

# Gerlach Nature Photography

[www.gerlachnaturephoto.com](http://www.gerlachnaturephoto.com)

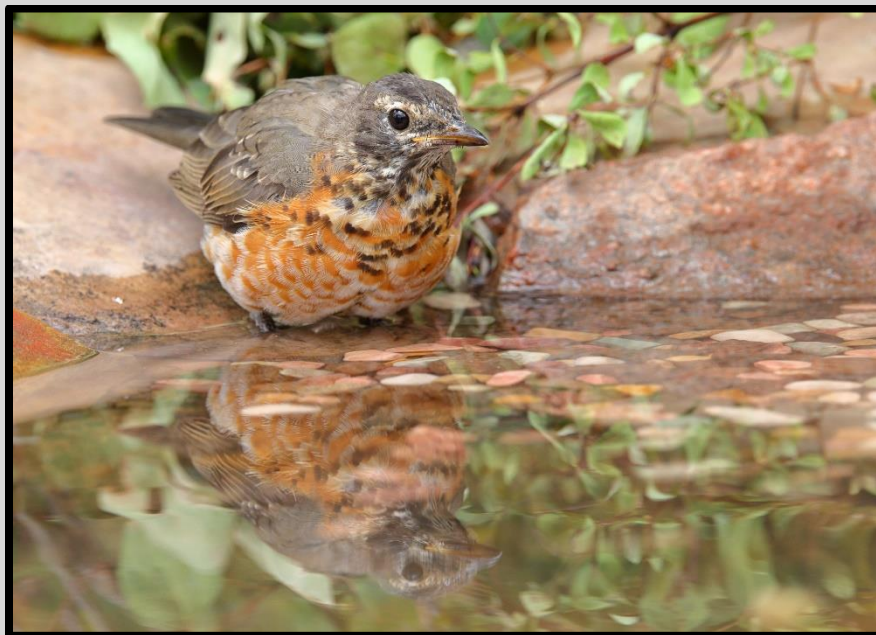
## Songbirds at Our Water Drips

### Island Park, Idaho

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

**Only 3 Participants!**

**August 27 – Sept. 2, 2023**



*Figure 1 Young American robins relish a dip in the pool. This is a pool made by using a plastic Jet Sled and then filling in the far 1/3 of it with gravel while also using flat stones to hide the plastic edges of the sled. When the bird is about to enter the water, the dripping water is turned off from the blind to obtain better reflection. We teach you how to easily and inexpensively do all of this.*

We love spending summer at home and know many of you would thoroughly enjoy it too. Our home is on a mountain slope at 6600 feet. The average Sept. 1 high is 73 and the average low is 43 degrees. Humidity is always low and that makes our weather truly delightful. Our ten acres border the national forest and is the perfect place to summer. Our property is alive with birds who are attracted to our sunflower seed feeders and water drips.

# 10 Reasons our Water Drips 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 drips and that gives you ample time to shoot numerous images.
3. In addition to photographing wildlife as they approach the water drip, you get opportunities to photograph them bathing and sometimes catch nice reflections of them in the water pool.
4. Each day is a new adventure as the species often change from day to day during late August. For example, one morning 3 western tanagers might visit your drip while the next morning five Audubon's warblers and two house wrens are the stars.
5. The last week of August is a super week with lots of bird visitors just arriving during the night from the north as peak migration for songbirds happens then.
6. Water works well because some small mammals are attracted. Yellow-pine chipmunks and red squirrels are the likely visitors, but with some luck, you might photograph the long-tailed weasel who comes in for water at times.
7. Water draws numerous birds that do not come to seeds we can put out because they prefer fruit and insects, but they are readily attracted with fresh water.
8. No seed particles are present to clutter your water setups.
9. Photos of bathing birds are likely!
10. Peak action for migrant birds at the drips begin a little after sunrise around 6:40am and runs for a couple of hours to 9:30am. Our blinds at the drips are a short 1-minute walk from the house, so easy to get to. Though the drips in the woods slow down after 10:00am, our yard drips remain active all day and are productive during the afternoon.



*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 that makes it

impossible to focus stack. That means if the bird photography slows down, you can shoot high-quality macro images.

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 a couple of times in the afternoon to photograph wildlife 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 an 8-square mile lake, and to the north the Black Mountains tower into the sky. Wildlife is amazingly plentiful on our property.

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 upon your arrival on the first day. On the last day we will have a continental breakfast, then go to Bozeman for your departure flight. If time permits (nobody is flying out before 1pm) we will have a morning shoot before going to the airport.

### **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. Each room is assigned one of them, so you have your own.
2. We **provide transportation** in our Ford Expedition as it easily carries five people in comfort along with 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. **This package includes 17 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 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 superb photo techniques.
5. We have four water drip setups with excellent hides at each location.

### **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 photograph small birds every morning and sometimes in the afternoon too. Since many of the birds are migrants who arrived 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 not make any quick movements. Cameras that have an electronic shutter where the camera is completely silent are best for this type of photography. While local birds that live near your place and visit your seed feeders get used to camera sounds, migrating birds who have never been in our yard, but hear the dripping water and approach to drink and bathe are nervous. Any unusual sound or quick movement by you will flush them and they might not return. Motionless, silent, and well-hidden are the keys to success. On some mornings, we shoot 2000 to 3000 images and may have twenty different birds or more of several species visit the water drips.

Here is the list of birds that we have photographed at our Idaho drips. You will not photograph all of them, but you certainly will get to photograph quite a few 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
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's subspecies)
- Townsend's Warbler
- Wilson's Warbler
- Western Tanager

#### **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 powerful 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 easily make 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 drips!*

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 one.*

## 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 load your images (JPEG only) on 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 drip pools*

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, but you will!*

## **The Workshop Schedule**

We believe in taking our field trips at the times when photo conditions are best. Drip photography of birds is best the first couple hours of the morning and can be quite good at our yard drips during the afternoon. 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. We have multi-flash hummingbird stations set up on our covered deck and all flash gear is provided. The hummingbird stations are best for the last 3 hours of the day.

## **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 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.

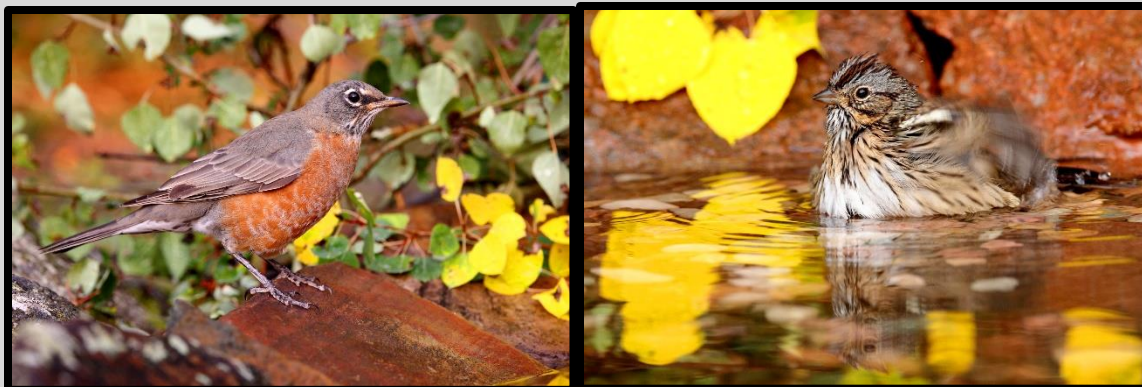
### **Working on Your Images**

Most clients bring a laptop computer and download images to the computer or external hard drive. You 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 as we hope to be able to see your images!

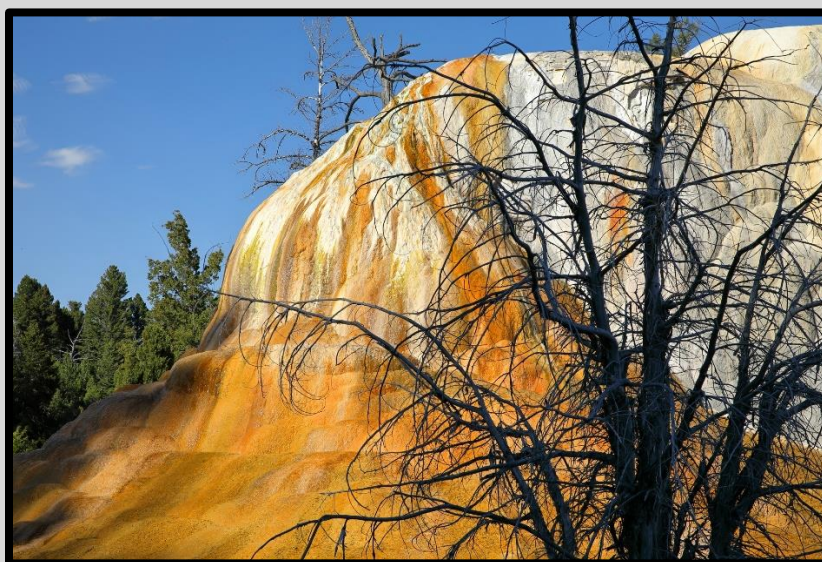
### **Meals**

Snacks are always available. Breakfast will be after photographing the birds at our drips in the morning – usually a little after 9:30 am. We will have 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 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 12 The American robin (left) and the Lincoln's sparrow both are attracted to the reflection pool setup in the middle of an aspen woodlot. Robins readily visit drips in my yard too, but Lincoln's sparrows never venture that far out in the open.*



*Figure 13 We will photograph many thermal features during this workshop, including one of our favorites – Orange Spring Mound.*

### **Tuition**

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

- **Intensive photo instruction from John and Dixie**
- **17 meals beginning with lunch 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, drip setups, flash gear for hummingbirds**

### **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% service charge for using credit cards to cover the banking fees we must pay.

## Refunds and Cancellation Policy

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### 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](http://www.allianztravelinsurance.com)
- [www.travelguard.com](http://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.**

**Please let Dixie know your flight arrival and departure times prior to your arrival on the first day of the workshop on August 27<sup>th</sup>. We will be in Bozeman on the 27<sup>th</sup>, so call us when you land so we can arrange a pick-up time. It is possible to fly into Bozeman the night before and we can pick you up at your chosen hotel, but this is expensive for you. Rooms can easily be over \$300 per night and that is for the budget hotel. If you fly in on the 27<sup>th</sup>, you can eliminate this added cost. If at all possible, please book your flight to arrive before 6pm.**





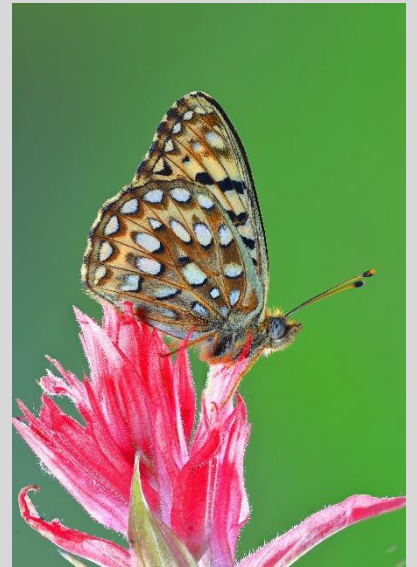
*Figure 14 Expect to get plenty of chances to photographing bathing birds like this Audubon's warbler, one of our more common visitors in late August.*



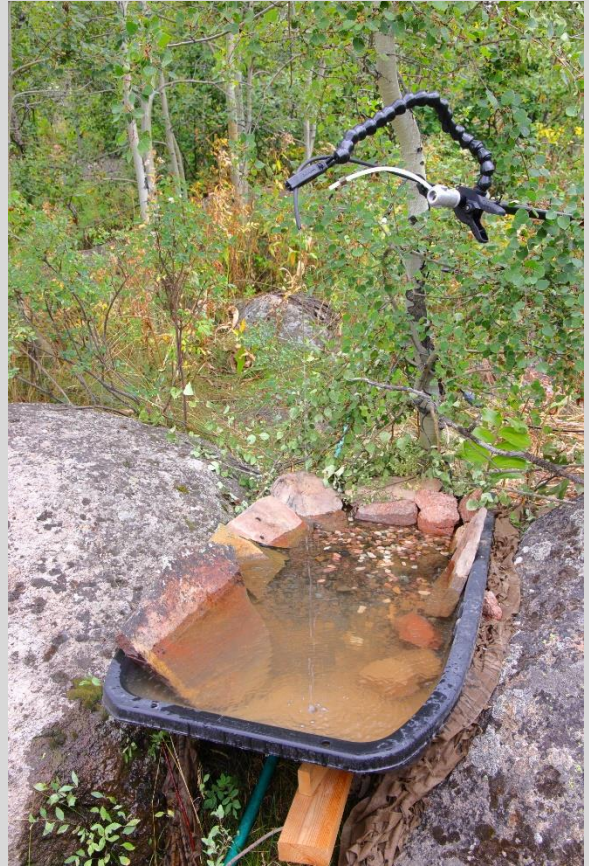
A hermit thrush is attracted to the loudly dripping water in the aspen woodlands. The Canon 100-500mm lens works perfectly for photographing wildlife at water setups when subjects are 6-10 feet away.

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 15 A yellow-pine chipmunk, MacGillivray's warbler, chipping sparrow, American robin, and a view of the reflection pool in the aspen woodlands and a pine siskin .*





Figure 17 House Wren



Figure 16 Broad-tailed Hummingbird



Figure 18 Orange-crowned warbler



Figure 19 Wilson's warbler



Figure 20 White-crowned sparrow