

# Journey to the Galapagos | Species List

January 15 – 23, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



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With mainland Ecuador /Antisana National Park pre-extension January 14, 2023

Compiled by Dan Donaldson

## Galapagos Islands

Our January 2023 journey aboard the beautiful ship Origin along the southern Galapagos Islands was an incredible experience with perfect weather nearly the entire trip and amazing birding at every destination. On land, we experienced quintessential Galapagos birding with Waved Albatross, three species of Boobies, three species of Mockingbirds, six species of Galapagos Finches, American Flamingos and many species of seabirds. Snorkeling was delightful with plenty of aquatic wildlife including terrific looks at sea turtles, marine iguanas, White-tipped Reef Sharks, Spotted Eagle-rays and even Hammer-head Sharks, not to mention 30 species of reef fish and many experiences with Galapagos Penguins and Galapagos Sea Lions!

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(E)= Galapagos Endemic

(I)=introduced

## **BIRDS (60 species recorded, of which 0 were heard only):**

### **DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae (1)**

**White-cheeked Pintail** *Anas bahamensis*— 2, observed at the brackish pond on Floreana between Punta Cormorant and Post Office Bay.

### **FLAMINGOS: Phoenicopteridae (1)**

**American Flamingo** *Phoenicopus ruber*— 4, a small group of four birds near the island in the same pond as WCPT.

### **CUCKOOS: Cuculidae (2)**

**Smooth-billed Ani** *Crotophaga ani* (I)— 25, an introduced species that continues to spread throughout the islands. Our group located several populations, but they were particularly noticeable on Isla Santa Cruz in the agricultural fields, and at the Galapagos Tortoise preserves.

### **RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae**

**Common Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata* – 15+, we spotted a couple individuals on the drive to the Rancho Primicais Tortoise reserve, but once inside the reserve there were several families with young running from pond to pond.

**Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinica* – only one located at Rancho Primicais Tortoise Reserve on Isla Santa Cruz.

**Galapagos Rail** *laterallus sibilonota* – We were so lucky to have one of these elusive rails pop out onto the road in front

of our bus on the return trip from Rancho Primicaís.

### **OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae (1)**

**American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus*— Only one heard, then observed, along the shoreline at Punta Suarez on Espanola Island. Seen again by some on Santiago Island.

### **PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriide (1)**

**Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus*—3, more common here in the fall, we observed a total of three: two at the brackish pond at Post Office Bay, and one in one of the tortoise ponds at Primicaís Tortoise Reserve.

### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (8)**

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*—One Whimbrel was located along the shore of Isla Santa Cruz near Puerto Ayora.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*—5, observed on lava fields along the beach at Post Office Bay, and again in similar habitat at Playa Tortuga Bay

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*—3, Punta Cormorant on Isla Floreana was the only location we observed Sanderlings.

**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla*—5, a small flock was found in the brackish pond at Post Office Bay.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* – 400- large flocks of probable Red-necked Phalaropes were observed in open water while traversing several island straights.

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*—1, just one located at Rancho Primicaís Tortoise Reserve on Isla Santa Cruz.

**Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana*— 6, seen almost daily working tide pools and along rocky shorelines around most islands.

### **GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (5)**

**Swallow-tailed Gull** *Creagrurus furcatus*—24+, this is the world's only nocturnal gull, its extra-large eyes help in this task. Seen daily and observed at very close range especially at Isla Espanola on breeding cliffs. When standing, this species is noted for stopping every 30 seconds or so to look down at their bright, coral-colored feet. Many pictures of this beautiful gull taken by all.

**Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan*— 8, somewhat uncommon here, we observed several on Santa Cruz and Floreana in or near the marinas.

**Lava Gull** *Leucophaeus fuliginosus (E)*—6+, this gull eluded us until the last day on the islands when we located several on the small island of South Plazas off Santa Cruz. Said to be the rarest gull in the world, it has a beautiful, dark gray color and is related to the prolific Laughing Gull that also occurs in the Galapagos.

**Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus* -1, spotted at North Seymour just as we approached the marina to refuel the Origin.

**Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus*—60+, a beautiful black and dark gray tern, many seen over the course of the week in open water and nesting on vertical lava cliffs.

### **TROPICBIRDS: Phaethontidae (1)**

**Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus*—20+, seen on several occasions over the course of the trip, but most notably on and around Punta Suarez. The first sighting of bright white, beautiful and graceful tropic birds is always exciting, and a definite crowd pleaser!

### **PENGUINS: Spheniscidae (1)**

**Galapagos Penguin** *Spheniscus mendiculus (E)*— 6+, why yes, we do have penguins! We were so excited to see Galapagos Penguins along the rocky shores of Sombrero Chino. First on our kayak outing along the shore, where they answered our imitations of their calls and swam to us to investigate. Then again during our snorkeling session in the same area. The incredibly clear water allowed us to watch them hunt and feed on tiny schools of minnow-sized fish. Definitely a highlight of the trip.

### **SOUTHERN STORM-PETRELS: Oceanitidae (1)**

**Elliot's Storm-Petrel** *Oceanites gracilis*—100+, many seen daily feeding behind the Origin. Elliot's Storm Petrels dancing on the water behind our boat was a wonderful experience to watch. A lifer for many on the trip, Elliot's and Wedge-rumped petrels are always smaller than expected, even for those who have seen them many times.

**Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel** *Hydrobates tethys*—32, similar in size and behavior to Elliot's, there were fewer Wedgies in the area this time of year, as they have not yet arrived for the breeding season. With some familiarization, they can easily be picked out of flocks of petrels by the distinctive white wedge shape on the rump and tail. Usually seen from our pangas.

#### **PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS: Procellariidae (1)**

**Galapagos Shearwater** *Puffinus subalaris*—150+, kind of a trip bird for us. We saw them daily and in great numbers, including incredibly close when kayaking along the shoreline. Great looks and great photographs, most notably at Sombrero Chino where they were nesting in a cliff recently created by a rock fall.

#### **FRIGATEBIRDS: Fregatidae (2)**

**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens*— 160+, seen daily and by far the most numerous frigatebird of the trip. What a thrill to have them flying just feet away from us as they kited off the uplift from our ship. Also observed in large numbers on their nesting grounds with chicks, and a few males were still displaying their inflated red throat pouches.

**Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor*— 6+, another large and beautiful bird, easily mistaken for Magnificent, best distinguished by the green sheen on the male's feathers, and the white chest of the females. Observed on nesting sites on South Plazas.

#### **GANNETS AND BOOBIES: Sulidae (3)**

**Nazca Booby** *Sula granti*— 90+, this striking black and white Booby was observed in flight near most breeding bird locations. Chicks were seen at nesting sites ranging in age from recently hatched to nearly adult-sized.

**Blue-footed Booby** *Sula nebouxii*— 57+, always a group favorite, seen every day in flight, nesting and resting along shorelines. We often observed them diving for fish along our pangas or in the surf at our beach landings. We were lucky enough to catch several pairs displaying on nest sites. Probably our most photographed bird of the trip.

**Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula*— 6, not nearly as common over all in the Galapagos, we found them at their breeding locations on Bahia Gardner on Espanola.

#### **PELICANS: Pelecanidae (1)**

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis*—50+, ever present and observed daily in good numbers flying and resting along nearly every shoreline.

#### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (4)**

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*— 4, only four observations of our old friend the GBH on the islands. These were single birds working tide pools along rocky shores. The Galapagos variety is an endemic subspecies, *A. h. cognata*.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*— 62+, observed at several locations, especially at Primicias Tortoise Ranch. Large flocks were seen flying from inland areas to the mangrove swamps along the shoreline of Santa Cruz.

**Striated (Lava) Heron** *Butorides virescens sundevalli* (E) — 6, recently lumped back into Striated Heron (hopefully temporary), Lava Herons were seen at several locations working rocky shorelines and tide pools. They are especially accustomed to Porto Moreno, and can be seen all along the shoreline and harbor.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea*— 6, a special treat on this trip, we witnessed a beautiful sunning behavior, presumably for parasite maintenance, that no one in the group had seen before. A crab-eating specialist, we observed them feeding on the plentiful Sally Lightfoot crabs.

#### **HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (1)**

**Galapagos Hawk** *Buteo galapagoensis* (E)— 4, we had wonderful looks at the only hawk in the Galapagos in the morning at Punta Suarez on Espanola Island. They were observed resting on small shrubs growing in the lava flows near and on remnant concrete structures. Fearless of humans, we had one dive very close to us as it tried for a nearby lava lizard.

#### **Owls: Strigiformes (2)**

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* —2, - observed and photographed roosting in a concrete goat shed near Rancho Primicias. Now a known nesting spot for them, this pair is banded and a reliable treat as we emerged from hiking the nearby lava tubes.

**Galapagos Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus galapagoensis* –1, unexpected on the southern route we were sailing. This individual was in a crevasse on a small island just offshore of Bahia Gardner. No doubt it was watching the 100 or so Galapagos Shearwaters returning to their nesting cavities, hoping to glimpse a chick. Great photos and a highlight of the day.

#### **FALCONS: Falconidae (2)**

**Peregrine Falcon** *falco peregrines* -2, occasional visitors to the islands, we were lucky to see presumably two different birds. One on our first day at Kicker Rock, and again on South Plazas Island on our last full day. Our Galapagos guides were especially excited to see them as it had been a couple years since their last sighting.

#### **TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (1)**

**Galapagos Flycatcher** *Myiarchus magnirostris* (E)–6, this small tyrant flycatcher was seen, often quite close, hawking insects from low branches. We had especially good observations on Isla Santa Cruz.

#### **MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (3)**

**Galapagos Mockingbird** *Mimus parvulus* (E)--- 4, prolific and bold, this is the most widespread mockingbird in the Galapagos, but our journey on the southern route gave us fewer chances to see this species, as we encountered more island-specific endemics mockingbirds. We observed the Galapagos Mockingbird on Isla Santa Cruz.

**Espanola Mockingbird** *Mimus macdonaldi* (E) 6, endemic to Espanola Island, we observed several pairs, or I should say, these bold birds were observing us on our Punta Suarez excursion!

**San Cristobal Mockingbird** *Mimus melanotis* (E)—5, recently split from the Galapagos Mockingbird, we made it a point to observe this species immediately upon arriving at San Cristobal Island. We searched them out again on our last day as well.

#### **NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (1)**

**Yellow (Galapagos) Warbler** *Setophaga petechia aureola* (E) –19, this familiar warbler was seen at nearly every excursion on land. The colorful yellow warbler with its rusty forehead is a resident here and is distinct from the species that migrates to North America.

#### **TANAGERS AND ALLIES: Thraupidae (6)**

**Green Warbler-Finch** *Certhidea olivacea* (E) — 2, observed only on Santa Cruz Island, especially in the more forested areas near the Los Gemelos sinkholes. The smallest of the Darwin Finches, it was originally thought to be a true warbler due to its small size, thin bill and light-colored plumage.

**Gray Warbler-Finch** *Certhidea fusca* (E) — 3, observed only once on Isla Espanola at Punta Suarez slinking in the low coastal shrub forest.

**Woodpecker Finch** *Camaealhynchua pallidus* (E) – 3, loud and boisterous with behavior similar to crossbills, the “chunk, chunk” call was unmistakable, often announcing their presence. We observed them on cacti, but unfortunately did not see the tool-using behavior for which they are famous.

**Small Tree-Finch** *Camarhynchus parvulus* – 5, we located two by following their calls at the Los Gemelos sink hole forest, and three at the tortoise reserve.

**Small Ground-Finch** *Geospiza fuliginosa* (E)--40+, widespread in the Galapagos, this species was seen on nearly every land excursion. Small, dark and nearly tailless in flight, this little finch seems to fill the house sparrow niche in developed areas. Observed on San Cristobal, Espanola, Floreana and Santa Cruz.

**Common Cactus-Finch** *Geospiza scandens* (E) –6, best observed on Isla Sana Cruz and South Plazas where we watched them bury their faces into cactus flowers.

**Medium Ground-Finch** *Geospiza fortis* (E) –4, viewed on Santa Cruz and on San Cristobal. Their large, grosbeak-like bills help with identification. Males are jet black while females are the expected mottled brown, but with bright orange beaks.

**Espanola Ground-Finch** - *Geospiza conirostris* (E) –1, we had a quick look at one picking through very dry gravel flats on Espanola Island, of course!

## Mammals (2 species)

**Galapagos Sea Lion** *Zalophus wollebaeki*—Seen and heard every day, including swimming with us many times while snorkeling. This is considered an endemic Galapagos subspecies of the California Sea Lion.

**Bottle-nosed Dolphin**-*Tursiopus truncatus* – A large pod approached our pangas as we were headed out to snorkel near Sombrero Chino. We have some great underwater footage thanks to I Love.

## Reptiles (9 species)

**Santa Cruz Giant Tortoise** *Chelonoidis porteri*— 60+, observed on the drive to, and at, Rancho Primicias Reserve. Likely the most endangered species we observed on this trip.

**Green Sea Turtle** *Chelonia mydas*—30+, observed daily from ship, pangas and shore, and at close quarters while snorkeling.

**Marine Iguana** *Amblyrhynchus cristatus*— 300+, many of these large, prehistoric-looking iguanas were seen nearly every day on islands with rocky, basaltic shorelines. We often encountered them sunning themselves on trails and had to be very careful not to step on the smaller, more camouflaged individuals.

**Galapagos Land Iguana** *Conolophus subcristatus*— Observed on South Plazas, where a small population of around 300 are carefully managed. The Opuntia Cacti, their main food source, is also managed with several fenced-off nursery areas for younger cacti. We found many feeding on Opuntia, defending cacti or patiently waiting for an Opuntia Cactus paddle to fall.

**Galapagos Lava Lizard** *Microlophus albemarlensis*—4, this species was observed on Isla Santiago

**San Cristobal Lava Lizard** *Microlophus bivittatus*—20, the only lizard occurring on San Cristobal Island with slight variations in size and scale patterns from the other Lava Lizards.

**Floreana Lava Lizard** *Microlophus bivittatus* -8, observed in the dry, coastal brush habitats on Floreana Island.

## Marine species and allies observed while snorkeling and panga rides (23+ species)

Common Names Only and in no particular order:

Spotted Eagle Ray	Golden Cow-nosed Ray
White-tipped Reef Shark	Hammer-head Shark
Panamic Cushion	
Diamond Sting Ray	Mexican Hog Fish
Ocean White Fish	Leather Bass
Rainbow Wrasse	Convenient Sargent Fish
Panama Sargent Major	Bullseye Puffer
Galapagos Ring-tailed Damsel	Spot-fin Burr Fish
Stiped Mullet	Flagebrea Bass ?
Moorish Idol	Striped Salemas
Razor Surgeon Fish	Tiger Snake-eel
Mobular Ray	Chocolate Chip Sea Star

### Mainland Ecuador Antisana Pre-Extension

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I)=introduced

## BIRDS (39 species recorded, of which 0 were heard only):

### DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae (3)

**Yellow-billed Pintail** *Anas georgica*—23

**Andean Teal** *Anas andium*—6

**Andean Duck** *Oxyura ferruginea*—4

### PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (2)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (1)—25  
Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata*—3  
Black-winged Ground-Dove *Metriopelia melanoptera* — 2

**HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (7)**

Sparkling Violetear *Colibri coruscans*—2  
Ecuadorian Hillstar *Oreotrochilus chimborazo*—4  
Black-tailed Trainbearer *Lesbia victoriae*—3  
Tyrian Metaltail *Metallura tyrianthina*—6  
Shining Sunbeam *Aglaeactis cupripennis*—8  
Great Sapphirewing *Pterophanes cyanopterus*- 3  
Giant Hummingbird *Patagona gigas*—2

**RAILS, COOTS, AND ALLIES: Rallidae (1)**

Slate-colored Coot *Fulica ardesiaca*—60

**PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (1)**

Andean Lapwing *Vanellus resplendens*—3

**GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (1)**

Andean Gull *Chroicocephalus serranus*—32

**IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (1)**

Andean Ibis *Theristicus melanopis*—7

**NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (2)**

Andean Condor *Vulture gryphus*— 8

**HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (2)**

Variable Hawk *Geranoaetus polyosoma*— 3  
Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle *Geranoaetus melanoleucus*—2

**FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (1)**

Carunculated Caracara *Phalcoboenus carunculatus*—16  
American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* - 2

**ANTPITAS Grallariidae**

Tawny Antpitta *Grallaria quitensis* — 3

**OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS: Furnariidae (4)**

Chestnut Winged Cinclodes *Cinclodes albidiventris* - 6  
Stout-billed Cinclodes *Cinclodes excelsior*—4  
Many-striped Canastero *Asthenes flammulata* - 1

**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (2)**

Tufted Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes parulus* - 3  
Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola alpinus* — 2  
Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca fumicolor*—1

**SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (2)**

Brown-bellied Swallow *Orochelidon murina*—8

**WRENS: Troglodytidae (1)**

**Sedge/Grass Wren** *Cistothorus platensis*—2

**MOCKINGBIRDS: Mimidae**

**Tropical Mockingbird** *Mimus gilvus* - 3

**THRUSHES: Turdidae (1)**

**Great Thrush** *Turdus fuscaster*—8

**PIPITS AND WAGTAILS Motacillidae**

**Paramo Pipit** *Anthus bogotensis* - 3

**SPARROWS: Passerellidae (1)**

**Rufous-collared Sparrow** *Zonotrichia capensis*—18

**Yellow-breasted Brushfinch** *Atlapetes latinuchus* - 2

**CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (1)**

**Golden Grosbeak** *Pheucticus chrysogaster*—1

**TANAGERS AND ALLIES: Thraupidae (4)**

**Cinereous Conebill** *Conirostrum cinereum*—3

**Black Flowerpiercer** *Diglossa humeralis*—6

**Plumbeous Sierra-Finch** *Phrygilus plebejus*—8

**Plain-colored Seedeater** *Catamenia inornata*—4