

Autumn in Yellowstone: The Bison and Elk Rut



All of our Yellowstone trips are popular, but Yellowstone National Park in autumn is truly a special time. It's a glorious season in which to experience the fall rut and the majesty of the changing colors in America's first national park.

Our fall trip combines wildlife viewing, geothermal features and the peak of beautiful autumn foliage. Yellowstone National Park has the best assemblage of large mammals in the lower 48 states, and this is the season when the elk, bison and moose are in rut. We will observe bull elk in their prime as they defend their large harems of cows, and may even see moose sporting huge antlers. The bison are also in large herds. We hope to spot wolves and bears on our daily field trips throughout the park as they prepare for winter.

Yellowstone is best known for its many geysers, hot springs and travertine rock deposits. But it is a diverse landscape offering panoramic views of rugged mountain ranges, the majestic Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River, scenic waterfalls and sweeping glacial valleys. The plant communities range from thick conifer forests that are fire-dependent to short-grass prairies, wetlands and marshes to high mountain meadows.

Participants will fly in and out of Billings, Montana, and cross the Beartooth Plateau — known for its spectacular alpine scenery — into Yellowstone National Park. We will stay at Yellowstone Lake and explore Hayden Valley with its large herd

of bison, the “Grand Canyon” of Yellowstone, and Mt. Washburn, where bears are frequently sited. Two days will be spent in the northern part of the park to experience Mammoth Hot Springs and explore the Lamar Valley, known for its unparalleled wildlife viewing. When we visit the Old Faithful area, we'll explore various geyser basins that also are home to large herds of bison and elk.

Our guide, Dr. Jim Halfpenny – world renowned carnivore ecologist and animal tracker – has been leading groups in Yellowstone for more than 25 years. Through field excursions and evening programs with Jim, we will gain a deeper understanding of the ecology of Yellowstone and its inhabitants. While our focus will be on spotting wildlife and learning about the changes in both the carnivores and ungulates in recent years, we will come away with a deeper appreciation of why Yellowstone was designated our first national park.

The activity level of this trip is easy and includes a variety of options for hikes throughout the week. Wildlife viewing is primarily done from the roadside. Limited to 18 participants.

**Escorted by Cheri Asa,
Director of Research**

ITINERARY

Autumn in Yellowstone

September 22 – 28, 2007

**\$2,000 per person double
occupancy, land only**

- › **Saturday, September 22**
St. Louis to Billings, MT, to Red Lodge
- › **Sunday, September 23**
Billings to Yellowstone Lake
- › **Monday, September 24**
Yellowstone Lake and Old Faithful Geyser Basin
- › **Tuesday, September 25**
Yellowstone Lake / Grand Canyon of Yellowstone / Gardiner
- › **Wednesday, September 26**
Lamar Valley
- › **Thursday, September 27**
Mammoth Hot Springs / Chico Hot Springs
- › **Friday, September 28**
Chico Hot Springs / Billings / St. Louis



For more information, contact the Zoo's Travel Department at
(314) 768-5408



Saint Louis Zoo
Animals Always®

DAY 1 SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 22 > ST. LOUIS / BILLINGS, MT

Depart St. Louis early in the morning for Billings, Montana, for an early afternoon pickup at the airport. We will then transfer to Red Lodge at the foot of the Beartooth Mountains. Afternoon is free to relax. After dinner we will have our trip orientation by Jim Halfpenny. (D)

DAY 2 SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 23 > BEARTOOTH PLATEAU / YELLOWSTONE LAKE

After breakfast we depart for the spectacular drive over the Beartooth Plateau (largest contiguous area above 10,000 feet in the lower 48 states) to the northeast entrance of Yellowstone National Park. Besides stunning alpine scenery and geological formations, we should also encounter Rocky Mountain goats and Bighorn Sheep.



We will drive through the Lamar Valley in the afternoon where we will encounter our first large herds of elk and bison and maybe moose. We will stop at Tower Falls on our way up Mt. Washburn, highest elevation of our trip. Grizzly bears often forage on the upper slopes of Mt. Washburn taking advantage of the pinecone crop to prepare for their winter dormancy. Jim Halfpenny will provide an overview of bear biology and management in the park. We will continue to Lake Hotel (NPS lodge) on the north shore of Yellowstone Lake, where we will stay the next two nights. After dinner, join in a lakeshore walk to look for animal tracks and signs or relax in this historic lodge. (B/L, D on own)

DAY 3 MONDAY SEPTEMBER 24 > TOUR WEST THUMB / OLD FAITHFUL GEYSER BASINS

After breakfast on our own in the dining room we will depart for a day of exploring different geothermal features and geyser basins of Yellowstone. West Thumb geyser basin is right on the shoreline of Yellowstone Lake. We will cross the continental divide into the Upper Geyser Basin on the Firehole River, home of Old Faithful. Upper Geyser Basin has the highest density of geysers in the world. We will hike one to two miles among the geysers and have lunch at Old Faithful Lodge. In the afternoon we will explore more geyser

basins and look for elk, bison, swans and other wildlife along the Firehole River on our loop back to Lake Hotel. That evening we visit Hayden Valley to view bison and possibly bear that inhabit this prairie area. (meals on own)

DAY 4 TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 25 > TOUR HAYDEN VALLEY, GRAND CANYON OF YELLOWSTONE, AND NORRIS GEYSER BASIN / GARDINER, MT

After breakfast our group heads north through Hayden Valley to the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. We will stop along the way to learn about animal tracking and the bison rut. We will explore some of the overlooks on both the north and south side of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, including Artist Point, Grandview and the upper falls. Have your cameras ready as the colors of both the rock and vegetation are stunning.

After lunch at Canyon Cafeteria, we drive to Norris Geyser Basins, known for the discovery of thermophile bacteria. Norris has undergone geothermic changes over the last couple of years and is distinctively different from Old Faithful area. Finally we head north towards Mammoth Hot Springs and Gardiner, where we spend the next two nights at the Absaroka Lodge. After dinner at the Educational Center, an evening program on Elk and other herbivores will round out the day. (B & L on own, D provided)





DAY 5 WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 26 > TOUR LAMAR VALLEY

Our group departs before sunrise (field breakfast provided) to get into the Lamar Valley when the wildlife start to stir from their night's resting sites. This is the best time to observe predator/prey interactions. We will know if wolves are hunting via radio contact with the wolf-watching team; if so, we will travel to the site where the action is. Lamar is home to the northern range elk herd and the wolf packs that prey upon them.

After a morning of wildlife viewing we will travel to Cooke City where we will lunch and visit an art studio featuring local wildlife photographs. That afternoon we learn about the ecology and interactions between wildlife as we head back through Lamar Valley. Various stops along the way will allow us to better understand the management issues facing the national park and Greater Yellowstone. An evening presentation will focus on the return of the wolves to the park. (B provided, L & D on own)

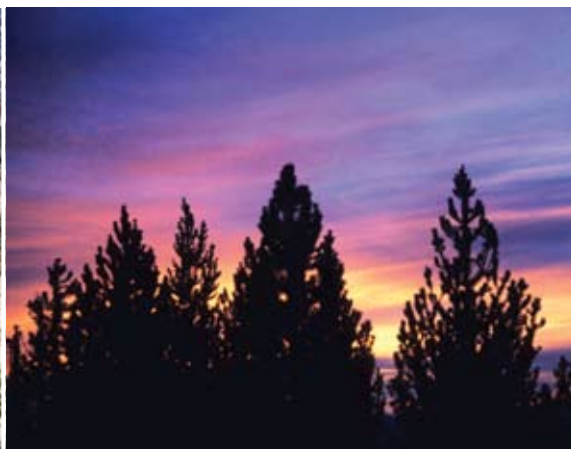
DAY 6 THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 27 > MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS / CHICO HOT SPRINGS

Our last day at the park will be spent exploring the environs of Swan Lake and its wildlife, as well as the historic Mammoth Hot Springs, where we will lunch. Large elk herds congregate here during rut and you may see some bulls spar as they defend their harems.

We head north through Paradise Valley looking for pronghorn and mule deer to Chico Hot Springs, a historic lodge nestled in the Absaroka Mountains. There's a hot spring swimming pool to relax in (don't forget your swimming suit). The lodge is known for its five-star dining. After a great dinner we will have our concluding program. (B & D provided, L on own)

DAY 7 FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 28 > CHICO / BILLINGS / ST. LOUIS

After a leisurely breakfast it's time to pack up and head to Billings for the afternoon flight back to St. Louis. We'll come away from our adventure with a new understanding of why Yellowstone was designated as our first national park. We'll carry with us lifelong memories of our visit to this home of some of our nation's most spectacular scenery and the most intact assemblage of wildlife in the lower 48 states. (B, L & D on own in transit)



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Our Yellowstone Adventures are popular. To be assured of space prior to sending in your reservation form, please call: (314) 768-5408. This form with deposit should be sent to:

Saint Louis Zoo Travel
Saint Louis Zoo
One Government Drive
St. Louis, MO 63110

PERSONAL INFORMATION – Please fill out one reservation form for each traveler/couple.

Full Name of Traveler Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

(2nd Traveler) Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of Birth _____

Evening Telephone (____) _____ Day Telephone (____) _____ email _____

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Double-Roommate _____
- Double-Please match with roommate (if not possible, I will pay additional single supplement)
- Single accommodations (if available) at \$400 additional

AIR ARRANGEMENTS TO BILLINGS, MT

- I would like to arrange airline travel with the group, please send me information. I understand I am responsible for arranging ticketing and/or transportation to Billings, MT
- I will make my own travel arrangements (info will be provided on pickups from airport)

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name: _____ Phone :(____) _____

Alternate Phone :(____) _____ Relationship: _____

OTHER INFORMATION

Medical Conditions for _____ : _____

Dietary preference: Regular Vegetarian Other

Additional travelers in your group: _____

I understand that by signing below I am acting for myself and for everyone in my party in acknowledging that I have read and accepted the Terms and Conditions, Payment, Refund and Cancellation Policy, Wildlife Viewing, Itinerary Changes, and Fees and Smoking sections on both sides of this reservation form. I also assume all risks involved with regard to this trip and agree that the Saint Louis Zoo, A Naturalist's World and its affiliates will in no way be responsible for any injury or damage to me or other members of my party.

SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN _____

Please make a copy of this entire form for your records.

PAYMENT

Autumn in Yellowstone program fee is \$2,000 per person land only, based on double occupancy. Single Supplement is \$400 additional.

A deposit of \$500 per person by check, payable to Saint Louis Zoo and sent to Saint Louis Zoo, is required to hold space on this departure. Saint Louis Zoo will invoice you 90 days prior to departure. Your final payment (by check only) is due 60 days prior to departure. Please make checks for the final payment payable to Saint Louis Zoo and send to:

Saint Louis Zoo Travel
Saint Louis Zoo
One Government Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63110

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Saint Louis Zoo, A Naturalist's World and our cooperating agents make every effort to select reliable suppliers and contractors to provide aid and other transportation services, hotels, guides and other travel related corrections equated with such services. Each traveler agrees not to hold the Saint Louis Zoo and A Naturalist's World, its owners, employees, agents, sponsoring organization and/or damage which results directly or indirectly from any act of omission of any person or firm which is to or does provide goods or services in connection with the trip or with any available option

The Saint Louis Zoo, A Naturalist's World, its cooperating agents and sponsoring organization shall not be liable for circumstances arising as a result of Acts of God, weather, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, theft, pilferage, acts of nature, military, political or terrorist action, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, discrepancies or changes in transit over which they have no control.

On advancement of a deposit, the traveler agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions set forth above.

PAYMENT, REFUND AND CANCELLATION POLICY

Deposits are due upon making reservations. The amount of each deposit is \$500 and can be made by personal check made out to the Saint Louis Zoo, enclosed with your reservation form and sent to the Saint Louis Zoo. Invoices will be sent out 90 days prior to departure; final payment (by check only) is due 60 days prior to departure.

All cancellations must be received in writing. For cancellations processed up to July 23, 2007, expect a full refund per person, less \$50.00 handling fee. After July 24, 2007 forfeit \$250.00. After August 22, 2007 forfeit 50% program fee. After September 8, 2007: forfeit 100% program fee. No refunds will be made for any unused portion of the trip. We reserve the right to cancel this tour, and in such cases the entire payment will be refunded without penalty or handling fee or any further obligation on our part.

We understand how disappointing it is for travelers in the event they are forced to cancel their adventure, especially one that they have been looking forward to for a long time. But we, too, plan for these adventures for quite a long period prior to departure and must continuously send non-refundable payments to hotels and suppliers of transportation. Therefore, we must strictly adhere to our Refund Policy for all travelers.

WE STRONGLY SUGGEST YOU PURCHASE TRAVEL INSURANCE IN CASE YOU WILL NEED TO CANCEL.

WILDLIFE VIEWING, ITINERARY CHANGES AND FEES

Since our programs specialize in viewing wildlife, every effort is made to plan programs in locations where wildlife is known to exist. However, the animals we visit live wild and free, and we cannot fully predict or control their migratory patterns.

In an attempt to locate wildlife which may have deviated from its normal pattern, or in the interest of traveler comfort or safety, we may be required to make reasonable changes in itineraries. If it is necessary to change hotels, boats or other facilities, comparable accommodations will be substituted wherever possible. If such changes occur, additional costs may require the program fee to change with little or no notice. Should fewer than 12 passengers register for this trip, it may be necessary to add a surcharge to the program fee.

SMOKING

As per government regulations, smoking is not permitted in buses or vehicles used for conveying paying passengers.