



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

UNDERSTANDING 'WOLF'

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR – WINTER 2023/24

INSTRUCTOR: Joanna Lambert, PhD

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: Joanna Lambert, Ph.D., is a scientist and tenured professor of animal evolutionary ecology and conservation biology at the University of Colorado – Boulder. She has a deep passion for the natural world resulting in a career spent publishing and teaching about the ecology, evolution, and conservation biology of wild mammals. Her wildlife research has taken her to every continent on the planet though she has spent most time working in equatorial Africa (>30 years) and more recently in Yellowstone National Park where she studies canid biology. One of her proudest recent conservation-related contributions has been in the effort to restore gray wolves to her home state of Colorado, an initiative founded on the science of reintroduction and recovery of wolves to Yellowstone National Park.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is activity **level 3** and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared for brisk hiking, snowshoeing, or skiing up to 5 miles per day with climbs up to 500 feet, including some trail-breaking in snow.

**All field activities will be conducted as a group. If participants cannot meet the activity level expectations during the program, they may be restricted from participation in daily outings. Program itineraries or activities will not be altered 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 Thursday, November 30, 2023, and goes through Sunday, December 3, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT: Lodging check-in begins at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2023 and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, December 4, 2023.

MEALS: This course is not catered. Participants will need to bring their own food; lunch should be able to travel in the field.

For general information about the facilities, preparing for classes, what to expect, cancellation policies, and more, please see the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Winter General Information](#) document.

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Gray wolves are just one of approximately 6,000 mammal species on Earth today. But for humans they are very much more than just a biological species, and always have been. Why do gray wolves loom so large in myth and legend? Why are wolves – the closest living relative of 'man's best friend' – so often despised and ruthlessly persecuted? In this seminar, explore the complicated 70,000+ year relationship that modern humans have had with gray wolves since first encountered dispersing from Africa into Eurasia.

Through engaging lecture, lively discussion, and as much time possible in the field observing wolves (weather and conditions permitting), the class focuses on evolutionary history and how humans interact with wolves and other predators on the landscape. The seminar class will discuss ways of knowing and understanding another species from many perspectives – ecology, behavior, genetics, culture, and psychology. Woven throughout our discussions will be an exploration of the seemingly dichotomous relationship that humans have with wolves versus beloved dog companions and how humans can simultaneously revile and revere another biological species.

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 Welcome

The program starts with an evening orientation. The group will get to know one another and be introduced to life at the Lamar Buffalo Ranch. Throughout the evening, the itinerary and seminar key concepts will be discussed, as well as what to expect to pack for the field each day.

Days 2 - 3 Wildlife Watching and Learning in the Field:

Participants will spend each morning in the field looking for wolves and observing their behavior. If other canids are encountered (red fox, coyote) observation will be made of them as well. After the morning, participants will return to the Lamar Buffalo Ranch for a late lunch, some down time, then a lecture. Each day participants will be given the option of going on a guided natural history hike in which animals will be observed. Early evening animal viewing drive might also be an option. Evenings will include lecture, films, or facilitated group discussion.

Day 4 Wildlife Watching and Learning in the Field:

The group will start the day with early morning wildlife viewing, followed by a hike or snowshoeing session. Depending upon the weather lunch will be in the field or Ranch. After returning to the Ranch mid-afternoon, a lecture and/or roundtable discussion will be held. The class will formally end at 4:00 p.m.

Day 5 Check-Out

Breakfast and check out of cabins by 9:00 a.m.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

This course does not require any specific equipment unless participants wish to bring their own snowshoes. For a full list of what is included in this course, in addition to recommended equipment check out the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Winter General Information](#) document.

RECOMMENDED READING

There are books and reference materials at the ranch for the class to enjoy during the stay. In addition to those materials, the following recommended readings are not required but may enhance the visit.

- Lopez, Barry. *Of Wolves & Men*. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1978
- Smith, Douglas W., et al. *Yellowstone Wolves: Science and Discovery in the World's First National Park*. The University of Chicago Press, 2020.

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