

Course Information:**Title: Introduction to Alaska's Birds****Course Identifier: BIOL F195P-F01 CRN: 51857****Credits: 1****Term: Summer****Meeting Time:** This course is comprised of four 2.5-hour lectures (6:00-8:30 PM) and one fieldtrip 3.5 hours in length (8:30 am-Noon).**Instructor Information:**

Name: Alaska Bird Observatory Staff

Telephone: 451-7159

Email: ssharbaugh@alaskabird.org**Course Readings/Materials:**

Recommended Field Guide:

Sibley, D. A. 2003. The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Recommended Bird Song C.D.

Peyton, L. J. 1999. Bird Songs of Alaska. Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY.

Other Materials: A high-quality pair of binoculars or a spotting scope would be useful but are not required.

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to identifying and appreciating Alaska's avifauna. It includes lectures and a field trip to become familiar with plumage and morphological variation of birds common to interior Alaska during spring migration. Concepts to be discussed include migration and overwintering strategies, behavior, habitat use, and foraging habits. Students should be able to walk up to 2 miles on uneven ground and have their own transportation for the field trip. ADA Compliance: Will work with Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities."

Course Goals and Student Outcomes:

The goal of the course is to give students the basic tools to identify birds.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Pick out features of birds that will help identify them to their family groups or species.
- Use a field guide
- Listen for bird song
- Focus a spotting scope and pair of binoculars

- Understand the aspects of species' life history that makes it unique.

Instructional Methods:

During lectures, the instructor will use slides, bird specimens, and bird-song recordings to introduce students to the species that are likely to be observed in Interior Alaska. Morphological features of various family groups and species will be introduced in the laboratory. A standard lecture format will be used to introduce concepts of migration and overwintering strategies.

Field trips will focus on how to identify species encountered using field guides, binoculars, spotting scopes, and listening for vocalizations.

Course Schedule:

Lecture (12 May): The basics of bird identification. This lecture will focus on classification and topography. We will also cover the behavioral, morphological, and auditory cues used for waterfowl and passerine identification.

Lecture (13 May): Bird Migration: why, when, and how birds migrate to Interior Alaska. There will be more discussion of waterfowl and passerine identification.

Lecture (14 May): Overwintering Ecology: how do birds survive winters in Fairbanks? We will also cover the behavioral, morphological, and auditory cues used for shorebird and raptor identification.

Lecture (15 May): Bird Conservation: current issues affecting conservation of Alaska's bird populations. We will continue the discussion of behavioral, morphological, and auditory cues used for shorebird and raptor identification and review waterfowl and passerine identification.

Field Trip (16 May): Students will visit several local habitats (e.g., forests, fields, wetlands, and ponds) to identify a wide variety of species in the field.

Grading Policy: Attendance is mandatory for all lectures and the field trip. Students will be required to demonstrate their ability to identify a minimum of 20 species by auditory or visual cues. A pass grade requires attendance at all lectures and field trips. If you know you will need to miss any class time, consider auditing the course.