



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

BIRDS & OTHER WONDERS OF THE SALTON SEA

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: KURT LEUSCHNER

FEBRUARY 11, 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We will spend the day exploring the Salton Sea with a focus on birds and natural history. The Salton Sea is an important migratory stop along the Pacific Flyway and many species choose to spend the winter here. We hope to see hundreds of Snow and Ross's Geese along with Sandhill Cranes and Burrowing Owls. In all, over 400 bird species have been recorded at the Salton Sea! We will try to find as many of them as we can as we car-caravan down the east side of the Sea. Along the way you will also learn about the geology and human history of the Salton Sea including the current status. Bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, a full tank of gas, a lunch, and drinks and snacks to last the day. Radios will be provided for car-to-car communication.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll start off with a meeting at the Sam's Club parking lot at 7:30am. Please ensure you have plenty of fuel in your vehicle before arriving. We'll go over a safety talk, basic logistics, and then caravan to Salton Sea and explore the area. We will have lunch at around noon (bring your own lunch and water), further explore the Salton Sea, and end the class at 4:30pm.

MEETING LOCATION

[Sam's Club Parking Lot](#), 34200 Monterey Ave, Palm Desert

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-Moderate Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

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:

- N/A

Recommended for this course (but not required):

- Hiking poles

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Wildlife Ecology, Professor of Natural Resources, College of the Desert. Leuschner's specialties include ornithology, entomology, and desert ecology. He has led hundreds of field trips both locally and as far afield as Africa. He teaches natural history courses for the Desert Institute, the Desert Studies Center at Zzyzx, the Living Desert, California State Parks, and many other conservation organizations.

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.

