



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

SPRING BABIES

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR - SUMMER 2023

INSTRUCTOR: Shauna Baron, M.S.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: Shauna Baron holds a B.S. in Biology, and a M.S. in Science Education. She has had over 25 years of experience as an outdoor educator. She has participated in numerous wildlife studies throughout the U.S., including wolves, bears, fishers, bobcats, sea turtles, swans, pelicans, and ravens. Shauna saw her first wild wolf while volunteering for the Yellowstone Wolf Project in 1996 and she has been working to protect wolves ever since. Over the years, she has focused her career on outdoor education and wildlife conservation, including work as a field biologist and outreach coordinator for the USFWS Red Wolf Recovery Program in North Carolina, a forest carnivore researcher for the University of Vermont, as well as a volunteer at the Colorado-based Mission: Wolf program. For the past 17 years, she has been working as a naturalist guide in Yellowstone National Park, developing outdoor educational classes. Her work specializes in programs for disabled veterans, inner-city youth, and autistic groups. She is a published author and editor, and when she is not writing or guiding a group, she can be found sitting on a hill watching wildlife, with a scope to her eye or book in her lap.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is an activity **level 1** and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared to hike up to 1 mile per day, comfortably, through relatively flat terrain on maintained trails.*

**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: Lamar Buffalo Ranch – Yellowstone National Park, WY

PROGRAM DATES & TIMES: The program begins at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, and ends on Saturday, June 3, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT: Lodging check-in begins at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, June 4, 2023.

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 [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.

FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

Welcome to Yellowstone's northern range—a wildlife hotspot renowned throughout the world for its “charismatic megafauna” but also home to many rare or potentially threatened species. In this course, we will spend our days looking for and discussing the amazing diversity of life that makes its home in this rangeland, from mammals to birds to wildflowers.

Classroom discussions will focus on who lives here and how these animals fit into the more complex Yellowstone ecosystem, with videos and pictures to illustrate. These talks will be complemented by plenty of time in the field looking for as many different species as possible at the best times to look for those species. For example, early mornings are great times to search for the shy and elusive wolf pups emerging from their dens, bear cubs following their mothers on daily adventures, or well-hidden elk calves. Late mornings will be spent searching for returning songbirds, raptors, and sandhill cranes busy feeding their chicks, and bison calves running through the meadows testing out their new legs.

Short-distanced walks up to one mile will be offered each afternoon to further explore the wonders of springtime in Yellowstone. We will journey into the field, stepping carefully, as we search for the first of the spring wildflowers bursting into view. We will learn how animals choose their birthing grounds and discuss their many adaptations to help increase the survival rates of their young.

Each day, we will take time to absorb our surroundings and use quiet reflection and inquiry to learn about the natural world, allowing us to learn more than just facts and numbers. To do so, I will encourage you to keep a journal. It can be a way to save memories and feelings about your Yellowstone experience, to keep them fresh in your mind and enable you to share them with others in the future.

The evenings will be up to you. Evenings can be a great time to just take in the changing light from the front porch of the ranch and reflect upon the wonders of the day. But I will offer an optional wildlife-watching adventure one evening if you choose to come along.

Although much of our viewing may be possible from the road, short walks each day (up to 1 mile) will help increase our chances of seeing certain species and give us a deeper appreciation and understanding of the plants and animals that make up this dynamic wildlife habitat. Signs and tracks of various species will also be examined on these walks.

You should be prepared to be outside in Yellowstone's ever-changing springtime weather—sunscreen, good shoes, and a daypack to carry water, extra layers, and possibly lunch are highly suggested, along with binoculars. We will have a few extra pairs of binoculars for those that don't have any and will provide spotting scopes to use on those harder-to-see animals.

I have included a tentative itinerary below, but the bulk of the class can be adapted to people's interests. I will bring a variety of materials designed to assist in identifying animals we may encounter, understanding more deeply what niche or role they play here, and the management concerns that surround many of our more controversial and/or threatened species. Open discussion is always encouraged, so bring your questions, concerns, and even personal experiences with you as we explore one of the most intact and diverse ecosystems on the planet together. I look forward to seeing you this spring at the historic Lamar Buffalo Ranch. Safe travels to all.

- *Shauna Baron, MS*

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** Participants are welcome to check into the Lamar Buffalo Ranch starting at 4:00 p.m.
- 7:00 p.m.** Meet & Greet
Introduction to Lamar Buffalo Ranch and course specifics.
- Days 2-3** Eat breakfast before we leave. You will need your daypack, snacks, water, sunscreen, rain gear, sunhat, and a journal or notebook.
- 7:00 a.m.** Depart for morning wildlife watching
Roadside viewing for wolves, bears, and other animals that are most active in the morning.
- 12:00 p.m.** Lunch break at the ranch
Bring snacks for the field, as this time may change pending wildlife activity
- 1:00 p.m.** Classroom Lunch Lecture
- 2:00 p.m.** Afternoon walk up to 1 mile in wildlife habitat, and wildlife field lecture and reflection activity
- 4:30 p.m.** Return to the ranch for dinner and a break.
- 6:30 p.m.** Optional evening wildlife watching on one of these evenings.
- Day 4** Eat breakfast and pack a lunch before we leave. You will need your daypack, lunch, snacks, water, sunscreen, rain gear, sunhat, and a journal. We will be gone all day.
- T.B.D.** Depart for early morning wildlife watching
Roadside viewing for wolves, bears, and other animals that are most active in the morning.
Search for other wildlife species including songbirds, raptors, and sandhill cranes.
Lunch in the Field
Afternoon walk up to 1 mile in wildlife habitat, wildlife field lecture, reflection activity and closing discussions.
- 5:00 p.m.** End Program
Dinner and Evening on your own
- Day 5** Check out by 9:00 a.m.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

For a full list of recommended equipment for all courses see the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.

Items specific to this course are:

- Journal**, or notebook
- Writing utensil**

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 Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15% discount and proceeds directly support the park.

Websites

- [Yellowstone National Park's website](#) - especially check out the Resources and Issues Guide

Books

- Alden, P. et al. 1998. *National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Rocky Mountain States*. Alfred A. Knopf; New York, NY.
- Craighead, K. 1999. *Large Mammals of the Yellowstone Ecosystem*. Yellowstone Association: Yellowstone National Park, WY.
- Halfpenny, James. 2003. *Yellowstone Wolves in the Wild*. Riverbend Publishing, Helena, MT.
- Kershaw, L., et al. 1998. *Plants of the Rocky Mountains*. Lone Pine Publishing, Auburn WA.
- McEneaney, T. 1988. *Birds of Yellowstone*. Roberts Rinehart: Boulder, CO.
- Smith, Douglas and Gary Ferguson. 2005. *Decade of the Wolf*. First Lyons Press, Guilford, CT.
- Streubel, D. P. 1989. *Small Mammals of the Yellowstone Ecosystem*. Roberts Rinehart: Boulder, CO.

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 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