## Galapagos Islands Photo Album

July 2017



After a day tour of Quito, the expedition flew to Baltra, followed by a short Zodiac ride to the Xperience. The cruise started at Santa Cruz, then Rabida, Santiago, Fernandina, Isabela, Santa Cruz, Genovesa, Bartolome, and back to Santa Cruz. Returning to Baltra, the expedition flew back to Quito.



## Quito, Ecuador

Quito is the capital city of Ecuador and extends to within 1 km of the equator. The city is at an elevation of 2,850 metres (9,350 ft) above sea level, located on the eastern slopes of an active stratovolcano in the Andes mountains. Quito is one of the two main departure points to the Baltra airport in the Galapagos Islands. El Panecillo is a 200-metre-high hill of volcanic-origin, located between southern and central Quito. Its peak is at an elevation of 3,016 metres above sea level. In the center of the Plaza de la Independencia is the monument to Heroes de la Independecia, which symbolizes the triumph of the Republic against the Spanish colony.

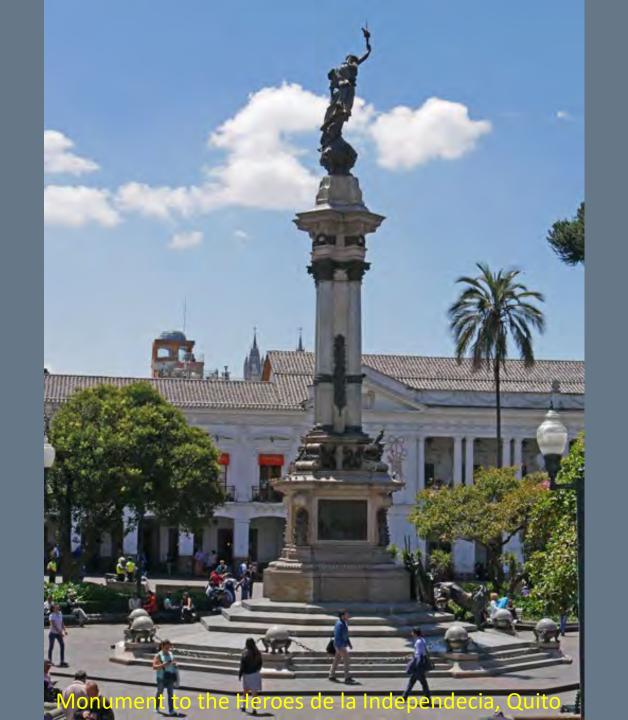








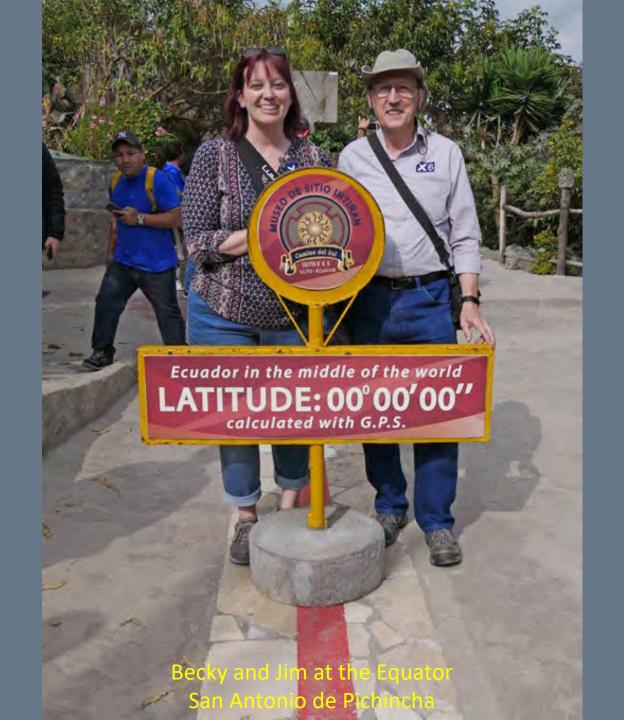












## Rabida Island, Galapagos

Rábida Island is a relatively small, arid island with steep slopes and one of the most volcanically varied islands in the archipelago. Several small volcanic craters and the high amount of iron in the lava give the island its distinctive red color and overall appearance. A visit to Rábida's visitor site begins with a wet landing on the maroon-colored beach on the northern coast. Marine iguanas and sea lions are often seen resting in the shade of the caves nearby. Rábida is one of the best places for visitors to see pelicans nesting up close. Blue-footed and Nazca Boobies frequent the cliffs above. Behind the beach is a saltwater lagoon in which Pintail Ducks and Common Stilts are frequently seen feeding. The inland trail is a good place to observe land birds such as finches, Galapagos Doves, Yellow Warblers, and mockingbirds, as well as the occasional snake. [Galapagos Conservancy, Inc.]



























## Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos

Santa Cruz is the second largest of the Galapagos Islands, with a long history of human settlement and agriculture. Today, Santa Cruz is the tourist hub of the Galapagos, centered around the island's largest city, Puerto Ayora. Puerto Ayora is home to the headquarters of the Galapagos National Park and the Charles Darwin Research Station. The Fausto Llerena Tortoise Center, with the Charles Darwin Foundation, began in 1965 to save the giant tortoise population. As of 2008, more than 4,000 young tortoises from eight different populations have been repatriated to their island of origin. [Galapagos Conservancy, Inc.]





























## Giant Tortoise Reserve Santa Cruz Highlands





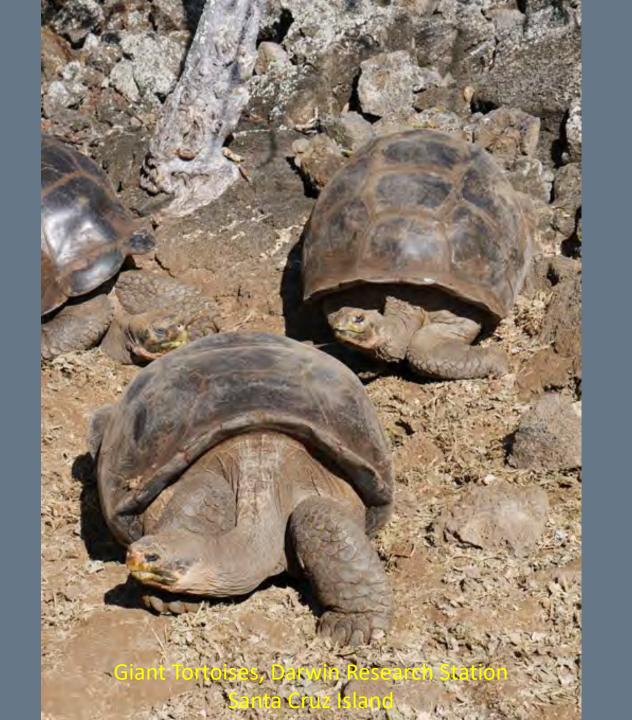




















## Santiago Island, Galapagos

Santiago was the second of the Galapagos Islands visited by Charles Darwin. The Beagle arrived there on October 5, 1835. Darwin's record of land iguanas is the only one that indicates there was a thriving population, as today land iguanas are extinct on Santiago. Goats, pigs, and donkeys were released on Santiago in the 1800s, causing havoc for the island ecosystem and many of its native species. Goats destroyed the natural woodlands, pigs destroyed nests of many of the native species, including giant tortoises, sea turtles, and Galapagos petrels. The island was declared pigfree in 2000, and goat- and donkey-free in 2006.

Sullivan Bay provides a unique opportunity to walk across a recent lava flow. The trail crosses relatively flat, black pahoehoe lava, dotted with a series of pyroclastic cones. At the southern end of the bay is Puerto Egas where a trail leads along the coast to the fur seal grottoes. [Galapagos Conservancy, Inc.]

































## Isabela Island, Galapagos

The seahorse-shaped Isabela Island is the largest of all the islands, and greater in size than all of the other islands combined. Darwin visited Tagus Cove in 1835. Isabela Island was formed by the joining of six shield volcanoes: Ecuador, Wolf, Darwin, Alcedo, Sierra Negra, and Cerro Azul. All of the volcanoes except Ecuador are still active. Wolf Volcano, at 1707 m, is the highest point in the Galapagos Archipelago. Wolf and Ecuador volcanoes lie directly on the equator. Isabela provides examples of the geologic forces that created the Galapagos Islands, including uplifts at Urbina Bay, tuff cones at Tagus Cove, and pumice on Alcedo Volcano. <br/>
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At Tagus Cove, a short, steep hike passes Darwin Lake, which sits within a tuff cone. This site is an excellent place for viewing landbirds, including ground and tree finches, hawks, yellow warblers and large-billed flycatchers. An occasional land iguana or giant tortoise can also sometimes be observed. Visits to Punta Vicente Roca are solely by water. The impressive geological formations provide a beautiful backdrop for numerous nesting birds, including Blue-footed and Nazca boobies, gulls, storm petrels, and Brown Noddy Terns. [Galapagos Conservancy, Inc.]

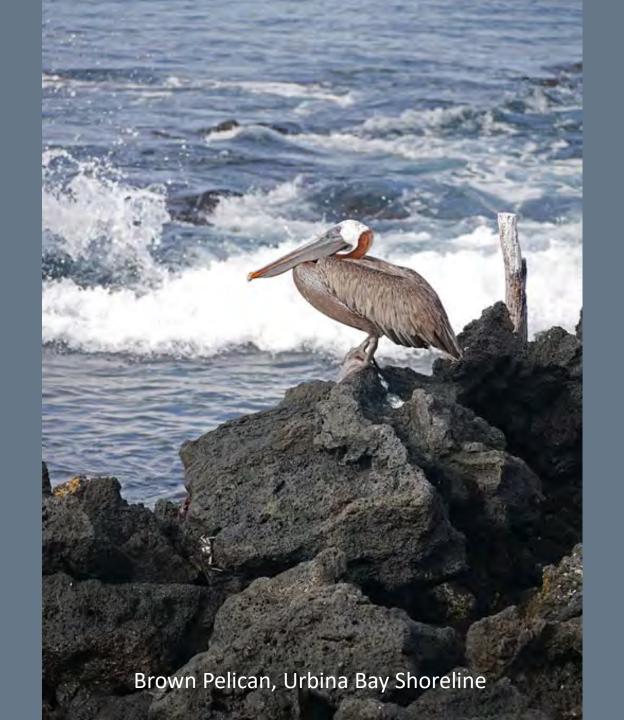












































## Fernandina Island, Galapagos

Fernandina is the westernmost island in the Galapagos Islands, and is most famous for its continuing series of volcanic eruptions. During an explosive eruption in 1968, the caldera of La Cumbre Volcano collapsed, falling approximately 350 m. Recent eruptions have occurred both in the caldera and on the outer slopes of the volcano, with some of them reaching the sea. Except for a single visitor site on the northeast edge of the island, the island is maintained in its pristine state. Punta Espinosa has been raised and lowered a number of times as a result of geologic activity, with the last known activity in 1975, when it was raised approximately 40 cm, leaving corals and red mangroves exposed. [Galapagos Conservancy, Inc.]













































## Genovesa Island, Galapagos

Genovesa Island is a horse-shoe shaped island that was formed from the eruption of a shield volcano and the eventual collapse of one side of the caldera. Genovesa has developed a reputation as 'the bird island' because of the numerous and varied bird species that nest there: frigate birds, Nazca and Red-footed Boobies, Swallow-tailed Gulls, storm petrels, Red-billed Tropicbirds, finches, and mockingbirds are among the bird species. Genovesa is one of the few places in the Galapagos Islands where Red-footed Boobies are found en masse.

At Prince Philip's Steps site, visitors are dropped off at a steep stairway that begins on rocks at the foot of a path that leads through a seabird colony full of Nazca and Red-footed Boobies. At the plateau, the trail continues past more nesting booby colonies. Visitors with keen eyes may catch a glimpse of a Short-eared Owl stalking its petrel prey along the island's eastern cliffs.

Disembarking at Darwin Bay Beach, a trail heads west along a tidal lagoon and then up a rocky hill that leads to a point overlooking the cliffs and Darwin Bay. Visitors will see pairs of Swallow-tailed Gulls, Lava Gulls, and Yellow-crowned and Lava Herons. Visitors are asked to watch where they walk, so as not to step on any Swallow-tailed Gull eggs. This is one of the few places in the islands where visitors are guaranteed to see Redfooted Boobies, with their bright red prehensile feet and contrasting blue bills. It is estimated that more than 200,000 Red-footed Boobies live in the trees and bushes of Genovesa. [*Galapagos Conservancy, Inc.*]











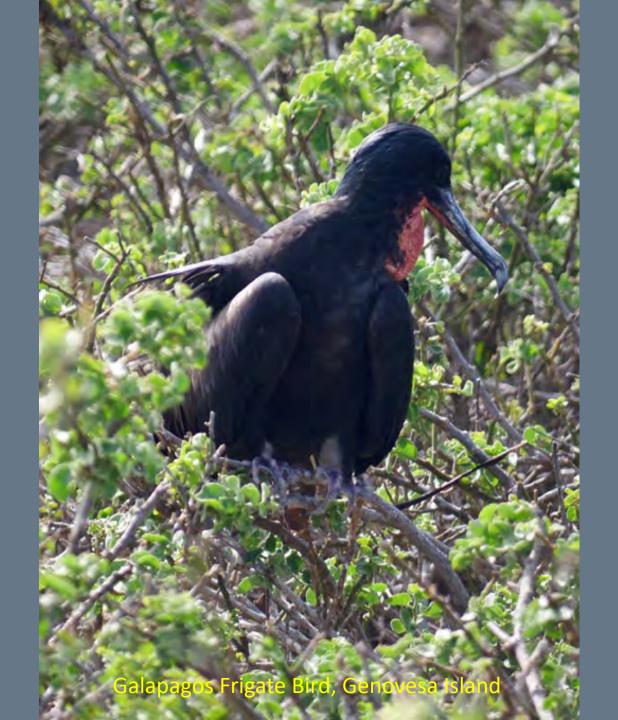


















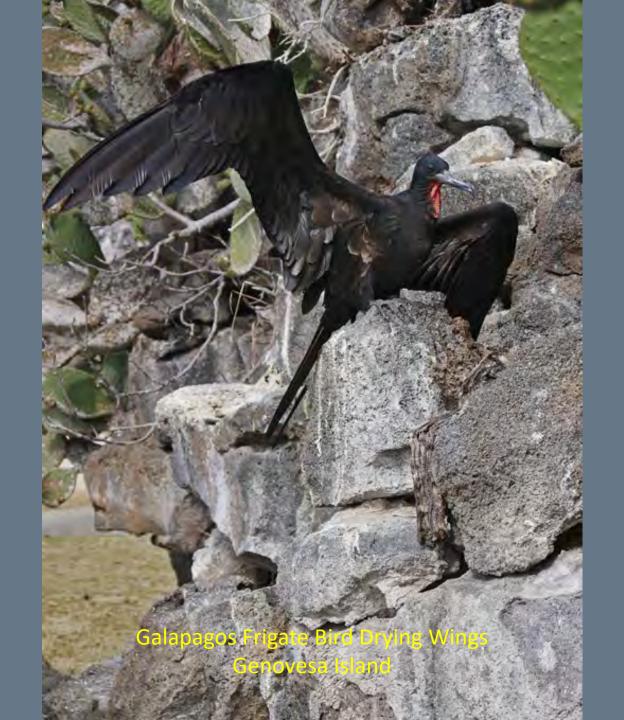


























## Bartolomé Island, Galapagos

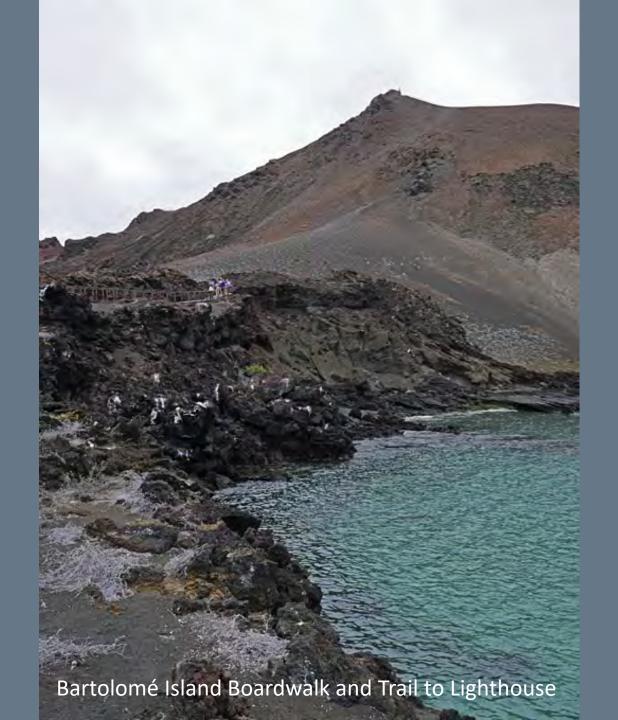
Bartolomé Island is a barren islet in Sullivan Bay to the east of Santiago Island. Bartolomé is home to a distinctive and recognizable site of the archipelago: Pinnacle Rock, a volcanic cone that was formed when magma was expelled from an underwater volcano. Visitors to Bartolomé may recognize the island and Pinnacle Rock from the 2003 blockbuster movie "Master and Commander." Landing across the small bay opposite Pinnacle Rock, visitors climb a 600-m trail to the 114-m summit that provides spectacular views of Pinnacle Rock, the immense black lava flows at Sullivan Bay and the rest of Santiago Island.

Bartolomé is the most visited and most photographed island in Galapagos. Birdwatchers should be on the lookout for Galapagos Penguins, herons, and Galapagos Hawks. The Galapagos Penguins, the second smallest penguin species in the world, have established a small breeding colony in a cave behind Pinnacle Rock. [Galapagos Conservancy, Inc.]





































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