



Field Guides Tour Report

Galapagos: An Intimate Look at Darwin's Islands II 2017

Jul 8, 2017 to Jul 18, 2017

Willy Perez & local guide

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



Waved Albatrosses nest almost exclusively in the Galapagos. We witnessed some amazing behavior, such as this courtship display, and we saw nesting birds as well, making these large birds one of the favorites of the trip. Photograph by participant David Stickney.

Every visit to the "Enchanted Islands" is different, but the special thing about Galapagos is that you will see unique wildlife up close to you, (sometimes too close!) ... or in the most unexpected places! The sites that we visited were superb for the birds that we needed, and the Nemo III was a great moving home from which to see the islands, and have a great adventure. The Nemo always got us where we wanted to be. The crew was great, and the food was tasty and delicious. And, I almost forgot — what about the decorations for each meal?

Our local guide, Peter, shared a lot of his knowledge about the islands, and that made the trip even more exciting. We had a superb time from the day we arrived; even common birds had something special to show us. Angela surprised me with her observation of the head of the Brown Noddy: the color of the head is different from the rest of the body, making a brown bird colorful. And we saw these guys every day.

The Galapagos Hawk surprised some people, especially the one that was waiting for us when we visited Espanola Island. The challenge of finding the Galapagos Rail made some people decide that it was the bird of the trip for them, and I am so glad that, in the end, we had good looks at this very small Rail. The colors of the Vermilion Flycatcher and the Purple Gallinule really impressed a few participants on this tour. The Waved Albatrosses gave us some big shows, and were Sylvia's favorite birds. The Short-Eared Owl was ready for a meal, and the Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel colony was fun to watch. The rare Floreana Mockingbird made Craig laugh when it landed on the boat.

Although the whole week was full of special moments, for me watching Flightless Cormorants nesting was superb, the Orcas that followed the boat for some minutes were breathtaking, and we had the most unexpected place to find a Barn Owl (it was in the bathroom... yes in the bathroom!). All of these moments were hard to believe, but this is Galapagos... anything can happen, and you have to be prepared for it!

To close, I would like to say "Thank you!" to everyone who came on this tour, and who shared the week with me in the Enchanted Islands. You made this trip successful... and it was very successful indeed.

Take care and see you soon,

Willy.

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*) – Seen few times along the trip, especially on the bigger islands.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

AMERICAN FLAMINGO (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) – Great looks at a few of them on Isabela and Floreana.

Spheniscidae (Penguins)

GALAPAGOS PENGUIN (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) – These small penguins were present on the western side of Isabela, especially in Punta Moreno. [E]

Diomedidae (Albatrosses)

WAVED ALBATROSS (*Phoebastria irrorata*) – Seeing these incredible birds do their courtship display was amazing, and we also saw some eggs and a little chick.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

GALAPAGOS PETREL (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) – Very nice views of this bird; they were around a lot while we were sailing, very distinctive in flight.

GALAPAGOS SHEARWATER (*Puffinus subalaris*) – The most numerous seabird on the trip.

Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels)

ELLIOT'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanites gracilis galapagoensis*) – The most common bird on the trip, they followed the boat like little fairies!

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma castro*) – Very few seen during our sailing from Genovesa to Isabela, and also from Espanola to San Cristobal.

WEDGE-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma tethys tethys*) – The colony at Genovesa is very impressive; thousands of them were coming in and out of the little lava holes.

MARKHAM'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma markhami*) – Only a few people managed to see this dark bird when we were crossing from Espanola to San Cristobal.

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon aethereus mesonauta*)

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – We saw both species of frigatebird the day when we visited North Seymour.

GREAT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata minor ridgwayi*) – A few were nesting on Seymour and Genovesa.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

NAZCA BOOBY (*Sula granti*)

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY (*Sula nebouxii excisa*)

RED-FOOTED BOOBY (EASTERN PACIFIC) (*Sula sula websteri*) – The white and brown race of this colorful booby was seen at Genovesa.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

FLIGHTLESS CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax harrisi*) – They liked the cold water off the western side of Isabela island, where we saw several of them. [E]

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (SOUTHERN) (*Pelecanus occidentalis urinator*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (BLUE FORM) (*Ardea herodias cognata*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

STRIATED HERON (GALAPAGOS) (*Butorides striata sundevalli*) – Very numerous, even in the towns. [E]

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (GALAPAGOS) (*Nyctanassa violacea pauper*)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – A few in Quito.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

GALAPAGOS HAWK (*Buteo galapagoensis*) – The only endemic hawk of the islands, we saw them on Isabela, but the ones at Espanola may have been the bird of the trip for Eric. [E]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

GALAPAGOS RAIL (*Laterallus spilonota*) – It was hard work, but remember, even in Galapagos, this is still a Rail, and as you know, they are challenging to see. In the end it was worth it to do the slippery trail, right? [E]

PAINT-BILLED CRAKE (*Mustelirallus erythropus*) – What a great look at this bird; a bit easier than the previous one.
PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – A really last minute gallinule; thanks to John for his hard work!
COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus palliatus galapagensis*)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (HUDSONIAN) (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*)

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*)

RED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

WANDERING TATTLER (*Tringa incana*)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

SWALLOW-TAILED GULL (*Creagrus furcatus*) – Both adults and young of this stunning looking gull were seen many times.

LAVA GULL (*Leucophaeus fuliginosus*) – We saw this rare gull several times. [E]

BROWN NODDY (*Anous stolidus galapagensis*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Quito.

GALAPAGOS DOVE (*Zenaida galapagoensis*) – This small endemic dove is present on different islands. [E]

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata*) – In the gardens of the hotel in Quito.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) [I]

DARK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus melacoryphus*) – Nice looks at this cuckoo in San Cristobal.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (GALAPAGOS) (*Tyto alba punctatissima*) – This is the one that showed up in the bathroom at the restaurant when we were having lunch.

Strigidae (Owls)

SHORT-EARED OWL (GALAPAGOS) (*Asio flammeus galapagoensis*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

SPARKLING VIOLETEAR (*Colibri coruscans*)

BLACK-TAILED TRAINBEARER (*Lesbia victoriae*)

WESTERN EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

CRIMSON-MANTLED WOODPECKER (*Colaptes rivolii brevirostris*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (OBSCURUS GROUP) (*Pyrocephalus rubinus piurae*) – Seen at the San Jose gardens in Quito.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (GALAPAGOS) (*Pyrocephalus rubinus nanus*) – We saw this one on Isabela on our way to the highlands.

GALAPAGOS FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus magnirostris*) [E]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*)

GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*) – Seen in the airport at Guayaquil.

GALAPAGOS MARTIN (*Progne modesta*) – The ones that were sitting on the cliffs at Tagus Cave were superb, and gave us a nice show. [E]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

GREAT THRUSH (*Turdus fuscater*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GALAPAGOS MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus parvulus*) – This most widespread of the four Galapagos mockingbird species was seen several times. [E]

FLOREANA MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus trifasciatus*) [E]

ESPAOLA MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus macdonaldi*) [E]

SAN CRISTOBAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus melanotis*) [E]

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

YELLOW WARBLER (GALAPAGOS) (*Setophaga petechia aureola*) – They followed us everywhere during our time in Galapagos.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

- SCRUB TANAGER** (*Tangara vitriolina*) – Great looks at San Jose Hotel in Quito.
- GREEN WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea olivacea*) – We saw this one on our visit to Isabela, and also Santa Cruz. [E]
- GRAY WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea fusca mentalis*) – The one at Genovesa. [E]
- GRAY WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea fusca luteola*) – We saw this one at San Cristobal. [E]
- GRAY WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea fusca bifasciata*) – We saw only one, but we got nice looks on Santa Fe Island.
- GRAY WARBLER-FINCH** (*Certhidea fusca cinerascens*) – Many of them when we visited Espanola. [E]
- VEGETARIAN FINCH** (*Platypiza crassirostris*) – This big finch was seen on San Cristobal and also on Santa Cruz. [E]
- WOODPECKER FINCH** (*Camarhynchus pallidus pallidus*) – This is the subspecies that we saw in the highlands of Santa Cruz. [E]
- WOODPECKER FINCH** (*Camarhynchus pallidus productus*) – Nice views of this bird at Isabela. [E]
- WOODPECKER FINCH** (*Camarhynchus pallidus striatipecta*) – This bird often uses a little stick as a tool, but ours never really used it. We saw it on San Cristobal. [E]
- LARGE TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus psittacula psittacula*) – The last finch that we saw on our trip, when we went to Santa Cruz on the last day. [E]
- MEDIUM TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus pauper*) – Asilo de la Paz in Floreana was the place to find this finch, and that is exactly where we saw them. [E]
- SMALL TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus parvulus parvulus*) – This finch is more wide spread in the Archipelago than the next one; we saw them on Isabela, Floreana and Santa Cruz. [E]
- SMALL TREE-FINCH** (*Camarhynchus parvulus salvini*) – This subspecies is the one that we saw at San Cristobal. [E]
- MANGROVE FINCH** (*Camarhynchus heliobates*) – We saw this super-rare bird on Isabela.
- SMALL GROUND-FINCH** (*Geospiza fuliginosa*) [E]
- LARGE GROUND-FINCH** (*Geospiza magnirostris*) – These are the finches with the gigantic beak; we saw a few of them on Genovesa. [E]
- SHARP-BEAKED GROUND-FINCH (DIFFICILIS)** (*Geospiza difficilis difficilis*) – Several birds were present on Genovesa. [E]
- COMMON CACTUS-FINCH** (*Geospiza scandens intermedia*) [E]
- MEDIUM GROUND-FINCH** (*Geospiza fortis*) [E]
- LARGE CACTUS-FINCH (CONIROSTRIS)** (*Geospiza conirostris conirostris*) – Very common at Espanola. [E]
- LARGE CACTUS-FINCH (PROPINQUA)** (*Geospiza conirostris propinqua*) – Few seen at Genovesa. [E]

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

RUFIOUS-COLLARED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia capensis*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

GOLDEN GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus chrysogaster*)

MAMMALS

- BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN** (*Tursiops truncatus*)
- ORCA** (*Orcinus orca*)
- FIN WHALE** (*Balaenoptera physalus*)
- "GALAPAGOS" SEA LION** (*Zalophus californianus wollebacki*)
- GALAPAGOS FUR SEAL** (*Arctocephalus galapagoensis*) [E]

Herps

- MARINE IGUANA** (*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*) – These bizarre creatures were fun to watch. [E]
- LAND IGUANA** (*Conolophus subcristatus*) [E]
- GALAPAGOS LAVA LIZARD** (*Microlophus albemarlensis*) [E]
- ESPANOLA LAVA LIZARD** (*Microlophus delanonis*) [E]
- FLOREANA LAVA LIZARD** (*Microlophus grayi*) [E]
- SAN CRISTOBAL LAVA LIZARD** (*Microlophus bivittatus*) [E]
- GALAPAGOS (GIANT) TORTOISE** (*Geochelone elephantopus*) – The truly gigantic ones were at Santa Cruz. [E]
- GREEN SEA TURTLE** (*Chelonia mydas*) – Many seen from the boat.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The Santa Fe Land Iguana was not on the list, but I think it needed a mention.

We also saw a Devil Ray, Galapagos Shark, Manta Ray, Diamond Stingray, Yellow-Finned Tuna, Ocean Sunfish (Mola Mola), plus Galapagos Blue and Sulphur Butterflies.

Totals for the tour: 89 bird taxa and 5 mammal taxa