

Ecuador & The Galapagos Islands

Naturetrek Tour Report

30 July - 21 August 2007



Galapagos Sea-lion and pup



Crossing equator



Land Iguana



Lava Heron

Report Compiled by Jenny Willsher
Photographs by John Willsher



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour leaders: Juan Manuel Salcedo (local guide)
Jenny Willsher (Naturetrek)

Participants: Marie Dodson
Pauline Francis
Hugh Tottle
Susan Littlewood
Graeme and Anne Robertson
Bill Spurrell
Jenna Spurrell
Roger and Pauline Bingham
John and Jan Jones
Bren Robson
John Willsher

“Cachalote” crew: Hose – Captain
Richard – Barman and waiter
Pedro – Cook
Pedro – Engineer
Jimmy – Helmsman
Danny – Helmsman

Mainland personnel: Gloria and Esteban
Gustavo Canas
Marcelo Andy

If there was ever a place where one runs out of superlatives, this is it! The uniqueness of the wildlife is one thing but the opportunity to get up close and personal to most of it just takes your breath away. From sea lion pups snuffling at your feet, Blue-footed Booby chicks, balls of white fluff, looking up at you from their grubby nests on the ground, the courtship ritual of the Waved Albatross, or a pair of Humpback Whales, Great and Magnificent Frigate Birds in mixed groups puffing up their bright red throat patches, to amazing aerial displays from these sky pirates, the Galapagos Islands did not disappoint. The intriguing diversity and the magic of ‘adaptive radiation’ of many of the islands flora and fauna, kept us attentive and fascinated, in large part due to the knowledge, passion and dedication of our local naturalist, Juan Manuel Salcedo. Juan was a natural teacher, taking every opportunity to share and explain every aspect of the islands, using the sand as his blackboard and bones, shells and live material as natural teaching aids. His specialist subject was not just the wildlife, but the human history, thankfully brief but none the less destructive, and volcanology, a fundamental key to any understanding of the islands. And then there was marvellous boat crew who looked after us so well, and the locals on the mainland who could not do enough to ensure we enjoyed every moment of our trip. For those who opted for the rainforest extension, more superlatives were called for. The lush, exuberance of the forest, its plants, birds, insects and animals, and the impressive (and thankfully calm) Napo River, were an amazing contrast, both to the islands and to the high altitude habitats at Antisana, Otavalo, Pichincha and Yanacocha. A feast of experiences all in one trip!

Day 1

Monday 30th July

A protracted but uneventful journey to Quito via Madrid. We were met by Enchanted Expeditions, whose staff were wonderful in their efforts to maximise our enjoyment of our trip to Ecuador, and we were soon on our way to our comfortable hotel, an early meal and bed.

Day 2

Tuesday 31st July

We breakfast at 7.30 and leave for our tour of Quito. Our guide Gloria talks us through the various sites and we take in the old town, citadel, the Plaza Grande, dominated by the Presidential Palace, the Basilica del Voto Nacional, that has turtles and iguanas rather than gargoyles around its parapets, finishing at La Virgen de Quito, a major Quito landmark, where there are marvellous views of the whole city and its surrounding volcanoes. There are many flowering trees and shrubs around the city and we see Eared Dove, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Rufous-collared Sparrow and Great Thrush.

After lunch at the hotel, we take an unscheduled outing to Volcan Pichincha, taking the Teleferico, up the flanks of the volcano to Cruz Loma, where we take a gentle walk (being aware of the altitude) and get a taste of the local flora and fauna. Plumbeous Sierra Finches peck at crumbs near the café, and we see Brown-bellied Swallow, Peregrine Falcon, Black Vulture, Bar-winged Cinclodes, and Ecuadorian Hillstar, feeding on its favourite shrub *Chuquiraga jussieni*. Black Flower-piercer is seen from the cable car. In the short turf we find *Hypochaeris sessiliflora*, yellow *Halenia weddeliana* (Deers Horns), an unusual member of the family *Gentianaceae*, the tiny blue *Gentianella sedifolia* and bright yellow Calceolarias.

Back at the hotel we sort our luggage, to leave any excess at the hotel, and then we have a good meal at Fried Bananas just around the corner from the hotel.

Day 3

Wednesday 1st August

We are up at 4.45 for 5am breakfast and an early start for the airport. Wendy, our escort soon has us checked in and we have a short smooth flight to Guayaquil and then onto Baltra. The cloud had lifted and we step off the plane into brilliant sunshine. No sooner had we met Juan and he had to reign us in as we spied a group of finches and Galapagos Doves feeding around the terminal buildings.

We board our transfer bus and take the short drive to Aleon Cove where the Cachelote awaits. Our reception committee is a group of Galapagos Sea Lions lounging on the seats on the jetty. Brown Pelicans bob in the sea around the boats, Frigatebirds are overhead and Elliot's Storm Petrels flit across the bay. Once on board and having had lunch we move off to Bachas Beach on Santa Cruz Island where we take our first foray. We land on the white sand beach and take a walk through the scrub at the back of the beach to a small brackish pool seeing Flamingo, Whimbrel, Great Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron and American Oystercatcher.

In the sea shallows we see a Black-tipped Reef Shark and a Spotted Eagle Ray. Some of the group test the waters and swim or snorkel in the sea. Although visibility is poor we see some colourful fish including Yellow-tailed Surgeon Fish, Black-tailed Mullet, White and Yellow-tailed Damsel and Bluechin Parrotfish. On the rocks around the bay are Blue-footed Booby, Lava Gull and Sally Lightfoot Crabs.

Before dinner, we are offered a cocktail and Juan introduces us to the whole crew and briefs us on our plans for tomorrow. We have a long navigation tonight and a choppy one on our way to San Cristobal.

Day 4

Thursday 2nd August

After breakfast at 6.30 we take the pangas ashore at Serro Brujo. Juan talks us through some aspects of volcanology, using the sand as his blackboard. There are many sea lions on the beach, and using a skull Juan explains the sexual differences, the males having a prominent ridge along the top of the skull to look bigger and more powerful. Blue-footed Boobies and Frigate Birds wheel overhead as we walk the beach. We see a Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Great Blue and Striated Heron, and in the pool at the back of the beach, White-checked Pintail, displaying Black-necked Stilts, a Western and a Least Sandpiper. Juan does some rock-pool dipping and shows us Green and Pencil Spined Sea Urchins and a Golden Spot Ray. Plants include Cut-leaved Scalesia, Pearlberry, Dropseed, Black and Red Mangrove.

Back on the boat, we head out to circle round Kicker Rock before lunch. This impressive Tuff Cone (Tuff is compacted volcanic ash formed when water is present during an eruption) has been floating on our horizon all morning, and is amazing up close. There are roosting Common Noddy and Sea Lions on a natural shelf just above the tide line, amongst Giant Barnacles and red sponges. We also see Nazca Booby, Red-billed Tropic Bird and Great and Magnificent Frigate Birds. Around the boat are Galapagos Shearwaters and Elliot's Storm Petrels.

We move around the coast of San Cristobal while having lunch, and drop anchor at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the island's capital, and second largest town in the archipelago. We take a bus up into the highlands, stopping to appreciate some Transitional Zone plants, and look for Warbler Finch and Galapagos Flycatcher. As we get higher the garua sets in and we walk in a thick wet mist to the crater lake Laguna El Junco.

Juan explains the importance of the Miconia Zone. *Miconia robinsoniana* is a shiny-leaved shrub which grows in dense stands, providing ideal nesting habitat for petrels, but it is under threat from agriculture and invasive plants such as Guava and Quinine. Quinine was introduced as it was mistakenly thought there would be malaria on the islands. We hear Common Gallinule and can just make out Frigate Birds as they come to wash in the lake.

We return to the town and have time to relax in a café or buy postcards and souvenirs, some people desperately writing their cards to post, as a post-box is a very rare thing on this trip!! Others give in to the temptation of the many wildlife T-shirts.

After dinner on the boat, we set sail for Gardner Bay on Espanola.

Day 5

Friday 3rd August

Some are up early on the look-out for Swallow-tailed Gulls. Two Hood Mockingbirds are on board, and petrels and Galapagos Doves are seen. Once on shore we see a collection of finches – Warbler, Small Ground and Large Cactus Finches. Also Wandering Tattler, American Oystercatcher and Galapagos Hawk. After coffee on the boat some choose to snorkel while others choose a panga ride around the coast, seeing Swallow-tailed Gulls, Greater Frigate Birds, Nazca and Blue-footed Booby, and many Sea Lion.

The snorkellers enjoy close encounters with the sea lions which nip our flippers, charge at us and snuffle at our faces. In the clear deep water we enjoy a treasure trove of marine life including King Angelfish, Dusky Chub, shoals of Black-striped Salema and Rainbow Wrasse, Hieroglyphic Hawkfish, Sea Urchins and Cushion and Chocolate Chip Sea Stars.

During lunch the boat travels round the North West corner of the island to Suarez Point. Once on land again we are soon stepping around Espanola Marine Iguanas and Lava Lizards, then past Nazca Boobies with Red-billed Tropic Birds streaming overhead. We see some Blue-footed Booby displays, with slow lifting of the incredibly blue feet. Then we are in the Waved Albatross zone, where many pairs are in different stages of display. This incredible bird can seem so clumsy and comical on land in contrast to its incredible grace in the air. We watch in awe as these bird's posture and fence, clacking bills together, seemingly oblivious to the audience.

We travel overnight to Floreana, crossing the Humbolt current coming up from the Antarctic, so the boat rolls quite considerably.

Day 6

Saturday 4th August

Early wake-up calls are becoming the norm and it is always good to be up early and out on land when the wildlife is most active. We are in the pangas by 6am, circling Champion Island to look for the Champion Mockingbird, which we see briefly. This small fairly barren island has tree-shaped Prickly Pear (*Opuntia megasperma* var. *megasperma*), Stewart's Scalesia (*Scalesia stewartii*) and Seashore Petunia hanging off the black rocks. We see Swallow-tailed Gulls, Lava and Yellow-Crowned Night Heron, and Red-billed Tropic Birds on the nest.

Back to the boat for breakfast, then the hardy don their wetsuits and prepare for another deepwater snorkel, seeing large shoals of King Angelfish and Dusky Chubb, Bumphead and Bluechin Parrotfish, masses of smaller fish but no Sea Turtle or shark.

The boat now moves round to Cormorant Point, where we walk ashore on a greensand beach. We walk to the flamingo lagoon where the Flamingos bright plumage stands out against the backdrop of the silver grey trunks of the Palo Santo trees. We also see Black-necked Stilts, 2 Least Sandpipers and White-cheeked Pintail. Amongst the fairly dry vegetation we find some small plants of *Scalesia villosa* which had been decimated by feral goats, though is now recovering. There are 20 species of *Scalesia* on the Galapagos, one of the best examples of 'adaptive radiation' of plants, the genus being endemic to the islands. We walk across the isthmus to the white sand beach and walk into the surf to find Diamond Rays.

Then back to the boat for lunch, and we move round to Puerto Velasco Ibarra. As usual sea lions are on the steps where we have to go ashore, but some clapping soon shifts them. We take a bus up into the highlands, stopping firstly to look for Medium Tree Finch, which is found only on Floreana. We see 2 males and a female.

Our next stop is to look at our first Giant Tortoises in an enclosure, where Juan talks us through some anatomy and physiology of this amazing reptile. Then on up to the first settlement on Floreana and a bit of human history.

Patrick Watkins, an unruly Irishman, marooned on Floreana, dug himself a cave near one of the few freshwater sources in these islands, and the cave was later used by the Wittmars, a German family who lived here while building a more conventional house and producing the first child to be born on the Galapagos. We drive back to the coast noticing the lush crops of banana, manioc, guava, avocado and sugar cane.

Another long crossing tonight to Puerto Villamil on Isabella. Isabella is the largest island of the archipelago, its backbone formed by the merging of its six volcanoes.

Day 7

Sunday 5th August

We have a lie-in today, not leaving the boat till 7.45am! From Puerto Villamil, we take bus trucks up to Volcan Serra Negra. The garua seems set in for the day, but eventually clears to give us amazing views into the caldera. Our first stop is for Vermillion Flycatcher, and then we leave the buses and walk to the edge of the caldera, seeing Large Ground Finch, Woodpecker Finch and Warbler Finch. Also had brief sightings of Dark-billed Cuckoo. As the garua clears we get dramatic views of it pouring over the edge of the caldera, onto the lava flow from the latest eruption. The caldera floor had been an arid zone of an old lava flow, and remnants are still visible, but the recent eruption in 2005 covered 10sq. km. We see more Vermillion Flycatchers on our way back. In the sunshine Puerto Villamil is now a wonderful sight of brightly coloured boats bobbing in a turquoise sea that is fringed with mangrove, with Turtle Island on the horizon.

After lunch some of us swim around the boat, and then we move across the bay for an unscheduled visit to the small marine reserve of Tintorenas. From the track across this rocky islet we watch 40 White-tipped Reef Sharks, resting in a small inlet. Someone spots a whale blow on the horizon, and we see the fluke of a Humpback Whale. Juan summons up the pangas and we are soon bobbing about in the swell close to a pair of courting whales. The male whacks the surface with his tail then rolls over arching his belly out of the water. The female shadows him, and we get excellent views of them both. Juan reports that he has never witnessed this so close to the islands before. Back at the boat we have fun looking at our photos, as in the jostling as we bobbed about we were bound to get someone's head in the way!

Tonight we have our longest navigation, travelling round the south west point of Isabella to Punta Morena.

Day 8

Monday 6th August

We wake to clear skies and good views of Volcan Cerro Azul and Volcan Serra Negra. We take the pangas ashore landing on black rocks, dotted with Red and White Mangrove. We take a lava walk and Juan talks us through some volcanology and the first plant colonisers of this inhospitable landscape, namely Mollugo, Lava Cactus, Pectis, Darwin's Bush, White Cordia, Poison Apple, Macrea and Palo Santo. In the brackish pools there are Flamingo, Common Gallinule, Pied-billed Grebe, White-checked Pintail and Yellow-tailed Mullet. We also see large Marine Iguanas ssp *albermarlensis*.

As it is too choppy to snorkel as planned, the boat moves on to Elizabeth Bay, where we take the pangas into the mangrove looking at the Green Pacific Sea Turtles in the shallow waters. We also see many fish including the endemic Galapagos Grunt. Adaptive behaviour by the sea lions has them roosting in low branches of the mangrove – Tree Lions perhaps? We stay moored overnight, moving early morning to Urvina Bay.

Day 9

Tuesday 7th August

Our first outing today is to the black sand beach of uplifted coral. We are restricted to the lower part of the beach as there are turtle nests at the top, with turtle tracks up from the shoreline. We take a circular walk through Myuyu, Spiny Plant, Poison Apple, Darwin's Cotton and Croton. We are hunting for Large Ground finch but do some finch revision along the way, seeing Small and Medium Ground and Small Tree Finch. We also see our first wild Giant Tortoises (ssp *vandenbergii*) and our first Land Iguanas. Other birds are Galapagos Mockingbird, Dark-billed Cuckoo, Smooth-billed Ani and Galapagos Hawk. Some of the group have a snorkel off the beach seeing turtles and Spotted Eagle Ray. Once back on board we move further up the coast to Tagus Cove, seeing 2 or 3 Bryde's Whales on the way.

We take a walk up behind Darwin's Lake, getting excellent views across this crater lake to the Cachelote anchored in the bay. A young Galapagos Hawk sits obligingly for photos and at last we get our first Large Ground Finch with its impressive bill. We also saw a Cactus Finch. Plants include hillsides of the ghostly Palo Santo, *Scalesia affinis*, Thin-leaved Darwin's Bush, Galapagos Acacia and Galapagos Lantana.

Back on board we move further north to anchor at Punta Espinosa, on Fernandina, with a diversion for more Bryde's Whales. We see good numbers of fishing Blue-footed Boobies, Galapagos Shearwaters, a few Galapagos Petrels, Elliot's Storm Petrels and a flock of 200 to 300 Grey-necked Phalaropes. A wonderful sunset is photographed by all and then we enjoy another wonderful meal enlivened by 'whale tales', including Juan's early encounters with Orcas.

Day 10

Wednesday 8th August

On shore on Fernandina, the youngest of the Galapagos Islands, we marvel at the mass of large Marine Iguanas, totally living up to their TV image! We watch a young Sea Lion chasing Black-tailed Mullet, with attendant scavengers of a Great Blue Heron and two Pelicans, hoping for some scraps. We see nesting Flightless Cormorant and look for snakes among the nooks and crannies of this jumble of uplifted lava. There are handsome clumps of the endemic Lava Cactus, an early coloniser of new lava, some of them having been eaten by Rice Rats.

On a small sandy beach is the skeleton of a Brydes or Sei Whale and some Sea Lion bones. Juan takes the opportunity for another anatomy and physiology lesson, demonstrating the ridges on the scapulas which anchor the strong shoulder muscles that the sea lions need. Plants include Shore Petunia, Red, White and Black Mangrove and Salt Bush.

Back on the boat we move back to Isabella across the Canal Boliva, to Black Turtle Beach. We have a short excursion ashore to look for Mangrove Finch, the most endangered of all the bird species on the Galapagos. Its habitat is very limited, to mangrove on sand and to prevent disturbance our exploration of this habitat is only permitted along the edges. We see Small Ground Finch, Yellow Warbler and Galapagos Mockingbird. Juan suggests that the Mangrove Finch is alarmingly close to the edge of extinction. As we head back for the boat Juan spots a Mole Crab and shows us how it can bury itself in the sand in an instant.

After lunch, we head into Banks Bay, at the foot of Volcan Equador, past its eroded flank. On the cliffs are Blue-footed Boobies, Swallow-tailed Gulls and Magnificent Frigatebirds. As we move round the headland we are almost passing through the sunken caldera. More whales are sighted – Bryde's and Minke, also Oceanic Sunfish, and occasional sightings of Manta Ray breaching in an effort to rid themselves of parasites.

As we near the equator, we crowd into the wheelhouse to drink cocktails as we watch the GPS reach zero, before taking group photos on deck. We sail round the northern end of Isabella overnight, anchoring in James Bay on Santiago at 1am giving us a quiet night to catch up on sleep.

Day 11

Thursday 9th August

Despite the moans last night when Juan suggested breakfast at 5.30 am, we are all on time and set off at 6.15 to look at inter-tidal life. Firstly we watch a heron struggle to swallow a Tiger Snake Eel, then we cautiously explore the slippery rocks around the pools, finding Brittle Stars, Sea Hare, Apple Snails, Thatched Roof or Volcano Barnacles, which when empty are occupied by Barnacle Blenny, and an Octopus which squirts its ink at us as Juan lifts it out of the water to show us. At the waters edge there is a lot of splashing as a Sea Lion catches and devours a large Sierra Mackerel and a Yellowfin Tuna. As it thrashes the fish around to break off chunks three Pelicans, five Magnificent Frigatebirds and some Elliot's Storm Petrels close in to pick up any scraps. The Frigatebirds deftly catch scraps that we throw up for them.

In deep pools formed by collapsed lava tubes we watch Galapagos Fur Seals clamber out onto the edges before diving in again and pirouetting through the water. This is the worlds smallest Fur Seal, and the third best insulated animal. It has large eyes as it is a nocturnal feeder.

James Bay was a settlement around a salt mine. Darwin landed here and stayed for a few nights though he had trouble erecting his tent as the ground was riddled with burrows of Land Iguanas. These have long been wiped out by the early invasion of cats, dogs and pigs.

We walk back to the beach past some of the oldest Palo Santo trees which have been able to mature as they have not been disturbed by any volcanic activity. Other plants include an endemic Grey Mat Plant, Punctureweed, White and Yellow Cordia, and Narrow-leaved Chaff Flower.

Now for something completely different! A football match! The Cachelote's sister ship, the Beluga is also in the bay and the crews get together for a traditional football match. Some of the group cheer the Cachelote Crew to a convincing victory, while others swim or sit in the shade on the beach.

After lunch we move on to Rabida, landing on a red sand beach, some choosing to snorkel while others walk along the beach. The walkers have to carefully skirt around a Sea Lion beachmaster, watching over his harem. They see 3 Wandering Tattler, Galapagos Mockingbird, Galapagos Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and a small colony of nesting Pelicans.

The snorkellers add Bluechin and Azure Parrotfish, Streamer Hogfish, Stone Scorpionfish, to the list and a glut of Sea Stars including Chocolate Chip, cushion and Blue Sea Stars, plus Pencil, Hatpin, Green and White Sea Urchin.

The boat then moves off to the Bainbridge Islands using the sails which is a magnificent sight. We climb as high as we can on the boat so that we can look over the low edge of a crater to see the lake inside which has Flamingo and White-checked Pintail.

After dinner the boat heads north east for Genovesa (Tower).

Day 12

Friday 10th August

We wake up in Darwin's Bay (Darwin actually never set foot here!). The cliffs around the bay are noisy with birds – Swallow-tailed Gulls, Boobies and Shearwaters. We land on the beach, and spend a fruitful couple of hours photographing and 'aahing' at the mass of nesting and young Swallow-tailed Gulls, Great Frigatebirds and our first Red-footed Boobies. We see the pale colour morph of the Red-foots, which looks very similar to the Nazca Booby, though it has a blue bill. We also get close to Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Large Ground Finch, Warbler Finch (possibly ssp fuscus), Sharp-beaked Finch and Tower Mockingbird.

After lunch the snorkellers enjoy seeing a group of Moorish Idol and Stone Scorpion Fish. Then the whole group tackle Prince Phillips Steps, a very uneven set of steps cut into the rocks. Once up the steps we are in an area of Dwarf Palo Santo trees where Red-footed Boobies are nesting, with Nazca Boobies nesting on the ground. Once through the forest we are out on a rocky plateau where hundreds of Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels wheel about.

A bottle of wine is promised to the first person to spot the Short-eared Owl, so we concentrate hard! Eventually we see three, possibly four, individuals. The first is sitting in a rock crevice, where we watch it tear apart a Storm Petrel. Two Mockingbirds and a finch are hopping about and pounce on the carcass when the owl abandons it.

Genovesa (Tower) is one of the largest sea bird colonies in the world, and the air is full of the noise of Gulls, Frigatebirds and Tropicbirds, as well as the storm petrels.

After dinner we head south again retracing our steps to Santiago and Sullivan Bay.

Day 13

Saturday 11th August

Our first outing is a walk on a comparatively recent lava flow which happened in the 1860's. It has very few plants but these include Mollugo, Lava Cactus and Stewarts Scalesia, making the most of tiny pockets of soil formed by wind erosion. This is Pahoehoe (Hawaiian for ropy) lava with fascinating formations including 'Hornitos', 'Dribble Cones' and 'Lava Toes'. We then move onto Sombrero Chino, where some go for a snorkel while others take a panga ride getting close to Galapagos Penguin, Galapagos Hawk, Lava Heron and Common Noddy.

After lunch we set off for Puerto Ayora, on the south side of Santa Cruz, a 7 hour navigation, which is a bit choppy at times, so it is a relief to arrive in port with the prospect of a day on land and two nights at anchor.

Day 14

Sunday 12th August

After a peaceful night in port we look forward to our day on Santa Cruz. At first the garua makes it damp but this soon burns off. We are bussed up to the Highlands to El Chato Giant Tortoise Reserve. At one point we have to wait while one of these impressive reptiles makes its laborious way across the road, and we have to carefully make our way around others. Birds include 8 of the finches (good revision!). At the tortoise pool, which is very lush with plants we hunt for the Galapagos Rail but only hear it call.

After lunch and a refreshing swim at a delightful location we head for Los Gemelos (The Twins). These are a pair of dramatic pit craters formed when a large magma chamber collapsed. The area is surrounded by a lush forest of Tree Scalesia (*S. pedunculata*), with many epiphytes attached – mosses, ferns and bromeliads. There are also good numbers of Galapagos Tree Ferns. Then we head back towards Puerto Ayora, via some Lava Tubes where we hope to find bats and Barn Owl, but have no luck. Our walk takes us through parkland dotted with Giant Tortoises, which is a surreal experience as these prehistoric beasts lumber about, largely oblivious to us, though Juan ensures that we don't invade their space.

Day 15

Monday 13th August

After another night in port, we go ashore after breakfast to the Charles Darwin Research Station. Juan talks us through all aspects of the islands geology, geography and weather, threats, introduced and invasive species, tortoise history, conservation and management. Then we stroll through the tortoise pens where we see new hatchlings of different ages, repatriated pets and 'Lonesome George' himself – an elderly male from Pinto Island, the sole survivor of that island's population. The surroundings of the centre give us a flavour of what the natural vegetation would have been like before the human development, and we see many finches, some begging from the snack kiosk.

We have time to stroll back through the town to buy more postcards or souvenirs at one of the many galleries and souvenir shops, before we return to boat.

We now move off again to Santa Fe, anchoring in Barrington Bay. A few seabirds are seen including Waved Albatross, Red-billed Tropicbirds, Blue-footed Boobies and Frigatebirds. We take a short walk through Palo Santo Trees and the impressive endemic Prickly Pear (*Echios barringtonensis*) with its immense trunks. As we land there is a Galapagos Hawk sitting calmly on the beach as two groups of tourists walk past. We see Santa Fe Land Iguana (*Conolophus pallidus*) and a large group of Sea Lions on the beach, one young one deciding to sniff at our feet, causing lots of 'aahs' and clicking of cameras.

As we are heading back to the boat we see a large shoal of spotted Eagle Rays floating beneath the pangas in the clear turquoise waters.

Day 16

Tuesday 14th August

We have moved the short distance to South Plaza, and we land on the north side of this small island. As usual Sea Lions are playing or sleeping on the landing jetty, and one grabs the end of the rope from the panga.

The island is dotted with bright red patches of Common Carpetweed (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*) and large Prickly Pear (*Opuntia echios* var. *echios*). The Land Iguanas are very small and dark here in response to lack of resources, and hybrids with Marine Iguanas have been known. We watch one roll an opuntia fruit to knock off the spines before eating it. From the south cliffs of the island we watch hundreds of Galapagos Shearwater wheeling over the sea in social groups, some landing at nest sights. Also Swallow-tailed Gulls and Red-billed Tropicbirds. In the sea we can see shoals of endemic Yellow-tailed Mullet, and an occasional Large Angelfish feeding on surface plankton.

There are about 1000 Sea Lions on the island including a batchelor colony in the south east corner, where every large rock is draped with sleeping males, and we marvel at how and where they haul themselves out of the sea and up through the rocks. As we head back to the jetty we skirt round a large male on the track and another huge one barks and postures from the shallows.

We now head to North Seymour where we walk through Dwarf Palo Santo, Saltbush and Spiny Bush. This scrubby landscape is full of nesting birds. The photographers dilemma is - just which is the best group of displaying Frigatebirds! Both Great and Magnificent are nesting together which gives us a chance to appreciate the differences in plumage of the males, females and young birds. The Land Iguanas are bigger here, as food sources are better, and we watch a handsome pair of males in a territorial dispute. The population here was repatriated from Baltra after a breeding programme at the Research Centre.

Tonight is our last night on board the Cachelote. We are joined by the whole crew in smart whites. Juan thanks the crew on our behalf, reminding us, as if that was necessary, of how effectively and efficiently they have carried out their individual duties and often other duties. We toast the crew adding our own thanks and appreciation, and thank Juan for his tremendous input to the tour. He has been generous and untiring in his sharing of his extensive knowledge and passion for the Galapagos Islands. His enthusiasm and patient teaching has enhanced our experience of this unique and amazing place. It has been a great pleasure and a privilege to have him as our guide.

We enjoy another excellent dinner, finishing with champagne and birthday cake for one of the group. Juan reveals yet another talent as he has personally decorated the birthday cake with Blue-footed Boobies and Frigatebirds! Is there no end to this man's skills!

On deck the stars are amazing.

Day 17

Wednesday 15th August

Our last outing of the trip. We are up at 5.30 and cruising gently through an extensive mangrove complex where we see White-tipped Reef Sharks, Spotted Eagle and Marbled Ray, Black-finned Snapper, Robalo and Pacific Green Sea Turtles all resting in the roots of the Red and White Mangrove. It is so quiet we can hear the turtles exhale and the 'popping' of oyster shells as they open with the rising water.

Birds include Great Blue Heron, Lava and Striated Heron, a mass of Cattle Egrets and Pelicans with Common Noddies in attendance, sometimes perching on the Pelicans heads in the hope of snatching some fish from them.

During breakfast the boat moves round to Baltra, we say fond farewells to the crew and disembark with a mixture of feelings after an incredible two weeks. We are glad to be on dry land again but we will miss the kindness and care of the crew.

An uneventful flight back to Quito, via Guayaquil. We have an excellent meal at the Restaurant Teatrum in the old town, though are glad to get back to our hotel for a good nights sleep.

Day 18

Thursday 16th August

The group splits today. Some go to the old Quechua market town of Otavalo with Esteban as their guide. The rest of the group set off early for the wildlife reserve at Antisana with Gustavo. We are soon out of Quito, and out into the countryside, finding Andean Lapwing on ploughed fields, Black-winged Ground Doves, Great Thrush and Carunculated Caracara. Our first stop is in a scrub sided valley of upper montane forest and we have a very productive time finding many birds including Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Spectacled Whitestart, Red-crested Cotinga, Shining Sunbeam and distant views of Giant Hummingbird, plus Variable and White-throated Hawks. We move to higher open bushy paramo and to Lake Mica. It is now raining and very cold but we see Silvery Grebe, Andean Ruddy Duck and Andean Teal.

We are pleased to reach our lunch venue where we can dry off and warm up with herbal tea, then a traditional Ecuadorian meal of Tamal (cornmeal with egg and chicken cooked in leaves), Quinoa soup (we ask for the recipe), and Desert of the Three Milks. Nectar feeders just outside the windows are busy with Ecuadorian Hillstars and our post lunch relaxation is cut short by a distant sighting of a Condor.

We now start retracing our steps, stopping at various places, and finding Paramo Pipit, Baird's Sandpiper, Andean Snipe and another distant view of a Condor. Altogether a very productive day, finding 51 species of birds.

Over drinks in the hotel the Otavalo group report on a very interesting day, with Esteban making sure they had all the information about all aspects of the places they visited.

Day 19

Friday 17th August

Some of the group are returning home today, spending the morning in various ways before their afternoon flight. The remainder are heading for the rainforest at Sacha Lodge, which means a drastic rationalisation of luggage down to 13kgs! But we won't need our wetsuits or extra layers! We have a short flight east over the Andes and into the Amazon basin, with good views of Quito and its unique situation between the two mountain ridges.

We land in hot and humid Coca, are transferred to a guesthouse for refreshments before our luggage is loaded into waterproof bags, we don lifejackets and make our way to the motorised launch for our 2 hour trip down the Napo River. We see many Black Vulture, Great Yellow-headed Vulture, and distant views of Great and Cattle Egret, Cocoi Heron, Yellow-headed Caracara, Pale-vented Pigeon and Swallow-winged Puffbird. We have a short walk from the jetty through the forest with our guide Marcelo, seeing Black-faced Nunbird, Speckled Chacalaca, Greater Ani, Russet-backed Oropendula, Yellow-rumped Cacique and our first primates – a small group of Howler Monkeys.

Once at the lodge we have time to wander around adding Blue and White Swallow, Ringed and Amazon Kingfisher, Hoatzin, Great-billed Hermit, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Tropical Kingbird and Blue-gray Tanager to our list. An Agouti forages under the walkways between the lodges and a Pygmy Tamarin is eating spiders near the restaurant. Some of us brave the lake for a swim where we are assured that the piranhas are vegetarian!

After an excellent buffet meal we have an early night as we have a very early start tomorrow.

Day 20

Saturday 18th August

We are heading for the canopy tower just after 5.30 in the dawn light. It is a formidable 120ft climb up to the walkway, and well done to those who struggled with a fear of heights to make it. From the middle platform we have fantastic views across and through the forest canopy. Howler monkeys growl in the distance and we see Black-mantled Tamarin below us.

Birds include Ivory-billed and Many-banded Aracari, Blue-winged Parrotlet, Squirrel Cuckoo, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Spangled Cotinga, Gilded Barbet, and Paradise Tanager, with distant views of Black-faced Hawk, Bare-necked Fruit Crow, and Swallow-tailed Kite. Once down from the tower, on our walk back to the lodge Marcelo finds a pair of roosting Crested Owls.

After lunch we have a visit to the butterfly farm, just behind the lodge where 40 local species of butterfly are bred, generating income for the lodge. Then we have a canoe trip around the lake, and into flooded forest getting closer views of Hoatzins, Ringed and Pygmy Kingfisher, Agami and Boat-billed Heron, and a Three-toed Sloth. After dinner we have a night excursion with wellies on and torches in hand, searching the undergrowth for spiders, stick insects, Bullet Ants, Giant Snail and we get brief views of an Armadillo. A full and busy day...

Day 21

Sunday 19th August

We are out on the Napa River at 6am, heading down stream for the parrot clay licks in Yasuni National Park. Parrots need to eat clay to neutralise the toxic or acid components of their diet. We get excellent views of a pair of amazonian Umbrellabirds and many Oriole Blackbirds on the way.

At the first lick the trees are noisy with masses of parrots including Dusky-headed Parakeet, Blue-headed Parrot, Yellow-crowned and Mealy Amazon. They are easily spooked by passing hawks and we only see a few land on the clay bank. We move off to the second 'lick' where after a long wait we witness a blur of green and blue as hundreds of Cobalt-winged Parakeets flutter down in front of the hide.

We return slowly to the riverbank seeing Rusty-belted Tapaculo, Great Potoo, a pair of Tropical Screech Owls and Ferruginous Pygmy Owl. We have a substantial picnic beside the river before heading back to Sacha.

At dusk we walk out to the canopy tower to look for owls and get good views of a pair of Black-banded Owls. At times we are surrounded by flickering fireflies. Our last dinner at the lodge is a barbecue on the deck, after which we have a short canoe ride around the lake to look for Caiman. We see distant glimpses of a red eye and a swimming snake.

Day 22

Monday 20th August

On our last canoe trip across the lake we see the Hoatzin quite close, appreciating its bizarre appearance and hearing its wheezy call. We also see Violaceous Jay and Cream-coloured Woodpecker.

Marcelo hears a Point-tailed Palmcreeper and tries to call it closer but it disappears and we have to head for the boat and our return journey to Coca.

An uneventful journey back to Quito, where we are met by Esteban who shepherds back to our hotel, and advises us on where to eat tonight and sightseeing for tomorrow if we have time. We eat at La Choza, where we have typical Ecuadorian cuisine accompanied by local musicians.

Day 23

Tuesday 21st August

Most of the group opt for a visit to Yanacocha, a reserve on the side of Pichincha, just outside the city, mainly to look at hummingbirds, particularly Black-breasted Puffleg, for which the reserve was created. An early start means we are soon out of the city and making our way into the countryside. We have a good walk into the reserve seeing Variable Hawk, Andean Lapwing, Barred Fruit-eater, Masked, Glossy and Black Flowerpiercer. Once at the hummingbird feeders we see Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Mountain Velvetbreast, Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted Puffleg, with Flowerpiercers also using the feeders.

Those who stayed in Quito for the morning had the luxury of a lie in and an interesting visit to the National Museum, marvelling at the collection of early goldwork. Then we take our last bus ride to the airport with Esteban giving us more commentary on aspects of the city, its transport system, its monuments and so on! There seems to be no end to his knowledge of all aspects of his country.

Day 24

Wednesday 22nd August

Our flight is delayed but we eventually reach Heathrow on time, tired but with memories (and masses of photos!) of some amazing, almost pristine habitats, some spectacular wildlife and some wonderful people that we have had the privilege to meet.

Galápagos Species List

Notes:

Bold print indicates an endemic species of the Galapagos Islands. (birds and animals)

Mainland bird taxonomy is according to Ridgely and Greenfield, 1998.

Galapagos Birds, mammal and reptile taxonomy is according to Swash and Still, 2000.

Fish taxonomy is according to Humann, 1993.

Flowering plant names according to Conley K McMullen, 1999

Birds

	Common Name	Scientific Name
1	Galapagos Penguin	<i>Spheniscus mendiculus</i>
2	Waved Albatross	<i>Phoebastria exulans</i>
3	Galapagos Petrel	<i>Pterodroma phaeopygia</i>
4	Audubon's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus iherminieri</i>
5	Elliot's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanites gracilis</i>
6	Wedge-rumped Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma tethys</i>
7	Madeiran Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma castro</i>
8	Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>
9	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>
10	Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>
11	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>
12	Nazca Booby	<i>Sula granti</i>
13	Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>
14	Flightless Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum harrisi</i>
15	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
16	White-cheeked Pintail	<i>Anas bahamensis</i>
17	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>
18	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
19	Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i> (Guayaquil)
20	Cattle Egret	<i>Bulbulcus ibis</i>
21	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus striatus</i>
22	Lava Heron	<i>Butorides sundevalli</i>
23	Yellow-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>
24	Galapagos Hawk	<i>Buteo galapagoensis</i>
25	Galapagos Rail	<i>Laterallus galapagoensis</i> (heard only)
26	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
27	American Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>
28	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
29	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
30	Wandering Tattler	<i>Heteroscelus incanum</i>
31	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>
32	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
33	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
34	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
35	Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>
36	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
37	Red (Grey) Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>
38	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>
39	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
40	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>

	Common Name	Scientific Name
41	Lava Gull	<i>Larus fuliginosus</i>
42	Swallow-tailed Gull	<i>Larus furcatus</i>
43	Common Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>
44	Royal Tern	<i>Sterna maxima</i>
45	Galapagos Dove	<i>Zenaida galapagoensis</i>
46	Dark-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus melacoryphus</i>
47	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>
48	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus galapagoensis</i>
49	Vermillion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>
50	Galapagos Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus magnirostris</i>
51	Galapagos Mockingbird	<i>Nesomimus parvulus</i>
52	Charles Mockingbird	<i>Nesomimus trifasciatus</i>
53	Hood Mockingbird	<i>Nesomimus macdonaldi</i>
54	Chatham Mockingbird	<i>Nesomimus melanotis</i>
55	Galapagos Martin	<i>Progne modesta</i>
56	Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
57	Large Ground Finch	<i>Geospiza magnirostris</i>
58	Medium Ground Finch	<i>Geospiza fortis</i>
59	Small Ground Finch	<i>Geospiza fuliginosa</i>
60	Sharp-beaked Ground-finch	<i>Geospiza difficilis</i>
61	Common Cactus-finch	<i>Geospiza scandens</i>
62	Large Cactus-finch	<i>Geospiza conirostris</i>
63	Vegetarian Finch	<i>Platyspiza crassirostris</i>
64	Large Tree-finch	<i>Camarhynchus psittacula</i>
65	Medium Tree-finch	<i>Camarhynchus pauper</i>
66	Small Tree-finch	<i>Camarhynchus parvulus</i>
67	Woodpecker Finch	<i>Cactospiza pallida</i>
68	Warbler Finch	<i>Certhidia olivacea</i>

Reptiles

1	Giant tortoise:	<i>Geochelone elephantopus</i>
2	San Cristobal sub-sp	<i>G. e. chatamensis</i>
3	Alcedo "	<i>G. e. vandenburghi</i>
4	Hood/Espanola sub-sp	<i>G. e. hoodensis</i>
5	'Lonesome George'	<i>(Charles Darwin Research Centre)</i>
6	Green Sea Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
7	Green Sea Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas agassissi</i>
8	Hood Racer	<i>Philodryas hoodensis</i>
9	Lava Lizard (San Cristobal)	<i>Microlophus bivittatus</i>
10	Lava lizard (Floreana)	<i>Microlophus grayi</i>
11	Lava lizard (Espanola)	<i>Microlophus delanonis</i>
12	Lava lizard (W & central)	<i>Microlophus albemarlensis</i>
13	Galapagos Land Iguana	<i>Conolophus subcristatus</i>
14	Santa Fe Land Iguana	<i>Conolophus pallidus</i>
15	Marine iguana:	<i>Amblyrhynchus cristatus</i>
16	Fernandina sub-sp	<i>A. c. cristatus</i>
17	Santa Cruz "	<i>A. c. hassi</i>
18	Isabela "	<i>A. c. albemarlensis</i>
19	Santiago/S Cristobal	<i>A. c. mertensis</i>
20	Espanola "	<i>A. c. venustissimus</i>
21	Genovesa "	<i>A. c. nanus</i>

	Common Name	Scientific Name
--	-------------	-----------------

Mammals

1	Galapagos Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus wollebacki</i>
2	Galapagos Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus galapagoensis</i>
3	Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>
4	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>
5	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>
6	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>

Land invertebrates

1	Carpenter Bee	<i>Xylocopa darwini</i>
2	Dragonflies	(Several genera, 8 species)
3	Sulphur Butterfly	<i>Phoebis sennae</i>
4	Queen Butterfly	<i>Danaus gilippus</i>
5	Galapagos Blue Butterfly	<i>Leptodes parrhasiodes</i>
6	Large-tailed Skipper	<i>Urbanus galapagensis</i>
7	Galapagos Footman Moth	<i>Utethesia spp (4 species)</i>
8	Green Cricket	
9	Small Painted Locust	
10	Painted Locust	<i>Schistocerca melanocera</i>
11	Millipede	
12	Spotless ladybird	<i>Cylonedra sanguinea</i>
13	Star Spider	<i>Gasteracantha servillei</i>
14	Four-eyed Horsefly	
15	Yellow Paper Wasp	<i>Polistes versicolor</i>
16	Galapagos Centipede	<i>Scolopendra galapagensis</i>
17	Field Cricket	
18	Little Red Fire Ant	<i>Wasmannia auropunctata</i>
19	Galapagos Scorpion	<i>Hadrurides maculatus galapagoensis</i>

Fish

1	King Angelfish	<i>Holacanthus passer</i>
2	Barberfish	<i>Heniochus nigrirostris</i>
3	Three-banded Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon humeralis</i>
4	Yellow-tailed Surgeonfish	<i>Prionurus laticlavus</i>
5	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>
6	Yellow-finned Tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>
7	Sierra Mackerel	<i>Scomberomorus sierra</i>
8	Bonito Mackerel	
9	Dusky Chub	<i>Girella freminvillei</i>
10	Blackspot Porgy	<i>Calamus taurinus</i>
11	Yellow-tailed Mullet	<i>Mugil cephalus rammelsbergi</i>
12	Black-tailed Mullet	<i>Mugil galapagensis</i>
13	Galapagos Grunt	<i>Orthopristis forbesi</i>
14	Yellowtail Grunt	<i>Anisotremus interruptus</i>
15	Black-striped Salema	<i>Xenocys jessiae</i>
16	Yellow-tailed Snapper	<i>Lutjanus argentiventris</i>
17	Coral Hawkfish	
18	Giant Damselfish	<i>Microspathodon dorsalis</i>
19	Bumphead Damselfish	<i>Microspathodon bairdii</i>
20	White-tailed Damsel	<i>Stegastes leucurus beebei</i>
21	Yellow-tailed Damsel	<i>Stegastes arcifrons</i>
22	Panamic Sergeant Major	<i>Abudefduf troschelii</i>

	Common Name	Scientific Name
23	Dusky Sergeant Major	<i>Nexilarious concolor</i>
24	Flag Cabrilla	<i>Epinephelus labriformis</i>
25	Bacalao (Trout Grouper)	<i>Mycteroperca olfax</i>
26	Creole fish	<i>Paranthias colonus</i>
27	Bumphead Parrotfish	<i>Scarus perrico</i>
28	Bluechin Parrotfish	<i>Scarus ghobban</i>
29	Bicolor Parrotfish	<i>Scarus rubroviolaceus</i>
30	Azure Parrotfish	<i>Scarus compressus</i>
31	Rainbow Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lucasanum</i>
32	Chameleon Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres dispilus</i>
33	Spinster Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres nicholsi</i>
34	Streamer Hogfish	<i>Bodianus diplotaenia</i>
35	Blacktip Cardinalfish	<i>Apogon atradorsatus</i>
36	Large Banded Blenny	<i>Ophioblennius steindachneri</i>
37	Galapagos Barnacle Bleny	<i>Acanthemblemaria castroi</i>
38	Bravo Clinid	<i>Labrisomus dendriticus</i>
39	Coral Hawkfish	
40	Hieroglyphic Hawkfish	<i>Cirrhitus rivulatus</i>
41	Bullseye Puffer	<i>Sphoeroides annulatus</i>
42	Guineafowl Puffer	<i>Arothron meleagris</i>
43	Stone Scorpionfish	
44	Yellow-bellied Triggerfish	<i>Sufflamen verres</i>
45	Cornetfish	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>
46	Fine-spotted Moray	<i>Gymnothorax dovii</i>
47	Oceanic sunfish	<i>Mola mola</i>
48	White-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>
49	Black-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>
50	Diamond Stingray	<i>Dasyatis brevis</i>
51	Eagle Ray	<i>Aetobatus narinari</i>
52	Manta Ray	<i>Taenioconger klausewitzii</i>
53	Jewel Ray	
54	Tiger Snake Eel	
55	Mexican Hogfish	<i>Labridae spp</i>

Marine invertebrates

1	Pencil-spined Urchin	<i>Eucidaris thouarsii</i>
2	White Urchin	<i>Tripneustes depressus</i>
3	Crowned Sea Urchin	<i>Centrostephanus coronatus</i>
4	Green Sea Urchin	<i>Lytechinus semituberculatus</i>
5	Cushion Star	<i>Pentaceraster cumingi</i>
6	Blue Sea Star	<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>
7	Chocolate-chip Star	<i>Nidorellia armata</i>
8	Red Sun Sea Star	<i>Heliaster humingii</i>
9	Pyramid Sea Star	
10	Spiny Sand Star	
11	Banded Sand Star	
12	Sea Cucumber	<i>Stichopus sp.</i>
13	Sally Lightfoot Crab	<i>Grapsus grapsus</i>
14	Ghost Crab	<i>Ocypode sp.</i>
15	Galapagos Fiddler Crab	
16	Semi-terrestrial hermit crab	<i>Coenobita compressus</i>
17	Tropical Mole Crab	
18	Volcano (Giant) Barnacle	<i>Megabalanus peninsularis</i>
19	Oyster	<i>Astra sp</i>

	Common Name	Scientific Name
20	Anemone	(many species)

Plants

Common Name	Scientific Name	
Maidenhair Fern	<i>Adiantum sp</i>	
Ageratum	<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i>	
Spiny-headed chaff flower	<i>Alternanthera echinocephala</i>	
Thread-leaved chaff flower	<i>Alternanthera filifolia</i>	Espanola, Isabela
Salt sage	<i>Atriplex peruviana</i>	
Black Mangrove	<i>Avicenna germinans</i>	
Yellow ground mallow	<i>Bastardia viscose</i>	
Blechum	<i>Blechum pyramidatum</i>	
Lava cactus	<i>Brachycereus nesioticus</i>	
Palo Santo (holy pole)	<i>Bursera graveolens</i>	
Palo Santo	<i>Bursera malcophylla</i>	Genovesa
Shore Petunia	<i>Cacabus miersi</i>	
Bitterbush	<i>Castela galapaeia</i>	
Chamaesyce	<i>Chamaesyce sp</i>	
Glorybower	<i>Clerodendron molle</i>	
Button Mangrove	<i>Conocarpus erectus</i>	
Muyuyo	<i>Cordia lutea</i>	
White Cordia	<i>Cordia leucophlyctis</i>	
Rattlebox	<i>Crotolaria retusa</i>	
Galapagos Croton	<i>Croton scouler</i>	Espanola, Floreana
Galapagos Tree Fern	<i>Cyathea weatherbyana</i>	Los Gemelos
Saltbush	<i>Cryptocarpus pyriformis</i>	
Galapagos Sedge	<i>Cyperus sp</i>	
Alternate-leaved Darwin's Bush	<i>Darwiniothamnus alternifolius</i>	
Darwin's Bush	<i>Darwiniothamnus tenuifolius</i>	
Hand Fern	<i>Doryopteris pedata var. palmate</i>	
Galápagos cotton	<i>Gossypium darwinii</i>	
Heliotrope (scorpionweed)	<i>Heliotropium angiospermum</i>	
Seaside Heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium curassavicum</i>	
Manzanillo (poison apple)	<i>Hippomane mancinella</i>	
Lava morning glory	<i>Ipomoea habeliana</i>	
Beach morning glory	<i>Ipomoea pes-caprae.</i>	
Candelabra cactus	<i>Jasminocereus thouarsii var thouarsii</i>	Floreana
Air Plant	<i>Kalanchoe pinnata</i>	
Multi-coloured Lantana	<i>Lantana camara</i>	
Lantana	<i>Lantana peduncularis</i>	
White Mangrove	<i>Laguncularia racemosa</i>	
Curve-spined lecocarpus	<i>Lecocarpus darwinii</i>	
Wing-fruited lecocarpus	<i>Lecocarpus pinnatifidus</i>	
Galápagos tomato	<i>Lycopersicon cheesmanii</i>	
Macraea	<i>Macraea laricifolia</i>	
Leather leaf	<i>Maytenus octogona</i>	
Miconia	<i>Miconia robinsoniana</i>	
Carpet Weed	<i>Mollugo flavescens</i>	
Bitter Melon	<i>Mormordia charancia</i>	
Prickly Pear Cactus	<i>Opuntia echios</i>	
Prickly Pear Cactus	<i>Opuntia e. var. echios</i>	South Plaza

Common Name	Scientific Name	
Prickly Pear cactus	<i>Opuntia e. var. heller</i>	Genovesai
Prickly Pear cactus	<i>Opuntia e. var. gigantea</i>	Santa Cruz
Prickly Pear cactus	<i>Opuntia e. var. megasperma</i>	Floreana
Prickly Pear Cactus	<i>Opuntia e. var. barringtonensis</i>	Sante Fe
Palo verde	<i>Parkinsonia aculeate</i>	
Colinvaux's Passionflower	<i>Passiflora colinvauxii</i>	Santa Cruz
Passion flower (Running Pop)	<i>Passiflora foetida</i>	
Pectis	<i>Pectis tenuifolia</i>	
Galapagos Bean	<i>Phaesolus mollis</i>	
Galápagos mistletoe	<i>Phoradendron henslovii</i>	
Ground cherry	<i>Physalis sp</i>	
Matazarno	<i>Piscidia carthagenensis</i>	
Galápagos milkwort	<i>Polygala galapageia</i>	
Galapagos guava	<i>Psidium galapageium</i>	
Red Mangrove	<i>Rhizophora mangle</i>	
Radiate-headed Scalesia	<i>Scalesia affinis affinis</i>	Floreana
Gordillo's Scalesia	<i>Scalesia gordilloi</i>	San Cristobal
Heller's Scalesia	<i>Scalesia helleri</i>	Santa Cruz
Tree Scalesia	<i>Scalesia pedunculata</i>	Santa Cruz
Long-haired Scalesia	<i>Scalesia villosa</i>	Floreana
Inkberry, Sea Grape	<i>Scaveola plumieri</i>	
Spine Shrub	<i>Scutia passiflora</i>	
Common carpetweed	<i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	
Rose Apple	<i>Syzygium jambos</i>	
Grey Mat Plant	<i>Tiquilia galapagoa</i>	
Grey Mat Plant	<i>Tiquilia nesiotica</i>	
White-haired Tournefortia	<i>Tournefortia pubescens</i>	
Rufous-haried tournefortia	<i>Tournefortia rufo-sericea</i>	
Punctureweed	<i>Tribulus cistoides</i>	
Pearlberry	<i>Valesia glabra</i>	
Wild Cow Pea	<i>Vigna luteola</i>	

Species list for the Ecuador Mainland (Quito/Pichincha/Antisana/Yanacochoa)

Plants

Scientific Name	Comments
<i>Stipa Ichu</i>	Basic paramo grass
<i>Bidens andicola</i>	
<i>Chuquiraga jussieui</i>	
<i>Culchitium uniflora</i>	
<i>Gentianella sedifolia</i>	Syn Gentiana sedifolia (Gustavo)
<i>Gentianella cerastoides</i>	
<i>Halenia weddeliana</i>	Syn Gentianella (Gustavo)
<i>Hypochaeris sessiflora</i>	
<i>Werneria nubigena</i>	
<i>Valeriana rigida</i>	
<i>Castilleja pumila</i>	Dwarf Indian paintbrush
<i>Lachenilla orbiculata</i>	
<i>Puya clava-herculis</i>	Growing plentifully on the lower parts of paramo, terrestrial
<i>Dalea caerulia</i>	
<i>Miconia salicifolia</i>	

Scientific Name	Comments
<i>Befaria dryanderæ</i>	
<i>Calceolaria</i> sp	Shrub about 1 metre
<i>Phaedranassa dubia</i>	This or similar sp growing on roadside cliff
<i>Tillandsia ampla</i>	This or similar sp growing on roadside cliff
<i>Tristerix longibracteatus</i> ?	Red flowered mistletoe on same cliff
<i>Oreocallis grandiflora</i>	
<i>Passiflora</i> sp	In scrub on lower parts of paramo, red flowers cup shaped, never going flat like <i>P. caerulea</i>
<i>Polygonum</i> sp	
<i>Brugmansia sanguinea</i>	Not clear whether wild or cultivated

Birds

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Silvery Grebe	<i>Podiceps occipitalis</i>
2	Andean Teal	<i>Anas andium</i>
3	Yellow-billed Pintail	<i>Anas spinicauda</i>
4	Andean Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura ferruginea</i>
5	Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
6	Andean Condor	<i>Vultur gryhus</i>
7	Variable Hawk	<i>Buteo poecilochrous</i>
8	White-throated Hawk	<i>Buteo albigula</i>
9	Black-chested Buzzard Eagle	<i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>
10	Carunculated Caracara	<i>Phalco boenus carunculatus</i>
11	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
12	Andean Coot	<i>Focha andina</i>
13	Baird's Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>
14	Andean Lapwing	<i>Vanellus resplendens</i>
15	Andean Snipe	<i>Gallinago jamesonii</i>
16	Andean Gull	<i>Larus serranus</i>
17	Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>
18	Black-winged Ground Dove	<i>Metriopelia melanoptera</i>
19	White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>
20	Ecuadorian Hillstar	<i>Oreotrochilus chimborazo</i>
21	Giant Hummingbird	<i>Patagona gigas</i>
22	Shining Sunbeam	<i>Aglaeactis cupripennis</i>
23	Great Sapphirewing	<i>Pterophanes cyanopterus</i>
24	Sword-billed Hummingbird	<i>Ensifera ensifera</i>
25	Buff-winged Starfrontlet	<i>Ceoligena lutetiae</i>
26	Black-tailed Trainbearer	<i>Lesbia victoriae</i>
27	Sapphire-vented Puffleg	<i>Eriocnemis luciani</i>
28	Golden-breasted Puffleg	<i>Eriocnemis mosquera</i>
29	Mountain Velvetbreast	<i>Lafresnaya lafresnaya</i>
30	Crimson-mantled Woodpecker	<i>Piculus rivolii</i>
31	Azara's Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis azarae</i>
32	Rufous Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis unirufa</i>
33	Andean Tit-spinetail	<i>Leptasthenura andicola</i>
34	Many-striped Canastero	<i>Asthenes flammulata</i>
35	Streak-backed Canastero	<i>Asthenes wyatti</i>
36	Tyrian Metaltail	<i>Metallura tyrianthina</i>
37	Viridian Metaltail	<i>Metallura williamii</i>
38	Stout-billed Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes excelsior</i>
39	Bar-winged Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>
40	Tawny Antpitta	<i>Grallaria quitensis</i> (heard)
41	Tufted Tit-tyrant	<i>Anairetes parulus</i>

42	Black-billed Shrike-tyrant	<i>Agriornis Montana</i>
43	Brown-backed Chat-tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca fumicolor</i>
44	Paramo Pipit	<i>Anthus bogotensis</i>
45	Ocellated Tapaculo	<i>Acropternis orthonyx (heard)</i>
46	Unicoloured Tapaculo	<i>Scytolopus unicolor (heard)</i>
47	Spillman's Tapaculo	<i>Scytolopus spillmanii (heard)</i>
48	White-fronted Tyrannulet	<i>Phyllomyias zeledoni</i>
49	White-banded Tyrannulet	<i>Mecocerculus stictopterus</i>
50	Streak-throated Bush Tyrant	<i>Myiotheretes striaticollis</i>
51	Black-billed Shrike Tyrant	<i>Agriornis Montana</i>
52	Brown-backed Chat-tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca fumicolor</i>
53	Paramo Ground Tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola fluviatilis</i>
54	Red-crested Cotinga	<i>Ampelion rubocristatus</i>
55	Blue-and-white Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon cyanoleuca</i>
56	Brown-bellied Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon murina</i>
57	Paramo Pipit	<i>Anthus bogotensis</i>
58	Spectacled Whitestart	<i>Myioborus melanocephalus</i>
59	Great Thrush	<i>Turdus fuscater</i>
60	Cinereous Conebill	<i>Conirostrum cinereum</i>
61	Masked Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossopsis cyanea</i>
62	Glossy Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa lafresnayii</i>
63	Black Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa humeralis</i>
64	Blue-and-black Tanager	<i>Tangara vassorii</i>
65	Blue-and-yellow Tanager	<i>Thraupis bonariensis</i>
66	Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager	<i>Anisognathus igniventris</i>
67	Hooded Mountain Tanager	<i>Buthraupis Montana</i>
68	Southern Yellow Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus chrysogaster</i>
69	Plumbeous Sierra-finch	<i>Phrygilus unicolor</i>
70	Rufous-naped Brushfinch	<i>Atlapetes latinuchus</i>
71	Rufous-collared Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
72	Hooded Siskin	<i>Carduelis magellanica</i>
73	Plain-colored Seed eater	<i>Catamenia inornata</i>
74	Band-tailed Seed eater	<i>Catamenia analis</i>
75	Plumbeous Sierra-finch	<i>Phrygilus unicolor</i>