

HOVERING OVER THE EQUATOR, 600 miles from the coast of Ecuador, the Galápagos is a world within itself. Many of the creatures that inhabit these islands are found nowhere else on earth and have developed unique adaptations that distinguish themselves and help them survive in their environment. With no natural enemies present, the animals through this archipelago have virtually no fear of humans, making them remarkably tame, not to mention photogenic!

This expedition will be an educational eco-adventure perfect for anyone with an interest in nature and learning about this incredible world!

Photos by Reinter Munguia and Dain Van Schoyck

Meet your leader



David W. Steadman is the Curator of Ornithology at the Florida Museum of Natural History. He came to the University of Florida in 1995, after being Curator of Vertebrates at the New

York State Museum for 10 years. He has a B.S. in Biology (Edinboro State College), M.S. in Zoology (University of Florida), and a Ph.D. in Geosciences (University of Arizona). Dave's primary research interests are the biogeography, evolution, paleontology, and community ecology of tropical birds. His studies have taken him to more than 40 countries, including 150 islands in the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. Dave is the author of 250 scientific publications, including the books *Galápagos: Discovery on Darwin's Islands* (Smithsonian Institution Press) and *Extinction and Biogeography of Tropical Pacific Birds* (University of Chicago Press).



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EXPEDITION TO THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

with the
FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ABOARD M/Y CORAL II

December 2 - 12, 2019



LED BY

DAVID W. STEADMAN

Curator of Ornithology at the
Florida Museum of Natural History



2019 Itinerary

QUITO

DEC.
2

Upon arrival in Quito, you will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel. Check-in starts at 3:00 pm.

Overnight at Rincon de Puembo.

QUITO

DEC.
3

Meet for breakfast and orientation in the hotel restaurant at 7 am. After breakfast, travel north up the Avenue of the Volcanoes for a visit to the Otavalo Market, Ecuador's largest indigenous market. The Otavaleños are a trader community by tradition, and known worldwide for their wonderful work on textiles and tapestries. During the tour, visit the handicraft (artisan) market and have real contact with the community while bargaining for their products. In addition, visit the nearest villages including Peguche and Ilumán, both ancient communities known for their textiles and tapestries. Continue on to Cotacachi, famous for its beautiful leather products. Enjoy lunch at a typical hacienda before returning to Quito.

Overnight at Rincon de Puembo. (BLD)

SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

DEC.
4

This morning transfer to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos. *(Please note that you are limited to 50 pounds of luggage per person. Anything over the 50-pound limit will be subject to additional fees.)* Upon arrival to San Cristobal, you will be picked up at the airport by your naturalist guides and taken to the pier to board the *M/Y Coral II*. This afternoon visit the interpretation center, which offers an informative overview to the formation of Galápagos, its significance in the world, and threats and conservation efforts. Next, hike to Frigatebird Hill (Cerro Tijeretas) where you will see both species of frigatebird, with the bonus of a beautiful view of the bay below.

Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II. (BLD)

SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

DEC.
5

Start the day with a wet landing from your panga (dinghy) onto San Cristobal Island. As you head to shore, take in the immensity of the stunning cliffs of Cerro Brujo, "Sorcerer's Hill." Here you can enjoy simply sharing the beach with sea lions, snorkeling from shore, or taking a walk to a hidden lagoon where you might spot Black-necked Stilts, Ruddy Turnstones, whimbrels, and White-cheeked Pintails. This afternoon, sea lions greet you as you land on the beach at scenic Punta Pitt and prepare for your climb to a high point on this steep eroded tuff cone. This is the only place in the islands where you will have the chance to see all three booby species in the same place: the Red-footed Boobies will be perched on the *Cordia lutea* and small trees, the Nazca Boobies on the ground near the cliff edge, and the Blue-footed Boobies will be a little further inland. Frigatebirds are also abundant here, and the views are breathtaking.

Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II. (BLD)

ESPAÑOLA ISLAND

DEC.
6

Start today with a visit to Española Island, home to Punta Suarez and Gardner Bay. Punta Suarez seems to have everything – a naturalist's paradise. See a slew of marine iguanas and sea lions as

you make your dry landing and walk alongside boobies, endemic lizards, gulls and even a dramatic blowhole. The oldest extant island in the archipelago it is your only opportunity to commune with the endemic Waved Albatross during their breeding season between April and December. With luck, you can watch their complex courtship displays. After returning to the yacht for lunch, visit Gardner Bay, one of the most stunning beaches in all of Galápagos. This long white sandy beach is lapped by turquoise waters and home to a colony of Galápagos sea lions, indifferent to the humans that walk amongst them. The Hood Mockingbirds, endemic to this particular island, will be eager to inspect you and satisfy their innate curiosity. Darwin's finches may also join the throng, including the reclusive Warbler Finch. You can also snorkel here from the beach, in the shallows of the bay.

Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II. (BLD)

FLOREANA ISLAND

DEC.
7

After breakfast, make a wet landing at Punta Cormorant. On arrival take notice of the subtle green hue on the dark beach, a result of a volcanic crystal called olivine. Your walk takes you past the island's endemic *Scalesia* plants to a large, shallow, lagoon often inhabited by vibrant pink Greater Flamingos. Continue through a forest of palo santo trees to arrive at a powdery white beach and nesting area for green turtles. As you walk barefoot in the shallow water, spot diamond stingrays and white-tipped reef sharks. This coral-sand beach marks the end of your trail, so head back to the olivine beach to swim or snorkel among sea turtles, reef fish, and sea lions – and, on a good day, white-tipped reef sharks. A small colony of penguins resides on Floreana and can sometimes be observed as well. Next, snorkel around the Devil's Crown, an eroded volcanic cone, home to an abundance of fish and marine animals. Here you'll swim with schools of yellow-tailed surgeonfish, salemas, and creole fish, and with luck, you may spot turtles, spotted eagle rays, parrotfish, and even hammerhead sharks! The eponymous jagged "crown" is a roosting area for boobies, noddies, tropicbirds, and frigates. Nearby Champion Islet is the last remaining home of the island-endemic Floreana Mockingbird, which you may be lucky enough to see from the pangas. After lunch, return to the olivine beach and take a short walk inland to the famous Post Office barrel. Claimed to have been set up in 1793 by Captain James Colnett, it remains the oldest functioning "post office" in the Pacific. Whalers and fur-sealers would leave addressed letters in the barrel to be picked up by homeward bound colleagues; in the spirit of maintaining this tradition, visitors today will often take letters and hand-deliver them in their home countries.

Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II. (BLD)

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

DEC.
8

This morning, make a dry landing on Santa Cruz Island, where you will visit the highlands and have the opportunity to interact with totally wild Galápagos giant tortoises. A short walk among these huge 600-lb. reptiles will also offer the chance for more highland species, especially several species of the famed finches. Next, visit collapsed twin sinkholes (Gemelos) that will put you in a stunning forest of the endemic tree-forming *Scalesia*. Apart from the dramatic scenery, this area is well known for its diversity of passerine bird species. After lunch, visit the Charles Darwin Research Station & Fausto Llerena Breeding Center. Once home to the famous Lonesome George, the last tortoise of the Pinta race, this breeding and relocation center is named in honor of his long-time guardian. The center is set in the Galápagos National Park Service, where various interpretative buildings are available to visit. The grounds, thanks to its large stands

of native vegetation, are one of the better places to spot some of the seldom-seen Darwin's finches, such as the Woodpecker, Cactus, and Vegetarian Finches.

Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II. (BLD)

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND / BARTOLOME ISLAND

DEC.
9

This morning, set out to explore Dragon Hill, named for its abundant population of Galápagos land iguana. After you arrive at a small lava dock, walk past marine iguanas then prickly pear cacti as you make your way along the beach, Dragon Hill standing in the distance. Stop at a shallow lake to observe feeding flamingos and waders such as stilts, turnstones and sandpipers. Then continue inland, to a dry, forested habitat where the land iguanas nest and burrow. In the afternoon, visit Bartolome Island, just off the eastern coast of Santiago Island. The view from the top of the island, overlooking the famous Pinnacle Rock and the austere Santiago Island beyond, is considered the most iconic landscape in the entire archipelago, and well worth the climb up the wooden boardwalk. This volcanic scene has often been likened to a lunar landscape. Your subsequent snorkel here might put you face-to-face with Galápagos Penguins, white-tipped reef sharks, and playful sea lions.

Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II. (BLD)

RABIDA ISLAND / SANTIAGO ISLAND

DEC.
10

Start today with Rabida Island with its distinctive red-sand beach, home to sea lions, mockingbirds, finches, endemic Galápagos Doves, and Vermillion Flycatchers. Go on a walk through a forest of palo santo and cacti to a beautiful overlook of the bay. Snorkeling here can be excellent, often with large schools of black-striped salemas, sea lions, and ubiquitous turtles. This afternoon, visit Buccaneers Cove and Espumilla Beach on Santiago Island. Buccaneers Cove is so named because it was once used as a refuge by pirates starting in the 17th century. This unique eroded shoreline is home to seabirds, fur seals and playful sea lions. Espumilla Beach, a golden sand beach in James Bay, is a popular place to explore. A short walk inland brings you to mangroves, a small palo santo forest, and saltwater lagoons. Espumilla Beach is a common nesting site for sea turtles, and a good place to snorkel to see rays, among other abundant marine life.

Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II. (BLD)

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND / QUITO

DEC.
11

Disembark at Black Turtle Cove on Santa Cruz, a series of coves and islets. The extensive tidal lagoon system stretches for almost a mile inland, and boasts four species of mangrove. During your panga ride through the labyrinth, spot many turtles, herons of several species, sharks, and rays. After returning to the *Coral II*, spend time in port before heading to the airport for your flight back to the mainland. Upon arrival in Quito, you will be transferred to your hotel near the airport. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.

Overnight at Rincón de Puembo. (BLD)

DEPARTURE

DEC.
12

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. Check out is 12:00 pm. *(B)*

Itinerary may be subject to change.

About your vessel



With a capacity for 20 guests and social areas distributed across three decks, the *M/Y Coral II* allows you to enjoy an intimate expedition experience in your own way. Both indoor and outdoor spaces – including an open deck Jacuzzi – maximize your relaxing time while cruising the islands.

LENGTH	SPEED	ACCOMMODATES
113 feet	12 knots	up to 20 passengers
CABINS	CREW CAPACITY	
11	9 + 2 naturalist guides	

CABIN DETAILS

Ocean view, air conditioning, private bath, hair dryer, television, and safe. Remodeled in September 2017.

More information

LAND COST:

\$7,260 per person

Includes:

Accommodations (double occupancy), in-country transportation, internal flights, meals and activities as listed in the itinerary, local guides, Galápagos National Park fee, and carbon offset.

Not included:

International airfare, gratuities, or items of a personal nature.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE COST:

\$1,129 (round-trip from Gainesville, Florida; other departure cities available)

THE FINE PRINT:

A completed enrollment form and \$500 deposit are required to reserve your space on the trip. Payments are non-refundable after 95 days prior to departure. A minimum of 10 passengers are needed to operate the trip. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information, contact Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS:

Participants able to walk a few hours a day unassisted will be able to fully enjoy the Galápagos. Some of the excursions require more physical activity than others, such as steep climbs or long walks in hot weather or on uneven rocky trails. However, most excursions require moderate activity and the walks are at a leisurely pace. Entering and exiting the Zodiacs requires that you be sure-footed.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have questions about the trip, please contact Lisa Palmese-Graubard at Holbrook Travel at **800-451-7111 x339** or lisa@holbrooktravel.com. Visit holbrooktravel.com/flmnh-gps19 for more information.