



Field Guides Tour Report

Galapagos: An Intimate Look at Darwin's Islands 2018

Jul 7, 2018 to Jul 17, 2018

Willy Perez & local guide

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



Although it's not what most people would call beautiful, the Flightless Cormorant is one of the special birds of the Galapagos. This endemic is found only on two of the islands, and we saw it well on Fernandina. Photo by participant Jude Harackiewicz.

Trips to the Galapagos Islands come with big expectations, because for most, it's the trip of a life time, and this trip did not let us down. The good thing about Galapagos is that it never disappoints anyone, and that is why it's unique.

We started our trip with a delay in the Guayaquil airport when our plane had to be changed and we had to wait some time there. But Judy found the right spot to keep us occupied by finding a big window with nice views of some bamboo that was covered by Green Iguanas, Amazilia Hummingbirds, Ecuadorian Ground-Dove and other things that kept us busy during our waiting time. We missed a couple of hours but once we landed in Baltra everything was fine again.

Peter, our local guide, was waiting for us and the adventure started straight away.

The Nemo III worked well as our home for seven nights, and our super chef prepared delicious meals, and I have to say that the variety was great. Every visit to each different location brought us different experiences, and some fabulous birds, plants, and of course, geology. Some people wanted to see Penguins, and when we were close to the Equator, we got them. We saw Flightless Cormorants, most of the Finches on our list and even Orcas. We stayed very busy, but even so, Esther had time to introduce people to Quiddler, what a hit.....

We also witnessed one of the most spectacular events in the islands, an example of the force that created the Galapagos. The eruption that we saw from Sierra Negra volcano was simply an amazing sight!

I have to say that the most important aspect of the trip was all of you people; you are the ones that make the difference. I would like to say thank you for adding so much fun to our Galapagos adventure. I hope that I will see you on another birding trip, but until then, all the best for all of you.

From 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*) – This was seen in the lagoons around Puerto Villamil in Isabela and also in Santa Cruz Island.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos).

AMERICAN FLAMINGO (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) – Fantastic close looks of some birds feeding at Puerto Villamil.

Spheniscidae (Penguins).

GALAPAGOS PENGUIN (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) – Some were seen sitting on the rocks but also swimming close to the boat in Isabela and Floreana. [E]

Diomedidae (Albatrosses).

WAVED ALBATROSS (*Phoebastria irrorata*) – The visit to Espanola Island was superb for this species, where normally they nest. We saw them in full display, also eggs, and chicks.....what a show!

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels).

GALAPAGOS PETREL (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) – Several birds flew by the boat during our sailing days.

GALAPAGOS SHEARWATER (*Puffinus subalaris*) – Very common along the way.

Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels).

ELLIOT'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanites gracilis galapagoensis*) – Always following the boat, the most commonly seen bird on the tour.

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL (*Pelagodroma marina*) – It was a great surprise to see this small storm petrel that is normally rare in Galapagos.

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma castro*) – Seen a couple of times, especially when we did the afternoon sailing.

WEDGE-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma tethys tethys*) – The big colony of this species was incredible to see in Genovesa Island.

MARKHAM'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma markhami*) – This dark storm petrel was seen when we were sailing from Genovesa to Isabela.

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds).

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon aethereus mesonauta*) – What a spectacular bird to see, but the calls and displays are also very unique.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – This bird was seen nicely on the first day at Seymour, some of them were nesting.

GREAT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata minor ridgwayi*) – Less common than the previous one but still seen in good numbers.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets).

NAZCA BOOBY (*Sula granti*) – Espanola was the best place to see them, but some were seen almost every day.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY (*Sula nebouxii excisa*) – The postcard bird; they were sometimes displaying. And we also saw little chicks.

RED-FOOTED BOOBY (EASTERN PACIFIC) (*Sula sula websteri*) – The two morph colors were seen in Genovesa.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).

FLIGHTLESS CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax harrisi*) – Fernandina was a superb place to see them well, some even showed their useless wings. [E]

Pelecanidae (Pelicans).

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

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

GREAT BLUE HERON (BLUE FORM) (*Ardea herodias cognata*) – It was crazy how tame these big birds were; they had no fear of people.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

STRIATED HERON (GALAPAGOS) (*Butorides striata sundevalli*) – A few of them were present along the way. [E]

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

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).

GALAPAGOS HAWK (*Buteo galapagoensis*) – The best site for this endemic hawk was at Espanola. [E]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

GALAPAGOS RAIL (*Laterallus spilonota*) – We had to walk a bit for this one but we saw it twice in two different places; this is one of the hardest birds to see in Galapagos. I am glad that we managed to have some good views of the birds. [E]

PAINT-BILLED CRAKE (*Mustelirallus erythropus*) – A nice pair came out just in front of us, what a treat!

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets).

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers).

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus palliatus galapagensis*) – At least seen a couple of times.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (HUDSONIAN) (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) – Nice looks of this bird, especially at Fernandina, where we could see the very long curved bill that was very distinctive.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*)

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – Seen only once during our sailing.

WANDERING TATTLER (*Tringa incana*) – We saw this species twice, just wandering on the rocks.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

SWALLOW-TAILED GULL (*Creagrus furcatus*) – This magnificent gull was quite common along the way.

LAVA GULL (*Leucophaeus fuliginosus*) – This rare endemic was spotted several times along the way. [E]

BROWN NODDY (*Anous stolidus galapagensis*) – Super common in the trip.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ECUADORIAN GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina buckleyi*) – This bird was seen during our waiting time in the airport in Guayaquil.

GALAPAGOS DOVE (*Zenaida galapagoensis*) – This is a very handsome dove, another endemic from the islands. [E]

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata*) – Seen in Guayaquil and Quito.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – Introduced in Galapagos and well established there. [I]

DARK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus melacoryphus*) – Nice looks a couple of times.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (GALAPAGOS) (*Tyto alba punctatissima*) – We had to do some sort of Yoga exercises to see this bird, but everyone managed; ha!

Strigidae (Owls)

SHORT-EARED OWL (GALAPAGOS) (*Asio flammeus galapagoensis*) – The best was the one hunting for the storm petrels at Genovesa.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

AMAZILIA HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia amazilia*) – This was another addition to our trip from our Guayaquil waiting time.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (GALAPAGOS) (*Pyrocephalus rubinus nanus*) – A female was seen first at Isabela, followed later on by a nice male.

GALAPAGOS FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus magnirostris*) [E]

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Guayaquil.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – Guayaquil.

GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*) – Guayaquil.

GALAPAGOS MARTIN (*Progne modesta*) – Great views of this Martin in Isabela. [E]

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GALAPAGOS MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus parvulus*) – The most widespread of the four Mockingbirds that we saw several times. [E]

FLOREANA MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus trifasciatus*) – This rare bird we saw in the Champion Islet near Floreana. [E]

ESPANOLA MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus macdonaldi*) – The biggest of all, that came to welcome us in Espanola island. [E]

SAN CRISTOBAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus melanotis*) – This is the one that we saw at the cemetery in San Cristobal. [E]

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

YELLOW WARBLER (GALAPAGOS) (*Setophaga petechia aureola*) – Always curious and came close for some nice photos.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

SAFFRON FINCH (SAFFRON) (*Sicalis flaveola valida*) – Some seen in Guayaquil.

GREEN WARBLER-FINCH (*Certhidea olivacea*) – We saw this small finch in Isabela and Santa Cruz. [E]

GRAY WARBLER-FINCH (*Certhidea fusca mentalis*) – This is the one that we saw in Genovesa. [E]

GRAY WARBLER-FINCH (*Certhidea fusca luteola*) – Nice looks at San Cristobal. [E]

GRAY WARBLER-FINCH (*Certhidea fusca bifasciata*) – Several seen at Santa Fe Island during our walk there.

GRAY WARBLER-FINCH (*Certhidea fusca cinerascens*) – Common at Espanola. [E]

VEGETARIAN FINCH (*Platyspiza crassirostris*) – We had great looks of this big finch eating leaves. [E]

WOODPECKER FINCH (*Camarhynchus pallidus pallidus*) – We saw this subspecies at Santa Cruz. [E]

WOODPECKER FINCH (*Camarhynchus pallidus productus*) – Some people saw this bird during our visit to the highlands of Isabela. [E]

WOODPECKER FINCH (*Camarhynchus pallidus striatipecta*) – At least a couple were spotted at San Cristobal. [E]

LARGE TREE-FINCH (*Camarhynchus psittacula psittacula*) – We had fantastic looks of this finch eating some of the flowers at Santa Cruz. [E]

MEDIUM TREE-FINCH (*Camarhynchus pauper*) – This rare tree finch showed up nicely at Floreana. [E]

SMALL TREE-FINCH (*Camarhynchus parvulus parvulus*) – We saw this one on several different islands except San Cristobal. [E]

SMALL TREE-FINCH (*Camarhynchus parvulus salvini*) – This subspecies in the one that we saw in San Cristobal. [E]

SMALL GROUND-FINCH (*Geospiza fuliginosa*) – The most common of the finches. [E]

LARGE GROUND-FINCH (*Geospiza magnirostris*) – It is impressive to see this bird with a gigantic bill, it is almost bigger than its head... [E]

GENOVESA GROUND-FINCH (*Geospiza acutirostris*) – Split from Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch. [E]

COMMON CACTUS-FINCH (*Geospiza scandens intermedia*) [E]

MEDIUM GROUND-FINCH (*Geospiza fortis*) – Few seen around. [E]

ESPANOLA CACTUS-FINCH (*Geospiza conirostris*) – Split from Large Cactus-Finch. [E]

GENOVESA CACTUS-FINCH (*Geospiza propinqua propinqua*) – Split from Large Cactus-Finch. [E]

Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows)

RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – Seen in Quito.

MAMMALS

ORCA (*Orcinus orca*)

FIN WHALE (*Balaenoptera physalus*)

"GALAPAGOS" SEA LION (*Zalophus californianus wollebacki*)

GALAPAGOS FUR SEAL (*Arctocephalus galapagoensis*) [E]

Herps

MARINE IGUANA (*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*) [E]

LAND IGUANA (*Conolophus subcristatus*) [E]

GREEN IGUANA (*Iguana iguana*) – Males and females were in the airport in Guayaquil.

GALAPAGOS LAVA LIZARD (*Microlophus albemarlensis*) – We saw these ones in Fernandina and Isabela. [E]

ESPANOLA LAVA LIZARD (*Microlophus delanonis*) [E]

FLOREANA LAVA LIZARD (*Microlophus grayi*) [E]

SAN CRISTOBAL LAVA LIZARD (*Microlophus bivattatus*) [E]

GALAPAGOS (GIANT) TORTOISE (*Geochelone elephantopus*) – The best ones were in the highlands of Santa Cruz. [E]

GREEN SEA TURTLE (*Chelonia mydas*)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

These are some other species of wildlife that we saw on our tour.

Santa Fe Land Iguana

Santa Cruz Lava Lizard

Ray Spotted Eagle Ray

Sally Light-foot Crab

Fiddler Crab

Ocean Sun Fish

White-tipped Shark

Yellow-finned Tuna

Guineafowl Pufferfish

King Angel-Fish

Razor Surgeonfish

Moorish Idol

Giant Damsel fish

Blue-chinned Parrotfish

Bump-head Parrotfish

Cortez Rainbow Wrasse

Panamic-fanged Blenny

Leather Bass

Totals for the tour: 79 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa