

Mammal Tracking in Joshua Tree National Park

Information

Date/ Time: Saturday, May 6, 8:15 am – 5:30 pm

Sunday, May 7, 8:30 am – 2 pm

Meet at: [Joshua Tree Visitor Center](#) (click on link for a map of the meeting site)

6554 Park Blvd., Joshua Tree, CA 92252

Instructor: Jim Lowery, Primitive Skills Teacher, Author of *The Tracker's Field Guide*

Overview

Join Jim Lowery, primitive skills teacher and author of *The Tracker's Field Guide*, to learn and refine fundamental tracking skills. This two-day class will explore the natural world through animal tracking, sign identification, and awareness techniques. Lowery will explain how to translate patterns found in the desert sand into animal stories in Joshua Tree National Park. This class will be entirely field-based in order to provide abundant “dirt time” focusing on following trails, interpreting tracks and signs and even learning to read mood and body language of desert animals through their trails. Wildlife behavior, biology, and ecological relationships will also be examined. In this weekend class, participants will feel the thrill of becoming environmental detectives by investigating the signs animals leave behind.

Itinerary

Saturday, May 6, 8:15 am – 5:30 pm

Joshua Tree Visitor Center

- Meet
- Caravan to field location
- Introduction
- Lunch break, **bring your own food**
- Field class

Sunday, May 7, 8:30 am – 2 pm

Lost Horse Campground

- Field class
- Lunch break, **bring your own food**
- Field class

What to Bring to the Course

Required Class Materials

- Long pants or shorts with knee pads and sun hat
- Comfortable shoes (preferably sneakers rather than hiking boots)
- Note pad and pen/pencil
- Tape measure (to 16ths of an inch)
- James Lowery's *Tracker's Field Guide* (you may purchase this book at a discount in the class or borrow a copy)
- Water bottle
- Waist or day pack
- Lunch and snacks

The 10 Essentials: Everyday in the Desert

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

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

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.

- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.

Camping Options

Lost Horse Campground is available for participants to camp Friday night in addition to Saturday at no charge. The campground has a pit toilet, but no other amenities (food, water, electricity, etc.) and is a **TENT CAMPGROUND ONLY**. No alcohol is allowed at Lost Horse Campground. Please call 760-819-4714 for more information.

Instructor Biography

Jim Lowery is a nationally known tracker and author of *The Tracker's Field Guide*, *Walk with the Animal*, and many monographs, workbooks, webinars and articles about tracking technique. He has taught tracking to thousands of students, including many specialized trainings for field biologists, universities, naturalists, and park rangers. Some of his specialized field workshops have focused on tracking individual species including bighorn sheep, badgers, mountain lions, kit fox, elk and black bears.

Suggested Reading

Tracker's Field Guide, Globe Pequot Press, by James Lowery

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