pass, you may use that!

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

**Easy** ▾ **Prerequisites:** Beginning Bird Banding, or prior approval from the instructor. Basic bird identification skills are helpful. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- All banding equipment
- Digital educational materials/handouts
- All banding materials

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation

## WHAT TO BRING

### The essentials for all field courses:

- Water, between 3 and 4 liters per person for a full day outing
- Food and snacks, easily packed and eaten in the field (please leave no trace)
- Close-toed athletic shoes or hiking boots; no sandals, not even hiking sandals!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen; light-colored long-sleeved shirts are recommended and very effective on hot days
- Warm layers for cooler mornings/evenings (it can be surprisingly cold!)
- Backpack to carry food, water, and any personal items you need for the day

### Required for this course:

- Clothing free of exposed buttons and zippers (which can get caught in mist nets)

### Recommended:

- Binoculars

## GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

**Stephen J. Myers** is a retired wildlife biologist, and has specialized in bird studies for over 40 years, mostly in southern California. He has been a federally permitted bird bander since 1990, and has participated in banding studies of species such as the Coastal California Gnatcatcher, Least Bell's Vireo, Nelson's Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird. In addition to bird surveys conducted as a professional biologist, he has led birding field trips for the National Audubon Society, Western Field Ornithologists, and local bird clubs since the early 1980s. He is interested in all aspects of nature study, including botany, herpetology, entomology, and mammalogy. He and his wife, Vesta, enjoy occasional international birding trips to tropical America, Australia, and south Asia.

## *SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY*

There is no cell service in the park!

Please allow ample time to arrive at the meeting location; park entrances may be very busy on weekends (see FAQs).

Please make sure you check weather conditions and dress accordingly.



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## FAQ+ \_

### WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Desert Institute Manager Benny Erdahl: **949-241-9693**  
or Education Director Dr. Justin Lenzi: **760-819-4714**

For classes meeting inside the park, it can take up to 45 minutes to go through an entrance gate on weekends after 9am (though 15-20 minutes is typical). Please allot time to park, as parking lots tend to be congested between 10am and 4p in the busy season. ***There is no cell service in the park***, please plan accordingly.

### WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified more than 14 days in advance. We are unable to process refunds for *any* cancellations less than 14 days in advance.

### DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

If we do not meet our minimum of 6 registered participants for any given activity, we will likely cancel the activity with at least 48+ hours notice.

*Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine*, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful.

We recommend that you purchase travel insurance, as we are unable to reimburse for expenses you incur due to a canceled class, such as airfare and hotel.

### WHAT IF I FORGOT SOMETHING I NEED?

Our visitor centers and park stores are stocked with amazing essentials for your adventure. Preview or purchase items from our [online shop](#); we carry [hats](#), [shirts](#), bandanas, water bottles, notebooks, [maps](#), [books](#). And more!

### CAN I BRING MY KIDS? MY SPOUSE? PETS?

Only registered participants may attend Desert Institute activities (unless noted in the activity description). If this is a kid-friendly activity, please make sure your child(ren) are registered and meet the age requirements.

As much as we love pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.

