



Field Guides Tour Report

Galapagos: An Intimate Look at Darwin's Islands II 2014

Jul 5, 2014 to Jul 15, 2014

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For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).

For those interested in natural history, the Galapagos Islands are a wonderland. Every island is a revelation. The animals -- though wild and unfettered -- are so trusting as to seem tame. Our week's cruise brought us within arm's length of Galapagos Tortoises the size of coffee tables and whip-fast lava lizards. Albatrosses snoozed in the middle of paths. Mockingbirds investigated bare toes. Boobies stomped their way through our group. "Darwin's Finches" circled as if planning to land atop heads or arms or camera lenses. And everywhere, we could settle in for extended studies of plants or birds or insects or herps or fish, secure in the knowledge that they just wouldn't care that we were there.

As you might expect in such a naturalist's paradise, there were many, many highlights. Waved Albatrosses called and bowed and clattered their beaks together, or brooded small chicks (which look surprisingly poodle-like, thanks to their curly feathers). Blue-footed Boobies whistled and grunted and solemnly displayed their extraordinary feet to each other. Well-camouflaged Short-eared Owls lurked among a whirling mass of Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels, waiting for an opportunity -- and a one-eyed hunter gobbled its hapless prey nearly at our feet. A Flightless Cormorant panted on its seaweed nest. A sunning pair of Galapagos Penguins suddenly turned frisky, working hard at making baby penguins. A tiny Galapagos Rail sprinted across gaps in the ferns and mosses in the soggy highlands of Santa Cruz, then tiptoed out into the path. Red-billed Tropicbirds circled overhead again and again and again, trying to get just the right flight line to land at their nests. Huge-eyed Swallow-tailed Gulls drifted past on flashy wings. American Flamingoes floated like neon pink swans on a brackish pool -- or snoozed one-legged along its shores. Male Great and Magnificent frigatebirds inflated their huge red gular "balloons," doing their best to attract passing females.



The Swallow-tailed Gull is surely one of the world's most handsome seabirds. (Photo by guide Megan Edwards Crewe)

The archipelago's "finches" (now known to be tanagers) and mockingbirds are part of its fame, as ruminating on their differences is what led Darwin to his famous theory of natural selection. And we got to see plenty of those differences ourselves: all three ground-finches -- including a very close Large Ground-Finch -- on North Seymour our very first afternoon, a Woodpecker Finch prying bark off twigs and a Vegetarian Finch stuffing itself on fruits on San Cristobal, swarms of Gray Warbler-Finches bouncing across the rocks on Espanola, a wing-shimmering male Common Cactus-Finch singing from a huge Opuntia cactus at the Charles Darwin Research Station, Small and Medium Tree-Finches sharing branches on Floreana. And the mockingbirds proved just as cooperative: an inquisitive San Cristobal Mockingbird atop a bush outside the cemetery, a gaggle of begging young Espanola Mockingbirds that followed us across the sands at Gardner Bay, at least 5 Floreana Mockingbirds (a significant portion of the world population) checking for tidbits on the rocky coast of Champion, and many confiding Galapagos Mockingbirds on virtually every other island we visited.

But it wasn't just the birds that dazzled. Glittering fishes swarmed around us in the seas. Bottlenose Dolphins leapt across our bow. We swam among herds of Pacific Green Turtles, and played tag with boisterous young Galapagos Sea Lions. We walked on ancient lava flows, marveled over delicate flowers and ferns thriving in cracks of blasted rock, chased more than one flitting butterfly or dragonfly (with cameras, of course) and admired many a setting sun or evening sky full of stars. And, of course, there were all those fabulous meals -- and table decorations -- that Ivan produced out of that tiny galley kitchen!

Thanks to Captain Antonio and his able crew -- Jimmy, Joffrey, Luis and Roberto -- and, of course, to our outstanding local guide Peter, we had a trouble-free week in paradise. And thanks to our fine group of traveling companions, we had a wonderful time exploring it! I hope to see you all again sometime soon. Meanwhile, happy memories! -- Megan

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL (GALAPAGOS) (*Anas bahamensis galapagensis*) – A handful on one of the ponds at Punta Moreno, including a few that flew in from the far end and landed right below us. We saw others snoozing on a rocky islet along the trail at Punta Cormorant on Floreana, a dozen or so in the brackish pool at the start of the trail at Cerro Dragon and a final pair waddling in the grass at Rancho Promicias.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

AMERICAN FLAMINGO (*Phoenicopus ruber*) – Ten or so in one of the ponds at Punta Moreno. Some snoozed, standing on one leg in shallow waters along the pond edge, while others floated like pink swans out in the middle, with their heads underwater as they fed. We saw another couple of pairs at Punta Cormorant -- two feeding and one sitting on a nest with its mate standing guard -- and a single bird foraging in a brackish pool at Cerro Dragon. [N]

Spheniscidae (Penguins)

GALAPAGOS PENGUIN (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) – One scooted across the face of an incoming wave as we waited for our panga to pick us up from Punta Moreno, and we saw others -- including a frisky pair making baby penguins -- on the dark lava near the water's edge in the bay there. [E]

Diomedeidae (Albatrosses)

WAVED ALBATROSS (*Phoebastria irrorata*) – Fabulous views of virtually every stage of this magnificent seabird's life -- from eggs (sadly abandoned along the trail at Punta Suarez) through small chicks in their distinctively curly-feathered plumage (rather like tiny poodles with beaks) to adults. We saw them sleeping and swimming and flying and courting -- including a pair doing an extended version of their bill-clacking dance. [N]

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

GALAPAGOS PETREL (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) – Reasonably common at sea between various islands, looking long-winged and elegant compared to the smaller, stiffer-winged and faster flapping Galapagos Shearwaters. We had some very close to the boat, which allowed us to see the white blaze just behind their bills. The former Dark-rumped Petrel was split into this species and the Hawaiian Petrel.

GALAPAGOS SHEARWATER (*Puffinus subalaris*) – Hundreds -- probably even thousands -- swarmed over the water near Daphne Major, presumably demolishing some school of fish, and we saw many others coursing over the ocean as we traveled between islands. This species, which was recently split from Audubon's Shearwater, has two forms -- the eastern birds have white underwings, while western ones are grayish.

Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels)

ELLIOT'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanites gracilis galapagoensis*) – This was easily the tour's most common storm-petrel; dozens and dozens danced on the water behind our boat during the course of the week. The pale belly of this species was particularly evident when we pulled up to the Nemo II in our panga one day while the birds swooped in beside us.

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma castro*) – Not particularly common this trip, though we did see several briefly following our boat on a couple of days. This species has a small rump patch, like the Elliot's Storm-Petrel, but is larger, darker underneath, and has a subtly thicker neck.

WEDGE-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma tethys tethys*) – Seen in small numbers following the boat (at least briefly) on most days, but the big encounter came on Genovesa, where tens of thousands swirled over the broken lava fields on the western side of the island. It was almost like being in a storm-petrel snow globe! [N]

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon aethereus mesonauta*) – A handful over Daphne Major our first afternoon on the boat, and others over the ocean between various islands, but our best views came at Punta Suarez on Espanola (where they flapped past at eye level or made multiple passes trying to get just the right angle to land at their nests) and on Genovesa. We had many birds on nesting ledges around Darwin's Bay -- and others screaming past with frigatebirds in hot pursuit. [N]

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – Daily across the Galapagos, including many hanging menacingly over Daphne Major our first afternoon, waiting for hapless tropicbirds to return to their nests with their fish. We had especially nice looks at many -- including males with their "balloons" puffed out, females on nests (showing their diagnostic blue eyerings) and lots of fluffy, white-headed chicks -- on North Seymour and Genovesa. [N]

GREAT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata minor ridgwayi*) – Great comparisons between this and the previous species on North Seymour, where many were nesting side by side. Despite its name, the Great Frigatebird is smaller than the Magnificent. Females have a reddish eyering. [N]

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

NAZCA BOOBY (*Sula granti*) – This, the largest of the boobies found in the Galapagos, was seen daily, with particularly large numbers on Enderby (off the coast of Floreana) and close views on Espanola and Genovesa, where birds nested right beside the trails -- and occasionally walked right among the group! The bird gathering pebbles for its nest right at the top of Prince Philip's Steps on Genovesa was especially entertaining. [N]

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY (*Sula nebouxii excisa*) – Daily, often (such as on North Seymour) in sizeable numbers. The birds doing their courtship dances (whistling and grunting, spreading their wings and solemnly showing their bright blue feet to each other) were certainly endearing. [N]

RED-FOOTED BOOBY (EASTERN PACIFIC) (*Sula sula websteri*) – A few cruised past Enderby (and one sat atop a dead tree there) but we had most of our sightings on Genovesa, where birds of both color morphs (mostly brown, and a few white) sat on nests or coursed over Darwin's Bay. We also had a bunch of youngsters cruising alongside us -- including one that seemed intent on eating the button at the top of our radio antenna -- as we steamed back to Santa Cruz from Genovesa. [N]

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

FLIGHTLESS CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax harrisi*) – Fine looks at several around Punta Moreno, including one panting bird sitting on a seaweed nest (rearranging bits as it brooded its eggs) and others preening along the edge of the bay. Some of the snorkelers even got to see one in action underwater. [EN]

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis urinator*) – Daily, with both adults and youngsters seen well in many places -- including the adult that flew in and landed on our boat as we departed (in the panga) for our walk at Gardner Bay.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (BLUE FORM) (*Ardea herodias cognata*) – One fished the shallows at the edge of the harbor at Puerto Ayora, seen while we waited for our panga after our visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station, and another stood atop the "Welcome to Floreana" sign beside the harbor at Puerto Valasco Ibarra.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Some of the group saw one along the runway in Guayaquil, when we landed there on our way to the Galapagos, and others saw one flap past along the beach as we started our walk at Cerro Dragon. This species isn't particularly common on the Galapagos islands.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Common on several of the islands, including small numbers flying past the San Cristobal cemetery, many flocks of a dozen or more heading to roost over the harbor in Puerto Ayora, and more than 100 sprinkled across a field in the Floreana highlands, seen as we descended from our walk at Asilo de la Paz.

STRIATED HERON (GALAPAGOS) (*Butorides striata sundevalli*) – A few scattered birds along the rocky lava coastlines of the islands, including one hunched on a ledge in Darwin's Bay. Some taxonomists consider this to be a distinct species -- the Lava Heron -- while others (including those in charge of the Clements list, which we use for our tour checklists) lump it with Striated Heron. [E]

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (GALAPAGOS) (*Nyctanassa violacea pauper*) – Single birds on most days, and a pair preening low on the cliffs at Darwin's Bay. This endemic subspecies is quite dark compared to mainland birds.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – One soared over the grounds of the Garden Hotel San Jose our first afternoon, seen by some.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

GALAPAGOS HAWK (*Buteo galapagoensis*) – We got progressively closer to these dark hawks as the tour went on. First, we had a distant pair playing in the winds above Santa Fe. Then we had 4-5 birds around Bahia Urbina, including an adult carefully feeding two fluffy white chicks at a nest, and another dark adult mantling her stick nest at Punta Suarez. But our best views came at Gardner Bay, where one bold adult stood on a piece of bamboo washed up on the beach, completely unfazed as the gang of us passed by. [EN]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

GALAPAGOS RAIL (*Laterallus spilonotus*) – Wow! This skulking species can be tough to see well, so to have one standing practically on our boot tips at Media Luna was a real treat. The first one we spotted sprinted back and forth across a side trail a few times before melting back into the ferns and mosses, but the second proved braver, venturing out several times into the open. [E]

PAINT-BILLED CRAKE (*Neocrex erythrops*) – One crept closer and closer in the tortoise enclosure on Floreana before finally working its way back into the undergrowth, where it was joined by second one.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – Several chugged across the brackish ponds in the lava fields at Punta Moreno, their white undertail coverts flashing, and another nibbled a fallen guava fruit on the grounds of Rancho Promicias.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – One preened and then snoozed on a rocky islet in the middle of one of the brackish ponds along the Punta Cormorant trail on Floreana -- good spotting, Linda! We saw a couple of others foraging in the brackish pool near the start of the Cerro Dragon trail. This is a resident breeder on the islands.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus palliatus galapagensis*) – One along the dark lava edge of Daphne Major proved to be a bit of a "Where's Waldo" challenge our first afternoon on the boat. We found a trio -- two adults with a nearly grown youngster -- along the coast of Espanola, and had another pair snoozing on the sand at Bahia Ballena. This is a resident subspecies on the archipelago.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Four of these winter visitors pattered on the sandy beach at Punta Cormorant on Floreana, and we spotted another in the brackish pool at the start of the Cerro Dragon trail.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WANDERING TATTLER (*Tringa incana*) – Single birds on the rocky shorelines of three islands: Santa Cruz, Floreana and Espanola. This is a winter visitor to the islands.

WHIMBREL (AMERICAN) (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) – One near the hotel where we enjoyed a drink after our walk in the Floreana highlands appeared to be digging crabs out of the sand, and we saw a couple of others among the lava boulders at Cerro Dragon. This is another winter visitor to the Galapagos.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – One rummaged on the rocks at the edge of Daphne Major, just beyond the tour's first American Oystercatcher.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – One foraging in the brackish pool near the start of the trail at Cerro Dragon had us guessing until we finally edged close enough to get a good look. Presumably, this was a failed breeder already headed south for the winter.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

SWALLOW-TAILED GULL (*Creagrus furcatus*) – Many fine views of these gorgeous gulls, particularly on North Seymour and Darwin's Bay, where they often landed within yards of us. While most of the birds we saw were adults, we did find a few checkered youngsters, particularly on Genovesa. This species is a nocturnal feeder, which accounts for its large eyes.

LAVA GULL (*Leucophaeus fuliginosus*) – Small numbers on scattered days, including one paddling in a concrete pool on the San Cristobal sea front and others standing on piers there and at Puerto Ayora. The all dark upperwing of this species is quite different than the distinctively flashy plumage of flying Swallow-tailed Gulls. This is the world's rarest gull, with fewer than 500 pairs known to exist. [E]

BROWN NODDY (*Anous stolidus galapagensis*) – Seen daily along various island coasts, where they typically perched on rocky boulders or ledges low along the cliffs. We saw many others hunting over the sea, where their all dark plumage and long tails quickly separated them from other

seabirds.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

GALAPAGOS DOVE (*Zenaida galapagoensis*) – Reasonably regular throughout (though nowhere in big numbers), with especially nice views of one grubbing in the underbrush along the path at Punta Suarez and of a wary quintet atop a rock pile not far from the Galapagos Hawk's nest there. [E]

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata*) – Easily the most common dove around our Quito hotel, with dozens flashing from tree to tree on the grounds.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Those who explored the grounds of our Quito hotel on the first afternoon spotted several of these small doves among the bigger Eared Doves in the cow pasture down the hill.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

DARK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus melacoryphus*) – A handful along the path at Bahia Urbina proved accommodating, particularly the one that sat for long minutes in a nearby leafless tree.

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – Quite common on many of the islands we visited. Sadly, this species (introduced to control ticks on introduced cattle) has proved to be a real problem for many of the islands' endemic land birds, as it is a major predator of eggs and nestlings. [I]

Strigidae (Owls)

SHORT-EARED OWL (GALAPAGOS) (*Asio flammeus galapagoensis*) – Our first -- huddled in a dip far out across the broken lava on Genovesa -- was a real challenge for most to find. We found a somewhat closer bird further along the path, and then lucked into a superb encounter with a one-eyed hunter (the second year in a row we've found it) which flew in clutching a Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel in one foot near where the trail ended. We could almost have reached out and touched it as it de-feathered and then devoured its prey.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

SPARKLING VIOLETEAR (*Colibri coruscans*) – These big hummingbirds were quite common on the grounds of our Quito hotel, chasing each other -- and all the smaller hummingbirds -- away from "their" flowers.

BLACK-TAILED TRAINBEARER (*Lesbia victoriae*) – A couple of these snazzy little hummingbirds on the grounds of our Quito hotel on the first afternoon; the shorter-tailed female showed white on her outer tail feathers, while the male's very long tail impressed us all.

WESTERN EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus*) – A couple of emerald-green males flashed through fruit trees in the cow pastures near our Quito hotel; we also saw a little female, with her distinctive black mask, feeding in a bottle brush tree.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – A pair with a nest in one of the palm trees on the grounds of our Quito hotel spent much of the afternoon flying back and forth across the garden. [N]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

GALAPAGOS FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus magnirostris*) – Singles and pairs sprinkled in scrubby growth across the islands, including a very confiding duo along the trail at Bahia Ballena one afternoon. Though it was tiny (definitely on the smallest end of the Myiarchus group), it certainly sounded a lot like its larger cousins. [E]

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – A trio twittered in one of the trees along the edge of the parking lot at our Quito hotel, making occasional sallies out after passing insects.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – A handful of birds winged over on our first afternoon at the Garden Hotel San Jose, and at least 25 or so coursed back and forth over the cattle pastures near the same hotel on our last afternoon.

GALAPAGOS MARTIN (*Progne modesta*) – Three coursed back and forth high over Daphne Major our first afternoon in the Galapagos, looking tiny compared to the tropicbirds and frigatebirds. We had better looks at another small group over the brackish ponds at Punta Moreno; they zoomed after insects, occasionally dropping down to the water's surface for a drink. [E]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

GREAT THRUSH (*Turdus fuscater*) – A few of these big drab thrushes on the grounds of our Quito hotel, including some checking out the offerings in the fruiting trees in the parking lot.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GALAPAGOS MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus parvulus*) – The most widespread of the tour's mockingbirds, seen on several islands -- including one singing from the roof of one of the buildings at the Charles Darwin Research Station, several bouncing along the sandy trails at Bahia Urbina and noisy youngsters begging from adult birds (and quite possibly us) along the trail on Genovesa. [E]

FLOREANA MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus trifasciatus*) – It meant missing the end of the Argentina-Netherlands World Cup semifinal, but we had good views of several flicking through the prickly pear cactus trees and checking for tidbits around some sleeping Galapagos Sea Lions on Champion island, just off the coast of Floreana. This species went extinct on the main island of Floreana back in the late 1800s, and the total world population is thought to number less than 150. [E]

ESPANOLA MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus macdonaldi*) – A number of almost ridiculously confiding birds approached us on both our landings on Espanola -- including a few bold youngsters that stabbed a toe or two at Gardner Bay. [E]

SAN CRISTOBAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus melanotis*) – A half dozen or so on the island of San Cristobal, including a trio right along the main road (two on roadside wires, the third bouncing through a tree top underneath them) and another atop a tree right near the entrance to the cemetery. [E]

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

YELLOW WARBLER (GALAPAGOS) (*Setophaga petechia aureola*) – Ubiquitous, found every day in every habitat, often in surprising numbers. Males, as we saw on multiple occasions, have little rusty caps in addition to their rusty breast streaks. Females and young are surprisingly different than mainland forms; they're very pale underneath, with gray faces, sometimes showing little or no yellow.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

- BLUE-AND-YELLOW TANAGER** (*Pipraeidea bonariensis*) – Those who met for our first afternoon's walk had brief views of one of these handsome tanagers when it flew into a flowering tree near the hotel's entrance -- and then flew back out again right over our heads. We had much better looks on our final afternoon's ramble, when we found a cooperative pair sitting in the sunshine at the top of a tree near the pastures across the road.
- BLUE-GRAY TANAGER** (*Thraupis episcopus*) – Two flew from a tree in the middle the parking lot of our Quito hotel to one on the edge; one gleaming bird then its way up to a branch near the middle of the tree, sitting for long minutes in the open.
- SCRUB TANAGER** (*Tangara vitriolina*) – One in the shrubs beyond a cow pasture near our Quito hotel certainly showed its rusty cap nicely; it glowed in the late afternoon light, contrasting sharply with its turquoise-blue body -- nice spotting, Kathy!
- GREEN WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea olivacea*) – Common on our walk in the misty highlands of Santa Cruz, including a pair right near where our bus parked. This species was only recently split from the next. [E]
- GRAY WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea fusca mentalis*) – A couple of this subspecies twitched through the brush right at the top of Prince Philip's Steps on Genovesa. [E]
- GRAY WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea fusca luteola*) – These were the first of the Gray Warbler-Finches we found -- a big group swirling along the edges of the back road we walked on San Cristobal. [E]
- GRAY WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea fusca cinerascens*) – Several small family groups of this subspecies -- including some trailing begging youngsters -- bounced through the low bushes along the trail on Espanola. [E]
- VEGETARIAN FINCH** (*Platyspiza crassirostris*) – Particularly nice looks of one feeding along the edge of the trail at the Charles Darwin Research Station, with another along the track we walked on San Cristobal. We heard the high-pitched "radio static" song of this species on several occasions. [E]
- WOODPECKER FINCH** (*Camarhynchus pallidus striatipectus*) – One rummaged through roadside shrubs on San Cristobal, peeling bark from some of the smaller branches and prising twigs apart with its strong beak. [E]
- LARGE TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus psittacula*) – Our first was a male that flicked through (appropriately) large trees along the road down from Media Luna; eventually, he serenaded us from a nearby telephone wire. We had another pair near where we found our giant wild Galapagos Tortoises. This was the last new species for the tour. [E]
- MEDIUM TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus pauper*) – Quite common (and surprisingly easy to find) on Floreana this year, including one singing from the top of a tree right near where the "chicken truck" dropped us off, and others flitting through the trees in the tortoise pen. This critically endangered species is found only on Floreana. [E]
- SMALL TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus parvulus parvulus*) – The birds seen at Asilo de la Paz (in the highlands of Floreana) and Media Luna (on Santa Cruz) were this subspecies. We had nice views of several in close comparison with nearby Medium Tree-Finches on Floreana. [E]
- SMALL TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus parvulus salvini*) – Those seen with the mixed "finch" flock we encountered on our walk down from the highlands on San Cristobal were this subspecies. [E]
- SMALL GROUND-FINCH** (*Geospiza fuliginosa*) – Abundant throughout, seen in restless, moving flocks on virtually every island we visited -- except Genovesa, of course! [E]
- LARGE GROUND-FINCH** (*Geospiza magnirostris*) – A black male, its bill looking quite enormous as it perched on a nearby treetop, sat near the trail on North Seymour our first afternoon on the islands. [E]
- SHARP-BEAKED GROUND-FINCH** (*Geospiza difficilis difficilis*) – A couple of pairs flitted through the scruffy trees edging the track on Genovesa, occasionally approaching almost to arm's reach.
- COMMON CACTUS-FINCH** (*Geospiza scandens*) – A male singing from a big *Opuntia* cactus tree along the main path into the Charles Darwin Research Station was a highlight of our afternoon visit there, and we saw others along the trails further in. [E]
- MEDIUM GROUND-FINCH** (*Geospiza fortis*) – Nearly as common as their Small Ground-Finch cousins, particularly on our walks at Cerro Dragon and Bahia Urbina. There are big-beaked Medium Ground-Finches and small-beaked Medium Ground-Finches, and we had good views of both during the tour. [E]
- LARGE CACTUS-FINCH** (*Geospiza conirostris conirostris*) – A few along the track at Punta Suarez on Espanola showed their larger bills, and we had brief views of another male in the bushes edging the beach at Gardner Bay. This is the largest-beaked of the cactus-finches. [E]
- LARGE CACTUS-FINCH** (*Geospiza conirostris propinqua*) – All too brief views of one along the trail on Genovesa; unfortunately, it disappeared into the bushes before everybody really had a proper look. Though it is currently considered to be the same species as the subspecies found on Espanola, it has a much narrower, straighter bill. [E]

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

- RUFIOUS-COLLARED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – Quite common on the grounds of our Quito hotel, where their cheery songs were a key part of the first afternoon's soundtrack.

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

- HOODED SISKIN** (*Spinus magellanicus*) – A pair flitted along the edge of a grassy trail we walked near our Quito hotel, with the male showing particularly nicely as he perched up on a weedy little plant growing from a stone wall.

MAMMALS

- HOUSE MOUSE** (*Mus musculus*) – One scurrying around near the spring on Floreana was seen by many in the group.
- BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN** (*Tursiops truncatus*) – Several pods seen during the course of our cruise, including a couple of animals that rode our bow wave for a few too-brief seconds. This is the most commonly seen cetacean in the Galapagos.
- SHORT-FINNED PILOT WHALE** (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) – At least two (and maybe three) of these dark whales crossed our bow as we steamed west from Espanola late one afternoon, showing their fairly tall, straight dorsal fin nicely. The large "bump" on their forehead is distinctive.
- "GALAPAGOS" SEA LION** (*Zalophus californianus wollebacki*) – Dozens. Scores. Hundreds! These sociable creatures were reliably common all around the islands, and provided some fine entertainment, especially for the snorkelers who swam with them. They certainly did appear to like to show off their underwater talents!
- GALAPAGOS FUR SEAL** (*Arctocephalus galapagoensis*) – A dozen or more snoozed in caves and on rocky ledges around Darwin's Bay, their thick fur looking quite spiky compared to the fur of the nearby sea lions. It was amazing how few of them had their faces turned in our direction. [E]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Other creatures we saw:

HERPS

Marine Iguana (*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*)

Land Iguana (*Conolophus subcristatus*)

Galapagos Lava Lizard (*Microlophus albemarlensis*)

Floreana Lava Lizard (*Microlophus grayi*)

Espanola Lava Lizard (*Microlophus delanonis*)

Galapagos Leaf-toed Gecko (*Phyllodactylus galapagoensis*)

Galapagos Racer (*Alsophis biserialis*)

Galapagos Tortoise (*Geochelone elephantopus*)

Pacific Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

FISH

King Angelfish (*Holacanthus passer*)

Razor Surgeonfish (*Prionurus laticlavus*)

Longfin Halfbeak (*Hemiramphus saltator*)

Striped Black Salema (*Xenocys jessiae*)

Giant Damselfish (*Microspathodon dorsalis*)

Galapagos Ringtail Damselfish (*Stegastes beebei*)

Yellowtail Damselfish (*Stegastes arcifrons*)

Panamic Sergeant Major (*Abudefduf troschelii*)

Leather Bass (*Dermatolepis dermatolepis*)

Blue-chin Parrotfish (*Scarus ghobban*)

Spinster Wrasse (*Halichoeres nicholsi*)

Cortez Rainbow Wrasse (*Thalassoma lucasanum*)

Mexican Hognose (*Bodianus diplotaenia*)

Moorish Idol (*Zanclus cornutus*)

Steel Pompano (*Trachinotus stilbe*)

Guineafowl Puffer (*Arothron meleagris*)

Sunset Wrasse (*Thalassoma grammaticum*)

Orangeside Triggerfish (*Sufflamen verres*)

Razor Surgeonfish (*Prionurus laticlavus*)

Trumpetfish (*Aulostomus maculatus*)

Pacific Burrfish (*Chilomycterus affinis*)

Golden Cownose Ray (*Rhinoptera steindachneri*)

Giant Oceanic Manta Ray (*Manta birostris*)

Marbled Stingray or Reticulate Whipray (*Himantura uarnak*)

Diamond Stingray (*Dasyatis dipterura*)

BUTTERFLIES

Queen Butterfly (*Danaus gilippus*)

Galapagos Blue Butterfly (*Leptodes parrhasioides*)

Sulfur Butterfly (*Phoebis sennae marcellina*)

Large-tailed Skipper (*Urbanus dorantes galapagensis*)

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Large Painted Locust (*Schistocerca melanocera*)

Small Painted Locust (*Schistocerca literosa*)

Galapagos Flightless Grasshopper (*Halemus robustus*)

Yellow Paper Wasp (*Polistes versicolor*)

Galapagos Carpenter Bee (*Xylocopa darwini*)

Spotless Ladybug (*Cylonea sanguinea*)

Spot-winged Glider (*Pantala hymenaea*)

Ghost Crab (*Ocypode gaudichaudii*)

Sally Lightfoot Crab (*Grapsus grapsus*)

Semi-terrestrial Hermit Crab (*Coenobita compressus*)

Totals for the tour: 79 bird taxa and 5 mammal taxa