

Gerlach Nature Photography
Grand Tetons National Park
Winter Wildlife Photography
Workshop

Dec. 3 – 8, 2024

Dec. 9 – 14, 2024

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 on sunny mornings.



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 where they are easy to spot!

Grand Teton National Park offers spectacular landscapes with magnificent mountains towering above the rolling hills and rivers of western Wyoming. Shoot numerous 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 allow close approach of 35 yards. We may photograph elk and bison, and perhaps river otters along Flat creek. Many duck species 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 usually within close photo range. 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 in the National Elk Refuge. Each afternoon 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 in 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 or Auto ISO
- 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
- Mirrorless camera strategies
- How to shoot sharp images during snowstorms



Figure 5 Sagebrush fields are the typical habitat you find bull moose in early December near Jackson. They eat bitterbrush that grow among the sagebrush.

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 first light. Evening field trips begin about three hours before sunset. We seek wildlife photo opportunities in the evening and stop at great locations for evening light that hopefully fills the western sky with crimson clouds.

Average December Temperatures

High: 30

Low: 11

Sunrise and Sunset on Dec 8

Sunrise: 7:44 am

Sunset: 4:47 pm

What's Included:

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

- **All meals:** Beginning with a delicious dinner on the first night and ending with breakfast on the final day of the workshop. You will take you to several excellent restaurants in Jackson. 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
- **Free hotel shuttle service** to and from the airport
- **Teaching slide programs** on landscape and wildlife photography 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 for sunrise to Jackson Lake for sunset

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 how the week will run.

Price and Payments

Price:

\$3100 for a private suite

\$2800 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. (3.5% service charge added if using a credit card)

A non-refundable \$1000 per-person **deposit** holds your space in this photo workshop. Full payment is due four months before the workshop begins.

Refunds and Cancellation Policy

90 days or more before departure: 50% of tuition is forfeited

89 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 or health issues, 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 many 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. 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. Even though we often have a waiting list, in most cases those 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 to be more generous with the 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 for a higher price. Many companies that provide trip cancellation insurance are found on the web. Two well-known insurance companies include:

www.allianztravelinsurance.com

www.travelguard.com

Let us hope you never need to cancel your trip with us or anyone else! Happy travels!

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 where we drive you to a fine restaurant for 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 7:10 am before sunrise to be on location for the rising sun to light the landscape. 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 short 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 and to enjoy the early winter magic of this fabulous park.

With our two SUVs, four participants ride in each vehicle allowing plenty of room for participants 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 35-50 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. Normally, we find moose much closer to the road where we can park.



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 covers 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.

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 $300\text{mm} \times 1.6 = 480\text{mm}$ 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 2023, John carried these lenses with him at all times and they were quite adequate. The lenses were 24-105mm, 70-200mm, and 100-500mm. This covers the range of 24-800mm 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

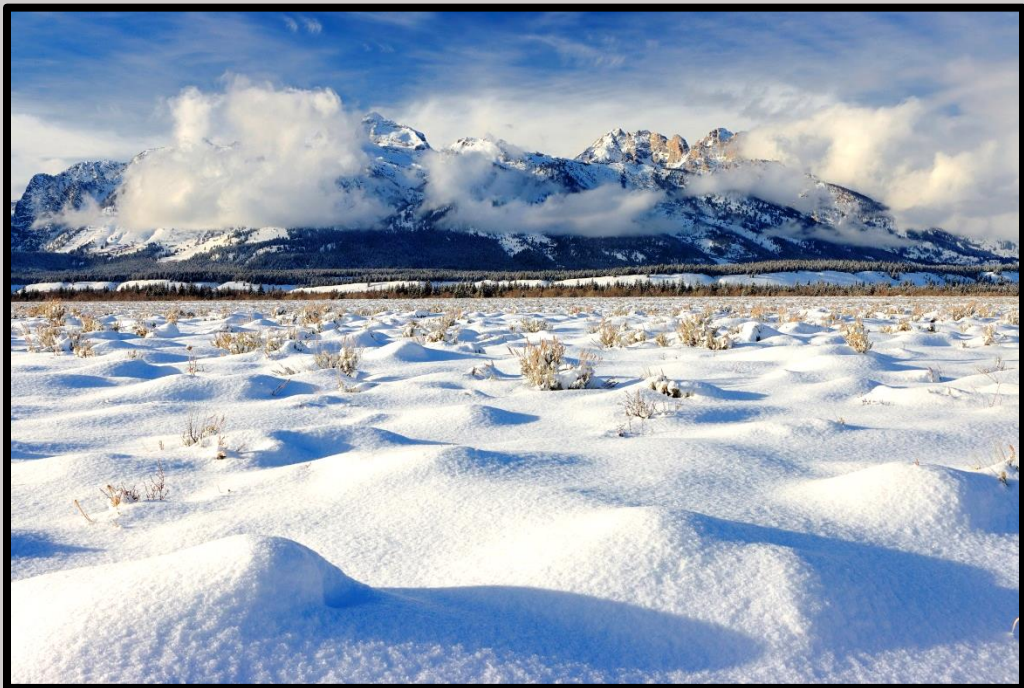


Figure 11 The Grand Tetons in December. With the close snow bumps in the foreground, focus stacking this scene with three images focused at different distances is the best way to capture the tremendous depth of field. A 16mm focal length made the foreground big and dramatic.



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.

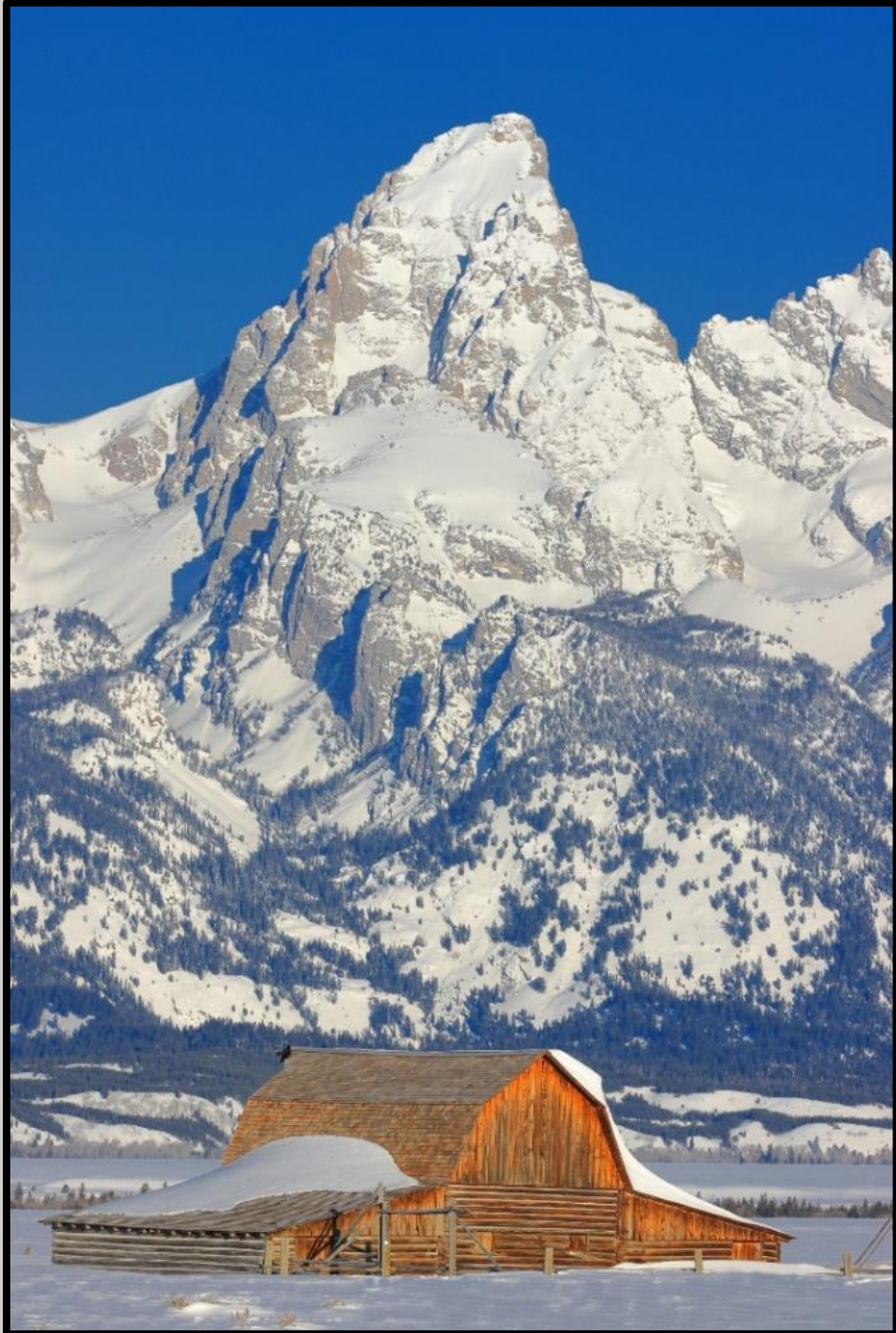


Figure 14 Using a longer lens from a distance makes the Tetons larger in relation to the barn.



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 of 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.



Figure 22 Jackson Lake can get incredible colors from the red light coloring the clouds at sunset during winter.



Figure 23 Two Bighorn sheep at the National Elk Refuge that is adjacent to Jackson.



Figure 24 Focus stacking was used to get a sharply focused image of this bull moose in the heavily falling snow.



Figure 25 The lonely Cunningham cabin on a cool winter day.