



2023 Wildlife Wrap Up

For the final newsletter of the year I wanted to put together a top five of my wildlife photos of the year. In January I plan to go back to the normal format and publishing schedule. Most of the images have been featured in past monthly newsletters but a new one snuck in to the top five.

5



February - In the background you can see the southern tip of the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica. We were on a seabird sighting expedition about fifteen miles offshore and surrounded by hundreds of these spinner dolphins. They jump out of the water while also spinning around. I managed to capture this one at the apex of its jump right as a Brown Booby flew underneath. Right place at the right time (and a lot of trial and error guessing where one would jump).

4



December - This is a brand new one for this newsletter. Burrowing Owls are cool creatures that make their nests in holes in the ground. Interestingly, they're found from Canada to Argentina but they skip over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Photographed is a juvenile who was practicing his hunting skills just outside the nest at the base of a tree. I got this shot laying in the red clay dirt of Iguazú Falls National Park in Argentina. (Not photographed: my dry cleaning bill later that day to get all the red stains out of my clothes.)

3



June - Earlier in the year I was concerned that I had yet to see a Brown Violetear. The reporting statistics from eBird, a portal for reporting bird sightings, backed up my observation that fewer of these birds were being seen this year than in past years. However, by mid-year I started seeing them regularly again. To me what makes this shot is not only the bird but its framing. With the *Stachytarpheta* flowers far enough in the background they're blurred out enough to not distract from the hummingbird while also serving to frame it in the shot. It looks like he's posing in front of a painting.

2



January - each year the Professional Photographers of America, the Federation of European Professional Photographers, and United Asia Professional Photography put on a global competition known as the World Photographic Cup. Like the Olympics of photography, each country is able to select and enter images. While I didn't make Team Costa Rica, one of my images received an Honorable Mention from the judges. This year the wildlife category was the most competitive of all the disciplines, so I'm happy with the honorable mention.

I covered the story behind this image in detail in my August newsletter, which you can find (along with all past editions) in the [Newsletter Archive](#) on my website.

My Best Shot of 2023



January - I couldn't enter this photo to the World Photo Cup due to their rules on removing objects from photos. (In the original image there was a stick to the right of him that I have removed.) But in my opinion this photograph of a male Black-crested Coquette is the best photograph I took all year. It was a combination of going to the right spot, choosing the right angle, and then waiting in the intermittent rain for hours until he finally did what I wanted him to do.

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