

Falling for the Migration: Crowley, Mammoth, Mono



Marbled Godwits and a Willet

Santiago M. Escruceria

August 18–19, 2018 • Dave Shuford

\$172 per person / \$157 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 15 participants

Welcome to our field seminar on the fall migration of birds in the southern Mono Basin, Crowley Lake and Long Valley, and the outskirts of Mammoth Lakes. Beginners as well as experts will enjoy this intimate introduction to the varied birdlife found in a wide variety of habitats from the shimmering shores of Mono Lake to the lofty Sierra peaks. We will learn to identify about 100 species by plumage and calls, and probe the secrets of their natural history. This seminar will include informal discussions on migration strategies, behavior, and ecology that complement our field observations.

This seminar will involve easy hiking at elevations ranging from 6,400 to 9,600 feet above sea level. We will hike 1–2 miles a day, mostly on level terrain. The first stop Saturday morning is at Crowley Lake Reservoir, a mecca for migrant and late-breeding waterbirds. For those who prefer to meet the seminar at this location (arriving Saturday morning from points south), please contact Nora Livingston (nora@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595 to obtain directions.

Dave Shuford is an expert birder, avid naturalist and teacher, and a full-time ornithologist. Dave's bird research in the region has included a long-term study on the ecology of Mono Lake's California Gull colony, an atlas of breeding birds in the Glass Mountain area, and surveys of Snowy Plovers at Mono and Owens lakes. More broadly his work has focused on the distribution, abundance, and habitat needs of shorebirds and waterbirds in California and the West, particularly in areas where competition for water threatens Pacific Flyway bird populations (e.g., Klamath Basin, Central Valley, Salton Sea).

ITINERARY (may vary with bird activity, weather, or the instructor's whims!)

Saturday, August 18, 7:00am: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining. After brief introductions, we will travel to Crowley Lake Reservoir where we can expect to see a wide variety of shorebirds, ducks, grebes (perhaps still nesting), gulls, terns, and other waterbirds, plus sagebrush and open-country landbirds. Please note that at Crowley we will be out in the open in the hot sun and away from bathrooms for the duration, so be prepared. Around noon we will break for lunch at Sherwin Creek (please bring your own) and afterwards we will bird riparian, meadow, Jeffrey or lodgepole pine, and sagebrush habitats. Sites often visited include the meadow at the Valentine Lake trailhead, Laurel Pond, the Inyo Craters, and the Earthquake Trail. The class usually breaks for the day at about 5:00pm.

Sunday, August 19, 7:00am: We will meet at a site near the south end of Mono Lake designated by the instructor the previous day. We will explore a wide variety of habitats around Mono Lake or in nearby Sierra canyons. Sites visited often include Lee Vining Canyon, South Tufa, and Mono Mills or other sites in nearby Jeffrey pine forests. The class usually ends about 3:00pm on Sunday; participants may leave at varying times depending on travel plans.

Altitude and Dehydration Cautions: Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Experts recommend that you begin drinking extra water as you drive to higher elevation in order to prevent dehydration and headaches. Also, the sun is rather fierce at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat.

MEALS

Please bring a bag/picnic lunch for both days. Also, please bring snacks in case we run behind time for lunch because of good birding.

TO BRING

- binoculars and/or spotting scope
- field guide(s)
- footwear you don't mind getting muddy or wet
- day pack
- rain jacket, hat
- sunscreen, sunglasses
- plenty of drinking water



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • monolake.org/seminars