## Gerlach Nature Photography

# Grand Tetons National Park

# Winter Photography Workshop

**Nov. 26 – Dec. 1, 2023**

**Dec. 2 – 7, 2023**

**Dec. 8 – 13, 2023**

**Limited to only 8 Participants**

With John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

www.gerlachnaturephoto.com

**Gerlach Nature Photography is an Authorized Permittee of the National Park Service**

*Figure 1 The Mormon barns are wonderful for photos at dawn when the sun shines.*

*Figure 2 At no other time of the year are bull moose easier to find and photograph. During December they munch on bitterbrush in the open sagebrush fields!*

Grand Teton National Park offers spectacular landscapes with magnificent mountains towering above the rolling hills and rivers of western Wyoming. You will shoot plenty of exquisite landscape photos under the expert guidance of John and Dixie as they teach you the best photo techniques to use for producing outstanding images. In addition to the landscape, the bountiful wildlife is an important part of this workshop experience. Plenty of moose are available to photograph and they are quite easy to find and get close enough for photos. We may photograph elk and bison, and perhaps river otters along Flat creek. Many species of ducks and trumpeter swans swim in the open creek waters and we photograph those too. And in the National Elk Refuge, bighorn sheep are abundant and frequently feed near the road where they are often within close photo range. While the refuge rules say you must stay 25 yards away from all animals, that is not easy to do when you must stay on the refuge road and the sheep are walking down the middle of it. You will get plenty of super close photo opportunities.

*Figure 3 Bison are nice and frosty on cold mornings.*

*Figure 4 Bighorn sheep are plentiful at Miller Butte. Each morning they descend the butte to feed on grass next to the access road. They are super easy to photograph well!*

We can see the Tetons from our home, photograph the park frequently, and thoroughly know the area. From having led hundreds of field workshops on photography, we are skilled at guiding photography groups to optimum locations to perfect their photo skills, shoot memorable images, and above all, to enjoy the grandeur of magnificent Grand Tetons National Park.

John and Dixie believe in teaching during all photo workshops and tours. We are always offering suggestions for composition, light, exposure, when to focus stack, and eagerly explain the best photo techniques.

**Key Photo Skills you will learn:**

- How to expose snow easily and quickly using manual exposure
- The best camera techniques for shooting landscape images
- The enormous benefit of focus stacking the landscape
- How to expose wildlife, especially wildlife with dark fur in the snow
- How to photograph wildlife to produce stunning compositions
- How to use long lenses to make sharp wildlife images
- Mastering light – color, direction, contrast to produce the best images
- How to focus stack and process the stack with Helicon Focus
- How to AF microadjust your camera and lens
- Mirrorless camera strategies
- How to shoot sharp images when it is snowing

*Figure 5 Sagebrush fields are the typical habitat you find bull moose in early December near Jackson.*

**Field Trips**

We travel together in our Ford Expedition Max SUV or Sierra Pickup. Each morning field trip begins before sunrise, so we are on location at sunrise. Evening field trips begin about three hours before sunset. We seek wildlife photo opportunities in the evening and stop at good locations for evening light that hopefully fills the western sky with crimson clouds.

Average December Temperatures

High: 30
Low: 11
Sunrise and Sunset

Sunrise: 7:32
Sunset: 5:14

**What's Included:**

- **Intensive photo instruction** from John and Dixie in the classroom and in the field during 4 full days of intensive photography

- **All meals** begin with a delicious dinner on the first night and end with breakfast on the final day of the workshop. You will enjoy several excellent restaurants in Jackson that we take you to. Order off the menu, and we pay the bill!
- **5 nights lodging** at the Lexington Hotel – a wonderful hotel!
- **All ground transportation** in our two comfortable SUVs
- **Teaching slide programs** presented in the early afternoon or after dinner
- **Viewing your images** brought from home and shot during the workshop
- **We drive you all over the park** from the Mormon Barns to Jackson Lake

**Not Included:**

- Airfare
- Items of a personal nature, such as alcoholic drinks
- Trip cancellation insurance
- Park pass to Grand Tetons National Park

No rental car is needed. The Lexington Hotel offers free shuttles to and from the Jackson airport. On field trips, we all travel together in our SUVs. We take care of everything for you. Fly into the Jackson Hole Airport (JAC), rest up, join us for the first evening meeting and dinner. At the first meeting, we explain the workshop goals, key photo strategies, and explain how the week will run.

**Price and Payments**

Price:

**$3000 for a private suite**

**$2700 each - two participants sharing a suite**

Deposit: $1000

Payment:

Payment can be made by check and made payable to: Gerlach Nature Photography. Mail check to John Gerlach/PO Box 318/Island Park ID 83429. To use a credit card, call Dixie Calderone at (812) 350-0799. (3% service charge added if using a credit card)

A $1000 per-person **deposit** holds your space in this photo workshop. Full Payment is due August 1, 2023.

**Refunds and Cancellation Policy**

**If written Cancellation is Received:**

**Cancellation Fee:**

90 days or prior: 100% refunded less fees we cannot recover and a $100 service fee

89 to 61 days prior: 50% of trip fee

60 day or less: no refund unless we can refill your spot

We strongly suggest buying trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

**Since these workshops only accept eight participants, they sell out quickly. Sign-up now! Call Dixie at 812-350-0799.**

John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

johngerlachphotography@gmail.com

812-350-0799

*Figure 6 Even a muskrat living at Flat Creek is a joy to photograph.*

**Itinerary:**

Day 1: Fly to Jackson, WY (JAC). The hotel offers a free shuttle to and from the airport. Our first introductory meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. at the hotel lobby to go to dinner as a group. Then we will return to the hotel conference room for a short meeting.

Day 2-5: We enjoy a hot breakfast provided by the Lexington Hotel at 6:30 am. Then we depart the hotel each morning at 7:15 am before sunrise to be on location for the rising sun to light the landscape. Then we look for wildlife and photograph

them wherever we find them. In mid-morning, we return to Jackson for lunch/breakfast at one of the many fine restaurants in town. Then we take a break at the hotel. During late afternoon to sunset, we search for wildlife and landscapes to photograph. Depending on events during the day, we present instructional photo programs in the early afternoon or after dinner.

Day 6: We enjoy a hearty breakfast together and then say our good-byes. We are happy to suggest other places to photograph if you wish to rent a car and travel.

*Figure 7 The Grand Tetons Mountain Range*

**Group Size:**

The group size is a maximum of **eight** participants. We like the small group size because we can teach everyone more about photography and the Grand Tetons, and seating at restaurants is easier to obtain. Small groups that move slowly make wildlife less nervous, allowing a closer approach.

Plus, with only eight, it is easy for us to provide continuous one-on-one instruction in the field. Our goal is to teach you how to use your camera gear to best advantage for making professional quality images.

With our two SUVs, four participants ride in each vehicle allowing plenty of room for them and their photo gear.

**Physical Requirements**

Nearly all of our photo stops require minimal walking over even ground. But keep in mind the altitude of Jackson Hole valley where we do our photography is 6237 feet. If we do not have too much snow on the ground, we offer a 1.3-mile hike to Schwabacher's Landing that is famous for excellent reflections of the Grand Tetons. That is 2.6 miles round trip on a good road that is closed to vehicles, so that is why we are walking. This is optional. One SUV will take those not hiking to another viewpoint of the Grand Tetons.

Moose are where you find them. They move around quite often. We might find moose close to the road for easy and quick access, or they could be a mile off the road in the sagebrush fields. The moose are used to people and allow close approach to 25-50 yards for full-frame images. But it may be necessary to walk 1 mile out into the sagebrush fields and snow will likely be present. We find several inches of snow makes it easier to walk in the sagebrush.

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*Figure 8 The bighorn sheep are especially photogenic on frosty mornings.*

*Figure 9 Bull Moose with the Tetons Behind It*

*Figure 10 Moose usually take a nap by mid-morning. This is Fremont, a well-known moose in the valley who may have the largest antlers. Manual focus captured a sharp image.*

What to bring:

**Clothes**

Early December is winter in Jackson, Wyoming. Wear warm clothes. Boots to keep your feet warm are important, especially if snow is on the ground. Warm gloves that allow your fingers to be exposed to permit working camera controls are helpful. A warm hat is essential.

Lenses that cover 70mm to 300mm work best at the Mormon barns. The longer lens works best to show the Tetons looming high above the barns.

**Park Pass and Driver's License**

You must have a park pass and a driver's license to prove who you are to enter national parks. (For the past two years, the entrance stations have not been occupied.)

**Camera Equipment**

- 2 cameras (in case one malfunctions)
- Lenses that cover 24mm to 300mm for landscapes and sometimes wildlife
- Polarizing filter to remove glare and darken a blue sky
- Long lens for wildlife! Any lens that reaches 500mm, whether a 500mm prime lens, a shorter lens with a teleconverter to make it long, or the crop factor of small-sensor cameras that give the angle of view of a long lens.
- Tripod for shooting landscapes and wildlife with long lenses

Examples: Long prime lenses of 500mm and 600mm are excellent for wildlife. But they are big and expensive. A shorter lens, such as a 300mm f/4, becomes a 420mm f5.6 lens when a 1.4x teleconverter is inserted between the camera and the lens. That works well. And so does a small-sensor camera like the Canon 7D Mark II with its 1.6x crop factor. That means the lens sees a smaller angle of view and appears to be a longer lens. A 1.6x crop factor camera used on a 300mm lens is like having a 300mm x 1.6 = 480mm lens!

For the record, Dixie uses a Nikon 500mm lens and John uses a Canon RF 100-500mm. When photographing the bighorn sheep, the sheep move a lot and often approach you, so a zoom is especially effective. In 2022, John carried these lenses with him at all times and they were quite adequate. The lenses were 15-35mm, 24-105mm, 70-200mm, and 100-500mm. This covers the range of 15-800mm when you consider John could set his 1.6x crop factor in the Canon R5 giving the 500mm focal length an angle of view of 800mm.

Please email us if you have any questions. johngerlachphotography@gmail.com

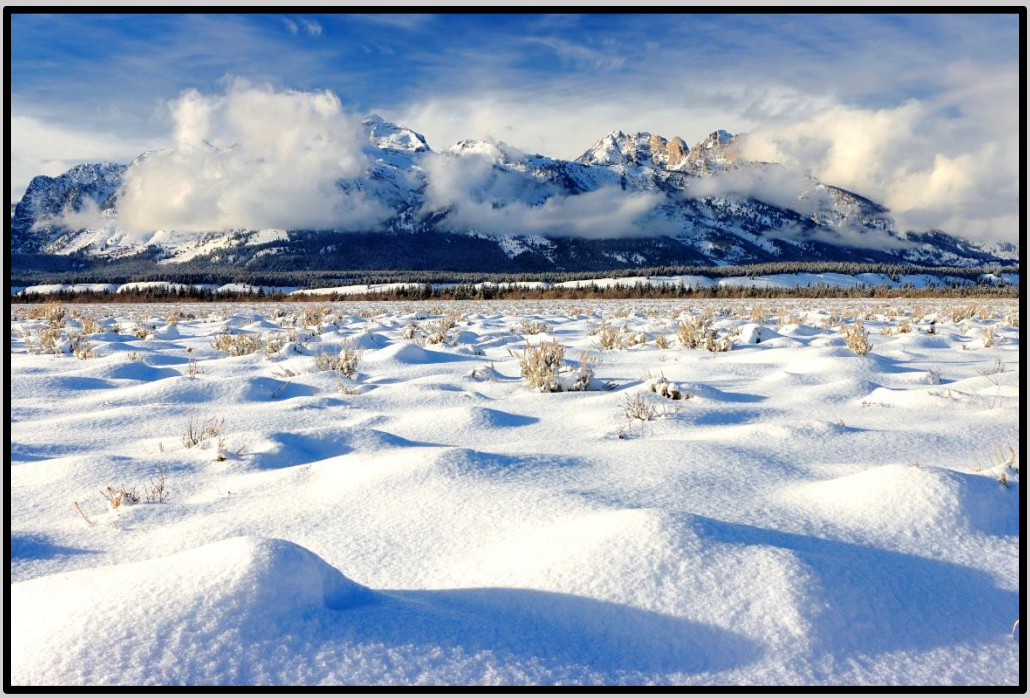

*Figure 11 The Grand Tetons in December. With the close snow bumps in the foreground, focus stacking this scene with three images focused at different distances is the best way to capture the tremendous depth of field. A 16mm focal length made the foreground big and dramatic.*

*Figure 12 These moose are spending time together in a bachelor herd of six bulls.*

*Figure 13 Bighorns at the Jackson Refuge. Getting sharp photos when the snow is falling is an important skill to learn that we are experts at and will readily teach you how.*

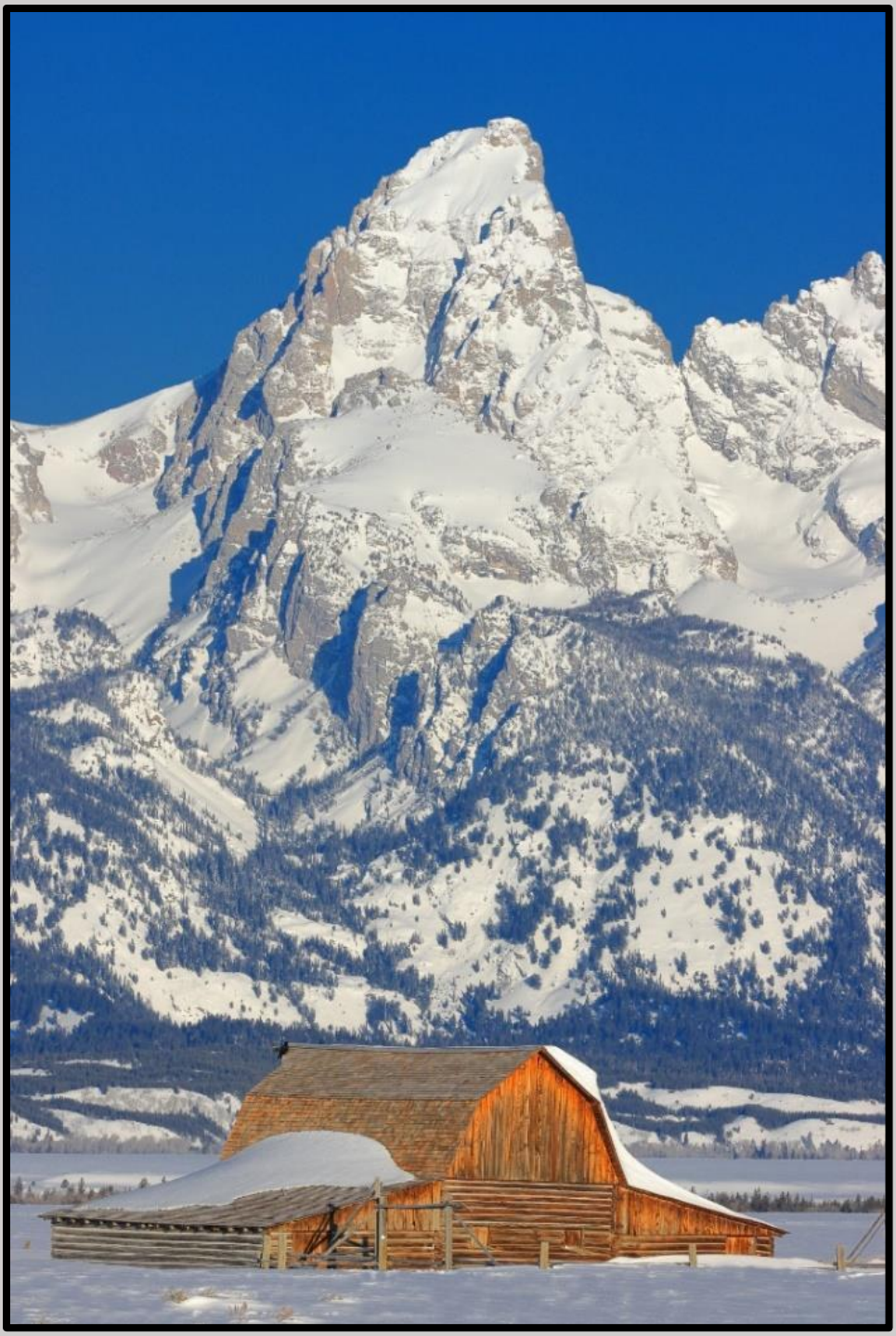

*Figure 14 Using a longer lens from a distance makes the Tetons relatively larger in relation to the barn.*

*Figure 15 Sunset can be spectacular at Jackson Lake.*

*Figure 16 Focus stacking is a super technique for landscapes and macro, but it also works for still wildlife like this resting moose.*

*Figure 17 A shaft on dawn sunshine breaks through the clouds to light the Tetons!*

*Figure 18 Focus stacking made it easy to get sharp focus of the herd of bighorn sheep amid all this falling snow!*

*Figure 19 Focus stacking let us sharply focus these two bighorn sheep.*

*Figure 20 Even this woodland "wild women" is found near Jackson.  You will see and photograph it!*

*Figure 21 A Barrow's goldeneye swimming on Flat Creek near our hotel.*