

Becoming a Bird Watcher

OSHER 868-001

Dates: Monday, March 31 to Friday, April 18

In-person class: Mondays: 3/31, 4/7 & 4/14

Field Trips: Fridays: 4/4, 4/11 & 4/18

Times: 9:30 – 11:00 A.M. (times adjusted for field trips)

Location: In-person class and in the field

Instructor: Jeanne Le Ber

Email: jeanne.leber@utah.edu

Home Phone: 801-532-7384; Cell Phone: 801-230-4373

Course Overview

The key to becoming a bird watcher is understanding the GISS-plus of the bird. The general impression, size and shape of the bird, color pattern, habitat and song/call are characteristics that lead bird watchers to accurately identify the bird. This class is a mix of in-class lessons and field trips. Beginning bird watchers develop skills that allow them to classify and identify birds based on plumage, song, behavior, habitat, and season. In-class lessons focus on identifying birds, selecting good gear, getting involved in local birding groups, participating in community science, and online and print resources. Three field trips to various habitats reinforce the learning.

Expectations and Goals:

By the end of the course, students will

1. Identify 30 bird species in the field based on general impression, size, shape, plumage, song, and behavior.
2. Determine the expected habitat for 30 bird species.
3. Participate in (or at least be aware of) community science projects.

Required Materials

- **Binoculars** are a must for bird watching. They don't have to be expensive or fancy, just functional.
- A notebook and pencil for taking notes in the field.

Optional Materials and Texts

- *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of the United States and Canada*, Eight Edition by Ted Floyd.
- Merlin is a free bird identification app from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Includes sound and photo identification features.



OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Field Trip
Monday, March 31	Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why birds matter• American Robin exercise• GISS-plus; field tips• Eleven common birds	
Friday, April 4 Start time 9:00 am	Field trip to Tracy Aviary. Meet me in the parking lot adjacent to the Aviary. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Science• Duck pond, wetlands exhibit• Visit the on-site feeders• Bird watch in Liberty Park and at pond	Tracy Aviary—9:00 am 589 East 1300 South (no entrance fee required for our group) Bring binoculars Note pad & pencil.
Monday, April 7	Binoculars and tools of the trade <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To list or not to list• Use print and online resources• Get involved locally• Community science• Eleven common birds	
Friday, April 11 Start time 8:30 am	Field trip to Big Cottonwood Regional Park <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Park is a mix of open areas and trees• Walk the trails• Visit the wetland area• Expect an accipiter, jays, and finches	BCRP—8:30 am 4650 South 1590 East North side of Murray/ Holladay Road; turn onto dead end road.
Monday, April 14	Habitat: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where birds live; finding them in Utah• Review 12 expected marsh birds.• The information prepares you for next week's field trip to Farmington Bay	
Friday, April 18 Start time 8:35 am	Field trip to Farmington Bay; look for birds on Glovers Lane, at nature center, along dikes. Meet at Farmington Bay at 8:35 am . Course evaluation	Farmington Bay—8:35 am ~1700 W Glovers Lane Bring binoculars Note pad & pencil Snack and drink Dress for weather

