

*Ecology of Birds  
Field Seminar Overview & Arrival Information  
June 23 - 25, 2008*



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 course is led by National Park Service Wildlife Biologist Carol McIntyre in one of the world's premier wilderness areas. This field seminar is a unique opportunity to visit various different habitats and learn about birds living in these habitats within the heart of Denali National Park and Preserve. From the MSLC Field Camp, located by the Teklanika River, we will explore the nearby boreal forest, riparian, sub-alpine and alpine habitats that characterize the northern foothills of the Alaska Range in Denali. We will be searching for the many different species of birds that live in these habitats during the breeding season. Most of our meals will be pre-prepared to eat in the field, minimizing the time that we will spend in camp.

*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)

This Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC) course is active and field-based. We will spend the majority of our days outdoors observing wildlife, admiring the spectacular Denali scenery, and having in-depth discussions. Hiking will be moderately strenuous, covering distances of approximately 3 - 5 miles round trip including as much as 1,500 feet of elevation gain. We will be hiking off trail on rough, uneven tundra and forest terrains and will likely encounter wet tundra / forest conditions and stream crossings with water levels that are above hiking boots; bring stream crossing shoes and/or rubber boots. **Participants should be in good physical condition.**

*Your Denali Visit & Your Expectations*

Course activities and destinations in the park will be devoted to the course outline and materials. For this reason, we encourage first-time (and long-time) Denali visitors to allow for extra time at the start or end of this course for further exploration via the shuttle bus system or on foot. Please contact us for advice or visit [www.nps.gov/dena](http://www.nps.gov/dena) for further information.

### *Tentative Daily Schedule*

Our group will be staying together at the MSLC Field Camp. Schedules 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-	12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Greeting and check in at MSLC
	1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Introduction, orientation & overview
	2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Drive to MSLC Field Camp & field exploration
	6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Dinner and evening discussions
Tuesday-	5:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Exploration of Denali (forest & alpine habitats)
	6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Dinner and Evening discussions
Wednesday-	5:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Cont. Exploration(riparian, sub-alpine & alpine)
	3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Return to MSLC for course conclusion

### *Weather*

Please realize the entire course takes place outdoors and activities will continue rain or shine. Weather conditions are unpredictable year round in Denali therefore we must be prepared for a wide range of conditions. Temperatures can drop close to freezing at night and may warm up to as high as the 80's during the day. Also mosquitoes can be numerous anytime during the summer. Be prepared with adequate warm clothing, a hooded rain jacket, rain pants, hiking boots, and insect repellent. Dressing in layers is recommended. **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 1.1 miles to a roundabout, and make the first right turn off the roundabout; the MSLC is the first building on the right. Because you will be parking overnight, **we ask that you park in the park concessionaire's employee lot.** To get to this lot, continue to the second right turn, drive up the 'Service Road' 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 1:00pm. The first day will not include lunch.

### *Transportation in the Park*

We will be traveling as a group in a 15-passenger van when we go into the park. Due to the Park's backcountry limits we limited the number of participants to ten.

### *Accommodations in Denali*

Your group will stay at the MSLC Field Camp at the Teklanika River Campground at mile 29 of the Park Road. This beautiful location allows us ready access to both east and west ends of the park. Our field camp was built under the “School To Work Program” by local Anderson, AK high school students in 2004 and is made up of five tent cabins and one large (Yurt) dining tent. Participants share space in the tent cabins. Each tent cabin has two bunk beds with foam mattresses and pillows. There is no electricity, plumbing or heated areas and each participant will need to provide their own sleeping bag. **Please note:** accommodations prior to and following the course are your responsibility, however we are glad to provide you with a list of local lodges and campgrounds upon request.

### *Meals*

Simple hearty meals will be served family-style in the group-dining tent at the field camp. 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 prior to the course of any necessary dietary needs or restrictions.

### *Cancellation Policy*

If you have to cancel your participation in the course, fees will be refunded for cancellations received in writing 30 days in advance of the course starting date, with a \$25 cancellation fee for each individual cancellation. The entire participant fee will be retained for course cancellations less than 30 calendar days before course starting dates, unless we can fill your individual course spot. If we are forced to cancel a course, we will fully refund your fee.

### *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 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 (all can be found online)*

1) Dixon, J.S. 1938. **Birds and Mammals of Mount McKinley National Park**. Fauna Series No. 3. United States Department of the Interior. [Online version](#).

2) Murie, A. 1946. **Observations of birds in Mt. McKinley National Park, Alaska**. Condor 48: 253-261. [Online version](#).

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

4) McIntyre, C.L., K. Steenhof, M. N. Kochert, and M.W. Collopy. 2006. **Long-term Golden Eagle studies in Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska**. Alaska Park Science, Volume 5, Issue 1: 42-45. [Online version](#).

*Suggested Pre-Course Reading List*

1) McIntyre, C., A. Seegert, and N. Eagleson. 2001. **The Birds of Denali: an introduction to selected species**. Alaska Natural History Association. Anchorage, Alaska.

(This book can be purchased at the [Alaska Natural History Association website](#).)

2) Murie, A. 1963. **The Birds of Mt. McKinley**. Mt. McKinley Natural History Association, Mt. McKinley, Alaska. (This book is out of print, however it may be available in local libraries or through interlibrary loan.)