

# Gerlach Nature Photography

## Tucson, Arizona Bird Photography Workshop at the marvelous Desert Photo Retreat

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

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

Feb. 12 (Sat) – 18 (Fri), 2022

\$3300 includes everything

Limited to only 4 participants



*Figure 1 A Northern cardinal searching for the suet we put out for him among the flowers..*

The Desert Photo Retreat is designed for wildlife photographers. Ron Niebrugge and his wife Janine winter far back in the Tortolita Mountains a little north of Tucson, Arizona. The wintering birdlife there is amazing. Ron is also a professional nature photographer and he built photo blinds on his property that

are tremendous for bird photography. When we visited, Dixie and I were amazed at how many birds continually arrived at the attractive photo setups. We shot thousands of images in no time at all. All birds are photographed at close range with telephoto lenses in the 400-600mm range.

During mid-February, you will photograph:

Gila woodpecker	Verdin
Gilded flicker	Anna's hummingbird
Mockingbird	Loggerhead shrike
Canyon towhee	White-crowned sparrow
Abert's towhee	House finch
Cactus wren	Lesser goldfinch
Rock wren	Black-throated sparrow
Phainopepla	Costa's hummingbird

The Desert Retreat is exclusively reserved for our private group for three full days beginning with afternoon photography, then two full days of morning and afternoon shooting, and ending after the morning photo session on our final day at the retreat. Tucson is full of ponds where many ducks winter. When not photographing at the Desert Retreat, we will take you to some of our favorite spots for duck photography too. And you cannot go to Tucson and not photograph the impressive giant saguaro cactus forest, so we will lead you to some super saguaro spots. We will take you to the famous Desert Museum for wildlife and cactus photos too.

This is a fantastic bird photography trip that is physically easy. Sit in a shaded blind and wildlife continually come to you – perfect! John and Dixie are busy setting up attractive perches for your photos and changing them at times to provide a variety of colorful settings.

For more info about Desert Photo Retreat, visit Ron and Janine online.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U001XVRd99g>

<https://desert-photo-retreat.com/>



*Figure 2 The curved-billed thrasher posing on a cholla stick.*

What you will learn:

Take your bird photography to the next level! John and Dixie are avid bird photographers. In 2020 and 2021, they shot more than 250,000 bird images from their floating blinds, seed feeder setups in their yard, water features built in the nearby aspen forest and their two months in south Texas and southern Arizona. We are experts at bird photography and will teach you how to consistently shoot outstanding images. We will also shoot some giant saguaro landscapes.

- Learn to focus precisely and instantly
- Learn to shoot perfect exposures easily and quickly

- When to use manual exposure or Auto ISO to achieve excellent exposures
- How to select and attract birds to photogenic perches
- How to use long lenses effectively and easily
- Tripods and heads that work best for wildlife
- How to work the natural light for best results
- How to produce strong compositions
- Optimize your camera settings for wildlife photography
- How to edit bird photos with Canon's DPP4 and post them on the web
- How to photograph the giant saguaro cactus forest
- Night landscape photography

### Field Trips

We all travel together in our Ford Expedition Max SUV. Each morning field trip begins early as we plan to be at the Photo Retreat or duck pond at sunrise when bird activity is high, and the light is superb. We will shoot thousands of images, break for a hearty lunch, and return to the desert retreat in the afternoon for more photos.



*Figure 3 Northern cardinals are common here and readily attracted to the water and food provided at the Desert Retreat.*

### **What's Included:**

- **Intensive photo instruction** from John and Dixie in the classroom and in the field
- **17 meals** beginning with dinner on the first evening and ending with breakfast on the last morning
- **6 nights lodging** at: Holiday Inn Express
- **All ground** transportation in our Ford Expedition Max. This includes pickup and return to the airport.
- **Teaching slide programs**
- **All Desert Photo Retreat fees** for using their blinds and property
- **Answers to all the questions you care to ask!!!!**

**Not Included:**

- Airfare
- Items of a personal nature, such as alcoholic drinks
- Trip Cancellation Insurance

**Lodging:**

Holiday Inn Express  
 North Marana  
 8373 N. Cracker Barrel Road  
 Tucson, AZ 85743  
 (520) 572-4777

We have a block of rooms reserved for our group. You do not need to contact the hotel unless you wish to extend your stay. We take care of the lodging for you.

**Price and Payments**

Price:

\$3300 for one participant with a private motel room

\$2900 each for two participants sharing a room

**Payment:**

Full payment for the Feb. 2022 workshop is two 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.

A \$1000 per-person **deposit** holds your space in this workshop.

**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)

89 to 61 days prior: 50% of trip fee

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



*Figure 4 The gorgeous pyrrhuloxia is striking in its gray and red feathers.*

## February 12 - 18, 2022 Bird and Landscape Photography Workshop

### **Itinerary**

Day 1: Saturday (Feb 12)

Feb. 12: Fly to Tucson International Airport (TUS)) in Tucson, Arizona. Let us know when you arrive. We will pick you up at the airport. We meet in the hotel lobby at 6 pm local time. Then we take you to dinner. When we return to the hotel, we will have a short meeting to prepare you for the week. Please make your flight arrangements to arrive no later than 4pm. If you arrive later, you can take a cab to the hotel.

Day 2: Sunday (Feb 13)

We begin our shoot at a local park where waterfowl are easy to photograph. In the afternoon, we begin our three days photographing the wildlife at the Desert Retreat.

Day 3 & 4: Mon and Tues (Feb 14 & 15)

Both mornings and afternoons are spent at the Desert Retreat photographing wildlife. When we get proper conditions, we will show you how to photograph the night landscapes of the saguaros.

Day 5: Wed (Feb 16)

We spend our morning at the Desert Photo Retreat. Then we enjoy a splendid lunch and rest a bit. In the late afternoon, we photograph landscapes.

Day 6: Thurs (Feb 17)

We photograph ducks at one of our favorite locations. We have several and will lead you to the most productive spot. In the evening, we will photograph desert landscapes. We will take you to dinner at a nearby restaurant, and then return to the hotel to view everyone's images shot during the week. This is a wonderful way to crown such a busy and productive week.

Day 7: Friday (Feb 18)

This is our farewell day as we return you to the airport for your departure flight.



*Figure 5 The beautiful house finch is a common visitor at the Desert Retreat.*

What to bring:

### **Clothes**

South Arizona is quite pleasant during February. Bring warm clothes, though, for early morning excursions. Dress in layers to stay warm at dawn and take some layers off to stay cool during the rest of the day. Enclosed shoes protect you from cactus spines, spiders, and possible scorpions.

This will help you plan for the weather. Rain is unlikely, but possible.

### **Sunrise/Sunset and Average Temperatures for Feb 15**

February 15 Sunrise: 7:07am Sunset: 6:11pm

average temp 70 degrees for the high and 44 degrees for the low

### **Camera Equipment**

Camera Gear:

- 2 cameras (one as a spare)
- Plenty of memory cards as it is easy to shoot thousands of images each day (500GB is not too much)

- Computer with external hard drives to download your new images
- Camera lens that reaches out to 500mm. That can include a crop factor camera. For example, a Canon 100-400mm lens on a Canon camera with a 1.6x crop factor is like having a 160mm – 640mm lens.
- A sturdy tripod for holding a heavy long lens
- Shorter zoom lens for photographing the blinds and our activities at the ranch such as a 70-200mm
- John uses a Canon R5 mirrorless camera with a Canon 600mm f/4 lens and this is attached to a Wimberly Gimbal head on a sturdy Gitzo tripod and Dixie uses Nikon gear that includes a D500 or D6 with a 500mm PF lens or a Tamron 150-600mm.

Examples: Long prime lenses of 500mm and 600mm are excellent for wildlife. You can buy a long lens or use teleconverters on a shorter lens. For example, a 1.4x teleconverter used on a 400mm lens gives it the reach of a 560mm lens.



*Figure 6 A view of the reflection pool from inside the blind..*

**Important Notice:** The enormous number of images our workshop participants shoot creates their biggest problem. It is rather easy to shoot 4,000 images per day and we had one client shoot over 10,000 images per day. Downloading and storing this many images can become a problem. We would have a minimum of

512GBs of memory card space to last all day and a 5TB external hard drive to download the images to. And you must have plenty of extra camera batteries and bring your battery charger. AC power is available at the Desert Retreat, so it is possible to recharge your batteries there. But it is best to have enough batteries to last all day so you can recharge them in your hotel room at night.

Here is what John uses to handle images shot with his Canon R5. He has six LP-E6NH batteries for the Canon R5 that uses up battery power quickly since everything is electronic and two chargers. His camera takes two types of cards – the SD and the CFexpress. John has two 128GB Hoodman 2000x memory cards and two Sony CF express 256 GB cards. That is a total of 760GB for the day. Please be prepared for the number of images you will surely shoot!!!!!!!!!!!!



*Figure 7 Gila woodpeckers are fun to photograph and frequent visitors at the Desert Retreat setups.*



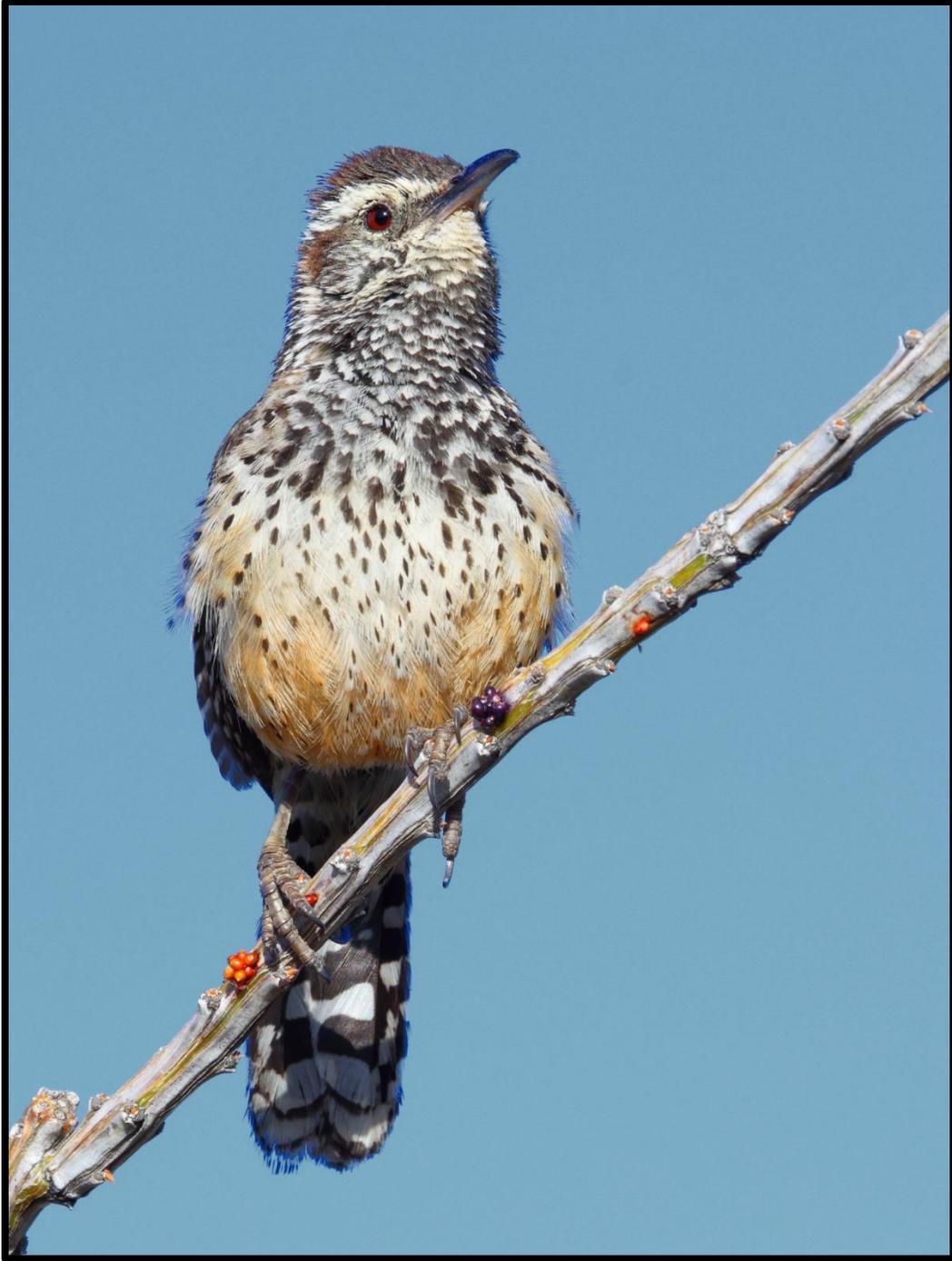
*Figure 8 We like to add flowers whenever we can to the setup. This adds a bit of interest to this gila woodpecker.*



*Figure 9 This will be our base camp at the Desert Retreat where we have electric power, water, and nice chairs to rest on. Notice how remote this camp is compared to Tucson.*



*Figure 10 We just love the red patch on the gila woodpecker.*



*Figure 11 We may get lucky and photograph the cactus wren. This is the largest wren in the US.*



*Figure 12 We will photograph landscapes on some mornings and evenings. Giant saguaros are everywhere. On the ponds in Tucson, we will photograph a number of ducks that winter there, including ring-necked, scaup and canvasback.*

