

Falling for the Migration: Bridgeport Valley & Mono Basin



Western Grebe

Photo by Bob Steele

August 15–16, 2019 • 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 northern Mono Basin, Bridgeport Valley, and adjacent Sierra Nevada. 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 and Bridgeport Reservoir on the edge of the Great Basin to 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 Thursday 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 Thursday morning from points north), 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!)

Thursday, August 15, 7:00am: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore 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 often include East Walker River below the dam, Bodie Hills from Masonic Road, meadows and riparian 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.

Friday, August 16, 7:00am: We will meet at a site near the north 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 Mono County Park, DeChambeau and County ponds, DeChambeau Ranch, Lundy Canyon, and the Lee Vining Creek delta. The class usually ends about 3:00pm; 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. Please bring plenty of drinking water.

TO BRING

- 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