

# Rainforest views

Stunning images from an author, tour leader and conservationist who has chosen long ago to leave his native home in the USA to live in Costa Rica out of his deep love for the neotropical wildlife and landscapes

## *Greg Basco: A Wildlife Photographer in his own words*

I've always been interested in nature, and it's this passion that led me to pursue a career as a professional nature photographer; but not right away. After graduating college in the US, I spent 2 years in Costa Rica in the Peace Corps and fell in love with the country and one person in particular, my wife who is a Costa Rican native! We returned to the US for a few years where I did my graduate work in political science and tropical ecology. We then returned again to Costa Rica so I could do my field research for my doctoral dissertation on ecotourism. At the same time, I worked for a few years in conservation in Costa Rica. But during that period, I was really getting into nature photography. I sold a few pictures and bought more gear. I sold a few more pictures and bought more gear again. And in 2006, I decided to move to nature photography full-time, selling my own images for books and magazines and co-founding Foto Verde Tours, Costa Rica's first travel company specializing in photographic tours. I'm busy now with the instructional workshops I lead, continuing to grow Foto Verde Tours throughout Latin America, and producing my own coffee table and e-books. I recently completed a coffee table book called National Parks of Costa Rica, and I'm co-author of the popular e-books *Guide to Tropical Nature Photography* and *Lightroom for the Nature Photographer*. I always look for different light and compositions rather than taking the more standard stock-type photos, and I enjoy shooting wildlife, birds, macro, and landscape equally. Here's what in my bag

for most shoots: Canon 5DsR and 7DII, the Canon 300 mm f/2.8 L IS, the Sigma 150-600 mm C zoom, the Canon 70-300 mm L IS zoom, the Sigma 150 mm f/2.8 macro, the Canon 16-35 mm f/4 L IS zoom, the Rokinon 24 mm f/1.4 lens, and the Sigma 15 mm f/2.8 fisheye lens, various ND and grad filters. I use flash a lot in my photography, whether I'm shooting in the middle of a Costa Rican rainforest or in the Atacama Desert of Chile. As such, I always have at least two flashes with radio transmitter/receivers in my bag. Induro tripods and heads are my choice for camera support. My latest and most exciting initiative is a new non-profit organization dedicated to promoting conservation through photography. I'm founding this in conjunction with my good friends and fellow photographers Nick Hawkins and Lucas Bustamante, along with an expanded team of great nature photographers, multimedia folks, and journalism and PR people. We call this new venture the New World Conservation Photography Group, and our aim is to produce high-quality nature photos and multimedia content that help governments, local communities, scientists, and non-profit groups to protect and preserve ecosystems throughout Latin America. My journey to nature photography is perhaps a non-traditional one, but it is finally coming full-circle. I'm now in a position where I can use my photography more and more to help give back to the ecosystems that have allowed me to make a living for my family and me.



<http://www.deepgreenphotography.com/>



**Keel-billed  
Toucan**

*Ramphastos  
sulfuratus*

A fast shutter speed helped me capture the exact moment when a Keel-billed toucan *Ramphastos sulfuratus* shook off the drops after a heavy rainstorm in Costa Rica.

Canon EOS 5DS,  
1/1600,  
f/6,3, no flash,  
ISO 2500,  
Canon 150-  
600mm F5-6.3 DG  
OS HSM.

**Baird's Tapir***Tapirus bairdii*

Costa Rica's Rio Celeste is an amazing place on its own – while photographing a landscape, I suddenly saw a Baird's tapir crash through the underbrush and begin to swim downstream. I sprinted to a spot I had noticed earlier and hoped against hope that the tapir would cross there.

Canon EOS 5D Mark III,  
1/320,  
f/5.6,  
no flash,  
ISO 640,  
Rokinon 24 mm.





**Collared Aracari** *Pteroglossus torquatus*

Directional sunlight filtering through the trees on the outskirts of a rainforest in northern Costa Rica allowed me to capture this dramatic image of a Collared Aracari.

Canon EOS-1D X, 1/2500, f6,3, with flash, ISO 1000, Canon 150-600mm F5-6.3 DG OS HSM.

**Green Iguana**

*Iguana iguana*

When I saw one Green iguana begin to become active, I quickly shot at a wide open aperture with a telephoto lens for shallow depth of field as the "iguana king" surveyed his little domain.

Canon EOS 5D, 1/200, f/2,8, with flash, ISO 320,  
Canon EF300mm f/2.8L IS USM.



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**Andean  
Flamingo**

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*Phoenicoparrus  
andinus*

A lone  
Andean  
Flamingo was  
foraging right  
next to us in the  
Atacama desert  
of Northern  
Chile.

Canon 5DsR,  
1/50, f/22,  
with flash,  
ISO 500,  
Canon 16-35  
mm f/4 L IS  
zoom.





**Mantled Howler Monkey** *Alouatta palliata*

I love sidelight, and when I saw this Mantled Howler Monkey in a tree at the Selva Verde Lodge in Costa Rica's northern lowlands I couldn't believe my luck. Canon EOS 60D, 1/200, f/7.1, with flash, ISO 500, Canon EF70-300mm f/4-5.6L IS USM.

**Long-billed Hermit**

*Phaethornis longirostris*

Long-billed hermits love these "Sexy Pink" *Heliconia* flowers in northern Costa Rica. I liked this photo because it shows how the birds have to contort themselves to get their nectar reward.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/200, f/11, four flashes, ISO 250  
Canon EF70-300mm f/4-5.6L IS USM.





### **Emerald Tree Boa**

*Corallus caninus*

A rarely seen juvenile Emerald Tree Boa in the rainforest in the Amazon region of Peru is the Holy Grail for the herpetologist as they are exceedingly hard to find.

I balanced flash with natural light for this wide angle portrait.

Canon 5DsR,  
1/200,  
f/10, with flash,  
ISO 250,  
Canon 16-35 mm  
zoom, polarizer.

**Parlor palm** *Chamaedorea elegans*

Steam from a natural volcanic vent in the forest of the Rincon de la Vieja National Park in Costa Rica separated the palms from the chaotic vegetation normally visible.

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 1/50, f/18, no flash, ISO 2500,  
Canon EF17-40mm f/4L USM.



**Pallas' Long-tongued bat** *Glossophaga soricina*

A Pallas' Long-tongued Bat visits a banana flower, Costa Rica.

Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, 3,2 sec, f/11, ISO 400,  
Sigma 150-600mm F5-6.3 DG OS HSM.



**Margay***Lepardus wiedii*

Camera traps rely on an infrared beam to trigger a camera. When I learned that an endangered Margay was spotted at my favorite ecolodge in Costa Rica, Bosque de Paz, I spent nine nights setting everything up and putting out a little tuna and sardines to help attract the cat to where I had my camera pointed. The cat came for a total of thirteen minutes, and my camera took five photos.

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 1/60, f8, with flash, ISO 1000, Canon EF17-40mm f/4L USM.

**Amazonian Motmot***Momotus momota*

An Amazonian Motmot speeds through the cloud forest in front of my house in Costa Rica. This image is an in-camera blur combined with flash; the effect is not a product of Photoshop.

Canon EOS 5D, 1/30, f/5.0, with flash, ISO 50,  
Canon EF300mm f/2.8L IS USM +1.4x.

**Emerald Glass frog***Centrolene prosoblepon*

I took this image of this amazing nocturnal frog at night in a cloud forests on the outskirts of the Juan Castro Blanco National Park in Costa Rica's Central Volcanic Mountain Range.

NIKON D700, 1/8, f11, with several flashes, ISO 800,  
Nikon 105.0 mm f/2.8.



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**Puma**

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*Felis concolor*

Puma feasting on a guanaco *Lama guanicoe* carcass on the outskirts of the Torres del Paine National Park in Chile.

Photo taken with a wide angle lens and a remote shutter release.

Canon 5DsR, 1/200, f/11, remote wireless shutter release, Phottix Odin flash transmitter, two flashes, ISO 400, Canon 16-35 mm f/4 zoom.

**Red-webbed Tree frog**

*Hypsiboas rufitelus*

Red-webbed tree frog in lowland rainforest, Costa Rica.

Canon 5DsR, 1/200, f/11, two flashes, ISO 200,  
Sigma 150 mm macro.



**King Vulture** *Sarcoramphus papa*

A King vulture takes a break from eating as the afternoon sun glints off the wing of one of the numerous black vultures sharing a carcass in Costa Rica.

Canon EOS 5DS R, 1/5000, f/2,8, no flash, ISO 400,  
Canon EF300mm f/2.8L IS USM.

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**San Rafael  
waterfall**

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Ecuador

The waterfall is situated in about as dramatic a setting as I've ever seen. Deep in the eastern foothills of the Andes, its water will eventually contribute to the flow of the mighty Amazon River.

Canon 5DsR,  
12 mins,  
f/16,  
no flash,  
polarizer, 10 stop  
neutral density  
filter, ISO 50,  
Canon 16-35 mm.



**Helmeted Iguana**

*Corytophanes  
cristatus*

Helmeted iguana  
on the banks of a  
lowland rainforest  
stream, Costa Rica.

I'm always on the  
lookout for strong  
compositions and  
dramatic natural  
light. I was  
absolutely thrilled to  
be able to capture  
this image under a  
lightly cloudy sky  
that gave  
a chiaroscuro look  
to the scene.

Canon EOS 5DS R,  
3,2 sec, f/8,  
no flash,  
ISO 100,  
Canon EF16-35mm  
f/4L IS USM.





### Atlantic Coast

Costa Rica

I found that low tide sunrise would be about an hour after low tide. This was perfect as that meant just enough water to swirl around the large tidal reef outcrop but not so much that I wouldn't be able to wade out into the surf to shoot. I hiked into the refuge at about 4 in the morning by flashlight, set up, and waited.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 2,0 sec, f/16, no flash, ISO 100, Canon EF17-40mm f/4L USM.

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**Red-eyed  
Tree frog**

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*Agalychnis callidryas*  
A nocturnal red-eyed tree frog is bathed in the rainforest starlight in northern Costa Rica during an hourlong exposure.

Canon EOS 5D  
Mark II, 1 h,  
f/10, with flash,  
ISO 400,  
20mm.







### Pacific Coast

Costa Rica

I used a 10 stop neutral density filter (kind of like welder's glass) for a very long exposure at sunset at my favorite beach on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast. The resulting three minute exposure gave an ethereal look to the image just after the sun had set.

Canon EOS 5DS R,  
150 seconds  
f/16, no flash,  
ISO 100,  
Canon EF16-35mm  
f/4L IS USM.

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**Red-eyed  
Tree frog**

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*Agalychnis callidryas*

A wild Red-eyed Tree frog leaps through the forest in the lowlands of Costa Rica. It took a setup with multiple flashes, a bit of creativity, and plenty of patience to capture this action!

Canon 5DsR,  
1/200,  
f/16, two flashes,  
ISO 640,  
Sigma 150 mm  
macro, tripod.





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**Juan Castro Blanco National Park** Costa Rica

At the end of a rainy day at the Toro Waterfall in Costa Rica's Juan Castro Blanco National Park, the sun suddenly broke through the clouds lighting up the overlapping misty mountain valleys while the rain kept pouring down. I quickly grabbed the camera and lens I had just packed away and fired off 6 vertical shots, which I would later stitch together for this panoramic image. The sun went back behind the clouds right after, and that was it. What a way to end the day!

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/160, f/5,6, no flash, ISO 500, Canon EF70-300mm f/4-5.6L IS USM.



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**Quito Whorltail  
Iguana**

*Stenocercus  
guentheri*

A Whorltail

Iguana surveys its domain at nearly 15,000 feet near the base of Ecuador's Cotopaxi Volcano. Canon EOS 5DS R, 1/60, f/16, with flash, ISO 100, Canon EF16-35mm f/4L IS USM.