



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

WINTER WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR – WINTER 2023/24

INSTRUCTOR: Meg Sommers

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: Meg Sommers has been an outdoor enthusiast from early childhood. A resident of Cody, Wyoming, she has been photographing wildlife seriously in Yellowstone since 1990 and teaching wildlife photography here since 2010. Meg's nature photography covers the full spectrum, but her passion is to photograph wildlife and help to tell their stories. While her heart will always belong to the Greater Yellowstone area, she has traveled worldwide to seek out new and interesting wildlife. Through her award-winning digital photography, she has found a way to share the beauty and grace of these areas with others. A knowledgeable naturalist, her dual passions for both nature and photography combine with her enthusiasm for sharing the wonders of it all with her students.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is activity level 1 and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared for leisurely hikes up to 1 mile per day through relatively flat terrain on maintained or snow-packed trails.

**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 Wednesday, January 3, 2024, and goes through Saturday, January 6, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT: Lodging check-in begins at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 3, 2024 and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

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

Do you love taking pictures, but your camera is a mystery to you? Do you want to learn more about wildlife and how best to photograph them? Do you want to take your photography to the next level while learning how you can help conserve what you love?

Participants of this course will immerse themselves with fellow enthusiasts in the heart of Yellowstone. This is a basic class where the class will learn not only the fundamentals of photography but also where and how to find wildlife. With full days in the field, there will be plenty of opportunities to practice new skills!

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

Introduction to Lamar Buffalo Ranch and course specifics.

Day 2 Photography Fundamentals and Beyond

The morning will be spent discussing the fundamentals of photography, composition, exposure compensation, equipment selection, and how to use depth of field to a photographer's advantage. In order to find wildlife to photograph, students will also need an understanding of wildlife habits and habitats. While some lecture is necessary, much of the class time will be interactive. After lunch, the class will be in the field looking for wildlife to photograph.

Day 3 Field Excursion

The class will meet early in the morning and head out into the field and stay out late looking for wildlife when wildlife is most often to be seen and photography light is at its best. Mid-day will be spent either discussing animal behavior or photographic techniques or just taking some well-deserved downtime.

Day 4 Field Excursion and Image Review

Early morning will be spent out in the field and the afternoon this day will be in the classroom reviewing student images and working on digital darkroom techniques.

Day 5 Check-Out

Check out of cabins by 9:00 a.m.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

This course requires the items listed below; participants may also 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.

REQUIRED CAMERA GEAR & EQUIPMENT

The class will be traveling through the park together on a 14-passenger bus. Camera equipment, except tripods, will be with participants in their seats. Many participants bring a camera bag packed with camera essentials and a separate small bag for other day essentials and personal items.

- ❑ **Camera Body**
- ❑ **Tripod** – sturdy with camera mount
- ❑ **Interchangeable Lenses** – participants can bring the longest lens they have, but shouldn't neglect smaller ones, such as a wide angle. Typically, this class uses everything from 16mm to 400- 800mm lenses. If students bring a large lens that cannot fit in the bus seat with them, they need to bring a protective case for it to ride in the back of the bus.
- ❑ **Manuals** - camera, lenses, computer software. Lens manuals can be beneficial but not required. If participants don't have a camera manual, they can look up camera manufacturer online and download the manual to refer to during the course.
- ❑ **Teleconverter** – if available.
- ❑ **Batteries** – for cameras and other gadgets. The number of camera batteries students should bring generally depends upon two factors: how quickly an individual camera consumes them and how cold it is outside. (Cold really draws down even the best batteries.) At a minimum, students should have at least one extra.
- ❑ **Battery Charger** – should be rechargeable. There will be plenty of outlets available to recharge devices.
- ❑ **Card Storage** – participants should anticipate that they will be out in the field all day and not able to purchase more card storage or download until later in the evening. Students will need to bring enough storage with them to get through the day.
- ❑ **Laptop** – not required but bring students should bring if they have one and want to use it. Be sure that the software has been preloaded to process images, because there is no internet available to students at the ranch.
- ❑ **Card Reader** - and attachment cord.
- ❑ **Jump Drive or Thumb Drive**
- ❑ **Rain Cover** – this does not need to be fancy, but it does need to be effective, even when the wind is blowing (lightly), for camera and lens as they sit waiting on a tripod.
- ❑ **Large Plastic Resealable Bag** – large enough for camera with largest lens (intact) and sealed up. Ziploc makes blanket-sized bags that work well for this.
- ❑ **Microfiber Cloth** - to dry and clean equipment with.

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.

- Camera Manuals
- Lens Manuals
- Computer Software Manuals – *If missing a manual or book and students use an Adobe product, Scott Kelby books are highly recommended. The book for the version of camera being used is recommended, regardless of how old or outdated. For non-Adobe products, participants should find a manual of some sort, as many can be downloaded online.*

WHOM TO CONTACT

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

- Program itinerary, health forms, payment, and general program 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