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Connecting People and Nature: History, Education and Adventure

Eagle Float on the Colorado River

March 3, 2018

Outline

The Eagle Float is an opportunity to enjoy a full-day rafting 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 guest research biologist from Hawkwatch International. 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 40 eagles between Loma, Colorado and Westwater, 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. 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 12 plus our experts. We will run rain, snow, or shine!

Directions

Westwater Ranger Station (the put-in): From Interstate 70, take exit 227. Turn south at the stop sign and proceed for nine miles to the Ranger Station.

Directions from Moab: <https://goo.gl/maps/6qtFd3xmTKz>

Directions from Grand Junction: <https://goo.gl/maps/QXzwqqxfrTB2>

GPS Coordinates for Westwater Ranger Station: Latitude 39.08720286014289 Longitude -109.1018557548523.

If you have any questions please contact us at info@cfimoab.org or 435-259-7750.

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.

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.

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 has covers a wide range of birds.