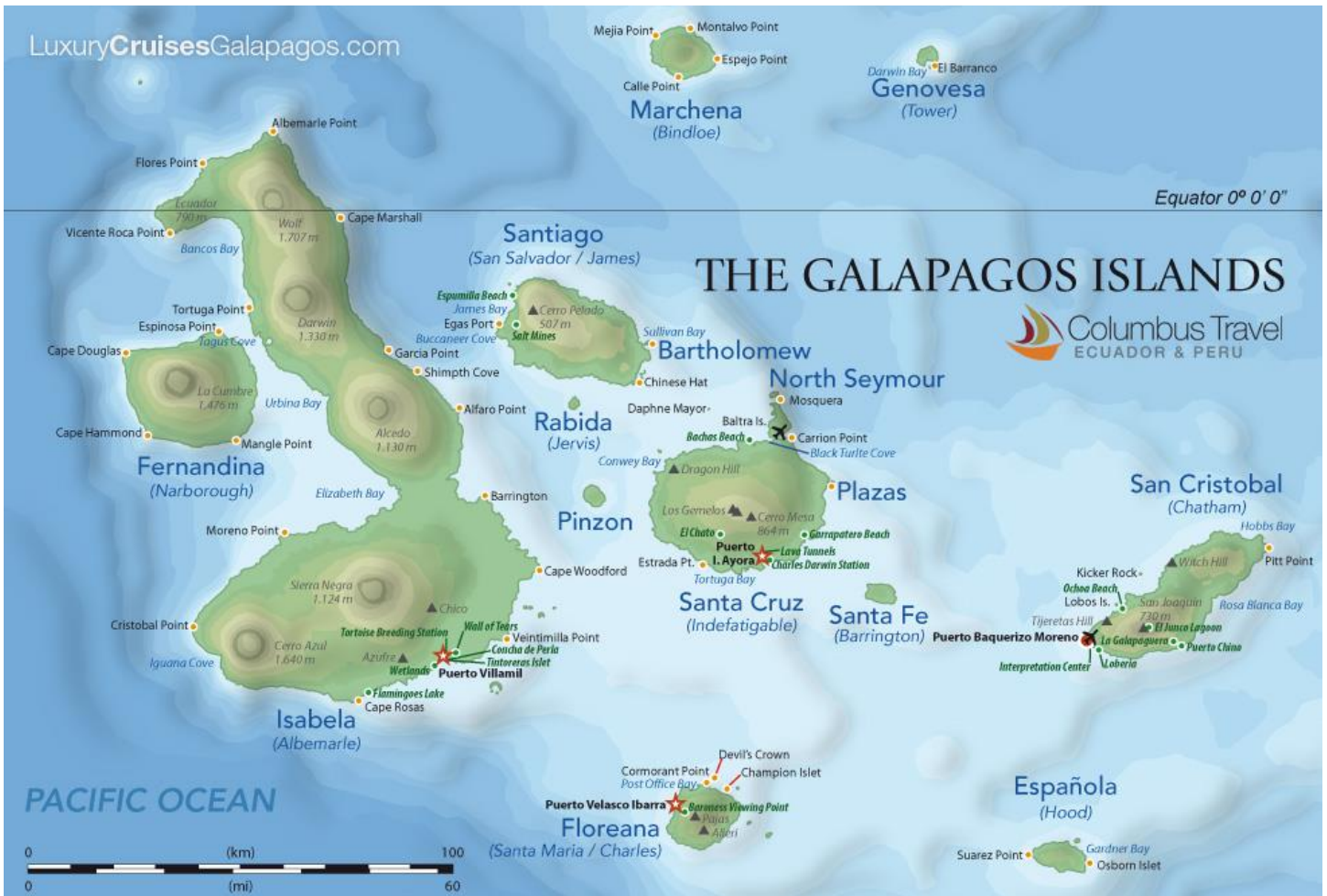


Birding **THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS** independently

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## INTRODUCTION

Visiting the Galapagos is on every birder's and every naturalist's wish list. It has been so for me for decades, especially recently so as it held my last penguin species. However, I have always considered myself as an independent budget birder. Based on numerous trip reports and writings, it did not seem to be possible to do it either independently or on a small budget. Everyone seems to do it on an all-inclusive and expensive cruise. Furthermore, if the birds of this archipelago are your primary interest, there appeared to be only one method open to the serious birder. That is to join one of the outrageously expensive, professional birding tour company offerings. In July, I decided to break my piggy bank and visited the Galapagos. While there, I learned a few things and I have some suggestions as how it is possible to do so independently and on a reasonable budget.

The Galapagos archipelago has much to offer, whatever your interest. There is the geology of the islands which shares similarities with that of Hawaii. There is the underwater life that scuba divers and snorkelers come to see from all over the world. There is human history here including that of: explorers, whalers, pirates, settlers and scientists (the most famous being Darwin). However, the one thing that most draws visitors here is the unique biology on the Galapagos Islands. Isolated for million and millions of year, life here has evolved into forms found nowhere else in the world. There are

endemic species of plants, fishes, insect, reptiles, birds and mammals. The reptiles are perhaps the most visibly striking examples in the form of marine turtles, giant land tortoises, marine and land iguanas, lizards, geckos and snakes. Discussing all these forms of unique life found in the Galapagos could fill a sizable archive. My main interest in going there was the birds and that is what I will be focusing on in this report.

## OPTIONS

I see four options for any birder(s) wanting to visit the Galapagos and they are:

1. Professional birding tours
2. Charter a boat with a crew and guide
3. Regular tourist cruises
4. Arrive independently and arrange everything by yourself there.

**OPTION 1** - Let me discuss briefly the professional birding tours. They are designed to show you as much as possible of the special birds and wildlife that can only be seen on this unique set of islands. You will not have to worry about anything as everything will be taken care of, for you. The birds will be found, identified for you and you will even be given a list at the end of what you saw. It is not my way or my belief as to what birding should be about. The three main companies are: Birdquest, Field Guides and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). They all charge about the same (around \$8,000) for a 10-day cruise/tour. The first/last days of these tours involves 2 to three days of meeting and travel to/from the Galapagos. Therefore, you actually only get about 8 days or less of actual birding in the Galapagos. The end result is that you are paying approximately \$1000 per day in the Galapagos with these companies. If you want everything done for you and costs are not an issue for you, I would recommend the first two companies. Based on their past trip reports, Birdquest and Field Guides will find as many of the endemic bird species as it is possible. Although Field Guides has been able on several occasions to get permission (unobtainable to others) to visit and see the rarest and most endangered bird in the Galapagos – the Mangrove Finch. VENT seems to be least desirable for those wanting to get the most birds for their money. Based on past trip reports, VENT does not go to as many sites, misses the most species and are the most expensive of the three. Additionally, these companies only offer one or two trips to the Galapagos each year or every few years and it is usually in May and June. You can find detailed trip reports from these companies on [www.cloudbirders.com](http://www.cloudbirders.com).

**OPTIONS 2** – Chartering your own boat with a crew and guide may seem as the most expensive. In reality, it could be much cheaper than option 1. Especially if you organize a group of people with similar interests to join you and you fill the boat with them. That is what the professional birding tour companies do. I just want to mention this as an option but it is something that I have neither considered nor investigated personally.

**OPTION 3** - A cheaper way, than option 1, to go there but still have most things organized for you is to do it with a regularly scheduled tourist cruise. There are over 100 cruise vessels/boats plying these waters/islands and serve some 250,000 visiting tourists annually. You can sign up with any via the internet and everything will be taken care for you, including flights from mainland Ecuador. You will be taken directly from the arriving plane to your boat. Everything is prepaid with the exception of drinks (alcohol, soft drinks), wet suit rental and end-of-the-trip tip. There is a multitude and variety of cruise trips offered to different destinations. You can go on 4-day, 8-day or 15-day cruise to different destinations as well as specialized trips such as scuba diving cruises. You can go at any time of the year. The regular prices are high but about half the price of professional birding tours. Furthermore, most offer deep discounts to fill their boats. Lacking much info about independent travel there, I decided on this option. For a 15-day cruise on board the Galavan, I paid \$3822 for such an all-inclusive cruise or roughly \$250 per day. This was a 50% discount and was to visit almost all the sites normally visited in the eastern and western itineraries. One web site that organizes such cruises is

[www.Galapagosislands.com](http://www.Galapagosislands.com). For special deals check this out: <https://www.galapagosislands.com/promotions/>. Another one that is worth looking at is: [www.galapagosisland.net](http://www.galapagosisland.net) and <http://www.galapagosisland.net/cruises/promotions.html>. If you take this tourist cruise option, I would advise you to arrange your own flights to the Galapagos and arrive 2 or 3 days earlier and stay 2 or 3 days on your own after the cruise, as I did. There are some birds you will inevitably miss on such cruises and you can spend this additional time to look for them on your own on the four inhabited island, which you can visit by yourself and without any guides. Going with this option, I only missed one bird that Birdquest saw in 2016 and that was because of lack of time on my part.

There are several positive aspects of going this way. The first is that, just as with the professional birding tours, you eliminate most uncertainties of getting to the sites you want to visit. Everything is arranged for you. Although the cost is high, remember this is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the world. If you are a neophyte on the Galapagos, its history, its wildlife and its geology, there will be English-speaking guide(s) to explain much to you. Besides offering land excursion on these sites, there will be almost equal amount of time spent snorkeling to see the underwater life. You can swim with Sea Lions, Green and Hawksbill Turtles, Galapagos Penguins, Marine Iguanas and sharks (White-tipped, Black-tipped and Hammerheads are possible) in addition to large numbers of tropical fishes. Finally, you will find and identify the birds yourself; rather than having someone else showing them to you. This last point is a definite plus for me.

There are also negative aspects with such arranged tourist cruise. These cruises are designed for the neophyte tourist. On my 15-day cruise, which was divided into three sub-cruises, there were four guides and 49 tourists at different times. No one else, including the guides, had a pair of binoculars. Of those 53 souls on my cruise, only one had serious photographic equipment. The vast majority used their smart phone to take pictures and a few had GoPro and pocket cameras. You will go to scheduled tourist sites and not to sites that might be best for your birds. You waste much time at sites you can visit on your own. They go to all the tourist breeding centers, which are not very good for birds. Park regulations limit your activities on land. You have to go where your local guide goes and at his pace. The guides insist that you are not allowed to go ahead of them or lag behind. There are designated trails and paths and you are not allowed outside them. The local guides know the big birds but when it comes to the small brown jobies that made Darwin famous, they would simply refer to them as Darwin Finches. If you need help identifying birds, you should bring along a birder friend.

**OPTION 4** - If I knew then what I now know, I would go with this last option. You simply buy a round trip ticket to the Galapagos for 3 or 4 weeks and arrange everything while there. The best time to go there would May and June. Although most bird species of interest are resident year around, the Waved Albatross arrives to breed in March. The hot wet season lasts from December to May and is least comfortable. In July and August, I did not encounter a single mosquito but it is also the busied tourist season and finding a good deal might be more difficult. There are four bird species which are normally seen by the professional birding tours and are possible only if you go on an overnight cruise. They are Genovesa Ground-Finch, Genovesa Cactus-Finch, Flightless Cormorant and Galapagos Martin. If missing these four species is acceptable with you than you never have to take an overnight, expensive cruise in the Galapagos. You can see all the other special species, normally seen by the birding tours, by yourself and on day trips from/to one of the four inhabited islands. I will discuss these later at some length.

## **INDEPENDENT BIRDING**

Here is one possible suggestion as how to proceed as an independent birder on a budget.

- Decide on the dates you want to visit the Galapagos and for how long.

- Once you know your dates, contact a tour agency via internet/phone in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on San Cristobal Island and book a day trip (\$200 per person) with them to Espanola Island. The Espanola day trips are in high demand and need to be booked before doing anything else.
- Book your flights so that you will arrive from mainland Ecuador to San Cristobal (airport code = SCY) two or three days before your already booked day trip to Espanola. You can also fly to Baltra Island (airport code = GPS) and take the daily ferry to San Cristobal.
- Make sure you have \$US dollars in cash before arriving in the Galapagos and much in small bills. I would suggest \$1000 to start with.
- Once in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, find accommodations for the time you want to spend on the island of San Cristobal. I would suggest three nights to start with. If Punta Pitt holds any attraction for you, inquire with the local tour agencies about going there. Bird locally to familiarize yourself with the Galapagos bird life, especially the Darwin Finches. Possibly, spend a second day visiting the moist highlands with the help of a bike rental or by taxi. Furthermore, all the taxis in the Galapagos are pickup truck. This means you could rent a bike; throw that bike in the back of the truck/taxi and have him drop you off and you bird back to town at your own pace on the bike. Don't forget the island's only endemic - San Cristobal Mockingbird. The third day could be your pre-booked day trip to Espanola.
- When you are finished with San Cristobal, take the ferry (2 hours, \$30, morning or afternoon) to Puerto Ayora in Santa Cruz. Find accommodations and check with the local travel/tour agencies about the day trips or discount cruises you might be interested in as well as the transport options to Floreana. While you are waiting for the travel agencies to deliver, make Puerto Ayora your base of operations. You could spend one or even two weeks visiting different sites, islands etc. from Puerto Ayora. During this time, you can take the ferry to Floreana for a few days and clean up there. Also go to Isabela for two or three days and get the Penguin, Vermillion Flycatcher and with luck, possibly, the Galapagos Martin. On the long interisland crossings look for Galapagos Petrel and Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (difficult but possible).
- By now you should have seen the vast majority of the Galapagos endemic bird species without going on a overnight, expensive cruise. Depending how frugal you might be, you probably spent (without airfare) somewhere between \$1000 and \$1500 per person, so far. You will have missed only the following: **Flightless Cormorant, Galapagos Martin, Genovesa Ground-Finch, Genovesa Cactus-Finch, Vampire Ground-Finch, Sharp-billed Ground-Finch and Mangrove Finch**. Of that list, the first **four** are only viewable if you go on overnight cruises to the Bolivar Channel and to Genovesa Island. Doing so will probably double your expenditure for the trip. Only you can decide if this is worthwhile for you. As for the last **three** birds on that list, you should give up all hope for them. You have no chance of seeing them because they are only found where you cannot go.

## SITES

Let me discuss some specifics about the islands and sites you might want to visit. The one inevitable thing in life is change and you should research these sites further on your own. What was true yesterday may not be so tomorrow.

1. **SANTA CRUZ** - I would make Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz my base of operations for the visit period. You can fly into Baltra Island (GPS), pay the \$100 Galapagos National Park entrance fee, take the airport bus (\$5) to the Ithabaca channel crossing ferry (\$1) and then a bus (\$5) or taxi (\$25) to Puerto Ayora. There are some 50 forms of accommodations and dozens of travel agencies that can arrange last minute cruises deals or day trips. There are many hostals, hospedaje and hotels that offer accommodations for about \$20 or \$30 per night. Camping is not much of an option in the Galapagos. I stayed at El Descanso del Petrel (gps = -0.746684,-90.313883) in a dorm bed for \$15 per night. There are many restaurants and a supermarket near the Port. If you need more money, get it here as ATMs are currently only available on Puerto Ayora and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on San Cristobal and not available in the other communities. Puerto Ayora is the only place that has direct, twice-daily ferries (\$30,

speed boats) to the San Cristobal and Isabela islands and less frequently to Floreana. If needed, there is tourist office in town to help you. Also, Santa Cruz is the easiest place to find the majority of Galapagos endemic bird species and you can observe them on your own and at your own pace. A guide is not mandatory for the below four sites on Santa Cruz.

**Charles Darwin Research Station.** - (gps = -0.742132,-90.3341) Located about 1 km east from the center of Puerto Ayora. Bird activity is best in the morning. Around the various exhibits and paths you can see: Galapagos Flycatcher, Galapagos Mockingbird, Vegetarian Finch, Large Ground-Finch, Small Ground-Finch, Medium Ground-Finch and Common Cactus-Finch. Lava Gulls can be seen flying around along the shoreline and blue-footed Boobies further out. The beach trail, there, can have up to 100 marine iguanas sun-bathing themselves there.

**Tortuga Beach Trail start.** – (gps = -0.746,-90.319245). This trail starts on the west side of Puerto Ayora and goes to Tortuga Beach. You can expect similar species as above including: Lava Gull, Galapagos Flycatcher, Galapagos Mockingbird, Vegetarian Finch, Small Ground-Finch, Small Ground-Finch, Medium Ground-Finch and Common Cactus-Finch.

**Media Luna.** (gps = -0.666175,-90.3240) to **Cerro Crocker** (gps = -0.64332,-90.32551). This is the most easily accessible and best highland site in the entire Galapagos, as far as I am concerned. You can either take a bus (\$.50) or taxi from Puerto Ayora to Bellavista (7 km). From the road junction in Bellavista, turn east/right and walk 100 meters than turn north/left and follow this road/trail to Media Luna and eventually to Cerro Crocker. When you come to an unmarked, wide fork in the trail, take the right track to Cerro Crocker. You can expect the following species: Galapagos Rail, Paint-billed Crake, Green Warbler-Finch, Woodpecker Finch, Vegetarian Finch, Small Tree-Finch, Large Tree-Finch, Small Ground-Finch and Medium Ground-Finch. It is worth spending an entire day or even more here.

**Los Gemelos.** (gps = -0.62561,-90.38525). This site is best visited in the morning. You can either take the bus to Santa Rosa (\$.50) from Puerto Ayora and walk the additional 4 km to the craters or take a taxi here. Bicycle rental in Puerto Ayora is another option. This site is at a similar elevation than the one above and should have similar targets but has only a very short trail and expectations are much less than Media Luna.

- ISABELA** - The western part of Isabela or more specifically the shores of the Bolivar Channel between western Isabela and eastern Fernandina Island is the only place in the world to see the **Flightless Cormorant**, the **Mangrove Finch** and the most reliable place to see the Galapagos Martin. As no permission is normally given to visit the mangroves where the Mangrove Finch lives, you can give up all hope of seeing this rarest and most endangered Galapagos bird. Your only realistic chance of seeing the other two specialties is to take one of the many cruises that visit those shores. Currently no one in Puerto Villamil offers a day trip to this area. However, local fishermen do go to this area and it might be possible to arrange something there. Even so, visiting Isabela can be rewarding.

**Puerto Villamil.** There is only one community on Isabella and it is Puerto Villamil. Puerto Villamil is accessible by twice-daily ferries (\$30, speedboat) from Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz. There are a number of cheap accommodations, restaurants and agencies that offer day trips to several places from here. When I bought my ferry ticket in Puerto Ayora, I asked them to arrange a cheap room for me at Puerto Villamil and they booked me at Hospedaje Mother Fanny for \$20 per night. This is a sleepy little town that has a couple of birds which might be of interest to birders. If you scan the distant rocks outside the harbor (where you arrived on ferry from Puerto Ayora), you should find a few Galapagos Penguins on those rocks. A scope would be helpful. If you fail to see the

penguins there, several agencies in town offer day trips by which they will take you to see the penguins. The other place of interest is the tortoise breeding center and the adjacent wetlands, west of town center. There is a boardwalk thru the wetland and you will see small numbers of American Flamingos.

**Sierra Negra Highlands.** The main attraction on Isabela and from Puerto Villamil is the infrequently active Sierra Negra Volcano. The crater is some 28 km from Puerto Villamil along a well maintained road. The last 3.5 km are within the national park and one cannot enter the park there without a local guide. You can go independently for the first 25 km but not the last 3.5 km. There are daily trips (\$35) offered from Puerto Villamil to the volcano crater. However, your chances of seeing anything, including the crater, are not very good. Most of the time, you are in the clouds/mist. I did this twice. They drive you to the national park checkpoint and from that point, you walk (are rushed) to the rim. You spend about 30 minutes at the rim overlook and then you are rushed back to the park checkpoint, where the bus takes you back to town. Even if you see a bird, there is little time to look at it on the walk to/from the crater. Having said that, I was fortunate to see a male Galapagos Martin fly by the rim. On the second tour there, I decided to leave the group and walked back the 25 km from the national park checkpoint to Puerto Villamil. This did not result in the hoped-for Vermillion Flycatcher. Another option might be to rent a bike (\$15/day) in town and bird the road at your own leisure. Among the birds you might see there include: Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos Rail, Vermillion Flycatcher, Galapagos Mockingbird, Green Warbler-Finch, Woodpecker Finch, Small Tree-Finch, Small Ground-Finch and Medium Ground-Finch.

- 3. FLOREANA** - This island was the first to have been settled and the most devastated by humans. Of the inhabited islands, it currently has the smallest population in the Galapagos of just 170 permanent inhabitants and mostly in Puerto Velazco Ibarra. It is currently trying to encourage tourism and can be visited by a ferry (\$30, speedboat) from Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz or on a day trip/tour (\$120) also from Puerto Ayora. Because of the small population there and of limited interest to tourists, the ferry schedule and day trips seem to vary with demand. When I was there, the ferry only went on Saturdays and Mondays and the day trip depended on demand. Finding accommodations in Puerto Velazco Ibarra should not be a problem as there are quite a few options available for about \$30 per person per night. There is also at least one restaurant. There are two island endemics on Floreana and your chance of seeing both are excellent with a professional bird tour and almost nonexistent on a tourist cruise, like the one I took. The tourist cruises do not normally visit the places the two endemics are to be found. However, you can go there independently and have a good chance of seeing both birds, especially if you stay here for one or two nights. There is a tiny tourist office in town but I do not know when it might be staffed.

**Asilo de la Paz.** This is an area of moist highlands (330 masl) in the center of this small island. It is about 8 km from the accommodations in Puerto Velazco Ibarra. It is within walking distance, given enough time. Additionally, you should be able to arrange a lift there with a local or inquire locally about hiring a bicycle for the day. This is the place to find one of the island endemic – the Medium Tree-Finch. The day trips from Puerto Ayora visit this area but only for about one hour. That may not be enough time to find your target among the common Small Tree-Finches. It would be better to stay on the island overnight and that would give you half of a day or more to find this bird. Birds to be seen here are: Galapagos Flycatcher, **Medium Tree-Finch**, Small Tree-Finch, Small Ground-Finch and Medium Ground-Finch.

**Champion Islet.** The **Floreana Mockingbird**, the other island endemic, is only reliably seen on two tiny islets near Floreana. Champion is one and Gardner Islet is the other. Landing there is not permitted. However it was possible to go diving or snorkeling there and you could see the mockingbird from the deck of the boat. The professional birding tours see the mockingbird from the deck of their boat. In the past, agencies from Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz would offer such diving/snorkeling day trips there but no longer. I visited about a dozen dive/snorkeling agencies in Puerto Ayora and they all told me the same story. That “it is no longer worth going

there". They told me that the only way to go there was on one of the few cruise boats that might stop there for snorkeling. A better option would be to go to Puerto Velazco Ibarra on Floreana and hire a local fisherman to take you around Champion Islet. I did not have this option because of lack of time and poor planning on my part. Reintroduction of the Floreana Mockingbird to the main Floreana Island has not been successful, yet. Seeing one on the main island is possible but only a very remote possibility for a casual visitor.

- SAN CRISTOBAL** – Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, on this island, is the governmental capital of the Galapagos Province and this is the other island that has an airport (SCY) that handles flights from the Ecuador mainland. You could actually fly here from Quito or Guayaquil and start your trip from here. There are numbers of cheap accommodations, restaurants and travel agencies. In this place you should arrange your day trip to Espanola Island, if you are not planning to go there on a cruise boat. You can also arrange here a day trip to Punta Pitt. There are places to rent a bike and you can explore the island on your own and at your own pace. The **San Cristobal Mockingbird** is the only island endemic.

**Cerro Tijeretas Trails** (gps = -0.8933,-89.6088). On the northern edge of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, there is an interpretation center. From this center, there are a set of short trails for scenery, wildlife viewing and an impressive statue of Darwin. Birds you can see there include: Galapagos Flycatcher, **San Cristobal Mockingbird**, Small Tree-Finch, Small Ground-Finch and Medium Ground-Finch.

**La Galapaquera de Cerro Colorado** (gps = -0.9135,-89.43624). About 23 km from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno and along the main road to Puerto Chino is the tortoise breeding center. It can be reached by taxi or Bicycle. It is frequently visited by tours and has some short paths you can bird. Birding along the main road may be more productive. Birds seen in the general area include: **San Cristobal Mockingbird**, Galapagos Flycatcher, Gray Warbler-Finch, Vegetarian Finch, Woodpecker Finch, Large Tree-Finch, Small Tree-Finch, Small Ground-Finch, Medium Ground-Finch.

**Punta Pitt**. It is located on the northeastern end of San Cristobal. It is only accessible by boat; either on cruise boats or day trips. Supposedly, it is the only place where one can see, in good numbers, all three boobies. Day trips are offered in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno but can be expensive and the boat ride can be rough. Birds that can be seen there include: Swallow-tailed Gull, Red-billed Tropicbird, both Frigatebirds, three species of Boobies, **San Cristobal Mockingbird** and Small Ground-Finch. Divers and snorkelers also go there.

- Espanola**. Geologically, this is the oldest large island and most south-easterly. Bird-wise, it should not be missed! It has two island endemic species and between April and November, the Waved Albatross nest here. The two island endemics are: **Espanola Mockingbird** and **Espanola Ground-Finch/Cactus-Finch**. It can only be visited by boat; either cruise ship or day trips from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on San Cristobal. Unfortunately, it is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Galapagos. As a result, the park service is trying to limit the number of visitors here by favoring access to cruise ships and reducing the number of day trips from San Cristobal. Currently only four day trips per week are allowed from San Cristobal and they are run by different companies each day. I was in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on July 31 and they were fully booked for all of August. If you want to go to Espanola on a day trip, you should book this well in advance and plan your entire trip around that date. One such company that you can contact about this and other trip offerings from San Cristobal is [www.islanders-galapagos.com](http://www.islanders-galapagos.com). They currently charge \$200 per person. If you do not do this on a day trip, your only other option is to sign up for an expensive multi-day cruise that includes Espanola.

**Suarez Point.** This is the trail everyone goes on and is the best place to see the island's wildlife. It is approximately two kilometers long, takes about 2 hours to walk (at the guide's pace) and is rough in places. Make sure your day trip offering includes this trail. Birds you can see here include: Waved Albatross, Galapagos Shearwater, Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos Dove, Red-billed Tropicbird, Swallow-tailed Gull, Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies, **Espanola Mockingbird**, Gray Warbler-Finch, **Espanola Ground-(Cactus-)Finch**.

**Gardner Bay.** This is the other site on Espanola that is visited, mostly for snorkeling. This site will probably be offered in conjunction with Suarez Point. A walk along the beach can result in seeing: **Espanola Mockingbird**, Gray Warbler-Finch, Small Ground-Finch and **Espanola Ground-(Cactus-)Finch**.

6. **Santa Fe.** This island is between San Cristobal and Santa Cruz. Most agencies in Puerto Ayora offer day trips here. I did not see anything special here that I did not see elsewhere. You should see the following birds here: Galapagos Dove, Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies, Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos Mockingbird, Small Ground-Finch, Common Cactus-Finch and Medium Ground-Finch.
7. **South Plaza.** This small island lies close to the east side of Santa Cruz. Day trips are offered from Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz. The following species should be recorded here: Swallow-tailed Gull, Red-billed Tropicbird, Galapagos Shearwater, Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies, Small Ground-Finch, Common Cactus-Finch and Medium Ground-Finch.
8. **Genovesa.** If you can only afford one short cruise, I would recommend this destination. This island is on par with Espanola as one not-to-be-missed. This island is more remote and takes a good part of the night to get there. There is no other way of going there but on a multiday cruise. However, last minute deals can be found at deep discount at Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz. The only roommate I had on my 15-day cruise was for this part of the cruise. He was on a 3 night/4 day deal. He negotiated a deal in Puerto Ayora at a very deep discount. So deep that he was sworn to secrecy about the actual cost of his fare. Genovesa has two island endemics and they are: **Genovesa Ground-Finch** and **Genovesa Cactus-Finch**.

**El Barranco or Prince Philip's Steps.** This is a 1 km long cliff-side trail. The following bird species can be seen here: Galapagos Dove, Swallow-tailed Gull, Lava Gull, Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel (thousands), Galapagos Shearwater, both species of Frigatebirds, Nazca and Red-footed Boobies, resident Short-eared Owl, Galapagos Mockingbird, Gray Warbler-Finch, Large Ground-Finch, **Genovesa Ground-Finch** and **Genovesa Cactus-Finch**. There is a good chance of seeing a Galapagos Fur-Seal on zodiac ride along the steep cliffs.

**Darwin Bay.** This is nearby to the above site and is mostly a snorkeling site but there is a short trail near the beach and you have a chance of seeing most of the above specialties in fewer numbers in addition to: Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Lava Heron.

9. **Bartholomew.** This small islet on the east coast of Santiago Island is very popular for scenery photos as you can climb a 100 + meter wooden stairway to view the surrounding area. It also offers something that every birder wants so see, especially if the trip is in combination with Sullivan Bay. There is small number of Galapagos Penguins here at both sites and you can see a few on the shore rocks. Day trips are offered here at many agencies in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz.
10. **North Seymour.** This island is just north of the airport on Baltra Island. Day trips are offered here from Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz. There is nothing unique here but this place offers several bird species to photograph. This is probably the easiest place to photograph nesting Blue-footed Boobies as well as nesting Great and Magnificent



Frigatebirds. Birds to be expected here: Galapagos Dove, Swallow-tailed Gull, Lava Gull, Great and Magnificent Frigatebird and Blue-footed Booby.

### **MY TOURIST CRUISE**

Now that I have told you how you might undertake such a trip, let me tell you how I did it. I had little information about the overall situation in the Galapagos. Not wishing to miss anything especially my last penguin species and the only one to reach the northern hemisphere, I decided to book a 15-day cruise that was scheduled to visit almost all possible sites. I was fortunate to find a boat, the Galavan, which offered a 50% discount from their regular price. Furthermore, this boat was designed to hold 20 guests. I believed this to be an advantage as park regulation says that the local guide cannot escort more than 16 guests at any one time. This meant that there would be two guides and that might give some flexibility as to what to see and when. I would, in fact, prefer to go without guides but they are mandatory in the Galapagos National Park and all the unhabituated islands in the archipelago are in the Galapagos National Park. So I had to put up with them. Believing that I would miss something on the official cruise and wanting to do some birding away from the constrain of a guide, I decided to arrive three day early and stay two days after the cruise ended. This would allow me time to familiarize myself with the wildlife beforehand and try to catch up with the species I might have missed on the cruise.

#### **Conditions, equipment and preparations:**

- Most citizens of western countries automatically receive a 90-day tourist visa upon arrival in Ecuador. Galapagos limits a tourist stay within the archipelago to 60 days during any one year period.
- Get \$US dollars before going to the Galapagos. It is the official currency of Ecuador. You can get some from ATM machines or money changers at the Quito and Guayaquil airports. You will need \$100 in cash to pay the entrance fee immediately in the arriving airport in the Galapagos. There are no ATMs at these airports in the Galapagos. Additionally you will need small bills to pay for the buses, taxis and ferry crossings,etc. Should you need additional money later, there are ATM machines only in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on San Cristobla.
- The Galapagos Islands are a natural treasure and should be respected and protected. The Galapagos National Park has put in place a number of conditions and rules toward that end. In the National Park, visitors are only allowed in the presence of a registered, local guide. There are specific trails set up and everyone can only walk within the boundaries of these marked trails. When you leave, take nothing with you but photos and memories and leave nothing behind, not even footprints (if possible). Do not bring with you any pests like insects, plants, seeds or soil in your luggage. Your luggage will be inspected in the mainland airport and upon arrival in the Galapagos. Additionally, your luggage will be again inspected during the ferry crossings and day trips to the different islands.
- Ecuador is a Spanish-speaking country and if you speak some Spanish, it is a definite advantage. However, 70% plus of the Galapagos economy is tourism. The language of tourism is English and you will find that many people dealing with tourism speaking some English. The guides are multilingual. They might struggle with their English or you might find it difficult to understand their accents. Therefore, even if you cannot speak a word of Spanish, you will get along fine.
- Free WiFi is available at most of the land accommodations but not on the cruise boats. Cell phone service is only available at or near the larger communities. If your only destination in Ecuador is the Galapagos, buying a local sim card (Claro, Movistar) is not worthwhile.
- Bring casual clothing, wide-brimmed sun hat, sun glasses, hiking shoes, sandals and a swim suit. An umbrella and/or a raincoat might be of some use as it was for me.

- Bring sun screen lotion, motion sickness medication and insect repellent.
- Of course do not forget your binoculars, land and underwater camera if you want to take pictures. A telescope is not necessary.
- A snorkeling mask, a snorkel and fins are provided at no cost on the cruises and day trips. Wet suits are available for rent but not necessary as the waters are quite warm.
- There is no detailed field guide to the birds of the Galapagos and the Ecuador bird field guides do not cover the birds of the Galapagos. However, there is a general photographic field guide to the **Wildlife of the Galapagos** by Julian Fitter, Danial Fitter and David Hosking. It is adequate for identifying most of the birds and as well as other wildlife and plants in the archipelago. There are a few notable errors or omissions but it is still very useable. It is wise to research Darwin Finch identification on the internet beforehand and bring such info with you.
- There is an article on the recent split of the Sharp-beaked Ground-Finches and Large Cactus-Finches worth reading: <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCprop676.htm>.
- There is a Moon travel guide to the Galapagos by Lisa Cho. It is dated (2015) but still very useful for independent travelers to the Galapagos and recommended.
- On [www.cloudbirders.com](http://www.cloudbirders.com), there is a number of birding trip reports. Most are by commercial birding tour companies. However, there is one noteworthy independent trip report by Oscar Campbell from 2016 - [https://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport/repository/CAMPBELL\\_Galapagos\\_0708\\_2016.pdf](https://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport/repository/CAMPBELL_Galapagos_0708_2016.pdf).
- Download a road map for Ecuador which shows the roads and trails in the Galapagos. One such app is Sygic and another is Navigator. Then input and save the gps coordinates for the sites you want to visit on the inhabited islands. Many roads and trails on the inhabited islands have unmarked forks or junctions.
- Download songs from [www.xeno-canto.org](http://www.xeno-canto.org) to your mp3 player or smartphone. Songs for Galapagos Rail and Paint-billed Crake are most useful if you want to see these two species. Most of the Darwin Finches are not known for their vocalizations and their recordings may be of little use. The warbler-finches seem to be the only ones to have a real song.

## **Itinerary;**

July 20 – I flew into Guayaquil, arriving on 23:00. I took a taxi (\$5.00) to Murali Hostal Airport (gps = -2.14262,-79.886) (\$15/bed).

July 21 – I returned to the Guayaquil Airport, where I had my luggage inspected for Galapagos entry and paid the \$20 transfer fee. I then went to the airline counter and received my boarding pass and proceeded to security and the gate. I arrived at Baltra Airport (GPS) in the Galapagos, where my luggage was inspected again. I paid the mandatory \$100 entry fee in cash. Then I went outside the airport terminal to the waiting bus (now \$5), which took me across Baltra island to the ferry (\$1) crossing to Santa Cruz Island. There I took another waiting bus (\$5) which took me across the island to Puerto Ayora. By 14:00, I checked into El Descanso del Petrel for a dorm bed (\$15/night). Then I visited one of the many tour agencies to enquire about transport to Floreana. I was told that it was fully booked for Sunday but I could go on Monday. The options were a \$60 round-trip ferry or a \$120 tour. Not knowing what the transport options would be on Floreana to Asilo de la Paz, I opted for the tour. Part of its itinerary involved going to Asilo de la Paz. The rest of the day I spent at the Charles Darwing Reseach Station, trying to familiarize myself with local wildlife.

July 22 – I took the Santa Rosa bus (\$.50 and goes every 30 minutes). It leaves from the same bus stop that was the last stop of the airport bus yesterday. It started raining as I got on the bus. I got off the bus at Bellavista (7 km) and start walking to Media Luna in the rain. I spend the entire day walking and birding to Media Luna and Cerro Crocker and back. It rained, drizzled and misted all day with much wind at times. In the highlands it can be like this at any time of the year

and a reason to bring along some form of rain-gear. Even with the bothersome weather, I saw everything I was looking for. I returned to Bellavista before sunset and caught the bus back to Puerto Ayora.

July 23 – At 7:00, I was picked up at the travel agency where I booked my Floreana day trip and was walked to the boat. With some 15 other participants the boat crossing took about two hours and was very rough. A truck-bus was waiting for us when we arrived at Puerto Velasco Ibarra on Floreana. It took us to the tortoise enclosure near Asilo de la Paz. There the guide and I had difference of opinion that resulted in deep discussions. Sighting park regulations, he insisted that everyone follow him and go only where he went and at his pace. I pointed out that park regulations do not apply there as this was a community area. That I need to go on my own to find my target bird. Eventually he agree to let me bird the area on my own and ahead of everyone else. It took some time but I found a pair of Medium Tree-Finches among the more common Small Tree-Finches. At noon, everyone returned to the town of Puerto Velasco Ibarra on the truck-bus. There we had lunch at a restaurant. In the afternoon, the plan was to do some snorkeling but because of rough sea conditions and bad underwater visibility, most everyone decided otherwise. I walked around town to see what I could find but the habitat there was in poor condition and the hoped-for Floreana Mockingbird never materialized. The return crossing to Puerto Ayora was somewhat calmer as we were travelling with the wind and swells. I arrived back at my hostel by 17:00.

July 24 – I checked-out of my hostel and made my way back to Baltra Airport. There I was met by the guides from the Galavan. When the other cruise participants' flights arrived we were all taken by bus to the harbor where the Galavan was waiting. It took all morning to get everyone together and get things organized. After lunch, the Galavan sailed across the channel to Santa Cruz Island. In the afternoon we were taken for a zodiac ride in Black Turtle Cove on Santa Cruz. This is a mangrove area which serves as oasis for marine life. After dinner, the boat started sailing for Genovesa Island.

July 25 – Sunrise was around 6 am and we were anchored in Darwin Bay on Genovesa. This would be the start of regular daily routine for the next two weeks. Breakfast at 7:00; first outing at 8:00; snorkeling at 10:30; lunch on board at 12:00; second outing at 14:00; snorkeling at 16:00; back on boat at 18:00; briefing on next day activity at 18:45; Dinner at 19:00; overnight sailing to next destination.

My main interest on this cruise was the birds, especially Darwin Finches and I wanted to have as much time as possible to that goal. I expressed my displeasure that so much time was being given to snorkeling. As we had two guides and two zodiacs, I wanted to have the option to spend more time for some us on land. After much discussion, it was put to a vote. The result was 19 votes against one (me). The end result was that everyone went to the same place at the same time for the rest of the cruise. However, there was less objections when I went ahead of the guide or lagged behind a little.

This morning we were taken by zodiac along the cliffs of Genovesa and eventually to El Barranco, also known as Prince Philip's Steps. Bird-wise, this 1 km long cliff-side trail resulted in close views of Great Frigatebirds, Red-footed Boobies, thousands of Wedge-tailed Storm-Petrels and 2 Short-eared Owls which prey on the storm-petrels. The Darwin finches were mostly absent with only a pair of **Large Ground-Finches** and a single **Genovesa Ground-Finch** noted there. After that, we went snorkeling from the zodiacs. The afternoon was spent at Darwin Bay Beach, where some went snorkeling while I spend all the time on the very short trail, adjacent to the beach, looking for Darwin Finches. More finches were present here than at El Barracno but usually distant. The only sightings of **Genovesa Cactus-Finch** was here.

July 26 – This morning, the boat was anchored in Sullivan Bay on Santiago. Before breakfast and from the deck of the boat, I saw my first **Galapagos Penguins** and **Galapagos Hawks**. The morning trek was thru a barren lava field that solidified about 100 years old. The snorkeling was from the zodiacs with a several penguins joining in. The boat was moved for the afternoon walk on Rabida Island. On the way, we saw a large, abandoned tourist cruise boat that was partially sunk. It had run aground in the middle of the night, a few days earlier. Everyone on board was safely rescued by another cruise boat after a few hours in the zodiacs. That captain will surely be looking for a new profession.

July 27 – Today, the boat was anchored in the harbor of Puerto Ayora. The entire day was spent on Santa Cruz Island and could easily have been done by oneself. Also, nine of cruise participants were on the 4 day/3 night option and were leaving here. Nine new ones would be joining us. In the morning the group was taken to Charles Darwin Research Station for about an hour and then let loose in the town to do souvenir shopping. In the afternoon the reorganized group was taken by bus to El Chato Tortoise Ranch. This is private reserve/ranch where you can see the giant Santa Cruz Tortoises in the wild.

July 28 – Our boat was found this morning at Dragon Hill on western side of Santa Cruz Island. A morning trek produced several encounters with the local Land Iguanas. This is a very impressive reptile. By the afternoon the boat was moved to Bachas Beach for snorkeling, mostly.

July 29 – This morning, we found the boat anchored at Post Office Bay on Floreana. This was a purely touristy visit. In the olden days, sailors, whalers, pirates and local residents would leave mail in a barrow. The next arriving person, in addition to leaving his own mail, would pick up mail for his next destination and deliver it himself. Tourists are now invited to do the same thing. No stamps required! The snorkeling was done from the zodiacs at Devil's Crown. It was interesting but, in my opinion, it did not live up to the hype. In the afternoon, a walk on the Cormorant Point trail resulted in seeing a few American Flamingos on nests and a couple young.

July 30 – Espanola was our destination today. In the morning we spent two hours on the Suarez Point trail. **Espanola Mockingbirds, Espanola Cactus-Finch** and nesting Waved Albatross were much in evidence. Also **Nazca Boobies, Red-billed Tropicbirds, Swallow-tailed Gulls** and **Gray Warbler-Finches** were quite common. In early afternoon, Gardner Bay beach, also on Espanola Island, produced similar species in much smaller numbers and more snorkeling. In late afternoon the boat made the crossing to San Cristobal. On the way, I had a good showing of tubenoses including: Waved Albatrosses, Galapagos Petrels, Galapagos Shearwaters and four species of Storm-petrels (Elliot's, Wedge-rumped, Band-rumped and a single Markham's). We anchored in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno harbor before sunset.

July 31 – Today was the last day for all the cruise participants except me. We even changed the two guides for two new ones. Most others were taken for a short visit to the interpretive center before being taken to the airport to fly out. I spend the morning on my own on the Cerro Tijeretas trails and around town. I returned to the Galavan by boat-taxi at noon. Only to discover that I was the only passenger there. It turns that the incoming flights which carried the new batch of cruise participants was delayed by over 3 hours. It was not until 16:00 hours (as opposed to 12:00) that things became organized. Then everyone was rushed to the zodiacs and taken to a waiting bus. The bus took us over the moist San Cristobal highlands to the La Galapaguera/tortoise breeding center for a quick visit. The scheduled visit to Puerto Chino was cancelled for lack of time.

August 1 – This morning, we found ourselves at Santa Fe Island. The trek here produced nothing special bird-wise. However, the island endemic Santa Fe Land Iguana gave us a good showing. For the afternoon outing, the boat moved to South Plaza Island. Courting Red-billed Tropicbird and **Swallow-tailed Gulls** were the stars there.

August 2 – The boat again anchored in Puerto Ayora and we again spent the entire day on Santa Cruz. It was repeat of July 27 with a visit to Charles Darwin Research Station, souvenir shopping and another visit to El Chato Ranch.

August 3 – This morning, the boat was anchored on the outskirts of Puerto Villamil on Isabela Island. This morning's outing was to the Sierra Negra crater rim. The truck-bus took us from the harbor to the national park checkpoint. There we left the bus and were rushed to the rim overlook, where we sat for about a half hour in the hopes that the mist would lift to see the crater. We did not see much in terms of birds or scenery. Then, we were again rushed back to the park checkpoint and the bus to return to the boat for lunch. The afternoon saw us going for a visit to the tortoise breeding center on the outskirts of Puerto Villamil. Afterwards, a walk thru the wetlands gave some the thrill of seeing close-up view of American

Flamingos. Then we were let loose on the town of Puerto Villamil for more souvenirs shopping before returning to the boat for at sunset.

August 4 – The overnight sailing found us at Moreno Point of Isabela. As it turned out, there was minor, current, active eruption on the slopes of Sierra Negra. So, I woke to the red glow of the active fissure some two or three kilometers away. The fissure was ejecting red-hot, fountains of lava some five to ten meters in the air. This was a definite plus to the cruise. The morning outing was over a barren lava field and the overall area had a few **Galapagos Penguin** and a few **Flightless Cormorants**. The morning snorkeling was from the zodiacs.

The lava eruption was a very rare event and the guides voiced the hope that we could see the lava cascading into the sea, if we stayed longer. However, if we stayed in the hopes of seeing such an event, we would have to give up going to our next scheduled site – Tagus Cove. I viewed Tagus Cove as the best birding site on the entire western sector of the Galapagos. Besides the penguins and cormorants, this is the only reliable site for the Galapagos Martin as they nest there in small numbers. After much discussion, it came to another vote. Again, the vote was 19 to 1 and I was the only one who wanted to go onto Tagus Cove. Thereafter we sat and waited and waited. At 16:00, we went into the zodiacs and cruised along the shore in the hopes that we could find some lava cascading into the sea. Alas, there was no such event. It appears that the ejected lava from the fissure re-entered an existing lava tube and was never seen again. We could smell the sulphur from the eruption and feel the heat from the rocks and warming waters but not much more. To console us, it was decided to stay past dinner and into the night. That way, we could see and photograph the eruption radiance during the night. However, the captain decided to anchor the boat in front of the cooling lava. This resulted in much heat waves rising into the air which distorted the view of the eruption everyone was interest in. Smart phone photos produced a nice red glow and most were happy. For the two of us who had telephoto lenses, we could not get any worthwhile photos. The rising heat from the cooling lava completely blurred out the actual lava fountains being ejected into the air. It was so badly blurred that the camera's auto focus feature could not lock onto an image. It was a bad decision by the captain and the guides!!

All my hopes for birding Tagus Cove and seeing my Galapagos Martin also disappeared. So I believed!

August 5 – When we woke up, the boat was anchored near Espinosa Point on Fernandina Island. Geologically speaking, Fernandina is the youngest island in the archipelago. Espinosa Point has a few patches of mangroves and other vegetation but mostly endless expanses of open lava beds and that was the area our morning walk took us to. It was interesting but I saw nothing new here. The boat then sailed to Vicente Point on the northwestern tip of Isabela. This was our snorkeling site for the early afternoon. In the late afternoon and night, the boat sailed over the northern tip of Isabela and proceeded onto Santiago Island. In the process, we crossed the equator twice.

August 6 – This morning, we were anchored in Buccaneer Cove on west side of Santiago Island. The morning outing was a zodiac ride along the shores of Buccaneer Cove. The snorkeling session later on in the same area resulted with us swimming with Galapagos Sea Lions and White-tipped Reef-Sharks. Over lunch, the boat was moved to Bartholomew islet on the east side of Santiago Island. This is a site for scenery and is probably the most photographed site in the Galapagos. There were a few penguins here as well. In the late afternoon we sailed to Baltra Island to anchor there for the night.

August 7 – At first light we arrived at North Seymour. Our outing was at dawn today and involved a short walk on North Seymour. The highlights here were nesting Blue-footed Boobies as well a Great and Magnificent Frigatebirds. Upon returning to the boat, it sailed again to Baltra Island. After Breakfast, my 15-day cruise came to the end. Everyone and our luggage were transferred to Baltra Airport. Mostly everyone left the Galapagos on the incoming flights. I and a few others decided to stay a few days more and proceeded onto Santa Cruz and Puerto Ayora by bus, ferry and taxi.

As I had missed two target birds on Isabela, I decided to return there for two nights. In Puerto Ayora, I booked the afternoon ferry to Puerto Villamil on Isabela. The same agency found me accommodations at Hospedaje Mother Fanny in Puerto Villamil. I stored most of my luggage at the hostel I used previously and took the 14:30 ferry to Isabela. The trip on this speed boat was rough and lasted about 2 hours. Hospedaje Mother Fanny was a great deal for \$20. It had aircon, hot showers, a refrigerator, WiFi and a tv, which I never used. I visited a local supermarket and picked up some rations for tomorrow.

Upon first arriving in Puerto Villamil, I arranged a guided trip to Sierra Negra (\$35) for tomorrow morning. So far I missed seeing the local race of the Vermillion Flycatcher and Galapagos Martin. Both species were previously reported on such trips. I believed my chances for the flycatcher was excellent and for the martin only slim. However, by deciding to walk back from the crater to the port, I would increase my chances of seeing the flycatcher, at least.

August 8 – At 8 am, the group met and we were driven to the park checkpoint. From there we were again rushed to the rim overlook. This time, to my surprise, the entire crater was crystal clear. I scanned the crater and the rim continuously for the martin and eventually one male **Galapagos Martin** did come by. What a surprise! After 45 minutes at the rim overlook, we were rushed back to the national park check point for the included lunch snack and the waiting truck-bus. This time, I left the tour there and start walking back by myself back to Puerto Villamil. I was sure the Vermillion Flycatcher would be in the bag before long. However, even after 7 hours and 25 kilometers, this flycatcher was never seen. I returned to the hospedaje at sunset.

August 9 – I caught the 7:00 ferry back to Santa Cruz. Upon arriving in Puerto Ayora at 9:00, I picked up my stored luggage. I repacked everything for air travel and made my way back to Baltra airport. My departing flight, which was scheduled to leave at 12:30, did not arrive until 17:00. Strangely, all my flights home were either delayed or rebooked. Thus, ended my Galapagos trip.

### SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRD SPECIES RECORDED BY ME ON THIS TRIP

Taxonomy follows that of Clements/Cornell as updated in 2017. The birds of special interest are **highlighted** and Galapagos Island endemics are **underlined** as well.

SPECIES SEEN	#	DATE	SITE
White-cheeked Pintail ( <i>Anas bahamensis</i> )	4	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	6	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	15	8/3/2018	Puerto Villamil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
American Flamingo ( <i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i> )	6	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	6	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	13	7/29/2018	2/i Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	15	8/3/2018	Puerto Villamil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
<u>Galapagos Penguin</u> ( <i>Spheniscus mendiculus</i> )	3	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
	4	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/3/2018	Puerto Villamil harbor, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	6	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
Waved Albatross ( <i>Phoebastria irrorata</i> )	3	8/7/2018	Puerto Villamil harbor, Isabela
	1	7/23/2018	Ferry between Puerto Ayora and Puerto Velasco Ibarra, Floreana

	50	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	25	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz to Puerto Villamil, Isabela Crossing
<b>Galapagos Petrel</b> ( <i>Pterodroma phaeopygia</i> )	2	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	8	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	7	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz to Puerto Villamil, Isabela Crossing
	2	8/9/2018	Puerto Villamil, Isabela to Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz crossing
<b>Galapagos Shearwater</b> ( <i>Puffinus subalaris</i> )	5	7/23/2018	Ferry between Puerto Ayora and Puerto Velasco Ibarra, Floreana
With white underwings unless otherwise noted	3	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	50	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	1000	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1000	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	50	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	50	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	1000	7/31/2018	Off shore from Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	100	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	500	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/1/2018	with dark underwing, South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/4/2018	with dark underwing, Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	200	8/5/2018	with dark underwings, Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	1000	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	300	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	300	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/6/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/9/2018	Puerto Villamil, Isabela to Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz crossing
<b>Elliot's Storm-Petrel</b> ( <i>Oceanites gracilis</i> )	20	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
Very common in near-shore waters and harbors	3	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	30	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	15	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	30	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/3/2018	Puerto Villamil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise

	50	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/7/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel ( <i>Oceanodroma castro</i> )	2	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel</b> ( <i>Oceanodroma tethys</i> )	1	7/23/2018	Ferry between Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz and Puerto Velasco, Floreana
	5000	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	40	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/31/2018	Puerto Baqueizo Moreno harbor, San Cristobal
	2	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
Markham's Storm-Petrel ( <i>Oceanodroma markhami</i> )	1	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Red-billed Tropicbird</b> ( <i>Phaethon aethereus</i> )	1	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise;
	10	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	15	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
Magnificent Frigatebird ( <i>Fregata magnificens</i> )	1	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/7/2018	North Seymour Island, Galapagos Cruise
Great Frigatebird ( <i>Fregata minor</i> )	200	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	50	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/7/2018	North Seymour Island, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Nazca Booby</b> ( <i>Sula granti</i> )	1	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	200	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	50	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise



	10	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	30	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz to Puerto Villamil, Isabela Crossing
	1	8/9/2018	Puerto Villamil, Isabela to Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz crossing
<b>Blue-footed Booby</b> ( <i>Sula nebouxii</i> )	1	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	1	7/23/2018	Puerto Velasco Ibarra, Floreana
	50	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	30	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	30	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	10	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	40	8/3/2018	Puerto Villamil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	40	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/7/2018	North Seymour Island, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/7/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz
	2	8/7/2018	Puerto Villamil, Isabela
	2	8/9/2018	Puerto Villamil, Isabela to Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz crossing
<b>Red-footed Booby</b> ( <i>Sula sula</i> )	100	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
mostly brown phase	50	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/25/2018	white phase, Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Flightless Cormorant</b> ( <i>Phalacrocorax harrisi</i> )	7	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	8	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Brown Pelican</b> ( <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i> )	5	7/21/2018	Baltra Island
	2	7/23/2018	Puerto Velasco Ibarra, Floreana
	10	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal

	5	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
<i>Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias)</i>	2	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
<i>Great Egret (Ardea Alba)</i>	1	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
<i>Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis)</i>	10	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	5	7/27/2018	El Chato Tortoise Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/2/2018	Rancho Fortiz, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/3/2018	Sierra Negra Highlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	50	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<i>Striated Heron (Butorides striata)</i>	6	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/25/2018	Lava Heron, Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Lava Heron, Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Lava Heron, Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
<i>Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Nyctanassa violacea)</i>	1	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
<b><u>Galapagos Hawk</u></b> ( <i>Buteo galapagoensis</i> )	2	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/8/2018	at Refuge dump, Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b><u>Galapagos Rail</u></b> ( <i>Laterallus spilonota</i> )	5	7/22/2018	2 seen, 3 heard only, Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	1	8/8/2018	1 heard only near NP checkpoint, Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b>Paint-billed Crane</b> ( <i>Mustelirallus erythropus</i> )	4	7/22/2018	2 seen, 2 heard only, Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
<i>Common Gallinule (Gallinula galeata)</i>	1	7/27/2018	El Chato Tortoise Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
<i>Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus)</i>	1	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
<i>American Oystercatcher (Haematopus palliatus)</i>	1	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise

	1	8/6/2018	Bartholomew Island, Galapagos Cruise
Semipalmated Plover ( <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i> )	1	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	6	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
Whimbrel ( <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> )	1	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
Ruddy Turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> )	1	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	2	7/23/2018	Puerto Velasco Ibarra, Floreana
	5	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	6	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz
Red-necked Phalarope ( <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i> )	6	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
Wandering Tattler ( <i>Tringa incana</i> )	3	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Swallow-tailed Gull</b> ( <i>Creagrus furatus</i> )	100	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	200	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	30	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/30/2018	Espanola to San Cristobal crossing, Galapagos Cruise
	50	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/7/2018	North Seymour Island, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Lava Gull</b> ( <i>Leucophaeus fuliginosus</i> )	2	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	2	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/7/2018	North Seymour Island, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/7/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/9/2018	Baltra Island
Brown Noddy ( <i>Anous stolidus</i> )	10	7/21/2018	Baltra Island
	20	7/23/2018	Ferry between Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz and Puerto Velasco, Floreana
	40	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	20	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	100	8/5/2018	Vicente Rock Cove, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	50	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/7/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/9/2018	Puerto Villamil, Isabela to Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz crossing
Royal Tern ( <i>Thalasseus maximus</i> )	1	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Galapagos Dove</b> ( <i>Zenaida galapagoensis</i> )	2	7/21/2018	Baltra Island
	2	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise

	3	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/7/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/9/2018	Baltra Island
Smooth-billed Ani ( <i>Crotophaga ani</i> )	2	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	6	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	10	7/23/2018	Puerto Velasco Ibarra to Asilo de la Paz, Floreana
	4	7/27/2018	El Chato Tortoise Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	2	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b>Barn Owl</b> ( <i>Tyto alba punctatissima</i> )	1	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch lava tube, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Short-eared Owl</b> ( <i>Asio flammeus galapagoensis</i> )	2	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Galapagos Flycatcher</b> ( <i>Myiarchus magnirostris</i> )	1	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	5	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	2	7/23/2018	Puerto Velasco Ibarra to Asilo de la Paz, Floreana
	1	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/31/2018	La Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado, San Cristobal, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/8/2018	/m near rim, Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b>Galapagos Martin</b> ( <i>Progne modesta</i> )	1	8/8/2018	at Refuge dump, 11 km along the road to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
Bank Swallow ( <i>Riparia riparia</i> )	1	8/8/2018	
<b>Galapagos Mockingbird</b> ( <i>Mimus parvulus</i> )	4	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	8	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	15	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	40	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b>Española Mockingbird</b> ( <i>Mimus macdonaldi</i> )	30	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
<b>San Cristobal Mockingbird</b> ( <i>Mimus melanotis</i> )	8	7/31/2018	1/h Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	11	7/31/2018	2/h La Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado, San Cristobal, Galapagos Cruise
<b>Yellow Warbler</b> ( <i>Setophaga petechia aureola</i> )	10	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	30	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	10	7/23/2018	Puerto Velasco Ibarra to Asilo de la Paz, Floreana
	6	7/24/2018	Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/26/2018	Sullivan Bay, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/27/2018	El Chato Tortoise Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise

	20	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	15	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	2	7/31/2018	La Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado, San Cristobal, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/2/2018	Rancho Fortiz, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/3/2018	Sierra Negra Highlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/4/2018	Moreno Point, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/5/2018	Espinosa Point, Fernandina, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/6/2018	Buccaneer Cove, Santiago, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz
	2	8/9/2018	Baltra Island
<b><u>Green Warbler-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Certhidea olivacea</i> )	30	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	1	8/2/2018	Los Gemelos, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/3/2018	Sierra Negra Highlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b><u>Gray Warbler-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Certhidea fusca</i> )	1	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/31/2018	La Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado, San Cristobal, Galapagos Cruise
<b><u>Vegetarian Finch</u></b> ( <i>Platyspiza crassirostris</i> )	1	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/2/2018	Rancho Fortiz, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
<b><u>Woodpecker Finch</u></b> ( <i>Camarhynchus pallidus</i> )	3	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	4	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b><u>Large Tree-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Camarhynchus psittacula</i> )	2	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
<b><u>Medium Tree-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Camarhynchus pauper</i> )	2	7/23/2018	1/m 1/f Asilo de la Paz, Floreana
<b><u>Small Tree-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Camarhynchus parvulus</i> )	20	7/22/2018	Media Luna to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	10	7/23/2018	Asilo de la Paz, Floreana
	1	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	5	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
<b><u>Small Ground-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Geospiza fuliginosa</i> )	10	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	20	7/22/2018	Puerto Ayora to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	10	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/27/2018	El Chato Tortoise Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/29/2018	Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	30	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	2	7/31/2018	La Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado, San Cristobal, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Isand, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/2/2018	Rancho Fortiz, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/3/2018	Puerto Villavil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/3/2018	Sierra Negra Highlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	5	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz

	50	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
	5	8/9/2018	Baltra Island
<b><u>Large Ground-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Geospiza magnirostris</i> )	1	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	2	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	1	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
<b><u>Genovesa Ground-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Geospiza acutirostris</i> )	1	7/25/2018	El Barranco, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise
<b><u>Common Cactus-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Geospiza scandens</i> )	2	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	3	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/1/2018	Santa Fe Island, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/1/2018	South Plaza Island, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/2/2018	Rancho Fortiz, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	1	8/3/2018	Puerto Villamil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz
<b><u>Medium Ground-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Geospiza fortis</i> )	20	7/21/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz
	40	7/22/2018	Puerto Ayora to Cerro Crocker, Santa Cruz
	50	7/23/2018	Puerto Velasco Ibarra to Asilo de la Paz, Floreana
	5	7/24/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/26/2018	Rabida Island, Galapagos Cruise
	50	7/27/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	10	7/27/2018	El Chato Tortoise Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	2	7/28/2018	Dragon Hill, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	5	7/29/2018	Post Office Bay, Floreana, Galapagos Cruise
	20	7/31/2018	Cerro Tijeretas Trail + Puerto Baqueizo Moreno, San Cristobal
	1	7/31/2018	La Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado, San Cristobal, Galapagos Cruise
	10	8/2/2018	Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	30	8/2/2018	Rancho Fortiz, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	20	8/2/2018	El Chato Ranch, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Cruise
	4	8/3/2018	Puerto Villamil + wetlands, Isabela, Galapagos Cruise
	3	8/7/2018	Baltra Island, Galapagos Cruise
	2	8/7/2018	Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz
	4	8/7/2018	Puerto Villamil, Isabela
	20	8/8/2018	Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra Rim, Isabela
	5	8/9/2018	Baltra Island
<b><u>Española Cactus-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Geospiza conirostris</i> )	8	7/30/2018	Suarez Point, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
	4	7/30/2018	Gardner Bay, Espanola, Galapagos Cruise
<b><u>Genovesa Cactus-Finch</u></b> ( <i>Geospiza propinqua</i> )	2	7/25/2018	Darwin Bay, Genovesa, Galapagos Cruise

### **ENDEMICS BIRD SPECIES I FAILED TO SEE:**

**Vermillion Flycatcher** – This is an endemic subspecies and has been traditionally fairly easy to see on Santa Cruz and Isabela highlands. However, recently the bird has become very scarce. It is said to have a different song than the mainland races and the female has a noticeably different plumage. The recently established parasitic fly has been speculated as the cause in the decline of this bird. The most reliable site currently is the Sierra Negra highlands on Isabela but I went there twice and even walked some 30 km and still failed to find one. However, this could have been a result of my birding ineptitude and you should not give up on seeing this bird.

**Floreana Mockingbird** – This island endemic cannot be reliably seen on the main island of Floreana. Your only realistic chance of seeing this species is to go to the tiny islets of Champion or Gardner. They are both close to the main island of Floreana but landing there is not permitted there. It should be possible to go to Floreana for an overnight stay and arrange with a fisherman to take you around Champion Islet and see the bird from the deck of the boat.

**Mangrove Finch** – This is the rarest and most endangered bird species in the Galapagos. The entire population of this species (20 breeding pairs) can only be found in a two small areas (32 hectares total) of mangroves on Playa Tortuga Negra and Caleta Black of Isabela, in the Bolivar Channel. Permission to go there is rarely given. In the last few years, a dangerous, introduced species of parasitic fly (*Philornis downsi*) has established itself in the Galapagos. This fly lays its eggs in the nests of birds. When these fly eggs hatch, that larvae attaches and even burrows into the birds in that nest; feeding on host's blood. In 2013, 37 % of the Mangrove Finch hatchlings were killed by these fly larvae.

A program has been established to prevent the extinction of the Mangrove Finch. During the breeding season, the eggs of the Mangrove Finch are collected from their nests. These removed eggs are then taken to the Charles Darwin Research Station and put into incubators. When they hatch, these young are hand feed and raised by humans. In the meantime, the wild parents lay a second set of eggs and they attempt to raise these into adulthood themselves. The human raised birds are then taken back to the mangroves and after a period of acclimation and supplemental feeding, they are released into the wild. The end result is that the human raised birds have a much greater chance of survival than the wild one. Over time, the wild birds will be out-survived by the human raised birds. It is only a matter of time, until most if not all Mangrove Finches will have an incubator raised ancestry.

**Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch** – Recently this group has been split into three species. The ones on Genovesa (the only one that is accessible) became the Genovesa Ground-Finch. The ones on Darwin and Wolf islands became the Vampire Ground-Finch. The remaining ones retain the English name of Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch. These Sharp-beaked Ground-Finches are only found in the highlands of Santiago and Fernandina Islands. Neither of these areas is currently accessible to tourists and thus these birds are not viewable.

**Vampire Ground-Finch** – This is the third member of the Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch split. Its name comes from the observed behavior of drawing and drinking the blood of boobies. It is only found on remote Darwin and Wolf Island. Landing on these islands is not permitted by the national park. There are regular, expensive diving cruises going there. However, your chance of being able to see and identify this tiny bird from the deck of a rolling boat or from a Zodiac is wishful at best.

#### **MAMALS SEEN:**

Galapagos Fur Seal – individuals seen on Genovesa and Vicente Rock Point

Galapagos Sea Lion – abundant and easily seen in harbors and on beaches.

Sperm Whale – 2 out of Vicente Rock Point

Shortfin Pilot Whale – 2 between Espanola and San Cristobal

Common Bottlenose Dolphin – one group of 50 + only seen once.

#### **REPTILES SEEN:**

Galapagos Giant Tortoise – the only species seen in the wild was in the highland of Santa Cruz

Galapagos Green Sea Turtle – seen at several sites from shore, from Zodiacs and while snorkeling

Hawksbill Turtle – seen at a few sites from shore, from Zodiacs and while snorkeling.

Lava lizards – seen on most islands

Land Iguana – seen at Dragon Hill and North Seymour.

Santa Fe Land Iguana – seen on Santa Fe Island

**SHARKS and RAYS SEEN:**

Blacktip Shark – seen on a few occasions from shore and Zodiacs

White-tipped Reef Shark – seen on several occasion from shore, Zodiacs and while snorkeling.

Giant Manta Ray – on one occasion, many were seen making their spectacular aerial leaps.

Diamond Stingray – seen while snorkeling

Spotted Eagle Ray – see a few times

Marbled Ray – seen on sandy bottoms and near beaches.

I hope you find this trip report and my comments helpful. Should you have further question, you are free to contact me. However, as I travel for lengthy periods, my reply may be slow in coming. Best wishes to all.