



April 2023 Newsletter

Image of the Month



I've barely left my office over the last month so this month's featured image is one from a few months ago. I was really happy with how this image of a (highland endemic) Fiery-throated Hummingbird feeding from a *Fuschia* flower turned out. This image came to mind because one of the projects that had me homebound the last month was finishing a revised account for this bird species for Birds of the World (BOW).

[BOW](#) is a joint publication of Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology and the American Ornithological Union. It's the premiere database for academic quality accounts of nearly 11,000 species of birds. After visiting Cornell's Lab of Ornithology in October, I was asked to help update the account for my favorite Costa Rican hummingbird. The resulting account is over 5,000 words long and includes around 50 multimedia files (photos, videos, and recordings). It is particularly an honor to be co-author with Gary Stiles, who was co-author of the original guide to the birds of Costa Rica and who has produced volumes of research on neotropical hummingbirds. BOW is a paid site, but if you're interested in learning more about birds I highly recommend it. If you'd just like to read the article I wrote, let me know and I can help you get access.

Fiery-throated
Hummingbird
Account

Featured Artist

Leo Valverde, together with his brother Dani, runs the Instagram

account @birdingcrew. I always love seeing their posts because they do a great job at capturing uncommonly seen birds in natural looking environments. The Flame-throated Warbler is another highland endemic bird to Costa Rica. What I particularly loved about this image is the [chiaroscuro](#) look of the image. It perfectly captures the feel of this species preferred habitat: high montane forests.



Leo's Instagram

Fascinating Fact

Costa Rica is officially home to 107 endemic bird species. Given their limited ranges, endemic species are often among the least photographed and least studied species. I decided to run the numbers for Costa Rica to find out which of the 107 species are the most and least photographed.



The least photographed endemic bird of Costa Rica is the Red-fronted Parrotlet. I've actually yet to see this bird, although not for lack of trying. The above photo by Jose Orozco is the best of the 42 photos in the world's largest collection of ornithological multimedia (the Macaulay Library).

By comparison the Fiery-throated Hummingbird (4th most photographed) and Flame-throated Warbler (36th most photographed) are much more commonly photographed with over 1,000 images of both species in the Macaulay Library. For more details about what birds are the least photographed or to look at the actual data, you can check out the article over on my website.

[Learn More](#)

News



The one outing I've had in the last month was to see a bird that was almost new for Costa Rica. In the original guide to the birds of Costa Rica, Gary Stiles reported having probably seen a Heermann's Gull on the Pacific Coast in the 1980s. This gull is normally found in California and Mexico. In mid-March it was reported near the cruise-ship dock in the Pacific port town of Puntarenas. It was exciting to now have definitive proof that it occasionally ranges as far south as Costa Rica. I wasn't able to go for a few weeks after the first report, but fortunately it appears to be hanging out for a while.

Just down the beach a few hundred meters was another rare migrant, a Pacific Golden Plover (pictured above) stopping on its way from Australia/NZ/Philippines to breed in Alaska or the Canadian Arctic. I wrote up a short article about the two birds, evocatively (and truthfully!) titled that Costa Rica (nor anywhere) Doesn't Have Seagulls!

[Read: "Costa Rica Doesn't Have Seagulls"](#)

In other news, I should have some great content for the May newsletter coming. One of the reasons I've not gone out much the last

month is I was preparing for this next week. I am writing this email between packing for an 8 day excursion to the most biodiverse place in Costa Rica. So keep an eye on my social media channels and of course, next month's newsletter.

Tyler Wenzel Photography

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