

Welcome



Teen Venture: Birds & Beyond

G25070311

with Holly Thomas & Holly Merker

July 20-26, 2025

Welcome to Birds and Beyond!

We look forward to spending time with you exploring the beauty and wonder of Ghost Ranch with the birds as our guides!

Join us as we co-create this week of birding walks, stargazing, owling, canoeing or kayaking, yoga nidra, nature journaling and night prowls that encourage us to experience the joy, curiosity and awe that come from time in nature.

The many trails of Ghost Ranch invite exploration, and we will be learning birding techniques along the way, tuning in to the sights and sounds of the birds and other natural wonders we may encounter. Whether it's listening to birdsong, taking in the spectacular landscapes, noticing a feather, catching the scent of the breeze, or gazing at the stars sprinkled across the night sky, we'll also be cultivating joy, curiosity, wonder, awe and gratitude.

As we journey through the week we'll be collecting objects that inspire us. We'll share these in the form of a mandala, created on our last day and presented at the art show on Friday night as a culmination of our time spent together at Ghost Ranch.

On the first evening, we will meet after dinner to gather together and get to know each other a little and share expectations for the coming days' activities. Depending on the weather, since the summer days are long, we may take an evening hike or stargaze or explore with blacklights.

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To get a sense of how the week might flow, see the sample schedule.

Other things to know and bring:

- Binoculars. If you don't have your own, we have extra binoculars. Your guides will bring along a spotting scope.
- Please bring along a notebook and your favorite colored pens/pencils – to journal or sketch
- Small backpack to carry snacks, water, journal, etc.

Important things to keep you comfortable during our time together:

- Plan for the weather with comfortable clothing - This might mean layering for both warmth and sun protection. Mornings can be chilly, while it can heat up significantly during the day, and the sun is very strong. We may be out in the evenings too, so keep this in mind. Pack for cool mornings/evenings and warm days. There is a possibility of rain, so please bring rain gear just in case
- Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses
- Whatever footwear feels best to you for trails - some are sandy or rocky with uneven surfaces . Hiking boots or sneakers. (Holly T likes minimalist footwear, but this does not work for a lot of people – you know your feet and body best). Feet will probably get wet on the day of kayaking/canoeing, so if you own a pair of shoes that you don't mind getting wet or water shoes, that would be great.
- A flashlight, or headlamp with a red light. This can be helpful when we are out after dark. We have extra red light headlamps if you need to borrow one.
- Refillable water bottle or thermos

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- Please bring any special snacks or food items you might like in addition to the meals provided by Ghost Ranch.
- Curiosity, sense of humor, openness to awe and wonder!

Please email htbern1@sbcglobal.net (Holly T) and/or hcybelle@gmail.com (Holly M) directly to let us know if there is any way we can accommodate you to make this weekend a better experience for you.

Workshop Itinerary:

Sample schedule: Actual schedule may vary a bit depending on weather and other factors. Sessions may include birding, hiking, stargazing, canoeing or kayaking, night prowls, nature journaling, owling– these are just general ideas to give a sense of how the week might flow – *Campfire dependent on current local fire restrictions in effect

Sunday July 20

5:30 - 6:30 pm Dinner

7 - 9 pm Evening program Welcome: intros, evening birding walk, stargazing.

Monday July 21

7:30 - 8:30 am Breakfast

9am - 11:30 am Morning session: optics, basic bird ID, birding hike

Noon Lunch

5:30 - 6:30 pm Dinner

7 - 9 pm Evening program Evening hike and night prowl

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Tuesday July 22

9am - 11:30 am Morning session: Bird families, birding hike

7-9 pm Evening program Owling

Wednesday July 23

7:30 - 8:30 am Breakfast

9am - 11:30 am Morning session: Bird features and interconnectedness, birding hike

7- 9:30 pm Evening program Night prowling/Owling, black lighting

Thursday July 24

7:30 - 8:30 am Breakfast

9am - 11:30 Morning session: Bird language, kayaking/canoeing

7 - 9 pm Evening program: Birding walk and yoga nidra

Friday July 25

7:30 - 8:30 am Breakfast

9am - 11:30 Morning session: Bird conservation, birding hike

4:00 - 5:00 Create mandala

6:30 onward Evening program: Art show, concert, campfire*

Saturday

7:30 - 8:30 am Breakfast