

Beginning Bird Banding

Information

Date/ Time: Wednesday, January 19, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Saturday, January 22, 7:00 am – 1:30 pm
Sunday, January 23, 7:00 am - 1:30 pm

Meet at: [Whitewater Preserve](#) (click on link for a map of the meeting site)
9160 Whitewater Canyon Rd, Whitewater, CA

Instructor: Stephen J. Myers

Assistants: John Green, Vesta Myers, Jennifer and Michelle Tobin, others

Overview

This course is a basic introduction to banding birds, which is a valuable tool in ornithological research and monitoring. An evening class session will briefly discuss the history, purpose, goals, and methods of banding. Among the topics discussed will be the federal and state permits required of bird banders, the submittal of data to the Bird Banding Laboratory, capture methods, the handling of wild birds, banding birds, the collection of morphological data, and the sexing and ageing of birds. The evening class session will be followed by two days of hands-on experience capturing, handling, and banding birds in the field. The banding location will be in Riverside, at John Green's residence (directions will be provided to enrolled students). All banding equipment will be provided.

Prerequisites: Basic bird identification skills helpful.

Text: None required. Hand-outs will be distributed. *Identification of North American Birds, Part 1*, by Peter Pyle, will be used for identification, ageing, and sexing of birds. If desired, students may purchase this book (<http://www.slatecreekpress.com>). *Identification of North American Birds, Part 2*, is also now available.

Itinerary

Wednesday, January 19, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at Whitewater Preserve

- Purposes of bird banding
- History of bird banding
- Government regulations and permits
- Banding of Endangered Species
- Bands and banding equipment
- Mist nets & poles - handling, placement, erecting, and maintaining

- Other bird capture methods
- Capture, handling, and banding of birds
- Data collection and record keeping
- Submission of data to Bird Banding Laboratory - Bandit software
- Publication sources - Journals, MAPS

Saturday, January 22, 7:00 am – 1:30 pm, and

Sunday, January 23, 7:00 am – 1:30 pm at a private ranch in Riverside. Directions will be included in the course registration confirmation!

- Placement and erection of net poles
- Handling and erection of mist nets
- Setting up the banding station
- Checking for captures
- Processing captured birds - identifying, banding, measuring, weighing, ageing, sexing
- Using *Identification Guide to North American Birds* (including “Tabular Pyle”)
- Closing down the station, taking down nets

Objectives: Upon completion of this course students should be able to understand state and federal regulations pertaining to banding, be familiar with capture techniques, be comfortable in the handling and banding of birds, and ultimately assist in bird banding studies.

What to Bring to the Course

- Snacks, drinks
- Water
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Binoculars
- Conditions can vary from cold early in AM to warm afternoons, so dress in layers
- If possible, do not wear clothing with buttons or exposed zippers (they snag the mist nets)
- Hand sanitizer (for cleaning bird droppings off of hands before lunch!)
- On Sunday (at the latest) bring your take home exam to turn in

Banding sessions will be over (including breaking down the banding station and taking down nets) by approximately 1:00 PM each day. We usually have lunch at a nearby eatery, for those that are interested.

Fitness Requirements

Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

Hike Level

Easy to Moderate

College Credit

If taking this course for **1.5 unit** of Biology (X404.4) credit through the University of California Riverside Extension, written examination at end of classroom session (50%) and participation in banding (50%) will determine your grade.

Guidelines

- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.

Instructor Biography

Stephen J. Myers is semi-retired after spending 38 years as a wildlife biologist and ornithologist for private biological consulting companies. He has concentrated his studies on birds, but also has extensive experience with small mammals, reptiles and amphibians, butterflies, and plants. Much of his experience with birds has focused on threatened and endangered species such as the California Gnatcatcher, Least Bell's Vireo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yuma Ridgway's Rail, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Mr. Myers has been banding birds since 1985, and has been a federally permitted bird bander since 1990. Bird banding projects have included research of the California Gnatcatcher, Bahama Oriole, Lark Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird, along with coordinating or assisting with MAPS banding stations (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship). He has taught ornithology classes at Victor Valley College, and bird banding classes at University of California, Riverside Extension. He also leads regular birding field trips and bird walks for the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society and the Wildlands Conservancy. He and his wife enjoy international travel, usually involving birding, to places such as Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Belize, Mexico, Australia, and Sri Lanka.

* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant's needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.