

Feral February Episode 3 – Quick as a whip

Description

Throughout the month of February, which I am calling –Feral February,– I am going to do something a little bit different – I’m going to create a series of theme posts every week day about my favourite things in the world: Animals.

Today’s animal is: The Booted racquet-tail!

The animal featured today in Feral February is an iridescent green hummingbird located in South America that has one extremely notable feature – can you spot it?



Booted racquet-tail (*Ocreatus underwoodii*). Photo courtesy of Joseph C. Boone. [Source](#).

The male booted racquet-tail has two extremely elongated feathers emerging from its tail, which end in shapes that resemble racquets (like you would use for badminton or squash), hence the name. Like most splendidly adorned birds, these additions are not for camouflage, to help itself feed or protect itself from predators – but to help it court a female. The male racquet-tail holds up its leg feathers during mating, and quickly flicks them up and down to produce a sound similar to a whip cracking.

Like other hummingbirds, the racquet-tail makes a distinct humming noise while in flight, flapping its wings repeatedly to stay aloft. You can listen to sounds the booted racquet-tail makes, including mating calls, calls during foraging to keep in contact with one another, the humming sound they make while in-flight, and more [here](#).

Daily dose of trivia:

Did you know that most hummingbirds let their body temperature fall to almost the temperature of the surrounding air at night? This state, called “torpid,” is because hummingbirds are so tiny, and require so much energy to keep their metabolism up, that if they tried to retain their normal body heat throughout the night, they would starve.

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