



*Birds of the Upper Yukon:
An Expedition by Voyageur Canoe
Field Seminar Overview & Arrival Information
May 29 – June 5, 2010*



Please read the entire information packet carefully. This important information will help you plan and prepare for your time with us. If you have any further questions after you have read this packet, please give us a call at (907) 683-1269. We are here to help.

The Activity

This Alaska Geographic course, operating through the Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC), is active and completely field-based. We will spend the entire 7 days outdoors traveling, observing wildlife, admiring the spectacular scenery, and having in-depth discussions about bird ecology. Canoeing experience is not necessary, yet participants must be in good physical condition, able to paddle for up to 6 hours per day, climb in and out of a canoe, and help carry heavy bags to and from the campsites. Canoeing this 'class one' stretch of the river will be moderate; working with the river current (~6 mph) we will cover approximately 30 river miles per day. We may take several short hikes from our campsite and at lunchtime stops. Participants must also be prepared to experience inclement weather including high winds and cold temperatures, hordes of biting insects, and exposure to extremely muddy and silty conditions.

This course is led by National Park Service Wildlife Biologist Carol McIntyre and guides from [CanoeAlaska](#). Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, created in 1980, protects one of the highest nesting densities of Peregrine Falcons in North America and is home to over 165 species of birds. Traveling in a 34 foot voyageur canoe, our small group of hardy explorers will start our journey in Eagle, Alaska and paddle 158 miles of the mighty Yukon River to Circle, Alaska. During the day we'll paddle along the Yukon River, stopping to watch and learn about birds and bird-related research projects in the region. Each evening we'll set up camp and enjoy hardy meals and rousing campfire discussions about the ecology and conservation of Alaska's birds. The course will be fully outfitted by Canoe Alaska.

Course Schedule

May 29th 8:00 am: Meet at Wright Air Service in Fairbanks (directions below). The group will board at 9:00 a.m. chartered flight (1.5 hours) to Eagle, Alaska. In Eagle we will meet Mary & Hank Timm of CanoeAlaska for our canoe orientation and packing exercise. We will launch onto the river this day and camp just down stream from Eagle.

May 30th through June 4th: Paddle with the river each day, exploring and discussing bird topics, spend the last night just upstream from Circle.

June 5th: Arrive in Circle, Alaska late morning and meet the MSLC shuttle van. Load up and return Fairbanks around 6pm. **Note: Due to possible delays in our air transport it is strongly advised that participants leave flexibility in their travel plans at the end of the course.**

Weather

Please realize the entire course takes place outdoors and activities will continue rain or shine. Weather conditions are unpredictable year round and therefore we must be prepared for a wide range of conditions. Temperatures may drop below freezing at night and may warm up to 80's during the day. Wind, rain and snow are likely as well. Biting insects could be numerous. Be prepared with adequate warm clothing, rain gear, and footwear. **Please review carefully the Clothing & Equipment List provided.**

Meeting Location & Transportation

The course participants will meet at Wright Air Service in Fairbanks, Alaska – at 3842 University Avenue South (see map below). This is on the East ramp of the Fairbanks International Airport. There is long-term parking across the street from Wright Air Service for \$2 per day. Prior to our departure date we will help participants coordinate ride-sharing to Fairbanks and within Fairbanks. Please be at Wright Air Service by 8:00 a.m. on May 29. At the end of our trip on June 5th a MLSC van will meet the group in Circle to return us to Fairbanks via the Steese Highway.

Meals and Lodging

All meals will be provided, beginning with lunch on May 29th up to lunch on June 5th when we are in route back to Fairbanks from Circle. Simple hearty meals will be served family-style. Unfortunately we have a limited ability to accommodate specific dietary requirements, therefore please notify the MSLC several weeks prior to the course of any necessary dietary needs or restrictions.

We will camp in tents the entire course. Participants must bring their own tent, sleeping bag and sleeping pad. For the entire course there will be no electricity, plumbing or heated areas.

Lodging accommodations before and following the course are your responsibility. In the event that the group's flight to Eagle is delayed the participant is responsible for their own accommodations in Fairbanks.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations that occur 30 days in advance of the course start date will be refunded the course fee, less a processing fee of \$25 per space. For cancellations within 30 days of the course start date, the entire fee will be retained unless we can fill your space. If we have to cancel a course, your entire course fee will be refunded. To process a cancellation, please email us at courses@murieslc.org or call (907) 683-1269.

Refunds will be credited to the credit card used during the original transaction. Refunds may also be applied to course substitutions within the same summer season. Please contact us to process a substitution or refund.

Insurance

Participants should have their own health and accident insurance. Also please consider travel insurance in case you have to cancel your trip due to illness or injury.

Course Paperwork & Liability

All participants will be asked to read and sign Risk and Release forms from Alaska Geographic and CanoeAlaska, as well as complete a Health and Emergency Contact form; all will be emailed to you. **Please complete these forms and fax or mail to our office by May 3rd**. Fax number: (907) 683-1271. Mailing address: Murie Science & Learning Center, P.O. Box 136, Denali Park, AK 99755. You will also need to complete a simple food questionnaire; this form needs to be emailed to Mary & Hank Timm of CanoeAlaska at info@canoealaska.net by May 3rd. Please contact the MSLC if you have any questions or concerns.

Important Phone Numbers

For the most of this course we will not have access to phones or cell phone coverage and may be completely out of contact with 'the outside world' for 5 days. Emergency and non-emergency messages can be relayed to the MSLC office phone number (907)-683-1269. After-hours emergency calls can be directed to the Murie Science and Learning Center emergency coordinator at (907) 699-6044. The Yukon-Charley River Preserve has offices in Eagle (907-547-2233) and Fairbanks (907-457-5752).

Professional Development Credit

Three optional professional development credits are available for this course. By choosing this \$109 option at the time of registration, you are officially pre-registered and pre-paid with the University of Alaska – Anchorage. A registration form will be sent to you prior to the course, please fill out and return to the MSLC office by May 3rd with the other course paperwork.

Pre-Course Reading List

The following articles are available for download on the Course Paperwork webpage:

1) Cade, T.J., C.M. White, and J.R. Haugh. (1968). Peregrines and pesticides in Alaska. Condor 70: 170-178.

2) Ambrose, R.E., R.J. Ritchie, C.M. White, P.F. Schempf, T. Swem, and R. Ditttrick. (1985). Status of peregrine falcon populations in Alaska. Unpublished report. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fairbanks, Alaska.

HIGHLY Suggested Pre-Course Reading List

McPhee, J. (1977). Coming into the Country. New York, NY: Farrar; Straus & Giroux.

Note: this book is available at public libraries or on the bookshelf of many Alaska enthusiasts.

Map of Meeting Location

