Falling for the Migration: Crowley, Mammoth, Mono

August 15–16, 2020 • 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, 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 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 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!)

**Saturday, August 15, 7:00am:** Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore
(51365 Highway 395) in Lee Vining. After brief introductions, we will 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 16, 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
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.

**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

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**Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars**
P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • monolake.org/seminars