

Mono Basin Mammals



John Harris • July 19–21, 2019

\$182 per person / \$167 for Mono Lake
Committee members
enrollment limited to 15 participants

This class will introduce participants to the diversity of mammals found in Mono Basin, from desert sand dunes to the forests and alpine meadows of the high Sierra.

More mammals occur here than in many states, and we will try to see as many as we can by live-trapping and field observation with an emphasis on identification and adaptations to Mono's varied environments. We will check live-traps on the dunes and at locations representing riparian and forest habitats within the basin. We'll visit one or more locations, likely near Saddlebag Lake, in hopes of seeing some of the alpine mammal species of the area, such as pikas, marmots, and chipmunks, and we will explore portions of Lundy or Lee Vining Canyon to look for tracks and sign of mammals.

John Harris is a Professor Emeritus of Biology at Mills College whose interest in Mono's mammals began in 1975 while working as an undergraduate assistant in a study of chipmunks. He went on to study small mammals on Mono Lake's dunes as a graduate student and has worked on small mammals in the Sierra Nevada, San Joaquin Valley, and Mojave Desert of California.

ITINERARY

Friday, July 19, 7:00pm: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining. We'll introduce ourselves, distribute course materials, and enjoy a slideshow preview of some of the mammals that we expect to see on Saturday and Sunday. We'll also go over the details of where and when to meeting on Saturday and Sunday, which may vary depending on the instructor's scouting during the previous few days.

Saturday, July 20, 7:00am: Meet at a location we will discuss and provide detailed directions for on Friday night. Bring a packed lunch, plenty of water, and other supplies as described below. We will begin by checking traps set out the previous evening. Then we will drive to an alpine location (probably Saddlebag Lake and the Hall Natural Area) to look for mammals. Our day will end by 4:00pm. Those who wish may join the instructor in setting out traps for the evening.

Sunday, July 21, 7:00am: Meet at a location provided Friday night. Bring a field lunch, water, and other supplies. We will check traps, then drive to another location to look for tracks and sign. We usually end the day around 3:00pm so that folks have time to drive home.

Altitude and Dehydration Cautions: Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at high altitudes. Experts recommend that you begin drinking extra water as you drive to higher elevation in order to prevent dehydration and headaches. Also, the sun is fierce at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly, using sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, and a bandanna to protect the back of your neck. Our walks will be at a leisurely pace, over level to moderately steep terrain, and likely totaling two to three miles per day. We will spend most of our time at varied altitudes up to 9,000–10,000 feet in elevation; at least 24 hours of prior acclimation in Lee Vining is advised.

MEALS

Bring a packable picnic lunch and snacks for both days. On Saturday we'll definitely have lunch along the trail, and it's likely we'll do the same on Sunday.

TO BRING

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| <input type="checkbox"/> lunch, both days | <input type="checkbox"/> field guide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> plenty of water | <input type="checkbox"/> sunscreen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> notebook or clipboard & paper | <input type="checkbox"/> mosquito repellent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hat, bandanna | <input type="checkbox"/> pens & pencils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> camera and binoculars (recommended) | <input type="checkbox"/> sunglasses |

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

A number of mammal books will be available for you to examine. Here are some recommendations.

These two are good general natural history guides. The Laws Guide has excellent paintings of many of the mammals we may see.

- Laws, John Muir. *The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada*. California Academy of Sciences, 2007.
- Storer, T.I., R.L. Usinger, and D. Lukas. *Sierra Nevada Natural History*, revised edition. University of California Press. 2004.

Here are two good mammal field guides:

- Reid, F. *Mammals of North America*, 4th edition. Peterson Field Guide. Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
- Kays, R.W. and D.E. Wilson. *Mammals of North America*, 2nd edition. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Two good books about tracks and sign:

- Elbroch, M. *Mammal tracks and sign*. Stackpole Books, 2003.
- Halfpenny, J. *A field guide to mammal tracking in western North America*. Johnson Books, 1986.



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

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