



P.O. Box 68, Moab UT 84532
800-860-5262 • 435-259-7750
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Connecting People and Nature: History, Education and Adventure

Eagle Float on the Colorado River

In cooperation with Sheri Griffith Expeditions & the Moab Bird Club

February 25th, 2017

Field Seminar Outline

The Eagle Float is an opportunity to enjoy a full-day float trip on a calm stretch of the Colorado River, and to see wintering Bald and Golden Eagles and waterfowl. Learn about eagle identification, habits, migration, and management from our guest birders from the Moab Bird Club and agency biologists. There is no need to be an experienced birder for this adventure. But, we do recommend a little prior research on the area and birds we may see to familiarize yourself.

As in past years, data collected on numbers of all bird species sighted, as well as the numbers of Bald and Golden Eagles will be contributed to state and national winter counts. Over the years, the late February/ early March "Eagle Float" sightings have varied from six to forty eagles between Loma, Colorado and the Westwater in Utah.

Our group will be in rafts, floating quietly as much as possible; motors will be used at times to make this 25 mile stretch in one day. We will join up to share information and hear comments from our guest experts. River guides will share history and geology of the canyons. We will be on the rafts for six-seven hours depending on water levels and wind. We will make several rest stops on shore along the way, including time for lunch.

Participants provide their own transportation to the take-out at Westwater Ranger Station (WWRS), Utah. Travel time from Moab to WWRS is about 1.5 hours. The time to WWRS from the Grand Junction area is roughly 1.5 hours as well. CFI will then shuttle all participants to the put-in at Loma, Colorado. There will be no returning shuttle to Loma, Colorado after the trip, so if you plan to meet us at Loma you will need to have your own plans for getting back. Boats and guides will arrive separately at Loma, Colorado very early in the morning. The trip is open to adults and children 12 years of age and older with adult supervision. Minimum number of participants is eight plus our experts. We will run rain, snow, or shine!

2017 Moab Bird Club and Biology Experts

Nick Eason is a National Park Service Retiree and a wildlife wood sculptor with a passion for birding acquired during his childhood.

Marian Eason was a city girl, but became an avid birder thanks to her husband Nick; 50 years of birding has taken them to Europe, the Americas and New Zealand.

Barb Smith is the Wildlife Biologist/Botanist for the Moab/Monticello District of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Doing inventory and monitoring of raptors on the Forest, including northern goshawks, peregrine falcons and golden eagles, remains one of the best parts of the job over the last 17 years. Other current areas of focus include aspen restoration projects and alpine habitats. Before working on the Moab District, she worked for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in northern Utah and for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources also doing habitat monitoring, project analysis and rare plant surveys. Barb has a degree in Wildlife Management from the Ohio State University, and it was in Ohio that her interest in birding began as a member of the Junior Zoologist Club in Cincinnati.

Patty Gelatt, retired US Fish and Wildlife Service, Western Colorado Supervisor, with over 30 years' experience in endangered species issues. Patty has been on Eagle Floats in CFI's early years.

Neil Paprocki, Neil joins the HawkWatch team in September 2014 as the organization's Conservation Biologist. Originally from the east coast, he earned his BS in Animal Behavior from Bucknell University in central Pennsylvania. Upon graduation, Neil immediately immersed himself in ornithological fieldwork for over three years. He has worked with Ptarmigan in Alaska, and songbirds in New Hampshire and Nevada. Eventually he made his way into the raptor community by working with the federally endangered California Condor for two and a half years in southern California, northern Arizona, and southern Utah. Neil went on to earn his MS degree in Raptor Biology from Boise State University studying the effects of climate and habitat change on wintering raptors in southwest Idaho.



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Schedule

- 8:00am Meet at the Westwater Ranger Station (WWRS) in Utah. Park your vehicles here. Participants will then be shuttled by CFI from WWRS upstream to the boat launch at Loma, Colorado where the float trip will start. Participants may want to car pool from Grand Junction, Moab or other locations (contact CFI for others from your area.) Please be punctual. *Please note that there will be NO shuttle by CFI at the end of the day back to Loma.*
- 9:30am Orientation and safety talk. Launch. Float downriver in Horsethief and Ruby Canyons on the Colorado River, enjoying the birds, the beauty and the knowledge of our birding experts. Due to the miles being covered, the boats will alternate between oar power and outboard motor power during the day and there will be several stretch/rest breaks and snacks.
- Lunch Served at a riverside beach.
- By 6:00pm Takeout at the Westwater Ranger Station. The boats and driver guides will remain in Westwater. Participants return home in their own vehicles from this point.

Please do not schedule any critical commitments such as flights for this evening because there could be unanticipated delays to this schedule.

Directions to Westwater Ranger Station (WWRS)

To reach the put-in, campground, and ranger station from I-70 exit 227 (Westwater Exit). At the off-ramp go south for 9 miles to the Westwater Ranger Station. Here is a link to google maps <https://goo.gl/maps/xiTXTnK1SXt>

GPS Coordinates Latitude 39.08720286014289 Longitude -109.1018557548523.

For further information, please follow link below to the BLM's information page on Ruby Horsethief Canyon: https://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/mcnca/recreation/Boating/Ruby-Horsethief_Boating_Information.html

What To Bring

*CFI will provide dry bags for participants to use for personal gear.

Clothes

- Long Underwear (Polypropylene or wool)
- Wool Socks
- Layers of wool or polypropylene clothing
- Wool hat
- Rain pants and jacket
- Mittens or gloves
- Boots (rubber or snowmobile boots with liners are recommended because your toes will get wet)

Accessories

- Binoculars
- Bird book
- Day pack
- Camera
- Water bottle and thermos of hot liquids
- Optional but highly recommended- small blanket and snow goggles/sunglasses

Please note that all participants will be required to wear a CFI Type V personal flotation device (life jacket) as per government regulations for commercial river trips. You will not be allowed to wear your own PFD.



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Reading

We recommend looking over HawkWatch International's website and specifically their Raptor ID Fact Sheets found here <http://www.hawkwatch.org/learn/factsheets>.

We also recommend Sibley's Field Guide to Birds of Western America which covers a wide range of birds.

Fees

Cost per person is \$145 for Adults, \$138 for Members and \$100 Youth. A non-refundable deposit to hold reservation is \$50 (applies to total due) with balance due 30 days prior. Fee includes the raft outfitting, expert instruction and interpretation, lunch, snacks, and morning shuttle from Westwater Ranger Station to Loma, Colorado. Final fees paid are non-refundable unless we can fill your spot. Please see our Additional Information sheet for details on cancellation policies.