

Gerlach Nature Photography

www.gerlachnaturephoto.com

Birds from a Floating Blind, Yellowstone Landscapes and Wildlife, and Close-up Photography Workshop

Island Park, Idaho

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

Only 3 Participants!

July 9 – 15, 2023

July 17 – 23, 2023

July 25 – 31, 2023



Figure 1 We are avid wildlife photographers who immensely enjoy photographing birds while hiding in a floating blind. We have five floating blinds that allows everyone to photograph at the same time. This is a hen ring-necked duck, and the photo is made with a Canon 1DX Mark III, Canon 800mm f/4 lens, and a Canon 1.4x teleconverter.

We love spending summer at home and know many of you would enjoy it too. Our home is on a mountain slope at 6600 feet. The average July high is 75 and the average low is 45 degrees. Humidity is always low and that makes July weather truly delightful. Our ten acres is the perfect place to summer and loaded with birds who are attracted to our sunflower seed feeders and water drips. Mule deer, chipmunks, and ground squirrels are mammals we often see, but elk and moose are possible as both are common here. Wildflowers blanket the hillsides leading up to our home.

The photography opportunities are impressive! Birds are easy to photograph at our home and we often shoot macros of wildflowers and butterflies in our huge six-car garage. Photographing inside our garage with our macro studio setup lets us control the light and backgrounds while avoiding wind that makes it impossible to focus stack. That means you can shoot high-quality macros any time you want to.

We are only 17 miles from the west gate of Yellowstone National Park that offers outstanding wildlife and landscape photos. We take you on field trips into Yellowstone in the afternoon to make fine wildlife photos and landscapes.

We have five bedrooms, four bathrooms and plenty of space throughout our home. Our view is amazing! The national forest begins 20 feet behind the house. To the southeast we look down on 8-square mile Henry's Lake, and to the north the Black Mountains tower into the sky. Wildlife is amazingly plentiful on our property and on nearby Henry's Lake.

We enjoy teaching small workshop groups and now we are offering a week with us for only **three** participants.

When this Tours Begins and Ends

We pick you up in Bozeman at the airport upon your arrival the first day and the workshop ends after lunch (flights permitting) in Bozeman on the last day.

What's Included:

1. Each person will stay at our home in their own private bedroom for a total of **six nights lodging**. We have four bathrooms, so each room will be assigned one of them.
2. We **provide transportation** in our Ford Expedition as it easily carries several people in comfort along with photo gear for our daily photo trips. This includes all field trips and to and from Bozeman, MT.
3. We provide all meals (and snacks too) beginning with lunch on the day we meet and ending with lunch on the day we depart. **This package includes 19 meals**. Meals will be at local restaurants when we are traveling or at our home and prepared by Dixie. Dixie is terrific in the kitchen and John has a passion for cooking hamburgers, pork chops, steak, and chicken outside on the grill.
4. We spend at least a dozen hours a day helping you shoot wonderful photos and teaching you how to master superb photo techniques.

What is not Included:

1. Transportation from your home to Bozeman and return.
2. Alcoholic drinks

3. Admission into Yellowstone National Park (most of you already have a lifetime or seasonal pass anyway)

We are anxious to teach you how to shoot many wonderful photos on our property and nearby Yellowstone National Park where we have a CUA authorization to conduct business.

- We are seeking three individuals who wish to use a floating blind to photograph ducks and other birds on the lake next to our home. You will need chest waders or a dry suit and a long lens of 600mm or better that takes a quick release plate for a Wimberley gimbal head. It does not have to be a prime 600mm. Even a 400mm lens on a camera with a 1.5x crop factor sensor is equivalent to 600mm. During July, easily approached wild ducks and some with ducklings are likely along with many other birds to photograph. We are enthusiastic about floating blind wildlife photography. In 2020, beginning in early April and running into September, John spent over 75 mornings in the floating blind and shot more than 100,000 images. With more than 20 years of experience using floating photo blinds, he knows how to get super results. And during July, out of five mornings we are likely to get 3-4 suitable mornings to use the floating blinds. A floating blind is provided for each participant. The key to the floating blind is shallow water, lots of wildlife in and near the water, and flat calm water conditions. Waves – even ripples – make it difficult to effectively use a floating blind. Therefore, we will use the floating blinds whenever water conditions allow us to use them. The floating blind is a morning opportunity as the light is superb at dawn and that is when the lake is most likely to be calm. On a suitable morning, we will enter the lake at sunrise. Normally the breeze begins to blow by 9 am creating too many ripples for successful photos, so we quit then and return to our home for a hearty breakfast. The lake we use is only ¼ mile from our house so the morning drive to the launch site is short. The floating blind floats your camera gear and hides you from wildlife, but it does not float you. Instead, it supports you as you walk along the shallow margins of the lake – do not worry – it is easy to do. We find photographing in the floating blind is incredibly relaxing.
- When the lake is too rough (meaning ripples up to waves), then we do macro setups in our huge six-car garage in the morning or lead a photo tour into Yellowstone National Park or nearby Mesa falls – an eastern Idaho landmark.
- Days are long in July, so we move at a leisurely pace. Mornings and evenings are most productive for photos, so we photograph then. During the early afternoon, John presents teaching programs indoors or conduct outside demonstrations. Plus, we will give you time to relax on our deck overlooking Henry's Lake. This workshop is a way to introduce you to western life and wildlife while we teach you how to shoot superb wildlife, landscape, and macro images.

Key Photo Skills You Will Learn:

- This workshop is huge on learning bird photography photo skills!
- How to skillfully use long lenses
- Set excellent exposures for JPEG or RAW files quickly and easily
- Understand the histogram and highlight alert
- How to use full manual exposure quickly and easily
- When to use the powerful Auto ISO exposure mode

- Use a tripod properly and the gimbal head
- Shoot the sharpest images possible on a tripod, or handheld when necessary
- Use the benefits of live view for focus, exposure, and shooting images
- Focus precisely using manual focus or autofocus
- Shoot perfectly exposed and sharp close-ups every time
- How to shoot a focus stack for the ultimate control over depth of field
- How to process focus stacked images with Helicon Focus
- Use front, side, back, and reflected light to best advantage
- When and how to use the polarizing filter
- Compose powerful compositions
- Become an expert shooting wide-angle lenses
- Strategies for using a mirrorless camera



Figure 2 Crested pool is a hot spring near Old Faithful that photographs best in the middle of the day because sunlight illuminates the interior of the pool when the sun is high in the sky.

John and Dixie are avid photography instructors who have no secrets. We teach you everything. We assume you want to become a super photographer because that makes photography more fun and rewarding. While we teach the ultimate photo skills you must master to shoot superb images, they are not hard, and everyone can learn them. We will advance your photo skills by several notches. This goal is especially easy to achieve because the group size is only 3 participants with two full-time instructors. This lets us provide unlimited one on one instruction!!!!



Figure 3 This wildflower is a weed that grows in our garden, but it makes a fine close-up subject. We are using a photo background and 3 LED lamps to light it.



Figure 4 Fritillary butterflies are likely subjects in our close-up photo sessions.



Figure 5 Using LED lamps indoors is a successful way to photograph butterflies while creating pleasing light such as the backlight used on this one.

Image Review

We review your images brought from home and the images you are shooting during the workshop. We do this during the middle of the day when photo conditions are less desirable as mornings and evenings are reserved for photography. Bring 30 images from home to share with the group. Please load your images (JPEG only) on a jump drive. Give the drive to us so we can load them into the slide program. We will return your jump drive ASAP.

Instructor Programs Presented

Programs we plan to present include:

- *Close-up Photography*
- *Landscape Photography*
- *Wildlife Photography*

Special Demonstrations to be fit into the schedule include:

- *Focus stacking – how to shoot the stack, process the images, and then stack them*
- *How to use tripods and their heads more effectively (we cover ballheads and Wimberley gimbal heads)*
- *Creating your own macro stations – equipment, background choices, lights, power packs*

Participating in our nature photography workshop is the perfect way to tremendously improve your nature photography skills and learn about nature while enjoying the beautiful outdoors. We teach photography with great passion and enjoy it tremendously. Be amazed at how much you learn!



Figure 6 Sunset at Great Fountain Geyser



Figure 7 Rocky Mountain Parnassian butterfly



Figure 8 Castle geyser erupts twice a day. It is not easy to photograph due to the long 12-hour eruption intervals, but when it does, you get 45 minutes to photograph the action.

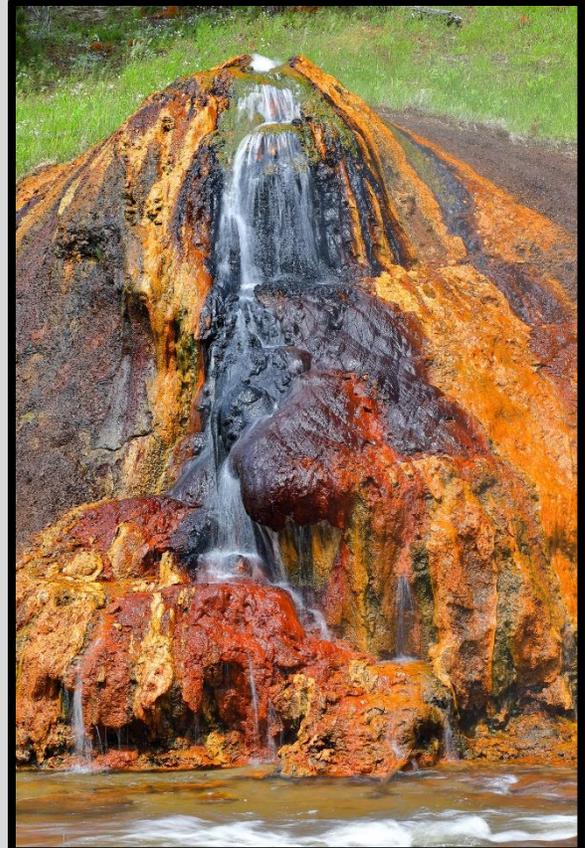


Figure 9 Chocolate Pots is a secretive hot spring few park visitors see.

The Workshop Schedule

We believe in taking our field trips at the times when photo conditions are best. As an example, on July 15, sunrise is 5:56 am and sunset is 9:07 pm Mountain Time. The average high temperature is 75 and the average low is 43 degrees. On mornings when calm winds let us use the floating blinds, it is best to enter the water shortly before sunrise. Since the furthest “launch” location is 15-20 minutes from our home, we leave the house 45 minutes before sunrise. If the wind makes it impossible to use the floating blinds, then we enjoy a more leisurely morning and shoot close-ups in our studio set up for that purpose. Most afternoons and evenings will find us in Yellowstone National Park photographing until sunset. We plan to drive to Yellowstone starting around 3pm. The sun is still high in the sky then, but Yellowstone is an exception where the high sun lights the thermal features better.

About Yellowstone National Park

The world’s first National Park, numerous thermals areas, waterfalls, and wildlife are protected within the parks borders. John has lived next to Yellowstone since 1987 and has led more than 100 week-long photo tours inside the park over the decades. You are traveling with park experts. We will monitor weather conditions and take you to super places that are perfect for the prevailing weather conditions.



Figure 10 Grand Prismatic spring is colorful and fun to photograph from the boardwalk. When the breeze is out of the north to blow the steam away, the foreground is nicely revealed. A polarizer is enormously useful here to saturate colors by removing glare from the wet foreground.

Transportation

All participants will travel with us in our new Ford Expedition. Driving only one vehicle makes it much easier to find parking at the popular park destinations.

Viewing your Digital Images

We use a high-resolution TV to view the images brought from home and shot in the workshop. Load the images to share on a jump drive and give them to Dixie.

Working on Your Images

Most clients bring a laptop computer and download images to the computer or external hard drive. You will have a desk in your room to work on images. If you have several large capacity memory cards for your camera, you can leave them on the cards, but we would like to be able to see your image!

Meals

Snacks are always available. Breakfast will be after the floating blind session around 9:30 am or around 8 am if weather conditions prevent the use of the floating blinds. If we can use the floating blinds, then we will have a small quick snack and off we go to the lake. When we return from the floating blind adventure, you will enjoy a hearty breakfast at our home.

If the wind prevents the use of the floating blinds, we do close-up photography under controlled conditions using LEDs lights in our studio, so there is no need to be shooting at sunrise. We can enjoy shooting superb macro images then have a hearty breakfast. Lunch will be at our home or at a restaurant should we be traveling then. We will enjoy dinner at the best available restaurant when we

are finished photographing, probably in West Yellowstone. Should we be home at sunset, then we will enjoy dinner at our home. (Remember John likes to grill!)



Figure 11 The floating blind provides low photo angles. Eye level or slightly shooting up provides an intimate viewpoint. A ruddy duck poses on the lake and a great-blue heron catches breakfast.

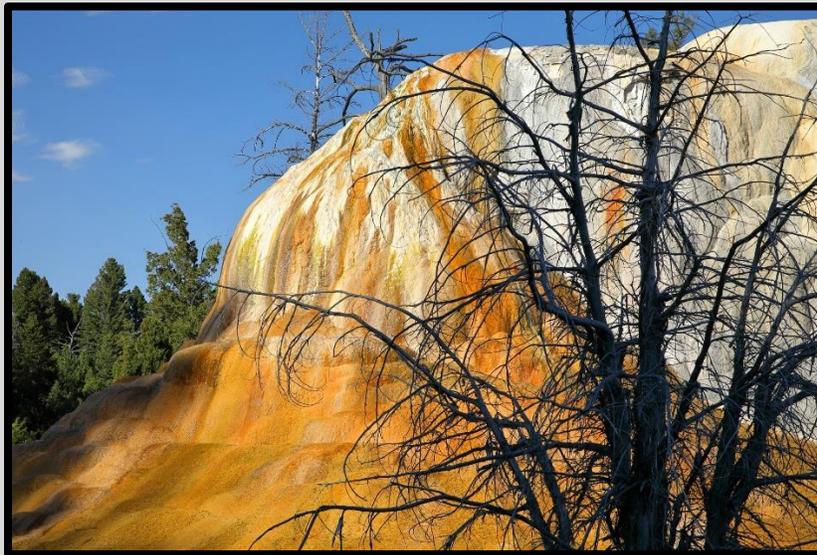


Figure 12 We will photograph many thermal features during this workshop, including one of my favorites – Orange Spring Mound.

Tuition

The fee for this comprehensive workshop is \$3600. This includes:

- **Intensive photo instruction from John and Dixie**
- **19 meals beginning with lunch on day one and ending with lunch on the last day**
- **Pickup and return to Bozeman and all transportation during the trip**
- **6 nights lodging at John and Dixie’s home in your private bedroom**
- **Snacks Galore**
- **Use of floating blinds and close-up photo stations**

Payment:

- A \$1000 per-person **deposit** holds your space in the workshop.
- Full payment for the Idaho workshop is due three months before the start of the workshop you are enrolled in. 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 at (812) 350-0799.

Refunds and Cancellation Policy

If written Cancellation is Received:

Cancellation Fee:

- 90 days or prior: 100% refund minus fees we cannot recover (normally only credit card charges) and a \$100 cancellation 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 we only have three participants in this workshop, losing one to a last-minute cancellation that cannot be refilled is a serious financial loss to us, so we will strictly abide by our cancellation policy.

Travel and Equipment Information

After making a reservation, we will send pre-departure information describing the photo equipment and clothing that is most suitable for this workshop.

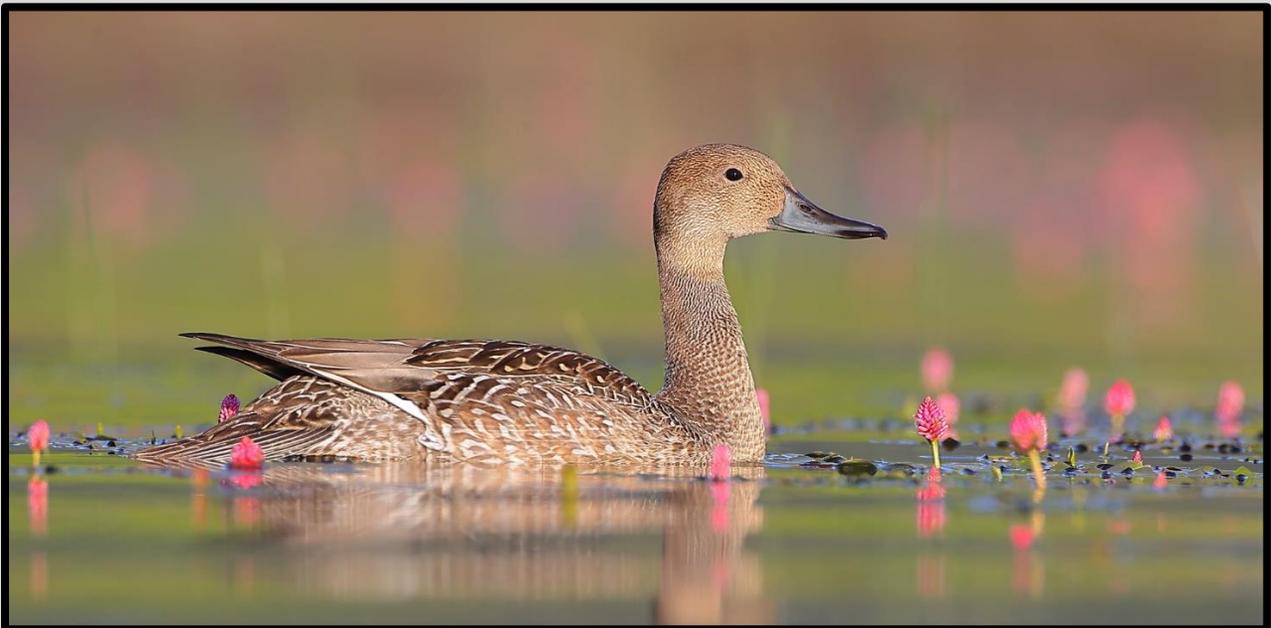
Getting to the Workshop

We pick you up in Bozeman at the airport on the first day of your workshop. If you are driving to the workshop, let us know so we can arrange to meet. We will have dinner in Bozeman then return to our home to prepare you for your first day of floating blind photography.

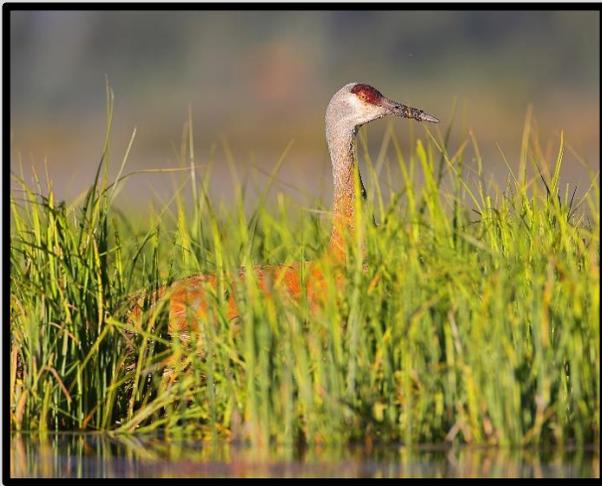
Please let Dixie know your flight arrival and departure times prior to your arrival on the first day of workshop. Then upon arrival call or text Dixie and we will let you know where to look for us at the airport. **This is a change from previous information!! Due to inflated Hotel cost we will pick you up at the airport on your first day rather than getting a hotel room the night before in Bozeman.** Rooms this year were \$379 - \$450 depending on where you might stay. We had folks cancel those rooms and we picked them up at the airport!



Figure 13 White Dome geyser in Yellowstone erupts 2-3 times per hour. We will photograph and explore many thermal basins. We plan to visit Black Sand, Upper, Biscuit, Fountain Paint Pots, and Norris geyser basins.



This drake pintail molts into these light brown feathers by July to help it hide in the aquatic plants surrounding the lake. Red-necked grebes are present, and birds along the shoreline such as this spotted sandpiper and sandhill crane are likely photo subjects.





Cassin's finches are abundant visitors to our July feeders and the sandhill crane warming itself in the dawn sunshine is often an easy bird to photograph from a floating blind.





Undine waterfalls is spectacular to photograph and real close to the parking lot!



Geysers fields offer plenty of unusual landscape opportunities.



Dixie getting in the float blind and on the next page is a tiny sample of the closeups we can make indoors

