

Trip Report — Galapagos: An Intimate Look at Darwin's Islands II 2025

July 12-22, 2025 with Willy Perez & Jairo Guzqui



The group is ready for a happy hour after a full day adventure on Isabela Island. Photo by Willy Perez.

The Enchanted Islands — that's what people call the Galápagos, and for good reason. It's a place full of wonder, wild beauty, and moments that stay with you long after you've left. For nature lovers — especially birders — it's a dream come true. I'm so happy to say that our recent tour was, once again, a complete success.

As usual, we made the *Nemo III* our comfortable home for seven unforgettable nights, and added one more night in Puerto Ayora, on Santa Cruz Island. Over the course of the week, we visited many of the major islands — exploring everything from the dry lowlands to the lush, misty

highlands — all in search of the unique and endemic wildlife that makes the Galápagos so magical.



Gregg Racer got a superb photo of the charismatic Waved Albatross in full display.

Right from the start, we were treated to fantastic sightings. On our very first outing, we visited the nesting sites of both Magnificent and Great Frigatebirds. It was a perfect opportunity to observe them up close and learn the small differences between the two. We also came across Blue-footed Boobies right in the middle of the trail — such a classic Galápagos moment! And we had to watch our step, as Land Iguanas were incredibly well-camouflaged, hiding in plain sight.

One of the most memorable days for many of us was on Genovesa Island. The sky was alive with Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels — thousands of them fluttering and diving into cracks and crevices, trying to escape the watchful eyes of Short-eared Owls hunting nearby. It felt like we were watching a scene from a nature documentary... but we were living it.



The Flightless Cormorant is one of a kind, the only Cormorant that lost the ability to fly and here, Suzi Cole got a perfect shot to see it.

Isabela Island brought us face-to-face with two of the Galápagos' most iconic species: the Flightless Cormorant, with its odd, stunted wings, and the playful Galápagos Penguin. To look for the elusive Galápagos Rail, we ventured into the highlands — riding the local *chiva* (also known as the “chicken truck”), which added a fun, local twist to the journey. After a short hike, we were rewarded with excellent views of this secretive little crake. We also had a lovely sighting of the Brujo Flycatcher — now recognized as a separate species from the more familiar Vermilion Flycatcher.

One of the absolute highlights was seeing all three species of boobies: Nazca Boobies nesting on the ground, colourful Red-footed Boobies in the trees, and the unforgettable dance of the Blue-footed Boobies. On Española Island, we were treated to the beautiful courtship display of the Waved Albatross, and even saw their chicks — such a special moment, especially at this time of year.



The visit to the highlands of Santa Cruz brought us face to face with the most iconic animals in the world, the incredible Galapagos Giant Tortoise. Photo by Willy Perez.

The finch ID challenge kept us all on our toes — but it was a lot of fun, and we managed to identify 14 species, plus several subspecies. Every day brought something new, something surprising. And it wasn't just about the birds: the ocean crossings between islands were full of life, too. We had wonderful sightings of Bottlenose Dolphins, Manta Rays, Mobula Rays, and even the elusive Mola Mola. Snorkelers in the group were lucky enough to swim alongside Hammerhead Sharks, Mobula Rays, and so many colourful fish!

On our final day, we explored the highlands of Santa Cruz, where we saw Giant Tortoises in the wild — always a humbling experience. We also added a few more species to our list, including the Vegetarian Finch, Barn Owl, and Large Tree Finch. We even had time for a short walk through a lava tunnel, which added a bit of geological wonder to our adventure.



We had the opportunity to be very close to the nesting site of both Frigatebirds and here Suzi Cole got a nice photo of a pair Great Frigatebirds.

But beyond all the wildlife, what really made this trip special for me was the group. You all came here with such enthusiasm and open hearts, ready to experience the magic of the Galápagos. Some of you were thrilled by the Flamingos, others by the Penguins, Flightless Cormorants, or the Swallow-tailed Gulls. A few even told me how much they enjoyed the finches — especially the *Smedium*, which made more than a few appearances! And yes, someone pointed out the Toco Toucan... Don't panic, people, no toucans in Galapagos yet! It was just a fantastic decoration in the dining room that Stalin our chef made — which I have to admit made me smile.

It was definitely a week full of fun, discovery, laughter, and shared wonder. Thank you all for joining me on this adventure. And a huge thank-you as well to our incredible Galápagos guide, Jairo, for his knowledge, patience, and dedication — and to the entire crew of the *Nemo III* for taking such great care of us.

I'll be back soon — but until then, just keep birding.



We never got tired of watching Blue-footed Boobies, and Gregg Racer got this beautiful picture of one of them.

Other Wildlife We Saw on the Tour:

Mammals:

Bottlenose Dolphin
Galápagos Sea Lion
Galápagos Fur Seal
Santa Fe Rice Rat

Reptiles & Amphibians:

Marine Iguana
Land Iguana
Santa Fe Land Iguana
Lava Lizards (Galápagos, Española, Floreana, San Cristóbal, Santa Fe, and Isabela)
Green Sea Turtle

Fish & Marine Life:

Mobula Ray

Manta Ray

Spotted Eagle Ray

Diamond Stingray

Marble Ray

Hammerhead Shark

White-tipped Reef Shark

Mola Mola

And many beautifully colourful fish

Invertebrates:

Sally Lightfoot Crab

Hermit Crab

Insects:

Blue and Monarch Butterflies

Painted Locust



Crakes are always hard to see, even in Galapagos, but Russ Cole managed to get this very cool photo of a Paint-billed Crake the day that we visit Floreana Island.

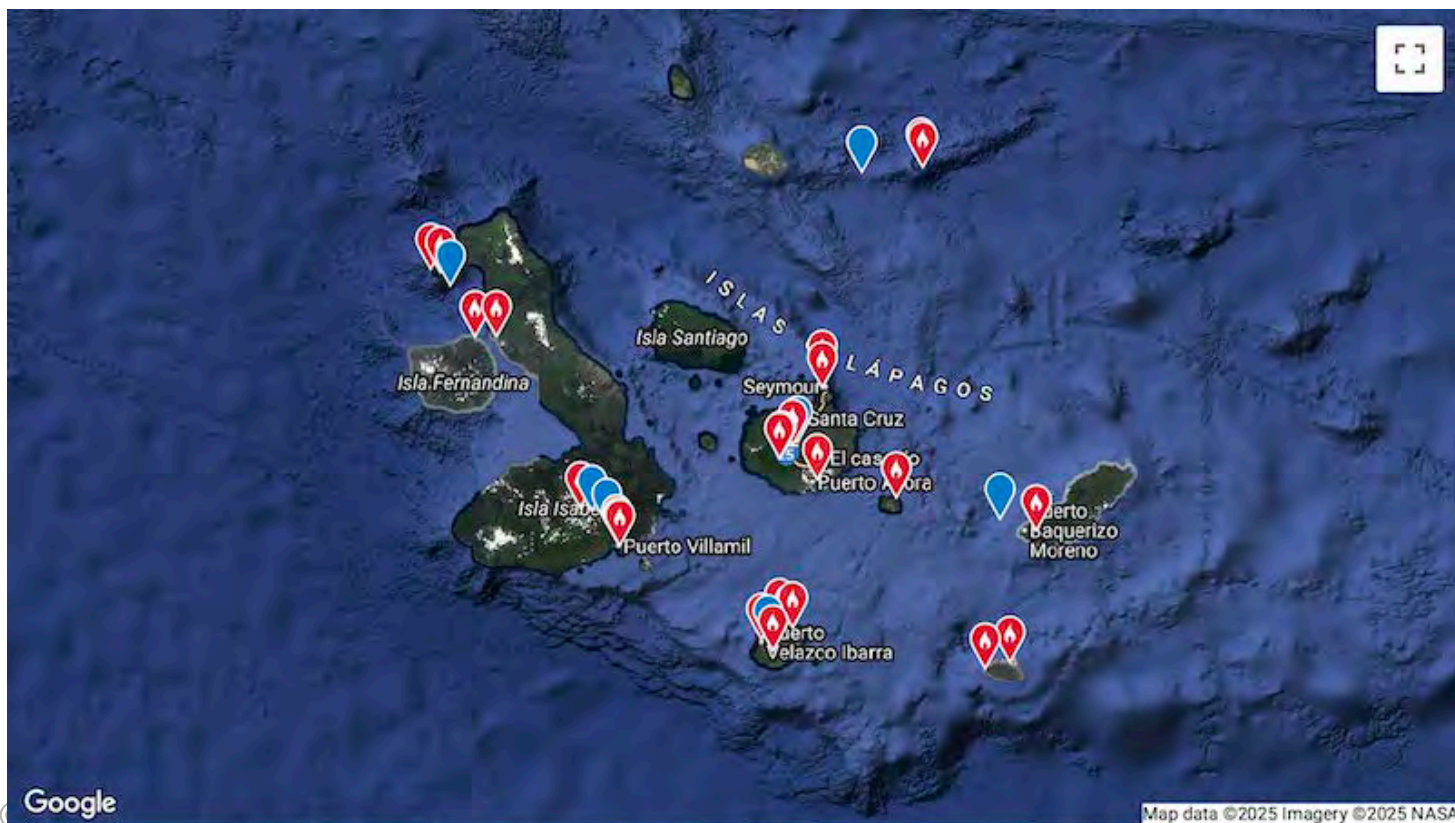
You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/402926>

Abrazos desde Dorset



Field Guides Birding Tours, Ecuador Galapagos 2025b (With Willy Perez)

13 – 21 Jul 2025 (9 days) Link-only



📍 Galápagos, Ecuador

👤 Willian Perez



For a narrative summary of this tour, including a Field Guides photo gallery and additional media for this trip...

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Species Observed




















32

Checklists

Species Observed

[Show all details](#)

19	White-cheeked Pintail	<i>Anas bahamensis</i>	▶ 5
56	Galapagos Dove	<i>Zenaida galapagoensis</i>	▶ 11
68	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i> *	▶ 7
4	Dark-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus melacoryphus</i>	▶ 2
2	Paint-billed Crane	<i>Mustelirallus erythrops</i>	▶ 1
10	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	▶ 4
1	Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>	▶ 1
2	Galapagos Rail	<i>Laterallus spilonota</i>	▶ 1
6	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶ 1
1	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	▶ 1
2	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	▶ 1
2	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	▶ 2
5	Wandering Tattler	<i>Tringa incana</i>	▶ 4
2	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	▶ 1
92	Swallow-tailed Gull	<i>Creagrus furcatus</i>	▶ 5
9	Lava Gull	<i>Leucophaeus fuliginosus</i>	▶ 4
421	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>	▶ 10
16	American Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	▶ 3
102	Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>	▶ 7
10	Galapagos Penguin	<i>Spheniscus mendiculus</i>	▶ 4

301	Waved Albatross	<i>Phoebastria irrorata</i>	▶  2
104	Elliot's Storm-Petrel	<i>Oceanites gracilis</i>	▶  10
4	Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	<i>Hydrobates castro</i>	▶  1
5152	Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel	<i>Hydrobates tethys</i>	▶  3
16	Galapagos Petrel	<i>Pterodroma phaeopygia</i>	▶  5
348	Galapagos Shearwater	<i>Puffinus subalaris</i>	▶  9
120	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	▶  13
179	Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>	▶  5
80	Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>	▶  3
670	Nazca Booby	<i>Sula granti</i>	▶  11
144	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>	▶  15
44	Flightless Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum harrisi</i>	▶  4
12	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	▶  2
6	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	▶  5
97	Western Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶  8
2	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  2
1	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶  1
42	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	▶  11
13	Galapagos Hawk	<i>Buteo galapagoensis</i>	▶  7
1	American Barn Owl	<i>Tyto furcata</i>	▶  1
3	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	▶  1
4	Brujo Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus nanus</i>	▶  1
4	Galapagos Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus magnirostris</i>	▶  3

30	Galapagos Mockingbird	<i>Mimus parvulus</i>	▶ 19
6	Floreana Mockingbird	<i>Mimus trifasciatus</i>	▶ 1
17	Española Mockingbird	<i>Mimus macdonaldi</i>	▶ 2
5	San Cristobal Mockingbird	<i>Mimus melanotis</i>	▶ 1
66	Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	▶ 17
9	Green Warbler-Finch	<i>Certhidea olivacea</i>	▶ 3
23	Gray Warbler-Finch	<i>Certhidea fusca</i>	▶ 6
2	Vegetarian Finch	<i>Platypiza crassirostris</i>	▶ 1
6	Woodpecker Finch	<i>Camarhynchus pallidus</i>	▶ 3
1	Large Tree-Finch	<i>Camarhynchus psittacula</i>	▶ 1
3	Medium Tree-Finch	<i>Camarhynchus pauper</i>	▶ 2
29	Small Tree-Finch	<i>Camarhynchus parvulus</i>	▶ 8
140	Small Ground-Finch	<i>Geospiza fuliginosa</i>	▶ 15
3	Large Ground-Finch	<i>Geospiza magnirostris</i>	▶ 1
23	Genovesa Ground-Finch	<i>Geospiza acutirostris</i>	▶ 2
3	Common Cactus-Finch	<i>Geospiza scandens</i>	▶ 3
14	Medium Ground-Finch	<i>Geospiza fortis</i>	▶ 5
5	Española Ground-Finch	<i>Geospiza conirostris</i>	▶ 2
9	Genovesa Cactus-Finch	<i>Geospiza propinqua</i>	▶ 2

EXOTIC: ESCAPEE

3	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i> *	▶ 1
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