

Gerlach Nature Photography

Arizona Bird Photography Workshop

at the marvelous Desert Photo Retreat

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

www.gerlachnaturephoto.com

3 Sessions in 2023

Feb. 11 (Sat) – 17 (Fri), 2023

March 18 (Sat) – 24 (Fri), 2023

March 29 (Wed) – April 4 (Tues), 2023

\$3400 includes everything

Maximum of **only 4** participants



Figure 1 A Northern cardinal searching for food we hid among the flowers..

The Desert Photo Retreat is devoted to wildlife photographers. Ron Niebrugge and his wife Janine winter far back in the Tortolita Mountains north of Tucson, Arizona. The wintering birdlife there is amazing. Ron is a professional nature photographer who built photo blinds on his property that are terrific for bird photography. During our week at the retreat in 2022, everyone shot thousands of images each day of the many birds and squirrels that continually arrived at the attractive photo setups. All birds are photographed at close range with telephoto lenses in the 400-600mm range.

You will photograph at the retreat:

Gila woodpecker (abundant)	Gambel's quail
Gilded flicker	White-crowned sparrow
Mockingbird	House finch
Canyon towhee	Lesser goldfinch
Abert's towhee	Black-throated sparrow
Cactus wren	White-winged dove
Rock wren	Rock Ground Squirrel
Harris's Ground Squirrel	Northern Cardinal
Curved-billed Thrasher	Pyrrhuloxia
Mourning dove	Costa's Hummingbird

The Desert Retreat is exclusively reserved for our private group for three full days beginning with afternoon on one day, then two full days of dawn and late afternoon sessions and ending after the morning photo session on the fourth day. The afternoon sessions are at a feeder station and the morning session is at the reflection pool that attracts numerous birds.

When not photographing at the Desert Retreat, we will photograph ducks on a pond in Tucson, visit the Sonoran Desert Museum, and shoot giant saguaros landscapes in the foothills. Last year our group photographed redhead, canvasback, American wigeon, mallard, ring-necked duck, Northern shoveler, and ridiculously tame black-crowned night herons and great egrets.

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.

Learn more about the Desert Photo Retreat by visiting Ron and Janine online.

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

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



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

What you will learn:

Take your bird photography to the next level! John and Dixie are avid bird photographers. Since 2020, they have shot more than 500,000 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

Field Trips

We 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 to shoot thousands of additional photos.



Figure 3 Northern cardinals are common here and readily attracted to the 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
 8373 North Cracker Barrel
 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 assign you to a room in the block we are holding.

Price:

\$3400 for one participant with a private motel room

\$3000 each for two participants sharing a room

Payment:

Full payment for your workshop is due 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. Call Dixie at (812) 350-0799 to use a credit card.

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 like credit card charges and a \$100 cancellation fee

89 to 61 days prior: 50% of trip fee

60 days or less: no refund unless we can refill your spot. If we can refill your spot, then we only charge a \$100 cancellation fee

We strongly suggest buying trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment.



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

February 11 - 17, 2023 Bird and Landscape Photography Workshop

Itinerary

Day 1: Sat (Feb 11)

Fly to Tucson International Airport (TUS)) in Tucson, Arizona. Let us know when you will 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.

Day 2: Sun (Feb 12)

We begin our shoot at a local park where waterfowl are easy to photograph or at the Desert Museum. Our choice that first morning depends on weather. In the afternoon, we begin our three days photographing the wildlife at the Desert Retreat.

Day 3 & 4: Mon and Tues (Feb 13 & 14)

Both mornings and afternoons are spent at the Desert Retreat photographing wildlife.

Day 5: Wed (Feb 15)

We spend our morning at the Desert Photo Retreat. Then we enjoy lunch at one of the many restaurants in the area. In the late afternoon, we photograph landscapes.

Day 6: Thursday (Feb 16)

We photograph in the morning at the Desert Museum or duck pond for photos and photograph landscapes in the evening. We have a pizza party at the hotel and view the photos you shoot during the week. This is a wonderful way to crown such a busy and productive week.

Day 7: Friday (Feb 17)

We eat breakfast together at the hotel and say good-bye to our little “family” of photographers. We are available all day to take you to the airport.

March 18 - 24, 2023, Bird, and Landscape Photography Workshop

Itinerary

Day 1: Sat (March 18)

Fly to Tucson International Airport (TUS)) in Tucson, Arizona. Let us know when you are arriving. 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.

Day 2: Sun (Mar 19)

Depending on the weather, we photograph in the morning at the city duck pond or go to the Sonoran Desert Museum. We begin our bird photo sessions at the Desert Retreat in the afternoon.

Day 3 &4 (Mar 20 and 21)

We photograph the birds in the morning and afternoon till sunset at the Desert Retreat.

Day 5: (Mar 22)

We photograph birds at dawn at the Desert Retreat and then shoot landscapes late in the afternoon.

Day 6: (Mar 23)

We visit the local Desert Museum or duck pond for photos and photograph landscapes late in the evening. We have a pizza party at the hotel and view the photos you shoot during the week. This is a wonderful way to crown such a busy and productive week.

Day 7: Friday (March 24)

We eat breakfast together at the hotel and say good-bye to our little “family” of photographers. We are available all day to take you to the airport.

March 29 - April 4, 2023, Bird, and Landscape Photography Workshop

Itinerary

Day 1: Wed (March 29)

Fly to Tucson International Airport (TUS)) in Tucson, Arizona. Let us know when you are arriving. 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.

Day 2: Thurs (March 30)

We begin our shoot at a local park where waterfowl are easy to photograph or at the Desert Museum. Our choice that first morning depends on weather. In the afternoon, we begin our three days photographing the wildlife at the Desert Retreat.

Day 3 & 4: Friday and Saturday (Mar 31 and April 1)

Both mornings and afternoons are spent at the Desert Retreat photographing wildlife.

Day 5: Sun (April 2)

We spend our morning at the Desert Photo Retreat. Then we enjoy lunch at one of the many restaurants in the area. In the late afternoon, we photograph landscapes.

Day 6: Monday (April 3)

We visit the local Desert Museum or duck pond for photos and photograph landscapes late in the evening. We have a pizza party at the hotel and view the

photos you shoot during the week. This is a wonderful way to crown such a busy and productive week.

Day 7: Tuesday (April 4)

We eat breakfast together at the hotel and say good-bye to our little “family” of photographers. We are available all day to take you to the airport.



Figure 5 The beautiful house finch will offer you numerous photo opportunities.

What to bring:

Clothing Strategy

South Arizona is quite pleasant during February. Bring warm clothes, though, for early morning. Dress in layers to stay warm at dawn and take some layers off to stay cool during the afternoon. Wear enclosed shoes to protect you from cactus spines.

Weather Conditions

Rain is unlikely, but possible. On Feb. 15, sunrise is 7:07am and sunset is 6:11 pm. The average Feb. temp is 70 degrees for the high and 44 degrees for the low. On April 1, sunrise is 6:11 am and sunset is 6:43pm. The average high is 80 degrees, and the low is 65 degrees.

Camera Equipment

Camera Gear:

- 2 cameras (one as a spare)
- Plenty of memory cards as you are likely 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 tripod for holding a long lens at the duck pond or when shooting landscapes. We did not use a tripod in the blinds because bean bags are provided, and they work well as a shooting platform. That gives all of us more room in the blind.
- Shorter zoom lens for photographing the blinds and our activities at the ranch such as a 70-200mm
- In 2022, John used the Canon R5 mirrorless camera with the Canon 100-500mm RF zoom lens quite effectively. Dixie used a Nikon Z9 with a 150-600mm zoom 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 6,000 images per day and we had one client shoot over 10,000 images per day. Downloading and

storing this many images can become a huge problem. We would have a minimum of 512GBs of memory card space to last all day and a 2TB external hard drive to download the images to. Have plenty of extra camera batteries and bring two battery chargers. AC power is available at the Desert Retreat, so it is possible to recharge batteries while there. But it is best to have enough batteries to last all day so you can recharge them each night in your hotel room.

John has four LP-E6NH batteries for the Canon R5 and two chargers. His camera takes two types of cards – the SD and the CFexpress. John has a 256GB SanDisk card and a 256GB Sony Touch CF express card in his camera and that stores thousands of images. That is a total of 512GBs 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. They are incredibly abundant at the Desert Retreat. You could call them a “flock of woodpeckers.”



Figure 8 Curved-billed Thrasher



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



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



Figure 11 Gambel's quail are common at the retreat.



Figure 12 The Harris antelope ground squirrel often comes to the reflection pool in the morning to drink.



Figure 13 Harris Ground Squirrels frequently pose for you too!



Figure 14 A white-winged dove makes a gorgeous image at the reflection pool where you will be each morning.

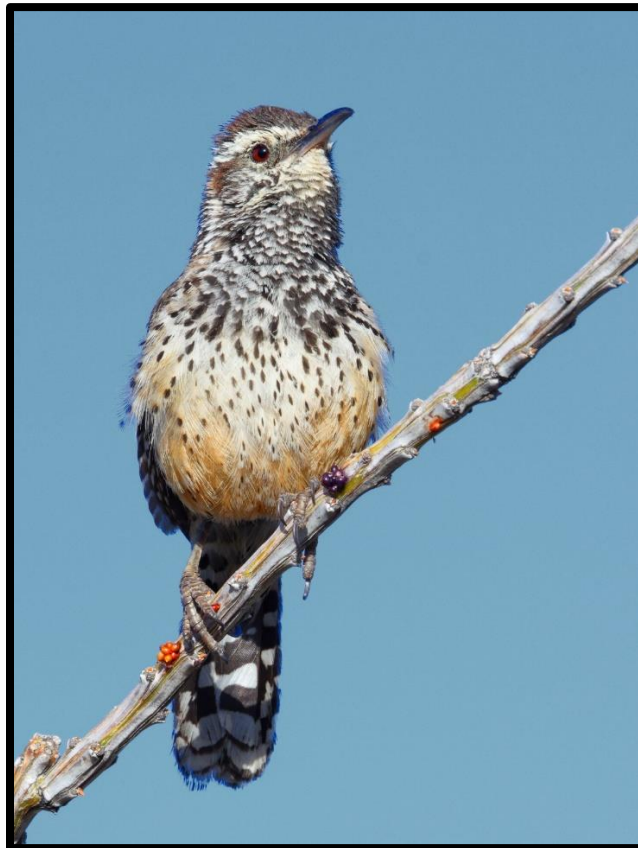


Figure 15 We may get lucky and photograph the cactus wren. This is the largest wren in the US.



Figure 16 Lesser Goldfinch at the Reflection Pool



Figure 17 A young, black-crowned night heron on the duck pond in Tucson. Photographed from a distance of 10 feet.

