

Natural History at the Edge of the Sierra



Butterflies on Sulphur Buckwheat

Nora Livingston

August 6, 2022 • Nora Livingston

\$145 per person / \$130 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 8 participants

The Natural History Institute defines natural history as the “...practice of intentional, focused attentiveness and receptivity to the more-than-human world, guided by honesty and accuracy.” Rather than focusing on one specific aspect of a singular creature of interest, natural history pays attention to all the goings-on in front of the observer. It is paying attention to the direction of the wind coming down off the mountain slopes or across a sagebrush plateau, and the tiny toad hopping through a meadow and the plants under which it stops to rest, and the accipiter circling overhead at the edge of the forest. Natural history is stopping to ask yourself what might be happening and using your eyes and ears to figure it out. On this day trip, we will make our way up the east slope, stopping at several locations to connect with all that we may find. Throughout the day, we will have moments of quiet reflection to allow ourselves to ponder the grandeur and the minutia that envelops us in this amazing place: the edge of the Sierra.

Nora Livingston is the Mono Lake Committee’s Lead Naturalist Guide. She has spent over a decade exploring the many unique nooks and crannies of the Mono Basin and the Eastern Sierra. Before moving to Lee Vining permanently, she bounced around California for eight years as a field biologist, studying birds on the Channel Islands, the Farallon Islands, and in the Eastern Sierra.

ITINERARY

Saturday, August 6 at 7:30am: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining. After brief introductions, we will spend the day exploring the habitats on the edge of the Sierra from low elevation (sagebrush steppe) to high elevation (Tioga Pass region) to look for birds, mammals, butterflies, and wildflowers. This class will return to Lee Vining around 3:30pm.

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.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: MODERATE

This seminar's activity level: *moderate*. We will be walking up to two miles at a leisurely pace, much of which will be over uneven terrain, off trail, and will include stepping up and over obstacles. This type of walking requires good balance, some agility, and stamina. We will be gaining altitude steadily throughout the day.

WEATHER & ALTITUDE

Temperatures in summer will be hot during the day and drop to chilly at night, with possible windy conditions and afternoon thunderstorms. Average temperatures in August in Lee Vining are 83°F (max) and 52°F (min).

This seminar will take place at elevations ranging from about 6,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. It is a good idea to acclimate at the elevation of Lee Vining for at least 24 hours prior to the start of the seminar. Those with a history of heart, ear, or respiratory problems should consult their doctors before attending. Anyone restricted to lower elevations should not enroll. *Note: If you have residual respiratory effects from having Covid-19, activities at altitude may be particularly difficult for you.

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MEALS

Please bring a bag/picnic lunch, snacks for the day, and plenty of drinking water.

TO BRING

- face mask (N95 or KN95 recommended)
- notebook and pen/pencil
- binoculars/hand lens
- camera (optional)
- appropriate field clothing: hat, sunglasses, warm layers, rain gear

___ day pack including plenty of water, sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.
___ packed lunch and snacks

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Laws, John Muir. *The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada*. Heyday Books, Berkeley, 2007.
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COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS FOR 2022

All participants and instructors must be fully vaccinated and boosted. Proof of vaccination will be required after you register for a seminar.

Please minimize your exposure to Covid in the time leading up to your seminar. We recommend obtaining a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.* If your PCR test comes back positive for Covid, you must cancel your registration and stay home. If you begin to feel sick in the days leading up to your seminar, you must cancel your registration and stay home. You will receive a full refund in either case.

*Depending on the regional Covid situation we may need to *require* a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.

During the seminars masks will be required indoors and in carpools/Mono Lake Committee van in accordance with Mono County requirements (N95 or KN95 masks offer the best protection). If Mono County has lifted the mask requirement, masks will not be required indoors and in vehicles during the seminars. (You may wear a mask at any time if you wish to.)

If you begin to feel ill with Covid symptoms at any time during the seminar, you must immediately notify the instructor or staff member accompanying the group and leave the seminar.

Please keep in mind that conditions may change at any time and we may have to change our procedures in order to provide the opportunity for everyone involved with the Field Seminars to safely participate. Depending on the Covid situation in the weeks leading up to your seminar, we may have to plan to hold the seminar completely outdoors. Mask requirements may change. There's a chance we may have to cancel seminars altogether. We will communicate with you about any of these changes, and you can always get in touch with us if you have questions or need more clarification about specific circumstances, by emailing fieldseminars@monolake.org or by calling (760) 647-6595.



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

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