

Falling for the Migration: Bridgeport, Crowley, Mono



American Avocets in flight, photo by Bob Steele

August 20–22, 2021 • Dave Shuford

\$182 per person / \$167 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 10 participants

Welcome to our field seminar on the fall migration of birds in the Bridgeport Valley and the adjacent Sierra, the Mono Basin, Crowley Lake, Long Valley, and the outskirts of Mammoth Lakes. Beginners as well as experts will enjoy this introduction to the area's birdlife found in a wide variety of habitats, from the shimmering shores of Mono Lake to lofty Sierra peaks. We will 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 Friday morning is at Bridgeport Reservoir, a mecca for migrant and late-breeding waterbirds. For those who prefer to meet the seminar at this location (arriving Friday morning from points north), please contact Nora Livingston at nora@monolake.org or (760) 647-6595 to obtain directions.

Dave Shuford is an expert birder, avid naturalist and teacher, and a retired professional ornithologist. Dave's bird research in the region includes 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 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!)

Friday, August 20, 7:00am: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore (51365 Highway 395) in Lee Vining. After brief introductions, we will travel to Bridgeport Reservoir where we can expect to see riparian landbirds and a wide variety of ducks, grebes, shorebirds, gulls, terns, and other waterbirds. Please note that for much of the day we will be out in the open in the sun. Around noon we will break for a picnic lunch (please bring your own) at a fishing access spot along the shoreline. In the afternoon, we will bird meadows, riparian, sagebrush, pinyon pine woodland, and conifer forest. Besides the reservoir, sites visited may include East Walker River below the dam, Bodie Hills from Masonic Road, meadows and riparian areas behind town of Bridgeport, extensive meadows on Twin Lakes Road, riparian and conifer on Robinson and Buckeye creeks, and Virginia Lakes. The class usually breaks for the day at about 5:00pm.

Saturday, August 21, 7:00am: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore. We will then travel to Crowley Lake Reservoir where—from Layton Springs to the Owens River mouth—we can expect to see a wide variety of shorebirds, ducks, grebes (still nesting), gulls, and terns, plus sagebrush and open-country landbirds. Please note that we will be out in the open in the hot sun and away from bathrooms for the morning, so be prepared. Around noon we will break for lunch (please bring your own) at Sherwin Creek and afterwards we will bird riparian, meadow, Jeffrey or lodgepole pine, and sagebrush habitats. Sites visited may include the meadow at the Valentine Lake trailhead, Laurel Pond, Inyo Craters, and the Earthquake Trail. The class usually breaks for the day at about 5:00pm.

Sunday, August 22, 7:00am: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore (51365 Highway 395) in Lee Vining. We will explore a wide variety of habitats around Mono Lake and in nearby Sierra canyons. Sites visited may 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.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, all seminars will be limited to ten participants and will take place entirely outside. Participants will caravan to each field location rather than carpool. All participants, including those who have been vaccinated, are expected to wear masks and socially distance for the duration of the seminar. Additionally, participants will need to complete a health screening before arriving in the Mono Basin and again at the start of the seminar. Keeping participants, instructors, and our staff safe is our highest priority.

ALTITUDE & 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 all three days. Also, please bring snacks in case we run behind time for lunch because of good birding. Please bring plenty of drinking water.

TO BRING

- a face mask (no buffs as masks)
- hand sanitizer
- binoculars and/or spotting scope
- field guide(s)
- footwear you don't mind getting muddy or wet
- appropriate field clothing: hat, sunglasses, warm layers, rain gear
- day pack including plenty of water, sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.
- packed lunch and snacks
- plenty of drinking water



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

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