



# YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

## YELLOWSTONE BIRDS: PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

### Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR - SUMMER 2023

**INSTRUCTOR:** Forrest Rowland

**INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY:** Forrest Rowland is a published ornithologist and photographer who has happily resided in the Greater Yellowstone Ecoregion for the past 13 years. Beyond becoming intimately familiar with the resident and migratory birds of our region, he is an expert in the birds of Montana, the United States, and South America, where he has held or currently holds seats on Rare Bird Committees, conservation committees and non-profit boards. During the course of his career in avian conservation biology, expedition planning, ecotourism business development, and photography Forrest has been honored to lead birding and wildlife adventures in more than 50 countries on 6 continents. He is excited to bring his passion for birds and ecology to this course, and share his knowledge and love of Yellowstone's amazing animals with you!

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:** This course is an activity **level 3** and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared to hike up to 5 miles per day, comfortably, with elevation gains up to 1000 feet. Some off trail hiking possible.\*

*\*All field activities will be conducted as a group. If you cannot meet the activity level expectations during your program, you may be restricted from participation in daily outings. We will not alter program itineraries or activities to accommodate participants who cannot meet the expectations of the stated activity level.*

**LOCATION:** Course begins at the Yellowstone Forever classrooms located in Gardiner, MT.

**PROGRAM DATES & TIMES:** The program begins at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, and ends on Friday, May 19 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

**LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT:** No lodging is provided for this course, however, there may limited lodging available through Yellowstone Forever at the Yellowstone Field Overlook Campus. For more information, please contact the Institute at [institute@yellowstone.org](mailto:institute@yellowstone.org). You can also find more information on Gardiner based lodging here: [Gardiner, MT - Lodging](#). (Yellowstone River Motel will grant you 10% off their rooms if you mention that you are taking a Yellowstone Forever Field Seminar.)

**MEALS:** You will need to bring your own food; lunch should be able to travel in the field with you.

For general information about the facilities, preparing for classes, what to expect, cancellation policies, and more, please see the [Gardiner Field Seminars - Summer General Information](#) document.

## FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

There are few places on Earth that offer the opportunity to observe, enjoy, and photograph wildlife and birds like Yellowstone National Park. During this workshop we will spend two full days in Yellowstone learning a number of good photographic practices and fieldcraft techniques by exploring a deeper understanding of both the charismatic megafauna and the fantastic birds of the Greater Yellowstone Ecoregion. We will spend time with such iconic species as Sandhill Crane, Golden Eagle, Mountain Bluebird, and Trumpeter Swan capturing their nesting and courtship behaviors at the height of breeding season! With luck, rarer species such as Dusky Grouse, Northern Pygmy-Owl, or Williamson's Sapsucker might be found, among many others. While seeking out the bird shots we want, we will surely come across unforgettable mammal sightings. Bison with newborns, Wolves on a hunt or at a den, perhaps even a Grizzly Bear rooting for food are among the likely encounters we'll spend time enjoying. By understanding the behaviors and natural history of the species we hope to photograph, we'll learn how to better portray their lives and stories through our images.

We will include a short amount of classroom time for introduction, with more time towards the last afternoon to go over what we've learned, share insights we might have gained together, as a group of enthusiastic citizen scientists, and go over helpful references, tools, gear, and any other topics that you might have queries and interest in. This is a field-intensive course though some small amount of time will be devoted to going over post-processing tips and ideas.

-Forrest

## PROGRAM ITINERARY

The itinerary is designed to take advantage of the best opportunities in the park, but may be adjusted to adapt to weather conditions, wildlife activity, holidays, and road construction. *The details and timing of the agenda are subject to change.*

### **Day 1**      **Evening Orientation**

Welcome and introductions at Yellowstone Forever HQ classroom  
Background information on Instructor and participants/students  
Short Presentation and Q&A

### **Day 2**      **In the Field**

Yellowstone National Park today, visiting known lek sites of Dusky and Ruffed Grouse, nest areas of Williamson's Sapsucker and Hairy Woodpecker, and many others in the Mammoth area. Visit Swan Lake and Hayden Valley for Trumpeter Swan courtship, Common Merganser, & Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck with luck. We might include a brief visit to feeders in Jardine & Gardiner for close studies of Finches, Jays & Clark's Nutcrackers. Any and all wildlife encounters will be fully taken advantage of! With long days of bright light, we'll get an early start and focus our energies on "golden hours" of the day.

### **Day 3**      **In the Field**

We will travel the northern range today to the higher elevation mountains around Cooke City and Silver Gate, as well as spend time in the lush sagebrush steppe of the Lamar Valley, learning more photographic techniques and interpreting the interactions between the birds and big game of the park. The best images tell stories. We will make time today to construct a story from what we're seeing, and try to capture an image imparting that. The afternoon will be spent, in small part, as a wrap-up classroom session sharing our experiences and insights, and covering any questions and further interests you may have, such as post-processing.

## PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

For a full list of recommended equipment for all courses see the [Gardiner Field Seminars - Summer General Information](#) document.

### Required:

- Personal camera equipment
- Notebook and pencil for observations
- Appropriate outdoor gear for elements
- Binoculars

## RECOMMENDED READING

No prior reading is required, but participants might enjoy the following publications, that complement the program. Most publications are available at Yellowstone Forever's online store at [shop.yellowstone.org](http://shop.yellowstone.org) Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15% discount and proceeds directly support the park.

- D.A. Sibley, 2016. *Field Guide to Western Birds*. Knopf.
- T. Flach & R. Prum. 2021. *Birds*. Harry M Anderson publishing.
- P. Johnshuard & T. Mangelsen. 2013. *Yellowstone Wildlife: Ecology and Natural History of Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem*. University Press of Colorado.

## WHOM TO CONTACT

**For any questions, concerns, or additional information please contact the following:**

- Program itinerary, health forms, payment, and activity questions please contact Yellowstone Forever at [institute@yellowstone.org](mailto:institute@yellowstone.org) or 406-848-2400
- Road updates, park conditions, and general park information please contact Yellowstone National Park Service at <https://www.nps.gov/yell/contacts.htm>
- If running late for a program, please contact 406-848-2400