

WILD IMAGINATION NEWS

WILD IMAGINATION May 2013

The Milky Way glows bright over the Ibera Wetlands of northern Argentina. I made this image during my April trip to South America.



Welcome to the WI Newsletter!

To be published every now and then

As a way of keeping my former clients, publishers, friends, family, and fans informed about the goings-ons here at Wild Imagination Photography, I've decided to create this occasional newsletter. Here, I'll cover news and information that isn't hitting my blog or social media feeds, and provide you with links and information on new images in my collection, recent publications, upcoming trips, tours, and workshops, and of course, to show off my favorite shots. It's guaranteed to be rare and irregular and won't clog up your inbox. (That said, if you'd like to be left off of these mailings, just let me know, I won't be offended.)

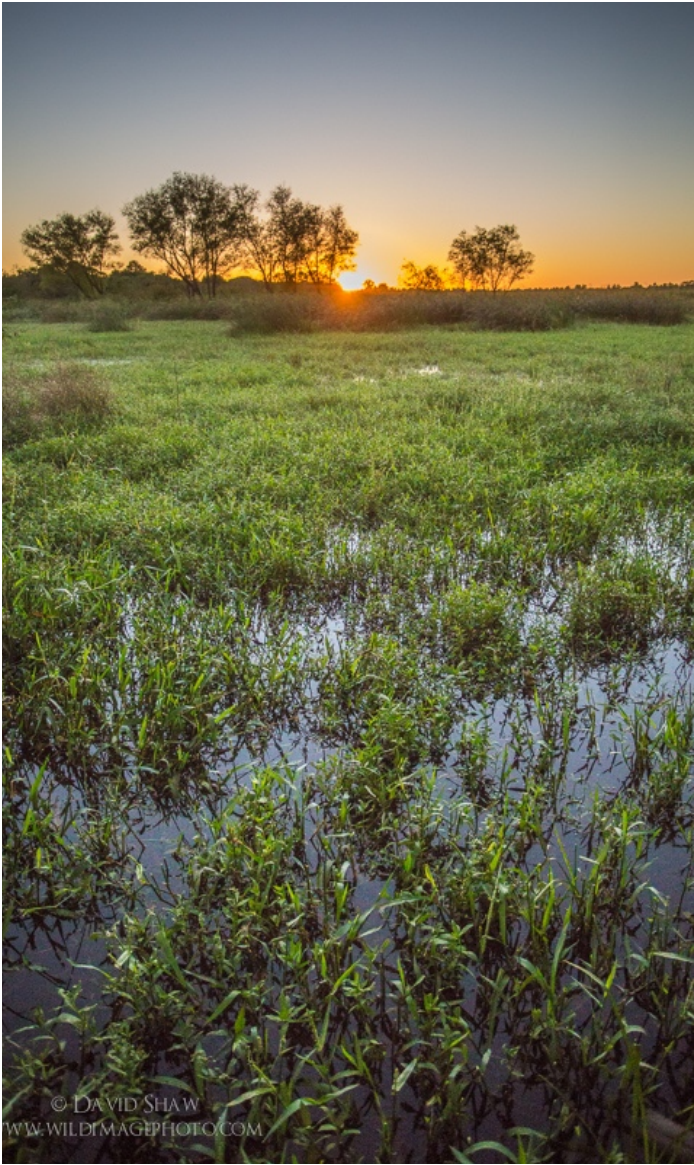
First, I want to say thanks for the support I've received from all of you. Some of you I know as clients on trips I've guided, some are editors and

image buyers, some of you are friends and family, and some of you I may only know via the internet. But one way or another you've all played a roll in getting my guiding/photography/writing career off the ground. I really can't do it without all of you. Thanks!

Also, I want to invite you to stay in touch. I'm always happy to answer photographic, natural history, or trip-planning questions and I'd love to hear about *your* travels and adventures.

All the best,

David Shaw
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Left: Sunrise over the Ibera. Top Right: South American Grey Fox. Bottom Right: Southern Lapwing

New Images: Argentina's Ibera Wetlands

My new favorite destination for tropical wildlife

During April, my partner Amy and I travelled overland from Santiago, Chile to Florianopolis, Brazil. We saw some amazing things along the way, but a trip highlight for me was the Ibera wetlands of northern Argentina. This expansive region lies a few hours south of the regional hub of Corrientes, on the banks of the Rio Parana and the border with Paraguay.

The Ibera is an ancient oxbow of the Parana, but now, rather than a river, it is a mosaic of lakes, marshes, fens, forest islands, and sweeping grasslands. Wildlife is abundant in this semi-tropical wetland. Caiman sun themselves on the banks, or atop the mats of floating vegetation. Capybara by the hundreds, graze like small cattle in the shallows.

Some 300+ species of birds have been found in the Ibera. (During our three days, we ticked off about 125.)

Far removed from any city, the stars in the Ibera are spectacular (see image on page 1). I'm hoping to return, perhaps with a like-minded group of naturalists and photographers. Let me know if you are interested in finding out more about this possible trip.

I've posted a new gallery of images from the Ibera to my stock site. Find them right here: wildimaginationphotography.zenfolio.com/?q=Ibera

More from South America

Too many adventures, too little time

While the Ibera Wetlands were superb, it wasn't the only great places we spent time. Amy and I stayed at a beautiful farm south of Salta, where, for several days, we consumed more fresh and delicious food than I can list.

The Finca Santa Anita is a family-owned, small farm that specializes in fine goat cheese (we consumed nine different varieties!). So good are their cheeses that two years ago the Finca received a well-deserved award from Slow Food. During our time there we took a day-trip to the wine-growing town of Cafayete, and explored the rich variety of habitats nearby.

See a selection of images from Argentina's Salta Province right here:

wildimaginationphotography.zenfolio.com/?q=Salta

No trip to Argentina, is complete without a visit to Iguazu Falls. Nor, should it be. Though the place was packed with visitors from dozens of countries, it wasn't hard to see why. The cascades stretch for miles, and mist and rainbows fill the sky and glint off the tropical vegetation. But for me it wasn't just the sight of all that falling water, but also the sound. The falls roar. They don't grumble, rumble, or growl, but shout a deep, full-throated and endless

"Poor Niagara!"

-Eleanor Roosevelt upon laying eyes on Iguazu Falls.

roar. Each of the hundreds of cataracts emits its own tone to the chaos.

There is more to Iguazu than the falls. Escaping the hordes of tourists at the overlooks is as easy as wandering down one of the little-used jungle paths, where the birding was superb. And that's exactly how Amy and I spent a very pleasant day. We ended up at a small (by comparison) waterfall where we were gloriously alone.

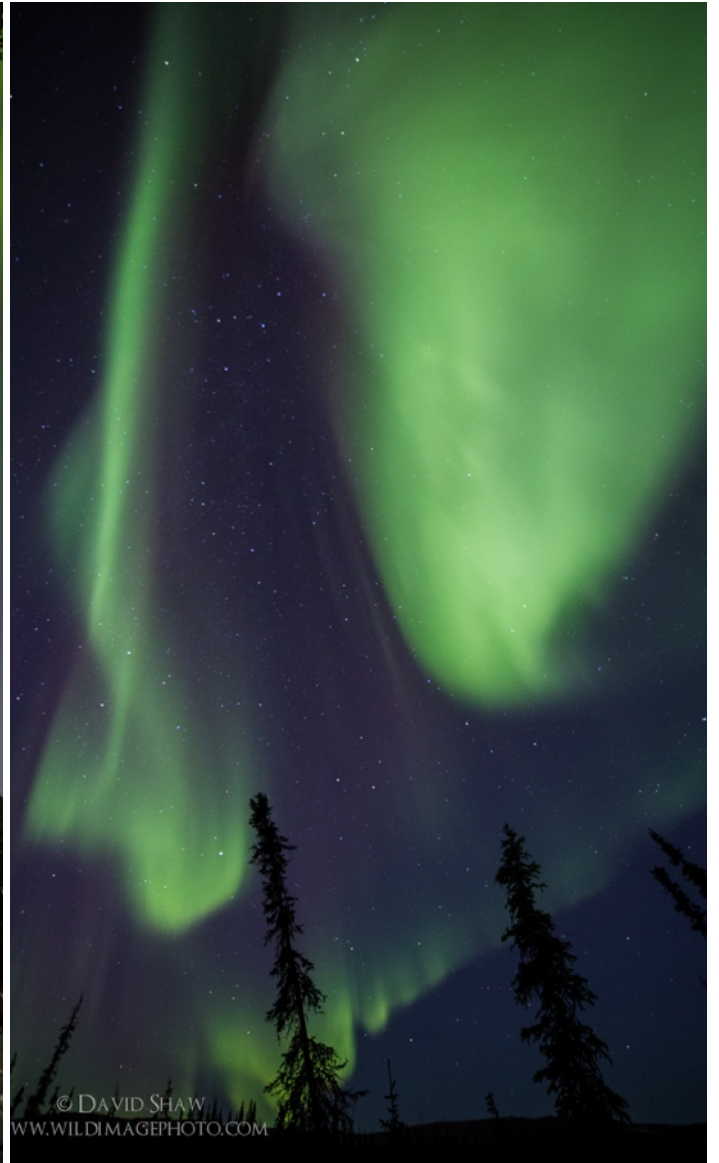
For a selection of photos of Iguazu visit here: wildimaginationphotography.zenfolio.com/?q=Iguazu

Check out a larger collection of images from South America, including adventures in Peru, Bolivia and Brazil right here: <http://wildimaginationphotography.zenfolio.com/?q=South%20America>

Iguazu Falls tumbles in dozens of cascades and stretches for miles.



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An Aurora Winter

Big displays lit up the sky

The sun's activity isn't consistent. Rather it goes through periods of activity followed by relative silence. Every 8-10 years our star gets restless and starts throwing out flares, plumes of plasma and charged particles. When those particles are aimed toward Earth, the aurora borealis is sure to follow. This past winter, and the next to come, are the peak of the current cycle, and true to predictions, the aurora has been hopping.

We were treated this winter to a number of incredible displays from quiet curtains on the northern horizon to great booming colors that erupted across the entire sky.

I spent many late nights waiting for the show, and photographing the lights when they appeared overhead.

Based on interest in aurora images on my web site and social media feeds, it seems people really, really like the northern lights. In fact I've written at least two separate articles on the aurora this past year (find links on my website, or email me). And I've received a number of calls about leading trips or evening workshops.

When the people speak, I respond. I'll be leading aurora watching and photo trips for Explore Dream Discover Tours (exploredreamdiscover.com) during March of 2014, and am available for evening workshops throughout the coming winter.

Check out my website for more information if you are interested in booking an aurora trip for next year, and to see more photos.

Gates of the Arctic 2013 Artist in Residence

Planning for a wilderness, photographic free-for-all.

This winter, I applied for, and was selected to be Gates of the Arctic National Park's 2013 Artist in Residence. It is not your typical residency. There is no cabin, no house, no housing at all provided. My residency will not involve teaching or working with the public. Rather I'll be out where there are no people at all.

I'll be making a wilderness trip accompanied by a Park Ranger and given the freedom to explore, photograph and wander. The trip is shaping up into a packrafting journey where we'll spend three or four days backpacking followed by a few days floating down one of the many rivers.

Though I've spent some time in the Brooks Range (with a lot more to come this summer), I've

rarely had the opportunity to explore and photograph on my own terms. I can't wait.

The final product of my residency will be a fine-art book of images and stories from my experiences in Gates of the Arctic, an accompanying website, and perhaps a gallery show next winter. If all goes as planned, the book should be ready to hit the publisher by the end of December.

Follow my blog, Facebook, and Twitter feeds for more news on the project, and email me (dave@wildimagephoto.com) if you'd like to be put on the list to purchase a copy of the book.

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for the spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter."

-Rachel Carson

I made this image during a trip I guided in 2012 down the Noatak River in the western portion of Gates of the Arctic National Park. This year, I plan to make a lot more images of Alaska's wild and beautiful Brooks Range.



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An American Golden Plover calls from a flower-filled meadow on the arctic coastal plain of Alaska. I made this image last year late one night in mid-June.

Upcoming Adventures

Wildlife and Wilderness

This coming summer I've got a very full schedule of trips I'll be guiding. In fact, according to my recent math, over the course of the 5 wilderness journeys and one hotel-based birding tour, I'll be out for nearly 9 weeks between June 1 and the beginning of September.

It starts at the beginning of June with a Road Scholar birding tour of Denali National Park. The trip, organized by the Denali Education Center and based out of their facility near the park's entrance should be great fun, and a great opportunity to admire the spring birds in Denali.

Three days after the conclusion of the first trip, I'll be heading out to the wildest place in the United States, the far northwestern part of Alaska. There, I'll be paddling the Kokolik River, and hoping to encounter the spring migration of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. This group of nearly 400,000 animals is the largest in the state.

A few days back in town and its off to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to chase down more caribou with a group of photographers and naturalists. This base-camp trip will be a great

chance to explore the Brooks Range foothills and the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge.

In August, I'll be leading another three wilderness trips. It starts early in the month with a backpacking trip from the headwaters of the Alatna to the headwaters of the Noatak, in Gates of the Arctic National Park. At the Noatak, I'll meet another group of travelers, we'll assemble boats and paddle on down the river for 10 more days. I've floated the Noatak for the past two years, it's one of the best canoeing rivers in the state with great wildlife and scenery. I'm eager to return.

The last trip of the summer will be a trip down the remote Kelly River in the Noatak National Preserve in the far western Brooks Range. It'll be a new river for me, the fall scenery should be spectacular and I'll get another chance to try and find the elusive Gray-headed Chickadee.

For more information on these and other awesome wilderness trips, check out Arctic Wild (www.arcticwild.com) or send me an email if you'd like to discuss a custom-guided adventure.



Better late than never, a migrating Greater White-fronted Goose stretches its wings at the Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks, Alaska

Slow Spring in Alaska

In which I ponder where all the birds are hiding

It's been a strange spring here in interior Alaska. After spending April in South America I expected to return to Fairbanks to find the snow turned to water, and a rising thermometer. Instead I found the landscape virtually unchanged from our departure. It snowed for the first week we were back. The usual sounds of singing Dark-eyed Juncos, Robins, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were entirely absent. If it weren't for the extended hours of sunlight, I would have thought I was caught in some kind of time warp.

Then, in the last few days, and a month late, spring has finally shown its face. Temps hit the mid-50s and the snow is rapidly turning to slush. Ducks, Geese and Cranes have appeared, and today

I saw Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpipers, and Dunlin feeding in a meltwater pond.

But still there are no songbirds. As I write this I'm looking out my window onto the sunny spruces, and willing the trilled song of a Junco to seep in through the glass. Yet there is silence.

The biologist in me is beginning to wonder just what the heck is going on. Other birds are appearing, so why not the passerines? And with some species running over a month late (a few should have active nests by now) what will happen when they finally show up? Will there be a mad rush to get back on schedule? An abbreviated claim of territories and courtship? Or will everything just happen a few weeks late?

I'm eagerly awaiting nature's verdict.



A few last images from the recent trip to South America. Left: The courtyard and windmill at the Finca Santa Anita in Salta Province, Argentina. Top Right: A juvenile Rufescent Tiger-heron in the Ibera wetlands of northern Argentina. Bottom Right: A horseman on the beach at Campeche, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

Final Notes

- I've just finished memorizing "The Cremation of Sam McGee" by Robert Service. I figure this will be a good poem to pull out on the tundra this summer. If you see me, feel free to ask for a recitation and we'll find out if my memory is up to snuff.
- I'm planning to add some winter guiding into my schedule over the next couple of years. Places that could end up on the list include Panama, Argentina, Bolivia, and Brazil. I like to work with small groups of birders, naturalists, and photographers. Give me a call or email if you have an interest in any of these destinations, or if you want to be kept up to date as trips develop.
- In the past few months I've had articles and images published in several magazines and websites including Photo Technique, Amateur Photographer, The Ecologist, Birds and Blooms, Alaska, and the Matador Network among others. Check out the publications page on my website for a complete list and links to full-text articles.
- Finally, here are the places where I can be found online:
Website: www.wildimagephoto.com
Wild Imagination Journal: www.wildimagephoto.com/journal/
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Wild-Imagination-Photography/275379539158803
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