

## Wolves, Bears and Geysers – A Yellowstone Expedition

by Bernie Buren

I have been asked to write about our recent visit to Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Teton Mountains. Seven of us (a couple from the Toledo Zoo, three people from the Philadelphia Zoo and my wife Jayne Ann and I) just completed an 8-day trip that ranks right up there with the best trips and educational experiences we have ever had. The trip was planned and guided by the Educational Adventure Company of Livingston, Montana. This company is “dedicated to providing travel opportunities combined with unsurpassed educational experience, designed to provide a better understanding of the beauty and wonder of our natural environment.” This trip is one that was advertised in our AZAD Newsletter.

We spent 6 days in Yellowstone, which is just teeming with birds, plants and mammals. It also provides unusual thermal areas found on top of an active volcano (geysers, mud pots, hot springs.)

Some of our top experiences were:

Traveling the Lamar Valley to look for Wolves and Grizzlies. (We didn't mind too much getting up at 4 AM). While we didn't see any wolves in the wild during our visit, we spent about 45 minutes tracking a big male grizzly bear. We also were delayed in our trip because a herd of about 100 bison coved the road in front of us. Really neat!

Following a big bull moose as he rummaged through the woods. We, of course, were never real close to the animals. We traveled in a ten-passenger van and had a very powerful scope to see everything.

Observing a very stupid group of people throwing rocks at some elks so they would move. Our guide, a very intelligent, expressive young lady in her late 20s, was so upset that she ran to the group (including a man who looked about 6 foot 6) and raised holy heck with them. They sheepishly left. She was wonderful!

Seeing a bald eagle feeding her babies on her nest. Viewing an osprey on her nest at the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. Admiring the upper and lower falls of the Yellowstone River.

Standing out in the weather (as it sleeted and snowed on June 18) to watch the Bee Hive Geyser as it spouted off. This geyser is more powerful and spouts higher than Old Faithful but you never know when it will spout. We were just lucky!

Our two days in the Tetons were spent admiring the beauty of the snow-capped Tetons, seeing more animals (sandhill cranes, pronghorns). Hiking Lake Jenny and spending some time in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. They say you have to be a millionaire to live there. Looking at the prices of the homes for sale, I can believe it.

I really do recommend a trip to this area if you are interested in seeing animals in their natural setting. Environmental Adventure Company, and especially their guide, Jessica Kerr, did an excellent job