

Natural History of Birds

Course Syllabus

UCSC, Environmental Studies 106A

Summer Session 1 (June 23 – July 25, 2014)

Instructor: Breck Tyler (ospr@ucsc.edu)

Website: ecommons.ucsc.edu/x/MxF0y9

Time: MWF 0830-1200

Place: #221 ISB

Course overview

This five-week course covers the evolution, adaptations, diversity, ecology, and conservation of birds. Monterey Bay area communities and issues are emphasized. Class meetings feature lectures complemented by labs, field sessions, and discussions of conservation issues. Independent fieldwork, including observation of birds in natural habitats, is an essential element of the course. Open to environmental studies majors, biology majors, and interested non-majors with an understanding of basic ecology.

Prerequisite(s): ENVS courses 100 and 100L, or by permission of instructor. Enrollment limited to 30.

Schedule

<u>Day</u>	<u>Lectures & discussions</u>	<u>Labs</u>
Mon 6/23	Wings and flight	Intro to field observation
Wed 6/25	Avian origins and systematics	Topographic anatomy
Fri 6/27	Field: Davenport/Waddell Creek	
Mon 6/30	Feeding and foraging	Functional morphology
Wed 7/2	Migration and molt	Arboretum: hummingbirds
Fri 7/4	Holiday	Optional Field: Neary's Lagoon
Mon 7/7	communication	Landbird families
Wed 7/9	Seabird and shorebird ecology	Waterbird families
Fri 7/11	Field: Elkhorn Slough kayak (~0830-1230)	
Mon 7/14	Mating systems, nesting behavior	Passerine families
Wed 7/16	Field: Natural Bridges SP	
Fri 7/18	Conservation presentations, Exam review	Lab review
Mon 7/21	Exam	
Wed 7/23	Conservation presentations	
Fri 7/25	Final paper and field notebook due	

Evaluation

Exam (essay & practical)	35%
Field observation assignments	35%
Conservation presentation	15%
Final paper (5-8 pages)	15%

Required materials (bring with you every day of class)

Binoculars (see binoculars website link; limited availability from ENVS stockroom)

Field notebook (minimum size 5" x 8")

Bird identification guide (your choice; some copies available in NH museum)

National Geographic Society (6th ed). 2013. Field Guide to the Birds of North America.

Sibley, D.A. (2nd ed). 2013. The Sibley Guide to Birds.

Sibley, D.A. 2003. The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America.

Supplemental Texts

Handbook of Bird Biology. 2004. S. Podulka et al (eds)

Sibley's Birding Basics. 2002. D.A. Sibley

Seabirds: A Natural History. 2004. A.J. Gaston

Field Trips

Davenport cliffs (seabirds) & Big Basin SP (chaparral and forest birds)

Neary's Lagoon: marsh birds

Elkhorn Slough kayak: waders and water birds

Natural Bridges SP: coastal and woodland species