



**DESERT INSTITUTE**  
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL  
PARK ASSOCIATION

+1-760-819-4714  
desertinstitute@joshuatree.org  
55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,  
Yucca Valley, 92284

## **BEGINNING BIRD BANDING**

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

**MARCH 16TH (LECTURE 10:00 AM- 12 PM)**

**MARCH 23RD - 24RD (FIELD, 7:00 AM - 1:00 PM)**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This course is a basic introduction to banding birds, which is a valuable tool in ornithological research and monitoring. An evening class session will briefly discuss the history, purpose, goals, and methods of banding. Among the topics discussed will be the federal and state permits required of bird banders, the submittal of data to the Bird Banding Laboratory, capture methods, the handling of wild birds, banding birds, the collection of morphological data, and the sexing and aging of birds. The lecture session will be followed by two days of hands-on experience capturing, handling, and banding birds in the field.

### **PROGRAM AGENDA**

#### **Saturday, March 16th, 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, March 23, 7a-1p**

The first day of banding will start at 7a with a brief orientation around a campfire, 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.

#### **Sunday, March 24, 7a-1p**

The second day of banding will begin at 7a 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:** [Black Widow Ranch](#), 2976 Mt Vernon Ave Riverside, CA 92507

*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 at the entrance!

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

**Easy** There will be leisurely walking every 30 minutes around the ranch to check for bird captures in mist nets. The terrain is flat, and most walks will be no more than 100 yards or so. There will be up to 10 of these walks, so participants should be comfortable walking up to a mile over the course of the day. 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 for this course (but not required):

- Camera allowing close-up photographs (smartphones are usually adequate)

## **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.



## DESERT INSTITUTE JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION

+1-760-819-4714  
desertinstitute@joshuatree.org  
55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,  
Yucca Valley, 92284

## 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.

