

News from the Everglades

A Weekly Update from Everglades Imagery

June 5, 2005

The Experience

This morning I was trying to figure out what I would include in my newsletter this week since I feel like I have been stuck inside all week due to the heavy storms. However, today I was able to get out for a while in yet another (unsuccessful) attempt to track down a Florida Leafwing. While I didn't find the butterfly I did come across a number of Florida Tree Snails (*Liguus fasciatus*) that are unique to extreme South Florida and Cuba. These snails were very heavily collected by a number of people earlier this century before they were protected by law. Apparently collectors wanted these shells so badly that they would go to all lengths to collect unique color phases. There are several accounts of collector who discovered a new color variety found only in one hammock and after collecting a number of the shells, they burned the hammock. Today there are nearly 50 color varieties known, however a handful of them are no longer found in the wild.

In the time I have been down here I have seen them two or three times until this past week when I found a number of them on the edges of hammocks in the Long Pine Key area. In the winter these animals seal themselves to a tree branch and are immobile. However, during the wet season they become mobile and move around the trees where they are found. Today, I was caught in the middle of a rainstorm while I was photographing a couple snails that I had found. After the rainstorm I happened to look back at the snail and noticed it was out and moving around. This week's newsletter focuses on these snails and the various color varieties I have photographed since I have been here. The last two images show one of the snails out and crawling around. All but one of the first groups of images were taken this week. I hope you enjoy these beautiful tree snails.

The Photos





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