

Gerlach Nature Photography

www.gerlachnaturephoto.com

Songbirds at Our Reflection Pools And Yellowstone National Park

Island Park, Idaho

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

Only 3 Participants!

August 25 – 31, 2024



Figure 1 American robins relish a dip in the reflection pool. This is a pool of water six feet long by 3.5 feet wide and 2 inches deep. It is made by using sawhorses, heavy boards, a wooden pool frame, and a pond liner to hold the water. The pond liner is hidden with natural objects. We teach you how to easily and inexpensively do this.

We love being at our mountain home and know many of you would thoroughly enjoy it too. Our home is adjacent to the lodgepole pine forest on a mountain slope at 6600 feet. Our ten acres border the national forest that begins right behind our garage and that makes it a super place for wildlife photography. Our property is alive with birds who are attracted to our sunflower seed feeders and reflection pools with water drips.

Our weather is wonderful too. Most days in late August are sunny and mild. The average Sept. 1 high is 73 and the average low is 43 degrees and humidity is always low.

10 Reasons our Reflection Pools are Terrific for Wildlife Photography

1. Birds and mammals that never visit our seed feeders extensively use our dripping water pools.
2. Wildlife spend more time at the reflection pool and that gives you ample time to shoot numerous images.
3. In addition to photographing wildlife as they approach the reflection pool, you get opportunities to photograph them bathing and frequently catch nice reflections of them in the pool.
4. Each day is a new adventure as the number of bird species and numbers of subjects typically change from one morning to the next during the August and September migration period. For example, one morning 3 western tanagers might visit the reflection pool while the next morning five Audubon's warblers and several Wilson's warblers are the stars. No two mornings are identical. You never know what new "contestant" will appear.
5. All of August and the first three weeks in September is a super period with lots of bird visitors arriving during the night from the north as peak migration for songbirds happens then.
6. Water also attracts mammals. Yellow-pine chipmunks and red squirrels will certainly be present for you to photograph.
7. Water attracts numerous birds that do not come to the seeds we provide because they prefer fruit and insects, but they are readily attracted to fresh water.
8. No seed particles are present to clutter your water setup or be stuck to the bird's beak.
9. Photos of bathing birds are easy to get!
10. Peak action for migrant birds at the reflection pool begins around 7:30 am and runs to 10:30am. Activity at the reflection pools is also good 2-3 hours before sunset. Both of our reflection pool setups are within easy walking distance of the house.



11.

Figure 2 A hermit thrush approaching the reflection pool.

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. This makes it easy to use focus stacking techniques.

We are only 20 miles from the west gate of Yellowstone National Park that offers outstanding wildlife and landscape photography. We take you on field trips into Yellowstone a couple of times in the afternoon to photograph wildlife and landscapes. Plus, there are other scenic spots in Idaho we visit.

We have four bedrooms, four bathrooms and plenty of space throughout our home. Our view is amazing! To the southeast we look down on an 8-square mile lake, and to the north the Black Mountains tower into the sky. Lodgepole pine and aspens surround our buildings and property. Wildlife is amazingly plentiful.

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 will pick you up in Bozeman at the airport on the first day. You must arrive no later than 4pm. On the last day we will have a continental breakfast, then drive to Bozeman at 8:00am for your departure flight at noon or later. We understand airline schedules fit various times. If you cannot arrive in Bozeman by 4pm or must fly out earlier than noon on the departure day, then fly in the day before and stay at a hotel near the airport. If you only have the option of an early morning departure, we can drop you off at a hotel on the last day to make your plane the following day.

What's Included:

1. Each person will stay at our home in their own private bedroom for a total of **six nights**. We have four bathrooms. Each room is assigned one of them, so you have a private bathroom and bedroom.
2. We **provide transportation** in our Ford Expedition as it easily carries five people in comfort and photo gear for our daily photo trips. This includes all field trips and transportation to and from Bozeman, MT.
3. We provide all meals (and snacks too) beginning with dinner on the day we meet and ending with breakfast on the day we depart. 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 enjoys cooking hamburgers, pork chops, steak, and chicken outside on the barbeque.
4. We spend at least a dozen hours a day helping you shoot wonderful photos and teaching you how to master photo techniques.
5. We have two reflection pools with excellent blinds at each location. Both reflection pools have seating for multiple photographers.

What is not Included:

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

3. Admission into Yellowstone National Park (most people 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 photograph small birds every morning and sometimes in the afternoon too. Since many of the birds are migrants who arrive during the night, visit the drip in the morning, and then depart the next evening, it is important to stay quiet in the blind and **do not make any quick movements**. While local birds that live around the yard and are used to the reflection pools and seed feeders get used to camera sounds, migrating birds who have never been in the yard, but hear the dripping water and approach to drink and bathe are nervous. Any quick movement by you will flush them. Motionless, silent, and well-hidden are the keys to success. On some mornings, we shoot up to 7500 images of more than a dozen species.

Here is the list of birds that we have photographed at our Idaho drips (49 species so far). You will not photograph all of them, but you certainly will get to photograph many of them.

- Red-naped Sapsucker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Calliope Hummingbird
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird
- Black-chinned Hummingbird
- Rufous Hummingbird
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Western Wood-Pewee
- Dusky Flycatcher
- Warbling Vireo
- Cassin's Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Mountain Chickadee
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- House Wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Hermit Thrush
- Swainson's thrush
- American Robin
- Gray Catbird
- Cedar Waxwing
- Evening Grosbeak
- Cassin's Finch
- Pine Siskin
- American Goldfinch
- Chipping Sparrow
- Brewer's Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Green-tailed Towhee
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Nashville Warbler
- MacGillivray's Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- American Redstart
- Yellow Warbler
- Audubon's Warbler
- Townsend's Warbler
- Wilson's Warbler
- Western Tanager
- Blue Jay
- Red Crossbill
- Mourning Dove
- Bullock's Oriole

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
- When to use the awesome Auto ISO exposure mode
- Use a tripod properly with the gimbal head
- Shoot the sharpest images possible on a tripod
- 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
- How to select or build photo hides
- How to use seed feeders and water drips
- How to build a reflection pool
- How to attract far more birds to your water setup
- How to control the sound and motion of dripping water for best results
- How and why to use custom shooting modes
- How and why to customize camera buttons and dials



Figure 3 McGillivray's warbler hides in dense brush along creeks, but it readily visits water pools!

John and Dixie are avid photography instructors who readily share all their knowledge. 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 considerably. This goal is especially easy to achieve because the group size is only 3 participants with two full-time instructors, allowing us to provide unlimited one on one instruction!!!!



Figure 4 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 5 Fritillary butterflies are likely subjects in our close-up photo sessions.



Figure 6 Using LED lamps indoors is a successful way to photograph butterflies while creating pleasing light such as the backlight used on this great-spangled fritillary.

Image Review

We review your images brought from home and the images you shoot 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 copy your images (JPEG only) to a jump drive. Give the drive to us. We will load your images into the slide program and 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 with Helicon Focus*
- *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*
- *Creating your own reflection pool*

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 7 Sunset at Great Fountain Geyser



Figure 8 Rocky Mountain Parnassian butterfly



Figure 9 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.

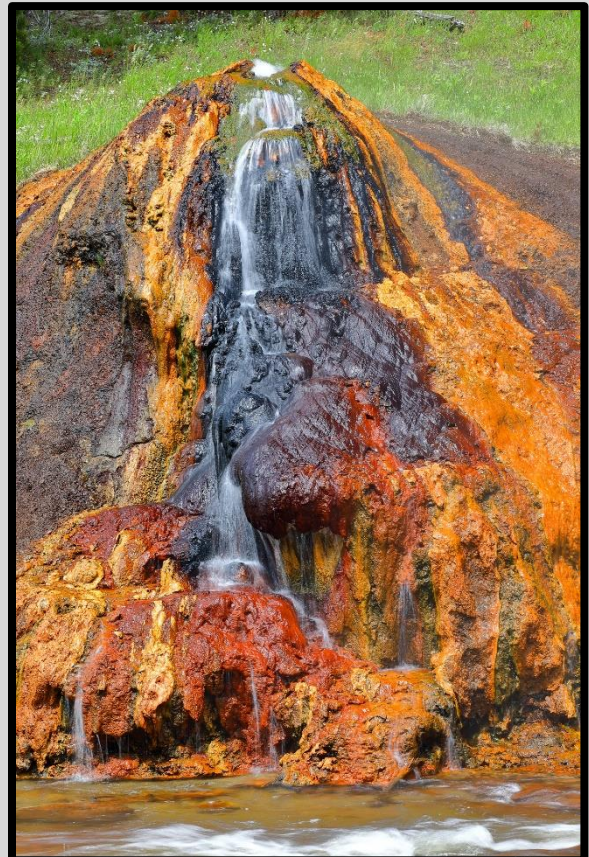


Figure 10 Chocolate Pots is a secretive hot spring few park visitors see.

The Workshop Schedule

We believe in taking our field trips at the times when photo conditions are best. Reflection pool photography of birds is best during the first three hours in the morning and can be quite good late in the

afternoon too. We plan to photograph birds then. We also have macro stations set up inside our huge garage allowing you to perfect your macro skills and we will take you on some afternoon field trips to Yellowstone or other scenic locations in Idaho.

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 150 week-long photo tours inside the park over the decades. You are traveling with John and Dixie, who are park experts. We will monitor weather conditions and take you to super places that are perfect for the prevailing weather conditions.



Figure 11 A chipping sparrow takes its bath in our yard drip. While this species is not interested in birdseed, it sure loves coming to water.

Transportation

All participants will travel with us in our new Ford Expedition. Driving only one vehicle makes it much easier to find parking at 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 have a desk in your room to work on images.

Meals

Snacks are always available. Breakfast will be after photographing the birds at our reflection pools in the morning – usually a little after 10:00 am. We will have coffee and orange juice and breakfast snacks available before you take your seat in one of our blinds.

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 traveling. Should we be home at sunset, then we will enjoy dinner at our home.



Figure 12 The American robin (left) and the Lincoln's sparrow both are attracted to our reflection pool setups.

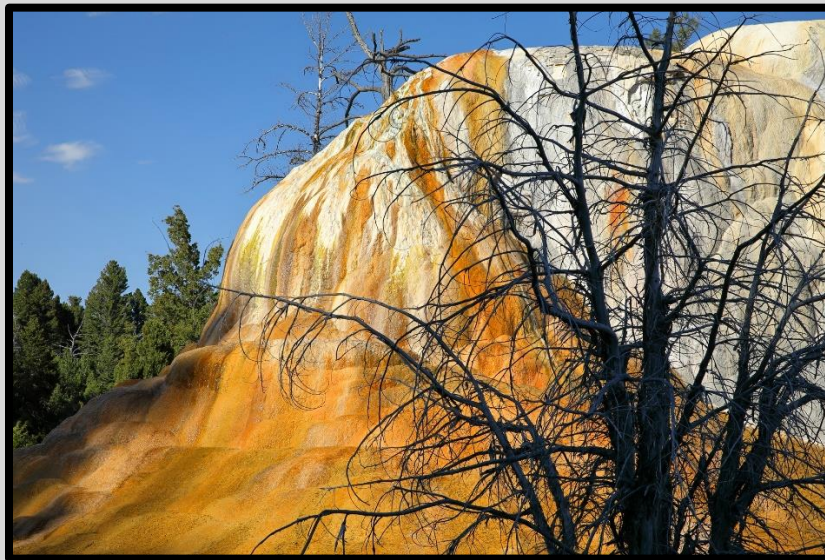


Figure 13 We will photograph many thermal features during this workshop. This is Orange Spring Mound.

Tuition

The fee for this comprehensive workshop is \$3800. This includes:

- **Intensive photo instruction from John and Dixie**
- **All meals beginning with dinner on day one and ending with breakfast 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 all our blinds, feeders, and the reflection pool**
- **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. 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. We add a 3.5% service charge for using credit cards to cover the banking fees we must pay.

Refunds and Cancellation Policy

If written Cancellation is Received:

A \$1000 non-refundable deposit is required to enroll in this workshop. The balance is due 120 days before departure.

Cancellation fee:

90 days or more before departure: \$100% of deposit

89 to 61 days before departure: 75% of tuition is forfeited

60 or fewer days before departure: 100% of tuition is forfeited

Gerlach Nature Photography understands that challenges in life may cause you to cancel your trip with us. Broken bones, illness, severe weather, natural disasters, covid concerns, sick pets, family troubles, and many other reasons may cause you to have to change your plans. No matter the reason for your cancellation, we will follow our cancellation policy exactly as written. Now that we are conducting mostly all-inclusive workshops, fees for rental housing or motels, ranch fees, snowcoach fees, and many other fees must often be paid far in advance, and most are non-refundable to us. Should you decide to cancel the photo workshop, we still must pay for what you would have used even though you are not there. That means we cannot refund your money beyond what is in our cancellation policy. We wish we could be more generous, but we simply cannot afford to absorb significant financial losses because you cancel. When you enroll in our workshop, we reserve a spot for you and most often turn away others who would have gladly paid for your spot. Though we often have a waiting list, in most cases people on the waiting list make other plans and are not available to replace you. If we can get a replacement for you (no guarantee) or you get a replacement, then we are happy and able to make a generous refund. We hope you understand our position. We wish to continue to offer high-quality photo workshops for small groups at reasonable prices. Gerlach Nature Photography encourages everyone to purchase Trip Cancellation Insurance that covers the

most likely reasons you would cancel. And to be safe, you can buy 'Cancel for Any Reason' trip cancellation insurance. Many companies that provide trip cancellation insurance are found on the web. Two well-known insurance companies include:

- www.allianztravelinsurance.com
- www.travelguard.com

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 will pick you up in Bozeman at the airport on the first day of the workshop. If you are driving to the workshop, let us know so we can arrange to meet. Once we pick everyone up in Bozeman, we drive 100 miles back to our home and help you move into your room and prepare you for the next morning photo session.

Please let Dixie know your flight arrival and departure times prior to your arrival on the first day of the workshop. Call us when you land so we can pick you up. It is possible to fly into Bozeman the night before and we can pick you up at your chosen hotel. Please book your flight to arrive before 4pm and your return flight home after the workshop should be no earlier than noon. We plan to get everyone to the airport by 10am on the last day.



Figure 14 Expect to get plenty of chances to photographing bathing birds like this Audubon's warbler, one of our more common visitors in late August.



We added the red leaves to show autumn is coming and this male evening grosbeak decided to rearrange them. The Canon 100-500mm lens works perfectly for photographing wildlife at reflection pools as the subjects are only 8-12 feet away.



Figure 15 An adult white-crowned sparrow at the reflection pool

Below are examples of macro photos we shoot under controlled conditions with LED lamps and photo backgrounds in our garage. You will learn all of this!





Figure 16 A yellow-pine chipmunk, MacGillivray's warbler, chipping sparrow, American robin, a reflection pool, and a pine siskin .



Figure 18 House Wren



Figure 17 Broad-tailed Hummingbird



Figure 19 Orange-crowned warbler



Figure 20 Wilson's warbler



Figure 21 White-crowned sparrow