



May 2023 Newsletter

Image of the Month



In mid-April we went on a weeklong trip to the southern Pacific region of Costa Rica. From waking up in the jungle to the sounds of Howler Monkeys while sleeping at the Sirena Ranger station inside Corcovado National Park (featured image) to the crisp mountain air of the Talamanca Highlands it was quite an adventure.

The photo of the month captures the vibrant and vivacious landscape at the place National Geographic has called “the most biologically intense place on Earth.” I documented the trip in a combination educational documentary/trip vlog style format that you can watch on YouTube.

[Trip Video](#)

Featured Artist

Eric Mesen is the photographer behind the fantastic Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica (@anfibiosreptiles_cr) page on Instagram. The most up to date field guides by Twan Leenders list Costa Rica as having 245 species of reptiles (with 141 being snakes) and 207 species of amphibians (with 147 being frogs or toads). Although new species of amphibians and reptiles continue to be discovered; a new species of frog was announced in 2022!



This photo he posted of a Blunt-headed Vine Snake (*Imantodes cenchoa*) caught my eye. It's a fairly common snake, yet one I've never seen! It is found from southern Mexico all the way down through Argentina. Primarily active at night, its thin body and prehensile tail allow it to access parts of trees that heavier snakes aren't able to get to.

I love the level of detail in his photos and highly recommend following his page on Instagram!

Amphibians and
Reptiles Instagram

Fascinating Fact

Corcovado National Park, which is featured in this month's image and the video trip report, is an amazing place. It makes up .001% of the world's landmass but contains 2.5% of all its plant and animal species. There are more species of trees in the park than in the continental US and Canada!



The park is home to the largest remaining jaguar population in Costa Rica, the critically endangered White-lipped Peccary, and the endangered Baird's Tapir (photographed below with an eight-month-old.)



Due to strict limits on visitation and a paucity of published information, planning a trip like we did to overnight in Corcovado can be challenging. I wanted to help make it less of a challenge, so I wrote up a straightforward guide to what you need to do to visit the park. You can check it out over on my website.

[Learn More](#)

News



May 13th was one of two annual “Global Big Days” for birding. The big days, sponsored by Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology/eBird, help monitor populations and the locality of birds during crucial migration times in May and October. (Artwork from eBird's Global Big Day page.)

With 702, Costa Rica finished 12th overall in number of species observed and 6th overall in the number of lists uploaded. (Each person or group will upload a list of the birds they saw at different locations/times). As usual, the highest number of species (1,532) came from the country with the most bird species, Colombia. And the

highest number of lists (over 75,000!) by far came from the United States with more birders than the rest of the top 10 combined. Only Canada and Colombia had more than 10,000 lists and Costa Rica took 6th with 3,257.

Learn More:
Global Big Day

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