



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

BIRDS OF JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: KURT LEUSCHNER

APRIL 23 (ZOOM 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM)

APRIL 27 (FIELD 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM) & APRIL 28 (FIELD 7:15 AM - 1:15 PM)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The deceptively barren Mojave Desert landscape is home and resting grounds for numerous endemic and migratory bird species. Joshua trees do not make a typical forest; the landscape is open, the climate dry and vegetation relatively sparse. Despite this, over 240 species of birds have been recorded in Joshua Tree National Park! Kurt Leuschner, Professor of College of the Desert, Palm Desert, will guide this two-day field class through the Mojave and Colorado Deserts to identify common and rare birds. Leuschner's focus will be on identifying individual species and separating summer and winter residents from true migrants. He will discuss nesting and feeding habits, interactions with plant life, and adaptive strategies. Participants will have the thrill of identifying the park's common spring bird species, better understand the role each plays in the high desert ecosystem, and have the chance of sighting rare species like the Pinyon Jay, Prairie Falcon, or Lawrence's Goldfinch.

PROGRAM AGENDA

Tuesday, April 23, from 7p - 8:30p

We'll start off with a zoom lecture on Tuesday night at 7pm with an introduction to ornithology, identification skills, field guides, and songs. At 8p we'll review resident species versus migrants: an overview of the birds at JTNP and end the zoom meeting by 8:30p.

Saturday, April 27, from 7:30a - 4:30p meet at [Big Morongo Preserve](#), 11055 East Dr, Morongo Valley CA 92256

Sunday, April 28, from 7:15a - 1:15p meet at [Luckie Park](#), 29 Palms

MEETING LOCATION

Tuesday, April 23, from 7p - 8:30p via zoom (details will be emailed to you)

Saturday, April 27, from 7:30a - 4:30p meet at [Big Morongo Preserve](#), 11055 East Dr, Morongo Valley CA 92256

Sunday, April 28, from 7:15a - 1:15p meet at [Luckie Park](#), 29 Palms

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 ▾ 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:

- Binoculars

Recommended:

- Bird guide, National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America by Jon Dunn recommended

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Wildlife Ecology, 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 Bureau of Land Management, UCR Extension, the Desert Institute, the Living Desert, California State Parks, Riverside County 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.

