



# January 2024 Newsletter

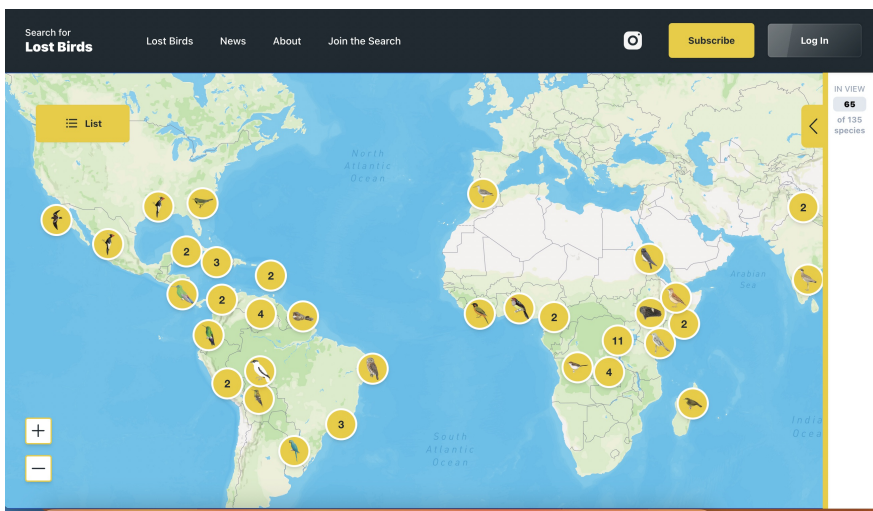
## Image of the Month



This month's featured image is as much about the bird as it is the photo. This is a Galapagos Petrel. They are Critically Endangered and only nest on five of the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador. They normally stick close to the Galapagos but are occasional visitors to Central American waters. They had been reported four times before in Central America (thrice in Costa Rica and once in Panama).

We spotted this individual on a pelagic birding trip on January 11th, making it the fourth report for Costa Rica and the second time it has been photographed. The previous photos were from 2009 and not great quality. (Taking pictures from a rocking boat of a bird dipping in and out of waves is really hard!) As a result, this image will soon be featured in a book about the pelagic birds of Costa Rica!

## Fascinating Fact



How many hummingbirds are found in Costa Rica? That's a question up for debate. Officially the country checklist includes fifty-two hummingbird species. Fifty are regular residents, one is migratory (Ruby-throated), and one is accidental, only occasionally showing up but usually limited to South America and Panama (Rufous-crested Coquette).

However, there is (or most likely was) another hummingbird called Guanacaste Hummingbird or Alfaro's Hummingbird (depending on who you ask); scientific name *Amazilia alfaroana*. This hummingbird has been described as "the foremost ornithological mystery of Costa Rica". It is only known from a single specimen captured in 1895 that is in the collection of the Natural History Museum of London. There has been considerable debate over whether it is a now (most likely) extinct species or if it is a hybrid of two existing species.

[This paper](#) from 2016 concluded that it is very likely a now extinct species. Not all hope is lost, there have been other species thought to have been extinct for even longer that have been rediscovered in recent years. There is a project dedicated to finding these birds called the [Search for Lost Birds](#) (a photo of their map is above).

## News

I'm going to be experimenting a bit with the format of the newsletter so please let me know if you have any thoughts on it. Due to the time commitment of finding, contacting, and coordinating with artists for the time being I'm going to be making the Featured Artist section a recurring but not every month thing. I'm also working on ideas for new topics that could be covered in the newsletter.

### Tyler Wenzel Photography

La Fortuna, Costa Rica  
<https://tylerwenzel.com>

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