

Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures



Sept. 22 – 29, 2016

866.900.1146

800.426.7781

520.558.1146

naturalistjourneys@gmail.com

www.naturalistjourneys.com

or find us on Facebook at

Naturalist Journeys, LLC.



Discover the crisp air, scarce crowds, and incredible wildlife of Yellowstone National Park in the fall. Magnificent bull Elk fill the air with frosty breath and clarion mating calls while cottonwoods shimmer in hues of gold. An early snowfall may decorate the landscape, bringing a sense of urgency to animals preparing for winter. Few places in the world match Yellowstone for viewing the dynamics of large mammals and the drama played out between predator and prey.

Follow the Snake River to Yellowstone Lake, Canyon, Old Faithful, the Lamar Valley, and Mammoth Hot Springs, exploring the geyser basins, Hayden Valley, and the dramatic Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River. Spot mammals in their prime: Bison, Elk, Pronghorn, Bighorn . . .



Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures

... Mountain Goat, Otter, Beaver, and more. Raptors on the wing, possible wolf sightings, fall color, and perhaps the first snowfall — this trip is a naturalist's or photographer's dream!

Absorb the rich legacy that is Yellowstone, the world's first and still most famous national park, and a World Heritage Site — there is simply no other place like it on the planet. This is a relaxed-pace tour with time to savor this treasured landscape and its signature species, and with time to enjoy photography, watch animal behavior, and meet local experts working with wolves and the Yellowstone Raptor Initiative.

Early on they called it Wonderland ... and we think you will as well.



Tour Highlights:

- Enjoy the stunning landscape of Grand Teton National Park, with snowcapped peaks skirted in fall foliage, en route to Yellowstone.
- Visit iconic Yellowstone destinations, including Old Faithful and Mammoth Hot Springs, without the summer crowds.
- Meet local experts who are working with wolves and the Yellowstone Raptor Initiative.
- Search for Bison, two species of deer, Elk, Pronghorn, Bighorn, and Mountain Goat.
- Witness the dramatic Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River.
- Spot Trumpeter Swan, Pine Grosbeak, Harlequin Duck, American Dipper, numerous raptors including Golden Eagle, and Gray-crowned and Black Rosy Finches.
- Savor a relaxed-pace tour immersed in the wild wonder of Yellowstone.



Tour Summary:

7-Night / 8-Day Yellowstone Birding & Wildlife Tour with Guide Woody Wheeler

\$2750 DBL occupancy; \$3265 SGL from Jackson, WY

Airport is Jackson Hole (JAC)

Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures

Thurs., Sept 22 Arrival in Jackson Hole / On to Yellowstone National Park / Yellowstone Lake

Arrive in scenic Jackson Hole today, beautiful this time of year, and enjoy views of the Snake River and the majestic Grand Teton Mountains, fringed with fall color and often capped in fresh snow. We pick up those at hotels in town, and then those at the Jackson airport at 1:00 PM for our drive alongside Grand Teton National Park, en route to Yellowstone Lake and the historic Lake Hotel. We stop for photos and to scan for Moose, Elk, Sandhill Crane, and Mule Deer.

We cross the Snake River, looking for Belted Kingfisher and mixed flocks in the conifers that may include Red Crossbill, Cassin's Finch, and Pine Grosbeak. We are sure to stop to walk a loop trail at West Thumb Geyser Basin, one of the best areas in the park to see Barrow's and Common Goldeneye, and inquisitive River Otter. West Thumb Geyser Basin holds rainbow-colored thermal pools and hissing steam vents called fumaroles — a spectacular sight.

Waterfowl use the Yellowstone Lake lakeshore to loaf and feed, and we scan a few of the coves where large congregations gather before reaching Lake Hotel, situated in one of the most scenic places in all of Yellowstone. Tonight we enjoy our kick-off dinner in the grand dining room.

Accommodations at Lake Hotel (D)



Fri., Sept. 23 & Sat., Sept. 24 Hayden Valley / Sylvan Pass / Yellowstone Lake

We have two full days to explore from the lake, and during the fall this puts us in a prime raptor migration area, as well as superb terrain to find Elk, possible Black and Grizzly Bear, Bison in good number, Coyote, and with luck, elusive Gray Wolves of the Hayden Valley pack. We drive Hayden Valley very early in the morning, return for

Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures



breakfast in Lake Hotel's grand dining room, and then head out along the lakeshore to Lake Butte where we should see raptors on the wing. Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, Swainson's, Ferruginous, and Rough-legged Hawks are all possibilities, as well as American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine. Along the shoreline we may find Redhead, Canvasback, Bufflehead, and both species of Goldeneye. Bald Eagle nest in the area and we can hope to see fledged young practicing their hunting skills — a real treat!

One day we stop at viewpoints from the famed Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River. We also walk the boardwalk at Mud Volcano. Each outing takes us through Hayden Valley, where the Yellowstone Raptor Initiative has run raptor census counts since 2011. It's an exciting time and with several days we should see both good numbers and a good mix of species, including Golden Eagle.

Accommodations at Lake Hotel (B,L,D)

Sun., Sept. 25 Dunraven Pass /
Tower Falls / Lamar Valley

Driving from the lake, we make one more pass through Hayden Valley before going on to the northeast entrance of Yellowstone. We stop for a last look on the other side of Yellowstone's famous Upper Falls. Our route then takes us over Dunraven Pass to the Tower Falls area, and then across the Lamar Valley to Silver Gate where we have booked log cabins (modern, with private bath) for the next two nights.

Dunraven Pass gives us access to higher elevation viewpoints, a good mix of forest and meadow to scan for wildlife, and it is frequented by Bighorn Sheep. Descending its high reaches, we have great views of the Absaroka Mountains, and we should see some large herds of Elk, and possibly Dusky Grouse. Around Tower, dense conifer forests attract flocks of kinglets and finches where we may find Green-tailed Towhee or other songbirds. American Dipper often frequent the stream at Tower Falls.



Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures

Crossing Lamar Valley in the afternoon we have excellent chances to see wildlife like Red Fox, Coyote, and even Gray Wolf on a kill, Mule Deer, Elk, possible Badger, and closer to the northeast entrance, Mountain Goat. We scan for Mountain Bluebird, which use the open sagebrush valley, and Bald Eagle hunting along the corridor of the Lamar River. The village of Silver Gate is surrounded by high peaks, with abundant willows in the river bottom that attract Moose.

We enjoy dinner in either Silver Gate or nearby Cooke City tonight; these are small towns with some of our favorite restaurants.

Accommodations in Silver Gate, Northeast Entrance of Yellowstone (B,L,D)

Mon., Sept. 26 Beartooth Pass / Silver Gate

Just out of Silver Gate and Cooke City we have a chance to see Northern Flicker, Hairy and American Three-toed Woodpeckers, and both Steller's and Gray Jays. Aspen forests are frequented by Elk, the river bottoms by Moose, and as we drive up scenic Beartooth Pass, we hope to find Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, and at the tree line, flocks of Gray-crowned and Black Rosy Finches. In groves of conifers we look for seed-eating specialties like Pine Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, and Pine Siskin.

Grand mountain scenery awaits us on "top of the world." At high elevation we look for Gray-crowned and Black Rosy Finches, American Pipit, and Horned Lark. In small lakes we should find Barrow's Goldeneye, and we keep our eyes to the sky for Northern Goshawk. Clark's Nutcracker, Gray Jay, Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel, and Yellow-bellied Marmot are other species we hope to find.

Upon return to Silver Gate, we stop at the gallery of Dan Hartman, a well-known local photographer, to see his work and catch news of recent sightings. Pine Marten and both species of Rosy Finches, as well as Pine Grosbeak, frequent his feeders.

Accommodations in Silver Gate, Northeast Entrance of Yellowstone (B,L,D)



Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures

Tues., Sept. 27 Mammoth Hot Springs / Norris Geyser Basin / Madison River / Old Faithful

If we hear of recent activity, we depart Silver Gate early to reach Lamar Valley at dawn, with hopes of seeing activity in the wolf packs. Raven, Coyote, Red Fox, Golden Eagle, and Black-billed Magpie follow the great predators and vie over carcass remains.

From the Lamar Valley we drive over to Mammoth Hot Springs and walk a boardwalk trail among the thermal features. We may find Townsend's Solitaire and Mountain Bluebird, and we have another good chance to view Bighorn Sheep. We then pass through Swan Flats, a good place for Trumpeter Swan, Sandhill Crane, and waterfowl, stopping at Norris Geyser Basin for a visit. We drive a ways down the Madison River where Elk often congregate. Day's end finds us at Old Faithful, with lodgings close to the iconic geyser. After dinner, those that wish can venture out for a night walk on the boardwalk trails here — fun!

Accommodations at Old Faithful (B,L,D)



Wed., Sept. 28 Old Faithful & Nearby Geyser Basins

We enjoy the morning by walking to various thermal features of the Upper Geyser Basin, watching wildlife along the way. American Dipper are often in the Firehole River, where we have another chance to find River Otter and Bald Eagle, too. Bison are common here — imagine the views of their steamy breath in the cool morning air.

In the afternoon we drive out to some of the other basins and Grand Prismatic Spring of Midway Geyser Basin, the largest and one of the most colorful in the park. In open habitat around the basin we should find Elk and other wildlife.

Tonight we enjoy our end-of-tour celebratory dinner, recalling our adventures and toasting a grand trip.
Accommodations at Old Faithful (B,L,D)

Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures

Thurs., Sept. 29 Return to Jackson Hole /
Departures

It is about a three-hour drive from Old Faithful to Jackson Hole. Since we keep our eyes peeled for wildlife along the way, we plan to leave early to pad our arrival to the airport, reaching the airport by 11:30 AM for afternoon flights out from 12:30 PM onward. If there is a flight at Noon we can adjust back a bit, but please do not book flights out before Noon.



Book your Yellowstone adventure today! Contact us: info@naturalistjourneys.com or 866.900.1146/info@caligo.com or 800.426.7781

PLAN AHEAD!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance (formerly Access America). Offset your Carbon Footprint. Show us the receipt and we'll take 50% - up to \$50.00 - of your carbon offset fee off your final payment.

COST OF THE JOURNEY

Cost of the week-long journey (7N/8D) is \$2750 per person, DBL occupancy; \$3265 SGL. This cost includes: accommodations for 7 nights, all meals as specified in the itinerary (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner), park entrance and other activity fees for activities for 8 days as described in the itinerary, professional guide services, pre-departure materials and miscellaneous program expenses.

Tour Cost does not include: round-trip airfare to and from Jackson Hole Airport, Wyoming (JAC). The Tour Cost does not include items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar; or gratuities for luggage handling or personal services.

You may wish to add additional time in Grand Teton National Park or the fun town of Jackson and if so we can pick you up at a Jackson hotel.

Group size: maximum of 12, minimum of six. With more than 8 persons, a second guide and a mini-van will be added to the tour.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

The airport for this journey is Wyoming's Jackson Hole Airport (JAC). Please plan to arrive in Jackson on or before September 22, no later than 1:00 PM. We will travel to Lake Hotel this day, so we do suggest coming in a night early, as there is no public transport into the park, so a delay could mean a costly transfer to catch up to the group. We plan to return to the airport by 11:30 AM on September 29, for flights out 12:30 PM onward. If you find a flight at Noon, we can back this up, but please, no flights out before Noon. We can also drop you off at a hotel in town if you plan to stay on after the tour.

Naturalist Journeys, LLC is an equal opportunity service provider and committed to the goal of ensuring equal opportunity for all in employment and program delivery.

Nature's Wonderland: Yellowstone!

with Naturalist Journeys and Caligo Ventures

Our Guide:

Woody Wheeler is a master birder, a certified interpretive guide and owner of Conservation Catalyst, a birding and natural history firm based in Seattle, Washington. He has worked for The Nature Conservancy, The Audubon Society and Seattle Parks Foundation as a naturalist and tour leader. He holds degrees in Environmental Education and Geography.

Woody is a skilled interpreter and former teacher with a special expertise in birds. He has traveled and led tours to Trinidad, Argentina, Panama and other tropical places, but is always happy to share his expertise at home, from Washington's lush forests to Yellowstone's mammal-rich high plateaus. He met up with Naturalist Journeys in Big Bend, and was such a primo "student" that he's been leading that tour ever since. He and his family hail from Seattle where they enjoy community and the outdoor life. With the publication of a new book, *Look Up!: Birds and Other Natural Wonders Just Outside Your Window*, he's been busy promoting with readings and presentations.



©Photo credits: Pg. 1: Yellowstone Lake, Greg Smith www.flickr.com/slobirdr (GS); Lower Falls, GS; Bison, GS, Mountain Bluebird, GS. Pg. 2: Grand Tetons, GS; Bison, Peg Abbott (PA). Pg. 3: Lake Hotel, Joy Mendez (JM); West Thumb Geyser Basin, PA. Pg. 4: American Kestrel, GS; Bighorn Sheep at Dunraven Pass, JM. Pg. 5: Coyote, PA; Bald Eagle, GS; Pine Grosbeak, PA. Pg. 6: Black-billed Magpie, PA; Boardwalk at Hot Springs, Carol Rivchun; Elk, PA. Pg. 7: Marmots, GS. Pg. 8: Woody Wheeler, Naturalist Journeys stock photo; Grizzly Bear, PA; Old Faithful, JM; Pronghorn, PA.