



June 2023 Newsletter

Image of the Month



This image of mine is actually one from shortly after I shifted to focusing on wildlife photography during the pandemic, in late 2020. Hummingbirds move so fast that shooting in low-light can be a huge challenge. Personally though I love how much more "real" their feathers look in these lighting conditions than when the sun is out. When it's sunny they often look like they're made of metal and it looks very harsh to me.

I chose this image for June because I got some great news related to it. I've been talking with some folks at Cornell's Lab of Ornithology for several months about hummingbirds and specifically a new online course they're going to be putting on about them as part of their Bird Academy. They announced the course and this image of mine is the feature image for the announcement trailer of the course! You can check out the course and trailer video at the link below. (A video of mine is in the trailer as well!)

[Hummingbird Course](#)

Featured Artist

This month's featured artist is a bit of an outlier but one I thought was worth featuring. Birdwatching is a bit of a misnomer. You use your ears as much as or more than your eyes. And playing back recordings of birds is often a good way to get a better view of them. Here in Costa Rica a lot of the high quality recordings available were produced by the late David L Ross, Jr. He created over 4,000 recordings of birds. His story of creating recordings can be found [here](#).



In particular, he created a recording called "Voices of the Cloud Forest" from his time in Monteverde, Costa Rica. It is a free download and a nice relaxing background track to put on while you work or sleep.

Voices of the Cloud
Forest

Fascinating Fact

Costa Rica is home to 148 species of amphibians. Among them is the most photographed amphibian on the planet (if we don't count Kermit the Frog). The Red-eyed Tree Frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*) is a beautiful frog. It's also one of the animals that fed my childhood fascination with wildlife. I remember some exhibits put on at our local mall (ah the 90s) with different small vertebrates. Among them was the Red-eyed Tree Frog (or Leaf Frog, both names are used).



I'm reminded of this frog as it is currently raining as I write this. The onset of the rainy season this year has been delayed by the El Niño weather pattern. And these (and other frog species) frogs breed with the first rains of the rainy season. Soon enough, I should be finding some baby frogs around the yard.

The Red-eyed Tree Frog is found throughout Central America. The one photographed is from the Caribbean side of the country. On the Pacific side their flanks and thighs are yellow instead of blue.

News

Costa Rica recently got a new (unofficially) bird species! A pair of Lesser Kiskadees from South America were spotted in the South of the country in late May.

Birds of Costa Rica



Dale Dyer and Steve N. G. Howell

There is also a new field guide to the birds of Costa Rica out. One of the coolest bits is the appendix section that talks about likely new species of birds as further DNA sequencing is done on birds, splitting large populations into more geographically compact species.

Book

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