

YELLOWSTONE AUTUMN



"The return of the wolf to Yellowstone has been a fantastic conservation success story and it's now well documented that they are helping to restore a balance to this quite astonishing wilderness. Time and time again we've had great looks at these top predators and I look forward to memorable encounters again." Darren Rees

Dates Sat 14 - Sat 28 Sept 2019
 Price £5,695
 Deposit £1,100 Single Supp £1,250

Leaders Darren Rees and Duncan Macdonald
 Flights United Airlines, scheduled
 Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Jackson Hole (via US stop)
 Inbound: Overnight, Jackson Hole-Heathrow (via US stop)
 Weather It can be cool (even cold), but daytime temperatures rise to warm and sunny (0°-15°C), with a chance of showers and some snow possible at high altitudes
 Walking There'll be some short, easy walks on wide paths with optional short, easy walks off tracks in the forest. Note that Yellowstone National Park is at high altitude. Most of the National Park is above 7,500 ft / 2,275 m and the Beartooth Highway ascends to nearly 11,000 ft / 3353 m, where we shall take a very short walk
 Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 14
 Insects Biting insects are rarely a problem
 Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite
 Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Gray Wolf	Least Chipmunk
Coyote	Trumpeter Swan
Grizzly Bear	White Pelican
Black Bear	Bald Eagle
Moose	Ferruginous Hawk
American Elk	Prairie Falcon
Bighorn Sheep	Great Horned Owl
Mountain Goat	American Dipper
Beaver	Mountain Bluebird
River Otter	Horned Lark
Pika	Black Rosy Finch

A favourite time to visit two of the finest National Parks in America, Grand Teton and Yellowstone, resplendent with fall colour, plus wolves, bears, bison, beavers and birds.

- Legendary wildlife of the Yellowstone wilderness
- Bison, Pronghorn and Gray Wolf in the Lamar Valley
- Fabulous encounters with Grizzly and Black Bears feeding before hibernation
- Crazy critters: Beaver, Moose, Pika, Chipmunks and River Otters
- Lots of migrant wildfowl, shorebirds and passerines
- Spectacular Grand Teton National Park with breathtaking autumn colours
- Geothermal wonders of geysers, bubbling mud and multi-coloured pools

1-3 Arriving early evening there is a short transfer to our hotel in Jackson Hole. From here, we explore the breath-taking Grand Teton National Park, a land of jagged peaks soaring above a sagebrush plain dotted with herds of Bison and Pronghorn. With the changing of seasons, flocks of American Robins, Audubon's Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows and Brewer's Blackbirds will be on the move, but perhaps the mammals will be greater prizes: willows along the Snake River are great places to look for Moose – the males will be looking magnificent with 'racks' of antlers. We'll also visit at dusk, when Beavers will be tending to their lodges.

Wildfowl numbers at Jackson Lake are increasing, so expect Trumpeter Swan, Cinnamon Teal and Lesser Scaup, as well as Western Grebe, White

Pelican and migrant shorebirds. The historic barns at Mormon Row will have you reaching for the cameras and we'll be alert for birds of the sagebrush such as Vesper Sparrow, Prairie Falcon, and maybe Sage Grouse. There'll be our first Coyote and who knows what else? We may see our first bear - bushes full of choke-berries are favourites for Black Bears, keen to pile on the calories before winter.

4-6 We'll travel north to the world's first and most famous National Park - Yellowstone. We shall stay near the shores of Yellowstone Lake at 7,700 feet, hosting Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Loon and Bufflehead. Here, we are in the middle of a vast wilderness, realm of both Grizzly and Black Bears and at nearby Hayden Valley we've often seen Gray Wolf. There



"Many choose autumn to watch wildlife in Yellowstone as the landscape is at its most colourful and the animals are looking their best. The mountains may have their first dusting of snow and rusting cottonwoods and glowing yellow aspens light up the land. Bears are filling up before the coming winter hibernation and both Elk and Moose are sporting full racks of antlers." Darren Rees



may be lingering Harlequin Ducks and raptors include Northern Harrier, Red-tailed and Bald Eagle. We'll explore lofty Dunraven Pass, hopefully finding wildlife of the higher altitudes: Golden Eagle, Clark's Nutcracker, Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel and perhaps a lazy Yellow-bellied Marmot reluctant to start its hibernation. We'll visit the mighty Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, where the Yellowstone River has carved a stunning landscape of colourful eroded pillars and spectacular waterfalls. Early mornings and evenings at Pelican Creek and Fishing Bridge are good for River Otter, Beaver and Belted Kingfisher.

7-9 We move to the beautiful north-east section of Yellowstone, to Cooke City. Dawn excursions will target Gray Wolves: a successful re-introduction programme started in 1996 and now there are numerous packs, particularly in the scenic Lamar Valley. Here, colourful stands of aspens and cottonwoods and herds of bison and pronghorn, provide the perfect backdrop for watching wolves. We'll hope for Grizzly Bears too - these often follow wolf packs to scavenge on the carrion from wolf kills. The spectacular Beartooth Pass leads out of the Park through spruce forests and higher, to peaks over 12,000ft. We'll look for more specialities of the high country such as Bighorn Sheep, Mountain Goat, Pika, Pine Grosbeak and Black Rosy Finch.

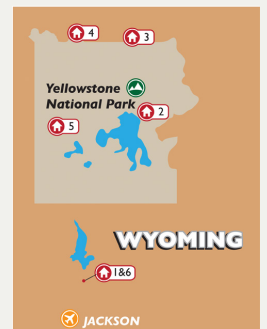
10-11 Wildlife abounds as we travel through the scenic northern section of Yellowstone to our next base at Gardiner.



From here we can visit the Mammoth travertine terraces that spectacularly mark the volcanic activity of the region. Around the town square Elk will be grazing and in September the males 'bugle' to round up their harems - confrontations between rival bulls and their ritual calling can go on through the night! Birds include American Dipper, Williamson's Sapsucker, Fox Sparrow, and Gray Jay.

12-13 We journey to the centre of the geothermal wonders of Yellowstone at Old Faithful - 70% of the world's geysers are here! As its name suggests, the historic, timber Old Faithful Inn is next to the planet's most well-known geyser and it's the perfect place for marvelling at the expulsion of steam and water in the cool air. Neighbouring geysers are even more spectacular and there are the bubbling mud-pools of Fountain Paintpots, plus the largest multi-coloured pool at Grand Prismatic. On our last full day in the field we travel south, where we return to Jackson Hole for one night, watching for birds and mammals as we go. We're sure to stop at Oxbow Lake and Willow Flats, now ablaze with the fall colours from quaking aspens.

14-15 Leaving Jackson Hole, we fly home, arriving in the UK on the morning of Day 15.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Fly to Jackson Hole, via US stop, arriving in the evening - 3 nights 49er Inn
- Days 2-3 Two days exploring Grand Teton National Park, including Elk Refuge, Mormon Row and Ox Bow Bend
- Days 4-6 North, via Jackson Lake, to Lake Yellowstone - 3 nights. Explore Hayden Valley, north shore of Lake Yellowstone and Grand Canyon of Yellowstone
- Day 7 Relaxed day transfer, via Dunraven Pass, to Cooke City
3 nights Soda Butte Lodge
- Days 8-9 Two days to explore north-east section of Yellowstone, including Lamar Valley and Beartooth Pass
- Days 10-11 Drive via Slough Creek to north-west gate at Gardiner. Visit Mammoth travertine terraces and Blacktail Plateau
2 nights Absaroka Lodge
- Day 12 Geothermal features at Norris and Midway Geyser Basins - 1 night Grant Village
- Day 13 Geyser gazing at Old Faithful then south for last night at Jackson Hole
1 night 49er Inn
- Days 14-15 Overnight flight back to the UK, via US stop, arriving on Day 15

Lin Gregory: Grizzly Bear, Bison, Elk, Grand Prismatic Lake
Duncan Macdonald: Mountain Bluebird, Coyote