

Winter Waterfowl Up Close! Course Syllabus 2018

In mid-September and again in late October, I sent a welcome email in mid-September and another email in late October reminding folks of the course and telling them what to expect. The week before class begins, I sent a reminder email and class content outline.

Class #1 at Temple Beth El

Prior to class beginning

Greet participants upon arrival, pass out lanyard hangtags and checklist of RI Birds.

10 a.m. to noon

Ask each participant to introduce themselves and briefly describe any previous waterfowl birding experiences they've had

Briefly outline what the class can expect over the next 4 weeks including 3 offsite field sessions and final session at the Temple. Identify class participants by town and suggest car pooling opportunities as possible.

Begin 32 slide PowerPoint that describes the individual duck species we can expect to see in the field. Talk specifically about the characteristics which will aid in identification.

After a brief break, continue with the aforementioned PowerPoint and finish the class with a 30 minute video by Bill Carpenter and Emily Westcott entitled Winter Waterfowl of RI.

Class #2 – Field Session at Trustom Pond NWR

Several days before the class, email driving directions and GPS coordinates to class members along with information about parking and available toilet facilities at the site. On class day, explore both the Otter Point and Osprey Point trails stopping to view and identify birds as available in these salt water ponds. Note characteristics from the PowerPoint that are present to encourage participants to use these tools for identification. Encourage participants to get a closer sighting of each species via spotting scopes that Bill and I will have.

Class #3 – Field Session in North Kingston and at Beavertail Light.

Email driving directions and GPS coordinates to class members in advance with information about parking and toilet facilities at each location. On class day, explore the brackish water pond behind the NK Free Library and the salt marshes within walking distances to see and identify ducks, talking about specific characteristics of each species. As time permits, drive as a caravan to Beavertail Light for our first experience to see and identify ocean-going ducks.

Class #4 – Field Session at Sachuest National Wildlife Refuge, Middletown.

Email driving directions and GPS Coordinates to class members in advance with information about parking and bathroom facilities. On class day, explore the 1 ½ mile Ocean Loop trail looking for ducks as we proceed. We will see some of the ducks we'll have spotted at Beavertail but many more other varieties as well.

Class #5 will be back at Temple Beth El. I will have reminded George of the Temple of this class since no other LLC classes are going on this late in the fall. Peter Lisle will be a guest speaker talking about his magnificent collection of duck decoys. Jeff Hall from RI Audubon Society will speak to the class about their mission and some of the courses offered for birders. As time permits, Bill and I will talk with the class with PowerPoint presentation about the Duck Stamp Act.

We will recap our adventures and thank the class for their interest in our course. The End (until next year)!

Emily Westcott and Bill Carpenter