

HUMMINGBIRDS: FIELD RESEARCH WEST OF THE DIVIDE

JULY 17, 2020

COURSE LEVEL: II COURSE #: S3061
FEE: \$60 PER ADULT AGES 16 AND OLDER



**Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy**

FIELD INSTITUTE

INSTRUCTORS: TENA & FRED ENGELMAN

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LOCATION: Trail River Ranch- Trail River Ranch is located on a small unmarked gravel road on HWY 34. It is located between the Coyote Valley Trailhead to the north and the Onahu Creek Trailhead to the south, approximately two miles inside Rocky Mountain National Park from the west entrance (Kuwaneche Visitor Center). The unmarked gravel road is made visible by two pedestrian crossing signs. Trail River Ranch is reached by following this road to a small parking lot. At the small parking lot, turn left and go through the gate. Trail River Ranch is at the end of this one-way road. **Map on last page of syllabus.**

TIME: 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Learn about Rocky’s hummingbird populations and their habitat while observing field ornithologists as they safely capture and band these remarkable birds. Marking individual birds remains essential to determine population size, migration corridors, and survivorship. Genetic and statistical analyses are complementing and expanding understanding of these important migratory pollinators. Class members will visit typical habitat, observe and identify types of food sources, and learn about factors influencing hummingbird survival. A classroom session following the field site visit will describe the hummingbird family, the geographical distribution of species, and results of analysis techniques.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Explain and clarify the characteristics that distinguish members of hummingbird family from other avian families.
2. Review the hummingbird family, its distribution, and the species identified in Rocky Mountain National Park and Colorado.
3. Investigate how hummingbirds live in natural landscapes and describe their role as migratory pollinators.
4. Introduce the concepts of bird banding as a research tool and review information gained from the practice.
5. Describe the specific challenges of hummingbird banding and demonstrate how these challenges are resolved.
6. Describe the information gained from field research and how it has improved overall knowledge of hummingbird natural history with special emphasis on its relevance to hummingbird populations in RMNP.

COURSE LEVEL: II

Short-distance walks primarily on level terrain.

BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHIES (additional information available at www.RMConservancy.org):

Tena and Fred are volunteer field researchers. They recently concluded RMNP’s first survey of hummingbird species and habitat. Analysis of information collected during the ten-year survey is giving new insight into hummingbird survivorship, behavior, courtship and nesting area fidelity, migration routes and timing, and populations. Their work is intended to provide current and future reference for ornithologists, resource managers, and Rocky Mountain National Park interpretive personnel.

EXPECTATIONS: Professional conduct will be expected from participants at all times. Individual ideas will be respected. Except during course breaks, cellular phones, pagers, and personal entertainment devices are strictly prohibited in the classroom and during field sessions.

CAR-POOLING: Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute courses utilize car-pooling to limit vehicles traveling into the park. Car-pooling makes it easier to keep the group together, reduces transit time, and allows courses greater access because fewer parking spaces are required at destinations. In addition, it provides an opportunity for participants to discuss course material in small groups during transit. Typically, a few participants from each course volunteer the use of their vehicles for car-pooling to course locations.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM	Welcome and introduction to Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Meet participants and describe the class. Discuss individual expectations, desired class outcomes, and procedures for the day.
8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Depart for a survey site in RMNP.
9:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Arrive at parking area and hike to the site. Give instructions on participant involvement. Define protocols and procedures. Lead an ongoing discussion of hummingbird capture methods, proper handling, measurement technique, and release procedure.
11:15 AM	Depart for Trail River Ranch.
11:45 AM – NOON	Arrive at Trail River Ranch. Quick break.
NOON – 1:30 PM	Classroom presentation of the hummingbird family, commonly seen Colorado and RMNP species, results of the RMNP hummingbird survey, Q&A session, and course evaluations.
1:30 PM	Depart.

REMEMBER TO BRING THE 10 ESSENTIALS:

Rocky Mountain National Park recommends that hikers always carry the 10 essentials in their daypacks.

- Raingear
- Map and compass
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Candles
- Matches or other fire starter
- Insect repellent
- First-aid kit and pocketknife
- Extra layers of clothing
- Sack lunch, snacks, and water

Note: Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute recommends that participants for all courses dress in layers and wear comfortable, sturdy hiking boots/shoes. Participants should be prepared for sudden changes in temperature and weather conditions.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Hummingbirds of North America, Paul A. Johnsgard, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

A Field Guide to the Hummingbirds of North America, Sheri L. Williamson, Peterson Field Guide Series, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York

REFUND POLICY:

Cancellations received at least 14 days prior to the start of a class will qualify for a refund minus a cancellation fee of \$25 per participant for a one-day class, \$50 for a multi-day class, \$5 per kid's class and \$15 per half-day class or bus tour seat. Registration money transferred to another class will be subject to a \$10 switch fee. Cancellations received less than 14 days prior to the start of a class or bus tour will not generate a refund. If the Field Institute cancels a class, every effort will be made to place the participant in another class; otherwise, a full refund will be given.

TRAIL RIVER RANCH MAP

