



## October 2023 Newsletter

### Image of the Month



The last month has been full of some excitingly rare birds. One of them is the subject of this month's featured photo, a juvenile male Bare-necked Umbrellabird. My wife and I went hiking up a mountain near our house with a pair of local friends a few weeks ago. It was a four hour hike to a peak that had cloud forest on the top. From what I could tell no one had ever specifically gone looking for birds there, and we were rewarded with some rarities. One of which being a fantastic photo for this species, because given their behavior it is very hard to get a clear almost eye-level shot like this.

### Featured Artist

This month's featured artist is David Altamirano. He was one of the first Costa Rican photographers I discovered on Instagram when I started an account for my photography a few years ago. I've always been a sucker for photos from Antarctica, I love the spartan landscape. And he captured the wildlife and scenery there fantastically.



You can find his Antarctica work on his Instagram page but this photo of a Baird's Tapir from Corcovado National Park really caught my eye. I love how he managed to get a shallow depth-of-field and have the tapir looking right down the camera. Fantastic capture!

[Instagram](#)

## Fascinating Fact



You would be forgiven for thinking that the tropics are so lusciously green because of the high-quality soil. In reality, the opposite is generally true. Most tropical soil is of poor quality. That's because the frequent, heavy rains tend to wash away a lot of key nutrients from the soil. The reason so much grows in the tropics is due to abundant rain and consistent temperatures.

And even rainfall can fool you. Studies have shown that rainforest grows **more** during periods of drought, at least in the short term. That's because the limiting factor on growth is the amount of sunlight, which is greatly diminished on cloudy, rainy days. So as long as there is still moisture in the soil, plants actually grow more during short droughts.

All that said, Costa Rica is somewhat an exception to the rule. Costa Rica has some of the best quality soil in the Neotropics. Why? The above photo should give you a hint. Volcanic soils are mineral rich and haven't broken down into poor quality clay like older soils do over time. And three of Costa Rica's four mountain ranges are volcanic in origin. Hence, a lot of great quality soil driving Costa Rica's dominance in the pineapple growing arena.

## News

October 14th was one of two annual Global Big Birding days. While late reports are still trickling in, Costa Rica was 7th in number of species observed with 706. Placing it between Bolivia (712) and India (702). And in 8th place in the number of observations submitted.

I'm about to undertake some really exciting projects. Things that I've wanted to do since I was a child. Epic videos, National Geographic style travelogues, and more. As I work on them I may alter the publishing of the newsletter over the next two - three months depending on how much bandwidth I have and to showcase some of these projects. So if you don't see a newsletter on Nov. or Dec. 15th know it's because I'm working on something exciting and it will be in your inbox soon!

### **Tyler Wenzel Photography**

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