

Yellowstone

Sept 21 – 24, 2019

Last visited the park in 2006. Lot less crowded than before which was nice. Had perfect weather. We stayed in Cooke City, MT so our venture started out going through the Lamar Valley. 15 miles in there was a crowd so we pulled over. There were wolves on a kill a long way off. After watching for about an hour two bison came over. The wolves then surrounded the bison, not sure if they were taunting them, playing or whatever. The bison just stuck around though.



There were six total, three black, three gray. It was a good way to start a trip.

After leaving the area we continued on to Mammoth. Along the way saw the obvious bison, pronghorn (no coyotes, elk or mule deer). Also the Uinta ground squirrels must hit hibernation. A sow black bear and two cubs were spotted just west of Canyon.



Continuing on we headed to Mammoth for lunch and then to Gardiner to look for bighorn sheep. Bighorn sheep search was a bust. Also hiked the Yellowstone Picnic Area trail to no avail.

On the way back stopped at the Floating Island Lake looking for pikas. Heard them and saw them but no picture. Then heading back to Cooke City saw the pronghorn. Near the NE entrance was a bull moose and then two mountain goats high up on the cliffs to the north of the road. The mountain goats were just white dots in my photos.



The next morning we had booked a trip on a photo tour starting at Yellowstone Lake and checking out Hayden Valley. This was very productive for two sow grizzlies in different locations, but neither had cubs. Also a great gray owl was a new addition to my bird life list. The guide was very informative and it was well worth the trip. Had to leave Cooke City at 4am to get to the Lake Hotel for the 645 am starting point. Very foggy between Canyon and the Lake.

The first grizzly is a 4 year old female, the second wasn't familiar to our tour guide.





Wrapping up the photo tour we stopped at the Lower Falls area where I got two Uinta chipmunks. If I am wrong I'll take some input.



The great gray owl was off the main road near the Lake turnoff.



The last day we patrolled the Lamar Valley again. The wolf area was still a popular spot. Saw more black bears west of Canyon and got a pika at Hellroaring Falls parking lot.



In all 14 mammal species including the above-mentioned along with elk at Madison, Mammoth, Lake area and north entrance. Mule deer near the lake and a red squirrels at Trout Lake and Harlequin lake. Looked for otters at Trout Lake there were none. Saw an unidentified rabbit run across the road going over Mt Washburn. Also seen were 27 bird species with the owl and rough-legged hawk being lifers for me.