

# Ecuador & The Galapagos Islands

Naturetrek Tour Report

1 - 19 January 2007

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Marine Iguana



Volcan Sierra Negra, Isabella



Painted Locusts



Hood Mockingbird

Images and report compiled by Andy Smith



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

**Day 1****Monday 1st January**

## Quito and Mindo

After a leisurely breakfast because of our late arrival the previous evening we departed for a day trip to the cloud forest at Septimo Paraiso near Mindo. The drive took us through some great highland scenery and at Septimo itself, despite the rain, we enjoyed fantastic views of a host of spectacular hummingbirds visiting the feeders, including Long-tailed Sylph, Booted Racket-tail and Empress Brilliant.

**Day 2****Tuesday 2nd January**

## Quito

In the morning we went on a guided tour of Quito old city and in the afternoon we visited the botanic gardens in Carolinas Park. A range of common birds during this relaxed day in the city included Eared Dove, Sparkling Violetear, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Black Flowerpiercer, Great Thrush and the ubiquitous Rufous-collared Sparrow.

**Day 3****Wednesday 3rd January**

## Quito - Baltra

An early morning flight from Quito got us to Baltra on the Galapagos by 10.00am local time. From here we transferred to the Cachalote, settled in and made an afternoon landing at Bachas Beach, on the north side of Santa Cruz where we had our first real taste of Galapagos wildlife. Highlights included close views of Blue-footed Boobies, Brown Pelicans and Magnificent Frigatebirds plus various waders, several Greater Flamingos, a gang of Marine Iguanas and masses of Sally Lightfoot Crabs.

**Day 4****Thursday 4th January**

## San Cristobal

In the morning we landed at pristine Cerro Brujo Beach with its Sea-lions, Ghost Crabs, Chatham Mockingbirds and Lava Gulls, and then cruised around the awesome Kicker Rock with its cloud of nesting Magnificent and Great Frigatebirds. In the afternoon we landed at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the historical capital of the Galapagos, and took a bus trip up through the transition zone to the highlands where we walked around the mist enshrouded El Junco crater lake.

**Day 5****Friday 5th January**

## Espanola

A full day on Espanola included a morning landing at beautiful Gardner Beach where we enjoyed close encounters with Sea-lions, Hood Mockingbirds and several courting Lava Lizards; a late morning snorkel around Gardner Island and an afternoon landing at Punta Suarez with its colourful Marine Iguanas, wonderful seabirds and spectacular seascapes. An unexpected bonus at Punta Suarez was the sight of a Hood Racer sprinting across a clearing with a mockingbird naughtily tweaking its tail!

**Day 6****Saturday 6th January**

## Floreana

A successful pre-breakfast panga ride around Champion-by-Floreana islet to see Charles Mockingbirds was followed by a morning landing at Punta Cormorant and an excellent snorkel back at Champion. In the afternoon we made a brief landing at historic Post Office Bay and then sailed around to Puerto Velasco Ibarra from where we took a lorry trip up to the humid highlands to explore the pirate caves and look (successfully as it turned out) for the endemic Medium Tree Finch.

**Day 7****Sunday 7th January**

## Isabella

After breakfast we set out for an all day excursion from Puerto Villamil to the top of Volcan Sierra Negra. A satisfying walk took us up into some truly spectacular volcanic scenery. The vast caldera was as impressive as ever and the lava flows from a little more than a year ago were an awesome reminder of the titanic processes still very much at play here. Notable wildlife today included lots of Painted Locusts, a good range of butterflies and superb views of Woodpecker Finch, Dark-billed Cuckoo and Galapagos Martin.

**Day 8****Monday 8th January**

## Western Isabella

A morning landing and walk around the lava flows and picturesque mangrove-lined lagoons at Punta Moreno gave us an interesting insight into the vegetative colonization of young lava flows plus good views of Greater Flamingos and Blue-winged Teals, a White-tipped Reef Shark serenely cruising through the crystal clear shallows and a wonderful little Galapagos Penguin scooting around at break-neck speed in pursuit of a shoal of tiny fish. In the afternoon we took a panga ride into the beautiful mangrove creeks of Elizabeth Bay and then around the seabird rich Mariella Islets.

**Day 9****Tuesday 9th January**

## Western Isabella

In the morning we visited Urbina Bay with its raised beach and Land Iguanas and enjoyed a lovely close encounter with a juvenile Galapagos Hawk. During the middle of the day we cruised north through the Canal Bolivar and out around the rugged and remote northern side of Fernandina; an afternoon of blue sea, blue sky, seabirds, turtles and then... finally, a huge pod of over 100 Common Dolphins feeding on fish at the surface and leaping and cavorting spectacularly – lovely! We finished the day at Black Turtle Beach on the shore of Isabella where we were unsuccessful in our search for the rare and elusive Mangrove Finch but nevertheless enjoyed the beauty and peace of the place itself and the fine sunset views of distant Fernandina.

**Day 10****Wednesday 10th January**

## Northern Isabella and Fernandina

In the morning we landed at Punta Espinosa at the north-east corner of Fernandina where we were treated to brilliant close encounters with masses of Marine Iguanas, courting Flightless Cormorants, the usual Sea-lions and a few entertaining Galapagos Penguins. In the afternoon we sailed north across Bank's Bay to the impressive cliffs of Volcan Ecuador, cleared Cape Berkeley, crossed the equator with due pomp and ceremony and then continued north and east towards Punta Albemarle, the northernmost point of Isabella. During the course of the afternoon we enjoyed something of a cetacean extravaganza with excellent views of masses of Common Dolphins, a pod of over 20 Short-finned Pilot Whales, a huge male Orca that passed right under the bow and, best of all, a mighty Sperm Whale loafing at the surface which allowed an unbelievably close approach – wow!

## Day 11

Thursday 11th January

### Genovesa

A full day on Genovesa involved a morning landing at Darwin's Beach, a late morning snorkel in a rain shower, an afternoon panga ride below the seabird cliffs and then a walk from Prince Phillip's Steps out to the Wedge-rumped Petrel colony. This is a lovely little island; remote, picturesque and packed full of approachable wildlife and our visit here was, as usual, a highlight for many. During the course of the day we enjoyed close encounters with various species of seabirds, Fur Seals, both Sharp-billed and Large Cactus Finches and, towards the end of the afternoon, two superb petrel-hunting Short-eared Owls.

## Day 12

Friday 12th January

### Santiago and Bartholomew

In the morning we explored the spectacular moonscape lava flows at Sullivan Bay on Santiago and then enjoyed a superb snorkel with penguins from the beach nearby. In the afternoon we climbed to the top of Bartholomew and admired the dramatic view out over Pinnacle Rock. At sunset, after we had weighed anchor and were making our way around the coast of Santiago we met a pod of Bottle-nosed Dolphins that joined us to bow-ride for a few minutes – a lovely way to finish the day!

## Day 13

Saturday 13th January

### Santiago and Rabida

In the morning we walked along the shore at James Bay, Santiago and found Galapagos Doves and Galapagos Flycatchers in the scrub, Lava Herons and a range of waders feeding around the rock pools and several Fur Seals snoozing in the grottoes. In the afternoon we landed on Rabida with its red sand beaches and courting Sea-lions and then in the evening we cruised south-east past Pinzon towards Santa Cruz and were again joined by a pod of bow-riding Bottle-nosed Dolphins.

## Day 14

Sunday 14th January

### Santa Cruz Island

A full and rather wet day in the highlands of Santa Cruz included visits to the collapsed pit craters and Scalesia forest at Los Gamelos and tortoise reserves at El Chato and Santa Rosa. During the course of the day we saw

dozens of Giant Tortoises, a wide range of interesting plants and various notable birds including Barn Owl, Large Tree and Vegetarian Finches, Paint-billed Crake and Galapagos Rail.

## Day 15

Monday 15th January

### Santa Cruz - Santa Fe Island

We spent the morning at the Darwin Research Centre and in Puerto Ayora town on Santa Cruz. In the afternoon we sailed across to Santa Fe and after a pleasant snorkel we landed at the picturesque Barrington Bay, where we were impressed by the large Opuntia trees and found one of the endemic Santa Fe Land Iguanas smiling benignly at us from the scrub.

## Day 16

Tuesday 16th January

### South Plaza

An early morning landing on South Plaza with its Sea lions, Iguanas, Cactus Finches, bizarre vegetation and spectacular seabird cliffs, was followed by a cruise along the coast of Santa Cruz and Baltra to North Seymour. Here we enjoyed a last snorkel before landing for a late afternoon walk through the Frigate and Blue-footed Booby colonies.

## Day 17

Wednesday 17th January

### Baltra – Quito

At dawn we took a panga ride around the mangrove-fringed Black Turtle Cove on the north coast of Santa Cruz where we enjoyed some very close encounters with courting Green Turtles. On the way back to the Cachalote we found ourselves amongst a feeding frenzy of Blue-footed Boobies and Brown Pelicans and were treated to some fantastic views of these birds as they plunged into the water around us at arm's reach – a perfect conclusion to our time on the Galapagos! A little later we transferred to the airport on Baltra. Our flight departed more or less on time and we arrived back in Quito at 3pm. and enjoyed an afternoon at leisure.

## Day 18

Thursday 18th January

### Antisano

Today we went on a full day trip to Antisano volcano, an hour or so south-east of Quito. Clear skies allowed us good views of the spectacular scenery and regular stops at different elevations introduced us to a range of interesting habitats and an exciting range of Andean birds and plants. Highlights amongst the birds included lots of Black-faced Ibis and Carunculated Caracaras, several exquisite Ecuadorian Hillstars and a superb adult male Andean Condor.

## Day 19

Friday 19th January

### Yanacocha, Quito and in flight

A three way split this morning saw some of the group heading off to the Amazon for a few days, some going to the equator museum on the outskirts of Quito and yet others going to the cloud forest reserve at Yanacocha for

a last blast of Ecuadorian natural history. Highlights at Yanacocha included Andean Guan, Powerful Woodpecker, Great Sapphirewing, White-browed Spinetail, Black-chested and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers and a superb Curve-billed Tinamou. The non-Amazonians re-convened at the hotel in the mid-afternoon and made their way to the airport to begin their journey home.

### Acknowledgments

Thanks to all our local guides and fixers throughout the trip and especially to Juan Miguel and the crew of the Cachalote. Thanks also to all the members of the group for their contribution to a thoroughly enjoyable trip.

## Species lists

### Mammals

**Galapagos Sea Lion** *Zalophus wollebacki* – Common and seen daily. One of the characteristic sights, sounds and smells (!) of the Galapagos. Over the two weeks we had all sorts of encounters with these engaging creatures, both in and out of the water!

**Galapagos Fur Seal** *Arctocephalus galapagoensis* – Much more localized than the previous species. We saw several below Volcan Ecuador, Isabella on the 10th, at Genovesa on the 11th and at James Bay, Santiago on the 13th. Most of those seen were dozing in shady recesses amongst the rocks but at Genovesa we saw some in the water and were able to appreciate their exceptional agility.

**Bottle-nosed Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus* – Pods of about fifteen animals seen in the Canal de San Salvador between Santiago and Santa Cruz on the evenings of the 12th and 13th. On both occasions they joined us to bow-ride.

**Common Dolphin** *Delphinus delphis* – Large feeding shoals of over 100 animals were seen in the Caleta Black area between Isabella and Fernandina on the 9th and 10th.

**Orca** *Orcinus orca* – One big male, unusually on its own, seen with Common Dolphins off north-west Isabella on the afternoon of the 10th.

**False Killer Whale** – At least two with Bottle-nosed Dolphins in the Canal de San Salvador on the evening of the 12th.

**Sperm Whale** *Physeter macrocephalus* – One superb great animal in Bank's Bay off north-west Isabella on the afternoon of the 10th.

**Short-finned Pilot Whale** *Globicephala macrorhyncha* – A pod of about 25 off the north-west coast of Isabella on the afternoon of the 10th allowed us a very close approach both in the Cachalote and in the pangas.

**Feral Cat** *Felix sylvestris* – One on Cerro Brujo beach, San Cristobal on the 4th.

### Reptiles

**Giant Tortoise** *Geochelone elephantopus* – About 30 of the Santa Cruz race were seen in the highlands of Santa Cruz on the 14th.

**Green Sea Turtle** *Chelonia mydas agassissi* – Common and seen almost daily, with a maximum of at least 20 on the west side of Isabella on the 8th and in Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz on the 17th. Most of us were lucky enough to snorkel with these amazing animals on various occasions and who will ever forget those fantastic close encounters during the last panga ride amongst the mangroves of Black Turtle Cove?

**Hood Racer** *Philodryas hoodensis* – One at Punta Suarez, Espanola on the 5th.

**San Cristobal Lava Lizard** *Microlophus bivittatus* – At least five on San Cristobal on the 4th.

**Espanola Lava Lizard** *Microlophus delanonis* – At least 20 on Espanola on the 5th.

**Floreana Lava Lizard** *Microlophus grayi* – At least five on Floreana on the 7th.

**West and Central Lava Lizard** *Microlophus albermarlensis* – Common and widespread within its range. Seen on eight dates at a variety of locations.

**Galapagos Land Iguana** *Conolophus subcristatus* – Two at Baltra airport on the 3rd and 17th; at least nine at Urbina Bay, Isabella on the 9th and several on both South Plaza and North Seymour on the 16th.

**Santa Fe land Iguana** *Conolophus pallidus* – One on Santa Fe on the 15th.

**Marine Iguana** *Amblyrhynchus cristatus* – Very common and widespread and seen daily, including members of all six races. A quintessential part of the Galapagos experience. Perhaps our best encounter with these extraordinary beasts was stepping over the loafing and courting hordes along the trails at Punta Espinosa on Fernandina on the 10th.

## Butterflies

Sulphur, Monarch, Galapagos Blue, Painted Lady and Large-tailed Skipper.

## Other notable invertebrates included:

Carpenter Bee, Galapagos Footman Moth, Painted Locust, Spotless Ladybird, Flightless Grasshopper, Ocean Skater, Scorpion sp., Sally Lightfoot Crab, Ghost Crab, Semi-terrestrial Hermit Crab, Fiddler Crab sp., Volcano Barnacle, Giant Chiton, Pencil-spined Urchin, White Urchin, Green Urchin, Hatpin Urchin, Blue Sea Star, Chocolate-chip Star and Christmas Tree Worm.

## Fish

The following list includes all the species identified by group members from land, boat and (especially) whilst snorkeling:

King Angelfish, Barberfish, Three-banded Butterflyfish, Yellow-tailed Surgeon Fish, Moorish Idol, Yellow-finned Tuna, Indo-Pacific Bonito, Sierra Mackerel, Barracuda, Dusky Chub, Cortez Chub, Yellow-tailed Mullet, Black-tailed Mullet, Halfbeak, Graybar Grunt, Galapagos Grunt, Yellow-tailed Grunt, Black-striped Salema, White Salema, Yellow Snapper, Barred Pargo, Giant Damselfish, Bumphead Damselfish, White-tailed Damselfish, Yellow-tailed Damselfish, Panamic Sergeant Major, Bacalao, Panamic Graysby, Flag Cabrilla, Creole Fish, Bumphead Parrotfish, Blue-chin Parrotfish, Bicolour Parrotfish, Rainbow Wrasse, Chameleon Wrasse, Spinster Wrasse, Streamer Hogfish, Black-tip Cardinalfish, Galapagos Barnacle Blenny, Large Banded Blenny, Bravo Clinid, Chameleon Clinid, Hieroglyphic Hawkfish, Bull's-eye Puffer, Guineafowl Puffer, Balloonfish, Yellow-bellied Triggerfish, Fine-scaled Triggerfish, Pacific Beakfish, Trumpetfish, Flying Fish, Garden Eel, Galapagos Shark, White-tipped Reef Shark, Black-tipped Reef Shark, Diamond Stingray, Golden Cowray, Eagle Ray, Manta Ray.

## Birds

**Galapagos Penguin** *Spheniscus mendiculus* – Seen on six days with a maximum of about 20 on the west side of Isabella on the 8th. Pretty much restricted to the cooler waters in the west of the archipelago but we did see one off Floreana on the 6th and several around Santiago and Bartholomew on the 12th where some of us were even lucky enough to snorkel with them. A very engaging little bird and wonderfully graceful in the water!

**Waved Albatross** *Phoebastria exulans* – About 8 were still present at the colony on Espanola on the 5th and we enjoyed some excellent views of them both on the ground and in the air.

**Galapagos (Dark-rumped) Petrel** *Pterodroma phaeopygia* – Small numbers seen at sea on several dates with a maximum of about 25 on the 10th as we sailed around the north side of Isabella. Fast and graceful fliers.

**Galapagos (Audubon's) Shearwater** *Puffinus herminieri* – Very common and seen almost daily. Lots of close encounters, with perhaps the best of all being those hurtling around the cliffs of South Plaza on the 16th.

**Elliot's Storm Petrel** *Oceanites gracilis* – Common and seen daily, often at very close quarters around the Cachalote. Employs the classic petrel walking on water technique as it forages.

**Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma tethys* – Small numbers of this distinctive and elegant storm petrel were seen almost daily and at Genovesa we were treated to the wonderful spectacle of hundreds wheeling around over their nesting colony.

**Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma castro* – A moribund individual was found aboard the Cachalote as we approached James Bay, Santiago on the morning of the 13th. Perhaps disorientated by overnight rain, the bird recovered in a dark corner of the bridge and departed voluntarily the following night.

**Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* – Seen on five dates with the largest numbers around the nesting colonies at Espanola on the 5th and Genovesa on the 11th where some of the birds were indulging in their dramatic and beautiful aerial courtship displays.

**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens* – Common and ubiquitous. We were rarely out of sight of these impressive birds throughout our stay on the islands. The biggest concentrations we encountered were at the nesting colonies at Kicker Rock on the 4th and Genovesa on the 11th.

- Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* – Much less widespread than the former species, though numerous at their colonies at Kicker Rock, Genovesa and North Seymour. Here we saw them engaged in various stages of their nesting cycle.
- Blue-footed Booby** *Sula nebouxii* – Very common and seen almost daily. Another ubiquitous feature of the Galapagos. The sight of Squadrons of these birds diving so spectacularly into the clear blue sea is one of the abiding memories of the trip.
- Nazca Booby** *Sula granti* – Fairly common. Seen on 11 days with the largest concentrations at Espanola on the 5th and Genovesa on the 11th. A very handsome bird.
- Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula* – Seen only at Genovesa on the 15th where numerous. The majority of the birds were of the brown phase but we did see a number of white phase individuals too. The birds were at various stages of their nesting cycle and many of the nests contained downy chicks.
- Flightless Cormorant** *Nannopterum harrisi* – Only seen on the 8th, 9th and 10th on the west side of Isabella and on Fernandina. Like the penguin this species is restricted to the cooler western waters. At Punta Espinosa on Fernandina we saw several pairs involved in courtship and nesting.
- Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis* – Common, seen daily. Another ubiquitee. One of the most memorable sightings was of the birds involved in the feeding frenzy off Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz on our last morning.
- White-cheeked Pintail** *Anas bahamensis* – Small numbers seen on five dates at various of the lagoon sites that we visited.
- Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* – Ten at Punta Moreno on Isabella on the 8th.
- Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber* – Seen on four dates at various coastal lagoon sites with a maximum of 65, including some chicks, at Punta Cormorant, Floreana on the 7th.
- Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias* – One or two birds seen at a variety of sites on five dates.
- Cattle Egret** *Bulbulcus ibis* – Seen in the settled, farmed areas of San Cristobal, Floreana, Isabella and Santa Cruz, with a maximum of 50 in the Villamil area, southern Isabella on the 7th.
- Striated Heron** *Butoroides striatus* – Singles at Cerro Brujo, San Cristobal on the 4th; Punta Moreno, Isabella on the 8th; Punta Espinosa, Fernandina on the 10th and at Puerto Ayora on the 15th.
- Lava Heron** *Butoroides sundevalli* – Widespread and fairly common with small numbers seen at a variety of sites on 12 days and a maximum of four at James Bay, Santiago on the 13th.
- Yellow-crowned Night Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea* – One at Punta Suarez, Espanola on the 5th, One at Punta Cormorant, Floreana on the 6th; two on Genovesa on the 11th and 2 at Puerto Ayora on the 15th.
- Galapagos Hawk** *Buteo galapagoensis* – Seen on five dates at a variety of sites on Espanola, Isabella, Santiago and Bartholomew, with a maximum of four on Espanola on the 5th. Fantastic views of one immature at Urbina Bay, Isabella on the 9th which came in close to investigate us, and an interesting observation of two at Sullivan Bay, Santiago on the 12th that were catching and eating Painted Locusts in the air.
- Galapagos Rail** *Laterallus galapagoensis* – Three separate individuals seen briefly during our wet day in the Santa Cruz highlands on the 14th.
- Paint-billed Crake** *Neocrex erythrops* – Two separate individuals seen briefly in the highlands of Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Common Gallinule** *Gallinula chloropus* – Small numbers seen on four dates on San Cristobal, Isabella and Santa Cruz with a maximum of six in the highlands of San Cristobal on the 4th.
- American Purple Gallinule** *Porphyryla martinica* – Two adults in a swampy area of the El Chato reserve in the highland of Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* – Small numbers seen at a variety of locations on 12 days with a maximum of four at Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz on the 17th.
- Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia* – Singles on Floreana on the 6th, Isabella on the 7th and Genovesa on the 11th.
- Wandering Tattler** *Heteroscelus incanum* – Widespread along rocky shores with small numbers seen on 10 dates. The largest count was of 12 at James Bay, Santiago on the 13th.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* – Small numbers seen at a variety of locations on ten dates with a maxima of six at James Bay, Santiago on the 13th.

- Sanderling** *Calidris alba* – Singles at Bachas Beach, Santa Cruz on the 3rd, Punta Cormorant, Floreana on the 6th and at North Seymour on the 16th.
- Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla* – two at Bachas Beach, Santa Cruz on the 3rd and two more at Villamil, Isabella on the 7th.
- Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* – Hundreds seen at sea off the north-west of Isabella on the 9th and 10th and in the Canal de Santa Cruz on the 16th.
- Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* – As with the previous species, hundreds seen at sea off the north-west of Isabella on the 9th and 10th and in the Canal de Santa Cruz on the 16th.
- American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus* – Small numbers seen at a range of coastal sites on nine days with a maximum of five on Espanola on the 5th.
- Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus* – Three at Bachas Beach, Santa Cruz on the 3rd; two at Cerro Brujo, San Cristobal on the 4th; three at Punta Cormorant, Floreana on the 6th and two at Villamil, Isabella on the 9th.
- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* – Singles at Villamil, Isabella on the 7th and Punta Espinosa, Fernandina on the 10th.
- Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* – Small numbers seen on five dates at a range of coastal sites.
- Lava Gull** *Larus fuliginosus* – Widespread but nowhere numerous. We saw this attractive endemic gull in one's and two's at a wide range of sites on nine dates. The highest single count was of four in Puerto Ayora harbour on the 14th.
- Laughing Gull** *Larus atricilla* – Small numbers at a variety of sites on eleven dates with a maximum of ten around San Cristobal on the 4th.
- Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan* – Small numbers at six sites on four dates with a maximum of six at floods in the San Cristobal highlands on the 4th.
- Swallow-tailed Gull** *Larus furcatus* – Common and widespread. A particularly beautiful gull that we saw well on many occasions. Counts of 100+ were reached at the nesting colonies at Punta Suarez, Espanola on the 5th, at Genovesa on the 11th and at South Plaza on the 16th. On a couple of occasions at night small parties accompanied the Cachalote. They created a magical effect as they drifted in and out of view like ghosts and kept up a chorus of subdued rattling contact calls.
- Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus* – One at South Plaza on the 16th.
- Common Noddy** *Anous stolidus* – Very common and seen almost daily. A lovely little bird!
- Galapagos Dove** *Zenaida galapagoensis* – Fairly common and widespread. We saw this pretty and engaging little dove on eight dates at a range of sites. The highest day count was of 12 on Genovesa on the 11th.
- Dark-billed Cuckoo** *Coccyzus melacoryphus* – Three singles at Volcan Sierra Negra, Isabella on the 7th and one at Urbina Bay on the 9th.
- Smooth-billed Ani** *Crotophaga ani* – Seen at a variety of sites on six dates with a maximum of 25 on Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* – Excellent views of two hunting Wedge-rumped Petrels on Genovesa on the 11th
- Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* – Fantastic close up encounters of two birds roosting in outbuildings at our lunchtime restaurant near Santa Rosa in the highlands of Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus* – Three on Volcan Sierra Negra, Isabella on the 7th; one at Urbina Bay on the 9th and one on Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Galapagos Flycatcher** *Myiarchus magnirostris* – Small numbers of this attractive and confiding little flycatcher were seen at a range of sites on five dates.
- Galapagos Mockingbird** *Nesomimus parvulus* – Common and widespread on the northern and western islands. Seen on nine dates with a maximum of 20 at Urbina Bay, Isabella on the 9th.
- Charles Mockingbird** *Nesomimus trifasciatus* – Two pairs of this very rare and restricted species were seen from the pangas as they hopped about in the Opuntia cactuses on Champion-by-Floreana islet early on the morning of the 8th.

- Hood Mockingbird** *Nesomimus macdonaldi* – At least 40 of this engagingly precocious species were seen on Espanola on the 6th.
- Chatham Mockingbird** *Nesomimus melanotis* – A total of nine of this rare and declining species were seen on San Cristobal on the 5th.
- Galapagos Martin** *Progne modesta* – Close views of a flock of ten hawking along the rim of Volcan Sierra Negra, Isabella on the 7th and four over nearby Punta Moreno the following morning.
- Large Ground Finch** *Geospiza magnirostris* – Uncommon, small numbers seen at various sites on five dates on Isabella, Genovesa, Santiago and Santa Cruz, with a maximum of three at James Bay, Santiago on the 13th.
- Medium Ground Finch** *Geospiza fortis* – Common and widespread. Seen on nine dates at a wide range of localities with a maximum of 50+ at Urbina Bay, Isabella on the 9th.
- Small Ground Finch** *Geospiza fuliginosa* – Very common and seen almost daily with a maximum of 50+ at Urbina Bay, Isabella on the 9th.
- Sharp-beaked ground Finch** *Geospiza difficilis* – Replaces Small Ground Finch on Genovesa where we saw five on the 11th.
- Common Cactus Finch** *Geospiza scandens* – Three at the Darwin Research Centre and one on Santa Fe on the 15th; two on South Plaza on the 16th and one on Baltra on the 17th. Always closely associated with *Opuntia* cactuses
- Large Cactus Finch** *Geospiza conirostris* – Three on Genovesa on the 11th.
- Vegetarian Finch** *Platyspiza crassirostris* – One in the transition zone on San Cristobal on the 4th and two in the gardens of our lunchtime restaurant near Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Large Tree Finch** *Camarhynchus psittacula* – A male at El Chato in the highlands of Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Medium Tree Finch** *Camarhynchus pauper* – At least five were seen in the Floreana highlands on the 6th. At one point we were able to directly compare Small and Medium Tree Finches as they foraged side by side in a flowering tree – very nice!
- Small Tree Finch** *Camarhynchus parvulus* – Seen on six dates at a variety of locations on San Cristobal, Floreana, Isabella and Santa Cruz, with a maximum of 20 on Santa Cruz on the 14th.
- Woodpecker Finch** *Cactospiza pallida* – Two seen and at least three more heard on Volcan Sierra Negra, Isabella on the 7th.
- Warbler Finch** *Certhidia olivacea* – A charming little bird. Small numbers seen at a variety of locations on four dates on San Cristobal, Espanola, Isabella and Genovesa.
- Yellow Warbler** *Dedroica petechia* – Common and ubiquitous. Seen daily. Another charming little bird and something of a Galapagos emblem.

## Birds on mainland Ecuador

M = Mindo, Q = Quito, A = Antisano, Y = Yanacocha and GU = Guayaquil Airport (en-route to the Galapagos).

Curve-billed Tinamou Y	Black-tailed Trainbearer Q/A
Black-faced Ibis A	Buff-winged Starfrontlet Y
Great Egret Gu	Sapphire-vented Puffleg Y
Cattle Egret Gu	Tyrian Metaltail A/Y
Andean Teal A	Green-crowned Woodnymph M
Andean Ruddy Duck A	Powerful Woodpecker Y
Andean Condor A	Azara's Spinetail A
Black Vulture Q	Grey-breasted Martin Gu
Cinereous Harrier A	Tropical Kingbird Gu
Black-chested Buzzard Eagle A	White-crested Elaenia Q

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Plain-breasted Hawk A	White-browed Spinetail Y
Carunculated Caracara A	Stout-billed Cinclodes A
American Kestrel Q/A/Y	Bar-winged Cinclodes A
Andean Coot A	Tawny Antpitta (heard only) A/Y
Andean Lapwing A	Unicoloured Tapaculo (heard only) Y
Greater Yellowlegs A	Tufted Tit Tyrant A/Y
Lesser Yellowlegs A	Paramo Ground Tyrant A
Andean Gull A	Vermilion Flycatcher Q
Eared Dove Q/A/Y	Brown-backed Chat Tyrant A/Y
Black-winged Ground Dove A	Barred Fruit-eater Y
White-collared Swift A	Brown-bellied Swallow Q/Y
White-throated Hermit M	Blue-and-white Swallow Q/A
White-necked Jacobin M	Paramo Pipit A
Sparkling Violetear Q/A	Great Thrush Q/A/Y
Andean Emerald M	Spectacled Whitestart A/Y
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird M	Cinereous Conebill Q/A/Y
Purple-bibbed Whitetip M	Masked Flowerpiercer Y
Fawn-breasted Brilliant M	Glossy Flowerpiercer Y
Empress Brilliant M	Black Flowerpiercer Q/A
Green-crowned Brilliant M	Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager Y
Brown Inca M	Black-chinned Mountain Tanager Y
Booted Raquet-tail M	Southern Yellow Grosbeak Q/A/Y
Violet-tailed Sylph M	Hooded Siskin Q/A/Y
Purple-throated Woodstar M	Plain-coloured Seed-eater A
Ecuadorian Hillstar A	Plumbeous Sierra Finch A
Giant Hummingbird A	Rufous-naped Brushfinch A/Y
Great Sapphirewing Y	Rufous-collared Sparrow Q/A/Y
Sword-billed Hummingbird A	Great-tailed Grackle Gu