

Winter Photography Tour and Workshop at Yellowstone National Park

www.gerlachnaturephoto.com

2021

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

January 17 – 23

January 24 – 30

January 31 – February 6



Figure 1 Snow obscures the steam in thermal basins, but it adds mood to a dark furry bison. When it is snowing this hard, autofocus has difficulty hitting sharp focus on the bison's face. We will teach you how to sharply focus the bison.

We enjoy the comfort and safety of a snowcoach to explore and photograph the winter wonders of Yellowstone National Park during this quiet and magical time of the year. John has lived next to Yellowstone since 1993. During that time, he has led over 100 five-day winter photo tours in this magnificent park. Nobody has more experience and enthusiasm for leading photo tours while teaching cutting-edge photography techniques during winter in Yellowstone. Please join us for five full days of intensive photography in the interior of Yellowstone. Come join like-minded nature photographers and be inspired by the incredible scenes found throughout the park.



Figure 2 Crested pool generates more steam when temperatures are cool. A 16-35mm lens nicely composes the scene.

Our days in the park are long. We begin early and we don't quit until the light fades away

around 5:30 pm. No other photo tour gives you more time in the park than we do!



Figure 3 These cow elk stand in the river to avoid predation by wolves and eat grass along the banks.

A Winter Fairyland of Beauty

Winter is a spectacular season in Yellowstone. Heavy snows in the lofty mountains push wildlife down to the geyser basins, rivers, and lower valleys where they seek food and stay warm. At no other time of the year are the wildlife of Yellowstone easier to see and photograph. Often, bison and trumpeter swans can be photographed in the dancing mist of rivers warmed by the runoff from hot geysers. Wintering bald eagles and river otters patrol the rivers for fish.

Although wildlife photo opportunities are outstanding in Yellowstone during winter, the highlights are the unbelievable landscapes. You haven't seen Old Faithful erupt until you watch and photograph it exploding into a cloud

of steam on cold winter days. The billowing steam created when superheated water clashes with frigid winter air is awesome! In the geyser basins, snow and hoar frost cling to every tree and that photographs beautifully against cobalt blue skies. Scenes we'll photograph include the magnificent Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone from Artist Point, several spectacular waterfalls that include Firehole, Gibbon, Lower, Upper, Kepler Cascades; plus, geysers, fumaroles, and the mud pots at Fountain Paint Pots. We spend all our time pointing out outstanding subjects to photograph while helping you use your equipment to best advantage.



Figure 4 A beaver is busy gathering food along the Yellowstone river in Hayden Valley.

To ensure that instruction is complete, informative, and helpful, the group size is limited to only (16) participants in the three snowcoaches we will use. That provides extra room for your camera gear.



Figure 5 Palette Spring in the fog

Our Flexible Itinerary

We cannot give you a day to day itinerary because weather determines our daily schedule. We lead our photo groups to the best locations prevailing weather conditions allow. There is little reason to visit Old Faithful if it is snowing as this famous geyser is nearly invisible in a snowstorm. But a snowy day is ideal for wildlife. Cloudy days without snow are superb for many landscapes such as the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone and all waterfalls. On sunny days, we visit thermal basins to photograph geysers and steam against cobalt blue skies. Naturally, no matter the weather, we always stop to photograph wildlife whenever we find them in appealing spots.

Our goal for you is to have a wonderful time exploring Yellowstone, shoot terrific images, learn about the park, and push your photo skills up considerably. We work hard to ensure this all happens—and it always does!

Wolf and Bear Discovery Center

When the weather is most favorable, we visit the nearby Grizzly Bear and Wolf Discovery Center that is close to the Three Bear Lodge where we stay in West Yellowstone. Both bears and wolves are active during winter at the center. The wolves offer especially good opportunities for close-up images of their faces. Admission to the center is included in your tour package.



Figure 6 A gray wolf at the center.

What you will learn!

- Expose snow quickly and accurately
- Compose memorable images

- Focus precisely every time
- Why live view works well for exposure, focus, and sharp images
- Control depth of field with focus stacking
- How to photograph wildlife
- How to use flash to make better winter landscapes
- How to make superb closeups
- Master the polarizer – how and when to use it
- How to process images and focus stack them together with Helicon Focus
- Greatly improve your shooting techniques for sharp images
- How and why to AF microadjust your camera and lenses
- How to focus in heavy snowfall
- And so much more

What about the cold?

It can be very cold on some mornings in West Yellowstone. Temperatures of 25 degrees below zero are possible, especially on mornings following clear nights. However, modern clothes are terrific for keeping you warm. We've had many below zero mornings during our tours over the decades and nobody has had a problem with cold temperatures yet. Besides, the snowcoaches we travel in are quite comfortable no matter the weather.

What is the typical day like?

Breakfast is served at 6:30 a.m. at the hotel. We board the snowcoaches by 8:00 am and drive the short distance to the park where we stay out all day and return to West Yellowstone late in the day around 6pm after sunset. We do try to photograph sunset whenever possible. We have paid for extended snowcoach hours, so we don't have to return as early as other tours. We return to the hotel in West Yellowstone only when the light fades away.



Figure 7 Old Faithful erupts against a cobalt blue sky. If the sky is white with clouds, the shape of the geyser is hard to see. On the first sunny days, we photograph the geyser fields.

Meals

We eat all meals as a group. The Three Bear Restaurant prepares breakfast for you each morning. We have a hearty packed lunch for everyone. The packed lunch gives us more flexibility in our travels. We can eat whenever and where we feel like it. At the end of the day, we enjoy an ample and delicious dinner at the Three Bear Restaurant.

Tips

Please tip the restaurant staff for your morning meal. We will collect tips for the snowcoach drivers who work extra-long days on our behalf. Budget 20 dollars per day for the coach driver. Dixie and John do not accept tips.



Figure 8 Chocolate pot is a colorful hot spring that few visitors to Yellowstone ever see, but you will photograph it.

How to get to West Yellowstone

West Yellowstone is near the intersection of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Yellowstone National Park roads are closed during winter to normal vehicles, so you cannot drive in the park. The best route from the south is Highway 20 north from Idaho Falls. From the north, take highway 287 or 191 south from Bozeman, Montana.

If you wish to fly in, Gallatin Field in Bozeman, MT is a good choice. Karst Stage lines is the shuttle bus at the airport that will transport you to West Yellowstone. In 2019, shuttle prices were \$176 per person if traveling double. Their local phone number is (406) 388-6404. You can also rent a car at Gallatin Field, but we suggest saving your money because once you arrive at West Yellowstone, a car isn't needed. However, if two or more share the rental cost, then a rented car makes perfect sense.

Yellowstone Tour & Travel is our local tour packager and **Tracie Frontin** is your contact at the agency. She is happy to answer any questions you have regarding the snowcoach, lodging, and the best way for you to get to West Yellowstone. Please call them for details at **1-800-221-1151**.



Figure 9 Heavy frost on the lodgepole pines makes this a mysterious landscape in Elk Meadows.

Snowcoach Tour Fee per person

\$3041 Single (1 person/1 bed – includes single room supplement)

\$2609 Double (2 people/1 or 2 beds)

\$2469 Triple (3 people/2 beds)

Tour Package Includes

- Six nights lodging at the deluxe Three Bear Lodge with private room
- Five days use of required National Park guides (snowcoach driver and John and Dixie)
- Park user fees
- Breakfast (6) Monday thru Saturday
- Lunch (5) Monday thru Friday

- Dinner (5) Monday thru Friday
- Intensive photo instruction from John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone
- Instructional slide programs presented by John that include exposure, wildlife photography, composition, and more
- Admission to the Grizzly Bear and Wolf Discovery Center

We made the tour price as complete as possible. However, items of a personal nature, alcoholic drinks, transportation to and from West Yellowstone, and your personal Yellowstone National Park pass are not included in the tour price.



Figure 10 We spend one morning at the Grizzly Bear exhibit in West Yellowstone. Both bears and wolves are active during your trip.

Yellowstone National Park Pass

Your pass to enter Yellowstone National Park is not included because many of you already have a pass. If you visit a few to many national parks each year, purchase a National Parks pass that is good at all National Parks for one year. If you are 62 years of age or older, buy a Golden Age Pass – \$80 lifetime pass. That is a fantastic deal! Or you can purchase a \$30 pass that is good for Yellowstone for the week. Have the pass and your driver's license with you each day, as sometimes the gate attendant will ask to see them.

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your space. 50% of the deposit is refundable. All remaining unpaid balances are due in full 45 days prior to the start of the tour. 50% of the total package is refundable up to 15 days before the beginning of your tour.



Figure 11 We sometimes find large bull elk in winter!

Enroll Now!!!

This tour is sold out with a total of 16 participants per snowcoach. This allows extra room for camera gear. We run three snowcoaches. John guides one and Dixie the other. Each day John and Dixie switch coaches. Nearly always all three snowcoaches stop at the same place while touring, so both John and Dixie are present to provide photo advice.

Pre-departure Information

Once we receive your reservation form and deposit, we'll send you pre-departure information that covers everything you need to know in detail, such as clothing and camera gear to bring.

Important Reservation Form

Please call Tracie first to make sure space is available. These are popular tours and we are well-known for our expertise. Call Tracie at (800) 221-1151.

For Additional Information

Contact:

John Gerlach/Dixie Calderone
(208) 320-0951 (John's cell)
(812) 350-0799 (Dixie's cell)

johnngerlachphotography@gmail.com

Tracie Frontin
Yellowstone Tour & Travel
P.O. Box 410
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
(800) 221-1151
(406) 646-9310
Fax: (406) 646-9490
tracie@seeeyellowstone.com

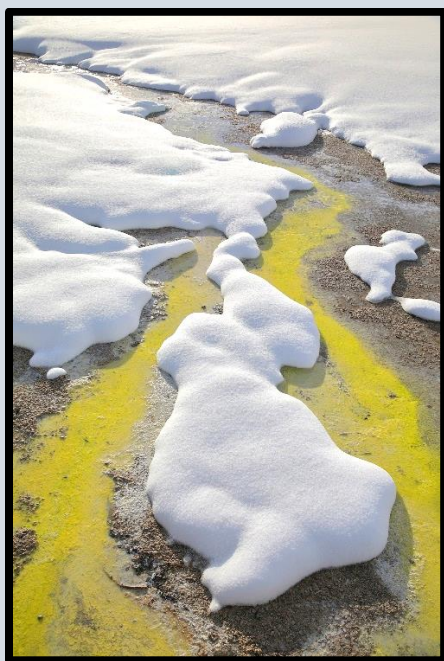


Figure 12 Several shots were made at different distances to stack the colors in the runoff to make a super sharp image. We teach you how to do that.

Return this completed reservation form, along
with your \$500 deposit to:

Yellowstone Tour & Travel
PO Box 410
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

Or call Tracie at (800) 221-1151

Name: _____

Male____Female____Age____

Name of Second Person

Male____Female____Age____

Phone: Day: ()_____

Night: ()_____

Address: _____

E-mail _____

Please enroll me in the workshop session as
indicated below:

Yellowstone Winter Photo Tour by Snowcoach

____ Jan. 17-23, 2021
____ Jan. 24-30, 2021
____ Jan. 31-Feb. 6, 2021

(Each tour begins on a Sunday at 7pm and ends after breakfast on the following Saturday.)

Type of Accommodations

Single, One Person, one bed (includes single supplement)

____ \$3041

Double, two people

____ \$2609 per person (both participants)

Triple, three people

____ \$2469 per person

____ Please try to find me a roommate

Method of Payment

Make check payable to **Yellowstone Tour and Travel**

Personal Check:

Visa or MasterCard

Exp. Date _____

Security Code _____

Signature _____

Full Amount is Due December 1, 2021

Enclosed:

\$500 deposit x _____ (# of people to attend)

\$2609-snowcoach full tuition payment x _____
(# of people to attend if sharing room)

\$3041-snowcoach full tuition payment and own
private room (single supplement included)

Please find enclosed check:

_____ for \$ _____

Please charge the credit card indicated for a
total amount charged of \$ _____



Figure 13 The valleys in Yellowstone are pristine in winter.



Figure 14 A coyote leaps to pin down a vole in the soft snow.

Be sure to read our detailed article on photographing Yellowstone in winter that is posted on my blog at www.gerlachnaturephoto.com

<https://www.gerlachnaturephoto.com/single-post/2019/02/17/Winter-Yellowstone-Photography-Strategies>