

*Ecology of Migratory Birds
Field Seminar Overview & Arrival Information
August 23 - 26, 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.

Activities

This Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC) course is active and field-based. Hiking will be moderate to strenuous, covering distances of approximately 4 - 6 miles round trip including as much as 2,000 feet of elevation gain. We will be hiking off trail on rough, uneven tundra and forest terrains and we will likely encounter wet tundra / forest conditions and minor stream crossings with water levels that are above hiking boots. Please bring stream crossing shoes and/or rubber boots. **Participants should be in very good physical condition.**

Prerequisites for this field seminar

- An inquisitive mind
- A sense of adventure
- Adequate clothing and footwear (please review clothing/equipment list carefully)
- A good set of binoculars (a limited number of extras will be provided)
- Ability to hike 4-6 miles of moderate to strenuous terrain each day of the course

This course is led by National Park Service Wildlife Biologist Carol McIntyre in one of the world's premier wilderness areas during one of the most beautiful times of year. Autumn in Denali is bustling with activity as resident birds prepare for the long winter and migratory birds prepare for their migratory journeys. More than any other group of organisms, birds have thoroughly adopted and adapted to a migratory lifestyle. Most of the birds that nest in Denali are migratory, with many undertaking extremely long annual migrations. This fascinating world of bird migration is best experienced by watching migrating birds in action and this field seminar is a unique opportunity to visit various different habitats while learning about migratory birds. The Wonder Lake region is one of the best places in Denali to search for flocks of migratory birds and study their behavior. During the day, we will explore the nearby ridges, forests and wetlands in search of the many different species of birds that live or migrate through these areas. During the evening, we will share discussions focused on the ecology and conservation of migratory birds, listen to the flight calls of migrating songbirds as they pass overhead, and perhaps enjoy the northern lights. Most of our meals will be pre-prepared to eat in the field, minimizing the time that we will spend in camp.

Tentative Daily Schedule

Our group will base itself from the Wonder Lake Campground. The schedule may be modified somewhat according to weather conditions and to fit the needs and interest of the participants and instructor, such as viewing unique wildlife sightings and/or spectacular scenery.

Monday	11:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. 12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.	Check in at MSLC Introduction, orientation & overview Drive to Wonder Lake & field exploration. Set-up camp, dinner, evening discussions
Tuesday	7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.	Long day hiking in the field Dinner and Evening discussions
Wednesday	6:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.	Long day hiking in the field Dinner and Evening discussions
Thursday	6:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Return to MSLC & exploration along the way

Weather

Please realize the entire course takes place outdoors and activities will continue rain, snow, or shine. Weather conditions are unpredictable year round in Denali and therefore we must be prepared for a wide range of conditions. Temperatures will likely drop below freezing at night and may warm up to the 60's during the day. Wind, rain and snow are likely as well. Late August in Denali can often seem like "winter camping". Be prepared with adequate warm clothing, a hooded rain jacket, rain pants, hat, gloves, and good hiking boots. Dressing in layers is recommended. Although late in the season, biting insects are still a possibility. **Please review carefully the Clothing & Equipment List provided.**

Directions, Parking Area and Meeting Location

The entrance to Denali National Park is located at Mile 237 of the George Parks Highway. Follow the Park Road for approximately 1 mile to a roundabout, and make the first right turn off the roundabout. The MSLC is the first building on the right. However, because you will be parking overnight, **we ask that you park in the park concessioner's employee lot.** To get to this lot, pass the MSLC and continue to the second right turn. You will see a sign that says 'Service Road Buses Only'. Drive towards the bus yard and park in the first large lot on the left. This is a very busy area, so please yield to any buses or pedestrians. To walk to the MSLC, go back down the drive toward the park road and look for the MSLC in the direction of the roundabout. Please leave your overnight bags in your vehicle. We will load all bags directly into the MSLC van in the parking lot after our initial meeting in the MSLC.

Arrival

Beginning a half-hour before course start time, MSLC staff will greet you at the Center for check-in; your course then begins at 12:00 p.m. The first day we will provide a brown bag lunch.

Accommodations in Denali

The entire course will be based from the Wonder Lake Campground at mile 85 of the Park Road. We will sleep in shared camping tents and cook together under the pavilion at the site. For the entire course there will be no electricity, plumbing or heated areas and each participant will need to provide their own sleeping bag and sleeping pad.

Lodging accommodations before and following the course are your responsibility. We do not endorse or recommend any particular lodge, cabins, or campground, but we are happy to provide you with a list of local accommodations upon request.

Transportation in the Park

We will be traveling as a group in a 12 passenger van while in the park.

Meals

Simple hearty meals will be served family-style. Each morning, along with a breakfast buffet, a lunch spread will be laid out for participants to create their own bag lunches for the day. 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.**

Your Denali Visit & Your Expectations

MSLC courses are designed to immerse participants in a particular subject area, and therefore course activities and destinations in the park will be devoted to the course content. **If you are interested in seeing more of the park, please allow for extra time before or after the course for further exploration via the shuttle bus system or on foot.** We particularly encourage first time visitors to plan for extra time, especially if this is a “once in a lifetime” trip. Please contact us for advice or visit www.nps.gov/dena for further information.

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. Alaska Geographic memberships are non-refundable and non-transferable. 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 and Liability

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. All participants will be asked to read and sign the enclosed Acknowledgment of Risk form and complete the Health and Emergency Contact form. Please bring these forms with you to the first day of the course. Please contact the MSLC if you have any questions or concerns.

Important Phone Numbers

For the entirety of the course we will not have access to phones or cell phone coverage. Emergency and non-emergency messages can be passed through the MSLC office phone number (907)-683-1269. After-hours emergency calls can be directed to the Denali National Park & Preserve Law Enforcement Ranger Division at (907) 683-9555.

Professional Development Credit

Optional professional development credit is available for this course. By choosing this 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 bring it with you for the first day of the course.

Required Pre-Course Reading List (can be found online)

Birds, bird studies, and bird conservation in Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska. Carol McIntyre, 2002.. Arctic Research of the United States. Volume 16: 22-30.
[Online version.](#)

Suggested Pre-Course Reading List

The Birds of Denali: An Introduction to Selected Species. McIntyre, C., A. Seegert, and N. Eagleson. 2001. Alaska Natural History Association. 15% discount for Alaska Geographic Members at the [Alaska Geographic online bookstore.](#)