

March 15, 2005

Mono Lake Committee 2005 Field Seminars

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For Immediate Release

Looking for a fun way to learn more about the Eastern Sierra and its human and non-human denizens this year? Perhaps you would like to make an authentic Miwok-Paiute burden basket or research the meanings in the carved aspen arborglyphs left by Basque shepherders. Whether your interests are in the natural history of the Eastern Sierra—be it the birds, geology, wildflowers or Sierra Bighorn Sheep, or in the human history of native peoples, water, and scientific research, the Mono Lake Committee is offering a wide range of outdoor field seminars for the 2005 season.

Starting in June and going through October, 15 different seminars will be offered to the public. Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars are open to everyone, but Committee members get advance notice and class discounts. If you are not a current member of the Mono Lake Committee, you can get the discount by joining when you register.

Seminars are generally limited to 15 people. All seminars operate under permit from the Inyo National Forest, and proceeds from the Field Seminars benefit research and education in the Mono Basin.

The Committee works with instructors and field leaders that have received high ratings from past seminar participants, and the seminars emphasize a spirit of learning and camaraderie in a magnificent outdoor setting for a reasonable cost. Call the Mono Lake Committee at (760) 647-6595 and ask for the seminar desk to register.

The 2005 Field Seminars and dates are listed below:

- **June 12th: South Shore Kayak with Stuart Wilkinson and Mono Lake Committee Staff.** \$85 per person/ \$75 for members. Join Stuart

of Caldera Kayaks and a staff member for a guided naturalist expedition along Mono Lake's south shore. Learn about Mono Lake geology, ecology, history, and politics. Plan on four or five hours for the tour. Some kayak experience is helpful, but not necessary. Kayaks and safety equipment are provided.

- **June 15–17: Birding the East Side with David Lukas and Simone**

Whitecloud. \$135 per person/ \$120 for members (3-day seminar).

Looking to get a little focused birding in before the 4th annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua? This field seminar will concentrate on identification and ecology of birds in the Mono Basin and local Eastern Sierra. David Lukas and Simone Whitecloud have led hundreds of bird watching programs and this class will intensively explore a number of sites, mixing short leisurely walks with periods of observation and natural history discussions.

- **July 2–5: California Gull Research: Chick Banding with Kristie**

Nelson, PRBO Conservation Science. \$135 per person per day;

overnight; meals included. Join a research team in collecting data on the California Gull rookery at Mono Lake. Don't miss this

opportunity to visit Mono Lake's spectacular Negit Islets and observe at close quarters the second largest California Gull rookery in North America. Please call and ask for Bartshe Miller for more information on this unique Mono Adventure.

- **July 9–10: Visions of the Past: Bodie and the Mono Basin taught by Terri Guissinger.** \$125 per person/ \$110 for members. Take a journey back in time and discover the fascinating history behind the Mono Basin and the rich Bodie Hills. Terri Geissinger is a Bodie State Historic Park historian, interpreter, and guide. She is active in the Mono Basin Historical Society, and has a talent for making history come alive.
- **July 15–17: Butterflies of the Mono Basin with Verina Bird and Paul McFarland.** \$125 per person/ \$110 for members. Join this expedition to locate, identify, and discuss the importance of butterflies and other insects in our ecosystem. Beginning Friday evening with a slideshow presentation, the group will spend the next two days leisurely exploring the alkali meadows along Mono Lake, fluttering

aspen groves, and alpine trails. Last years participants identified over 50 species of butterflies, moths, and dragonflies!

- **July 29–31: Introduction to High Country Plants and Habitats with Ann Howald.** \$125 per person/ \$110 for members. Explore a mosaic of habitats that make up the Eastern Sierra high country. This seminar will focus on sight identification of common trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. With any luck, you'll be zoomed by hummingbirds defending their patches of paintbrush and columbine. Walks will be around the 10,000-foot elevation level with a modest pace over moderate terrain.
- **August 5–7: Miwok-Paiute Burden Basketry with Lucy and Julia Parker.** \$185 per person/ \$170 for members, \$60 materials fee, includes primitive campsite fees. Taught by these two renowned California basket weavers, students will prepare materials and create a small burden basket. Traditionally, burden baskets, a favorite Miwok-Paiute style, were large, conical baskets used for gathering acorns and pine nuts. You are encouraged, but not required, to camp with the

group, and evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories.

- **August 6–7: The Secret Knowledge of Mono Basin Water with Greg Reis.** \$125 per person/\$110 for members. Water in the Mono Basin takes an intriguing journey full of detours, strange passages, and dramatic releases. Join Mono Lake Committee Information Specialist Greg Reis for an investigation of the Mono Basin's link to the water cycle: an intriguing maze of humans and natural influences. This seminar will focus as much on the management of the water as the natural habitats dependent upon it.
- **August 12–14: Identifying High Country Wildflowers with Mark Bagley.** \$123 per person/ \$110 for members. Experience the headwaters of Lee Vining Creek where a rich summer display of wildflowers, shrubs, and trees cascade along the creeks, jewel-like lakes, green meadows, and rocky granite slopes. There, amid the towering peaks of the Sierra at the source of Mono Lake's water, Mark will show you how to identify this diversity of plants using an

easy to understand field guide, and you'll soon be enjoying his engaging teaching style.

- August 20–21: **Fall Bird Migration with Dave Shuford.** \$125 per person/ \$110 for members. Dave Shuford knows that the east slope of the Sierra Nevada is a major migration route for birds traveling from northern nesting areas to warm southern habitats. Early autumn is the time of year to see the greatest diversity of landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds in the Mono Basin and on Crowley Reservoir. Dave Shuford, staff biologist for PRBO Conservation Science for twenty years, is well acquainted with where to find birds in the Eastern Sierra. This is one of our most popular field seminars!
- August 27–28: **Winging into Autumn with David Lukas and Simone Whitecloud.** \$125 per person/ \$110 for members. This field seminar will focus on the identification and ecology of both resident and fall migratory birds. This course is appropriate for beginning and more advanced birdwatchers. The birds will ultimately dictate where the class will go, but the plan is to investigate a number of sites,

mixing short leisurely walks with periods of observation and discussion, taking time to learn about birds by watching them closely

- September 10–11: **Thin Air and Steep Slopes: Sierra Bighorn Sheep in the Mono Basin with John Wehausen and Karl Chang.** \$150 per person/ \$130 for members. John Wehausen and Karl Chang will lead this seminar by discussing the biology and conservation of these animals with attempts to view them on foot. There is a very good chance of seeing Sierra bighorn sheep in the wild during this seminar, but no guarantee. Some of the proceeds from this seminar will benefit the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation. This seminar involves strenuous hiking at the 10,000-foot elevation and above.
- September 17–18: **The Story Behind the Land: Geology of the Mono Basin with Tim Tierney.** \$125 per person/ \$110 for members. The Mono Basin is a geological showcase, and geologist Tim Tierney will show students young volcanoes, glaciated landscapes, stark mountains, and strange mineral towers, all set about ancient and saline

Mono Lake. Cooler fall weather and the first tinge of fall color will highlight the geologic wonders of this popular field seminar.

- **October 1–2: Reading the Aspen Groves: Arborglyphs and Aspen Natural History with Richard Potashin and Nancy Hadlock.** \$125 per person/ \$110 for members. Known for their breathtaking fall color displays and distinctive quaking, aspens border the high meadows of the Glass Mountains and the Mono Basin. A century of sheep grazing brought many Basque shepherders into these meadows, where they left numerous carvings—or arborglyphs—on the aspens. This is an enchanting journey into the aspen groves to explore this historic, organic art form, and the natural history of the trees themselves.
- **October 7–9: Mono-Bodie Fall Photography with Richard Knepp and Jill Lachman.** \$275 per person/ \$250 for members. Autumn in the Mono Basin is one of the greatest photographic experiences in the country. Spectacular foliage and skies combine with exceptional light, presenting ample subject matter for photographers in both color and black and white. Join accomplished photographer Richard Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset, fall color in

nearby canyons, and the old ghost town of Bodie. Rick will be joined by Bodie expert and photographer Jill Lachman. Special accesses to some of the buildings will be granted, so don't miss this opportunity! Photographers of all levels are welcome; a fully adjustable camera of any size or format is suggested.

Call the Mono Lake Committee at (760) 647-6595 and ask for the seminar desk to register. More extensive seminar descriptions are available upon request or online at www.monolake.org. Visa, MasterCard, and Discover or personal checks payable to the Mono Lake Committee are acceptable. Sorry, we cannot accept registration by mail or email. If a seminar receives less than six participants (certain seminars excepted), the seminar will be cancelled two weeks in advance, and full refunds will be given. In you cancel three weeks prior to the seminar start date; we will refund your payment (less \$10 processing fee). No refunds after that date, but tuition can be applied to another class of 2005.

Photo Caption: These participants are observing and learning about Mono Basin birds during one of last years field seminars. All seminars fill quickly,

so don't delay! Call as soon as possible to make your reservations. Photo by

Arya Degenhardt

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Photos of the Mono Lake area and the text of this press release are available for download from www.monolake.org/press

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The Mono Lake Committee is a nonprofit citizens' group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.