

Fall Birds of GNP
Instructor: Josh Arrants
Friday, October 2, 2020

As autumn takes hold in Glacier National Park, breeding season winds down and fall migration begins. Familiar summer residents are preparing to head south, winter residents are trickling in, year round species are settling in for a long winter and a number of species will be showing up only briefly on their way to their wintering grounds. Few places offer the diversity of habitats and the challenges of changing seasons like the Crown of the Continent. Take a look at fall birding in Glacier National Park and not only observe songbirds, birds of prey and waterfowl; but also learn avian ecology and the various ways birds approach the transition to shorter days and colder temperatures. This course is for birders and those interested in avian behavior of all levels, even beginners.

Meeting Place: Glacier Institute Field Camp (see campus map)

Meeting Time: Friday, October 2nd at 8:00am

Tentative Itinerary: We will begin by spending an hour viewing slides and discussing the various habitats we will be exploring, along with common birds we expect to see during our time in the field. We will also learn how avian species found inside the park prepare for the shift from summer to fall and winter, from changes in behavior and diet to how mixed flocks communicate and share information. After the classroom time, we will head out into the field to hike along McDonald Lake and McDonald Creek, in the old growth of the large trees of Avalanche Cedars and then to a fen and wet meadow or two for songbirds, waterfowl and birds of prey. The class will end around 3:30 PM.

Food: Students are responsible for their own meals. Please bring a sack lunch and ample snacks for trail days. Use of the kitchen is restricted to Glacier Institute Staff only. No food or cooking is allowed in the cabins.

Equipment: Binoculars and field guide of your choice. Please be mindful that weather conditions in Glacier National Park may change quickly and dress in warm layers. Rain gear is recommended, as time in the field will occur regardless of weather.

Weather: This course will not be canceled due to weather. Please check the weather forecast in advance and refer to the gear list for proper attire.

Physical Requirements: Easy to Moderate. While some birding will be done on flat surfaces in areas along McDonald Lake and McDonald Creek, we will be hiking at a slow pace on trails and in areas that may be brushy and uneven; up to 3 miles and elevation gains of 1000 feet.

Transportation during course: We will be traveling in a Glacier Institute vehicle.

Accommodations: Lodging can be purchased for \$35/person/night at the Glacier Institute Field Camp. Facilities include bunkhouses, a community bathhouse, a library and a kitchen. Please call the registrar at 406-755-1211 to book lodging.

Academic Credit: Please see our '2020 Academic Credit' Link on our website to learn about OPI credit and FVCC and UM credit for our courses. There is a \$20 administrative fee to receive OPI renewal units with FVCC.

Recommended Reading:

The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America, by David Allen Sibley. Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Western North America, by Roger Tory Peterson. National Geographic Field Guide to the Bird of North America, by Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer. (or any bird field guide participant may prefer)