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# Exploring the Jordan River

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## OSHER 289-001

**Dates:** Thursdays: September 3 - October 8

**Time:** 9:30 am – 11:00 am

**Instructors:** Anne Terry, Nature Center Manager; Cooper Farr, Director of Conservation; Bryant Olsen, Conservation Ecologist

**E-mail:** [annet@tracyaviary.org](mailto:annet@tracyaviary.org)

**Phone:** 801-330-5488

**Location:** Alternating online via Zoom and in-person at:

Tracy Aviary's Jordan River Nature Center  
1125 W 3300 S  
South Salt Lake, UT 84119

## Course Description:

Throughout the course, students will gain a holistic appreciation for the Jordan River as an important riparian ecosystem for Utah's wildlife, a critical migratory pathway for birds, and a geographic hub of rich human history. Topics will cover anthropology and history, ecology, conservation biology, human development, conservation planning, and stewardship activities as they relate to the Jordan River.

## What to Expect:

Online classes will be lecture-style, but the small class size will allow students to ask questions as they arise and discuss with the group.

The safety of our students and instructors is our top priority. In-person classes will be entirely outdoors. We will meet in the outdoor portion of Tracy Aviary's Jordan River Nature Center and walk a section of the Jordan River Parkway Trail. Face coverings are required for times when we gather to discuss. There will be opportunities to further spread out for breaks from mask-wearing.

The trail is relatively level and paved. Bring a bottle of water and dress appropriately for being outdoors, at times in full sun, for the entire hour and a half. We will seek shade for discussions, but much of the trail is exposed.



You may want to bring binoculars if you have them, but instructors will also help you start to recognize birds by their calls. Additionally, there will be opportunities to view birds at a short distance at the Jordan River Nature Center's bird feeders.

## Learning Objectives:

- Social connectedness with and stewardship for the Jordan River: Above all, this course emphasizes the interconnectedness of human history, community, and survival with the ecological health of the Jordan River. Throughout the course, students will have opportunities to: build an understanding of how the Jordan River provides for human, plant, and animal communities; learn about the human impact (positive and detrimental) on the river; foster a personal relationship to the Jordan River and connect with their peers on this appreciation; and become aware of the various ways that individuals can be advocates for the Jordan River.
- Awareness of riparian ecosystems: Students will gain an appreciation of the uniqueness, functions, and values of riparian ecosystems, especially how these ecosystems support a wide range of plant and animal communities.
- Familiarity with avian wildlife in the Jordan River Watershed: More than 200 species of birds depend on the Jordan River and its neighboring habitats. Students will have opportunities to learn how to identify some of these bird species, learn about how birds of various kinds interact with the Jordan River, and how birds serve as biological indicators for the health or degradation of riparian ecosystems.
- Scientific literacy and engagement with riparian areas: Students will learn about community science as a volunteer-based tool for community members and researchers to collaborate on understanding how wildlife use riparian habitats. Instructors will highlight how community science works and how students can become involved in this fun and interactive approach to wildlife research.

## Equity Statement:

The instructors are dedicated to establishing a learning environment that promotes diversity of the students including race, class, culture, religion, gender, sexual identity, and physical ability. It is important that this is a safe classroom environment. We will practice being generous and respectful members of our classroom community. Anyone noticing discriminatory behavior in this class, or who feels discriminated against, should bring it to the attention of the instructor immediately.

## Accommodations:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. Reasonable prior notice is needed to arrange accommodations. Please call 801-585-1780 to be connected to the Continuing Education unit responsible for your class, or contact the University's Center for Disability Services at [disability.utah.edu](http://disability.utah.edu) or 801-581-5020.

## Course Overview:

### Week 1: Thursday, September 3rd, 9:30 - 11:00 am

**Topic:** Welcome to the Jordan River

**Location:** Online via Zoom

**Instructors:** Anne Terry, Cooper Farr

#### Content:

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Course Overview
- Student thoughts on the Jordan River

### Week 2: Thursday, September 10th, 9:30 - 11:00 am

**Topic:** Jordan River as a Migratory Corridor

**Location:** Tracy Aviary's Jordan River Nature Center, 1125 W 3300 S, South Salt Lake

**Instructors:** Bryant Olsen, Cooper Farr

#### Content:

- The function of the Jordan River for avian wildlife
- Migratory and resident birds: who comes and who stays, and why the Jordan River is important to each type of bird
- Vulnerable and threatened bird species as biological indicators of river health
- Where to bird in the Jordan River Watershed and how to identify birds

### Week 3: Thursday, September 17th, 9:30 - 11:00 am

**Topic:** Pre-Industrial Human History of the Jordan River

**Location:** Online via Zoom

**Instructor:** Anne Terry



**Content:**

- Prehistoric people of the Jordan River Watershed
- Indigenous and tribal groups of the Jordan River Watershed

**Week 4: Thursday, September 24th, 9:30 - 11:00 am**

**Topic:** Conservation Challenges and Opportunities

**Location:** Tracy Aviary's Jordan River Nature Center, 1125 W 3300 S, South Salt Lake

**Instructors:** Bryant Olsen, Anne Terry

**Content:**

- "Then and Now"—Human impact on the Jordan River and its associated habitats
- Today's flora and fauna of the Jordan River—Native and Non-native species
- Eco-services of the Jordan River
- Restoration efforts for the ecological health of the Jordan River
- Everyday actions for positive impact on the Jordan River

**Week 5: Thursday, October 1st, 9:30 - 11:00 am**

**Topic:** Tracy Aviary Community Science Research

**Location:** Online via Zoom

**Instructors:** Cooper Farr, Bryant Olsen

**Content:**

- What is Community Science?
- How is Tracy Aviary involved with Community Science?
- How you can be a Community Scientist in your everyday life and with Tracy Aviary

**Week 6: Thursday, October 8th, 9:30 - 11:00 am**

**Topic:** Course Wrap-Up and Assessment Surveys

**Location:** Tracy Aviary's Jordan River Nature Center, 1125 W 3300 S, South Salt Lake

**Instructors:** Cooper Farr, Anne Terry

**Content:**

- Reflections on the Jordan River
- Course wrap-up
- Course assessment

**Attendance:**

Our team understands that there are life events that can prevent students from attending every session. In this case, we ask—if possible—that you call us at 801-330-5488 to inform us that we should not expect you for this class or that you are going to be late. You can also use this number if you are having trouble finding the Jordan River Nature Center on in-person class days.

We appreciate advanced notice on any days that you know you will be absent. Please provide this notice via email at [annet@tracyaviary.org](mailto:annet@tracyaviary.org).