



**DESERT INSTITUTE**  
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL  
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,  
Yucca Valley, 92284

## **BIRDS OF ANZA-BORREGO**

**FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: KURT LEUSCHNER**

**MARCH 12TH (ZOOM, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM)**

**MARCH 16TH (FIELD, 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM) - 17TH (FIELD, 7:30 AM - NOON )**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This two-day weekend field class explores the oases in and around the Anza-Borrego Desert, which is home to a surprisingly wide variety of bird species. This habitat also provides the perfect resting place for migrants such as warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks, sparrows, hawks and other tired travelers on their way south for the winter. After a zoom lecture on Tuesday night, the class spends Saturday and Sunday in the field, studying both migrant and resident bird species. Participants will learn about: conservation, ecology, natural history and special adaptations to the harsh desert environment. Participants will need to make their own weekend accommodations; meals and lodging are not included.

### **PROGRAM AGENDA**

#### **Day 1: Tuesday, March 12**

We'll meet at 7p over zoom for an introduction to bird identification, classification, local families, migration, and conservation. We'll discuss the upcoming weekend's activities and answer any questions you might have.

#### **Day 2: Saturday, March 16**

We will meet at 7:30a at the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association and drive approximately 75 miles in a loop around and through the State Park in search of birds in a variety of habitats, from desert scrub to montane forest. We might even see a Bald Eagle! We'll have a lunch stop around noon and class will end around 4:30p.

#### **Day 3: Sunday, March 17**

We'll meet at the same time, same place as Saturday. We will bird in the vicinity of Borrego Springs, checking out a number of local birding sites including a sandy, creosote scrub ecosystem with a chance to see LeConte's Thrasher and migrating Swainson's Hawks. Class will finish by noon.

## MEETING LOCATION

Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association, 652 Palm Canyon Dr, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

*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** Walking over mostly flat but possibly uneven terrain for no more than two miles each day, and standing for long periods of time. Rocky, sandy stretches are possible, with some gentle up and downhill sections. Please contact us if you have questions about accommodations or your ability to participate.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation
- Lodging (you must make lodging reservations on your own)
- Admission fee to park in Anza-Borrego State Park (currently \$10/vehicle)

## 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:

- Binoculars

### Recommended for this course (but not required):

- Bird guide, *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* by Jon Dunn
- Merlin bird app for your phone (free)

### **Additional optional reading materials**

- Introduction to California Birdlife, Jules Evens & Ian Tait, UC Press
- Sibley's Birding Basics, David Sibley

## **GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR**

Kurt Leuschner is a Professor of Natural Resources at 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.

