

## **Route B – San José**

### **Day 1 – Tuesday**

#### **AM: Arrival at Baltra Airport**

Upon arrival at Baltra Airport, you will first pass through an airport inspection point where your TCT (Transit Control Card) will be checked and stamped (please keep this carefully with your passport as you will need to show it again when you leave Galapagos). Here you will also pay the Galapagos National Park entrance fee of USD 100 (unless it has been prepaid). To ensure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands, your luggage will be inspected as well. At the arrival hall a naturalist guide will meet you and escort you on a short bus ride to the harbor at Baltra. By dinghy you will be taken to the yacht.

#### **PM: Mosquera**

Mosquera Islet is located between Baltra and North Seymour. This is a small islet formed by a geological uplift, with a reef of rocks and coral and a great white sand beach, where a population of sea lions can be found. You can also observe several species of shorebirds. Along the rocks are commonly running Red Lava crabs or Sally light-foot crabs.

### **Day 2 – Wednesday**

#### **AM: Darwin Bay (Genovesa)**

This bay has origin when the crater of this island collapsed below sea level. The wet landing is on a beautiful white coral sandy beach. This is a favorite island for birdwatchers: red footed-boobies, masked boobies, wandering tattlers, lava gulls, whimbrels Yellow-crowned, black-crowned and lava herons, and yellow warblers can be seen in the area.

Continuing on the trail, visitors climb gradually to the edge of the cliff seeing Red-Foots nesting in the Mangrove trees below. Bird watching includes sightings of Sharp-Beaked Finches, Large Cactus and Ground Finches, Galapagos Doves and Swallow-Tailed Gulls. Reaching the end the trail at the cliff's edge offers an incredible view of the island and the many birds living there.

#### **PM: Prince Phillip Steps (Genovesa)**

El Barranco is located at the southern part of Darwin Bay and it is also known as Prince Philip's Steps. Passengers will climb to a plateau that is part of the stretch of land that surrounds Darwin Bay on its eastern side. There is a big population of Masked boobies and Red-Footed boobies in the trees; Storm petrels and Short-eared Owls have found the ideal place for nesting in the lava flows.

## **DAY 3 – Thursday**

### **AM: Plazas**

South Plazas is located at the east of Santa Cruz Island, and forms part of two islands known as Islas Plazas. Despite its small size, some of the most interesting and outstanding species of the Galapagos are found here. The Plazas land iguanas are smaller than its relatives found on other islands. Throughout the island there are several hybrid iguanas, a result of crossing a male marine iguana and a female land iguana, they are unique, recognizable at first glance by their black/gray color, with a land iguana's crest, but face and tail of the marine iguana. The big population of iguanas is due to the presence of tunas, their favorite food. Swallow Tailed Gulls nesting in the rugged cliffs are seen along with other sea birds as: Audubon shearwaters, red-billed tropicbirds, frigate birds and brown pelicans.

### **PM: Santa Fe**

Located in the southeastern part of the Galapagos, this island was formed from an uplift, which explains why it is mostly flat. There are some theories which assure this could be the oldest island in the Archipelago. Santa Fe is the home of a number of endemic species like the Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos snake, Galapagos mockingbird, rice rats and one of the two species of lands Iguanas of the islands. After disembarkation in the beautiful and clear waters you will be in contact with one of the many sea lion colonies. Along the trail many salt bushes can be seen as well as giant prickly pear cactus. There are great possibilities of snorkeling with playful sea lions and tropical fishes.

## **Day 4 – Friday**

### **AM: Interpretation Centre (San Cristobal)**

The Galapagos National Park Visitor Center lies close to the port town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. The center explains a series of natural circumstances such as the volcanic origins of the islands, their remoteness from the continent, its ocean currents, its special climate, the arrival of different species, and their establishment, among others.

### **PM: Leon Dormido & Cerro Brujo**

Cerro Brujo (Wizard Hill) is a beautiful beach made of white coral and volcanic ash. It is located along the north coast of San Cristobal, the island where Charles Darwin first arrived in September 1835. Cerro Brujo is an eroded tuff cone and several parts are composed of the AA lava type. In this fascinating landscape you can observe sea lions, as well as different sea birds, finches and warblers. The sheltered bay is popular for young sea turtles and rays. The salt water pools behind the sand dunes were used as a salt mine in the past. After visiting Cerro Brujo you will continue by yacht to Leon Dormido (Kicker Rock). This huge 'cathedral' of rock is an old lava cone, now split in two. On the rocks many blue footed boobies, Nazca boobies and frigate birds are to be found. The snorkeling is great here, with good opportunities for seeing sea turtles, spotted eagle rays, tropical fish and the Galapagos shark.

## **Day 5 – Saturday**

### **AM: Gardner Bay (Española)**

Located on the north-eastern coast of Hood, Gardner Bay provides an excellent beach for relaxing, swimming and snorkeling, and the opportunity to observe sea lions. Here you may also observe sharks in the crystal clear ocean waters.

### **PM: Punta Suarez (Española)**

This rocky land spot sustains one of the most impressive and varied colonies of sea birds in the Galapagos. Along its southern shore, high cliffs rise up from the sea affording the visitor spectacular views of soaring birds and of the blow hole where water spouts up to 50-75 feet into the air according to the intensity of the surf.

## **DAY 6 – Sunday**

### **AM: Post Office Bay (Floreana)**

Historically, Post Office Bay is the location of a wooden barrel that was placed in the 18th century by the crew of a whaling ship. Since this time it has been used by mariners and tourists as a post office. The idea is to carry letters or postcards to their destination by hand. Apart from being the Post Office Barrel, this site was the landing area for some of the first colonists. We will continue to the north of the island and ascend to an elevated slope to enjoy a beautiful view from the Baroness Lookout. It is said that Baroness Eloisa von Wagner loved this place and spent several hours watching the horizon. Within walking distance (30 m) are the ruins of what is known as her House. From this lookout, the landscape covers the coastline from the Enderby islet to Post Office Bay, as well as Cerro Pajas, the pool of flamingos and wide forest of Palo Santo.

### **PM: Punta Cormorant, Champion Islet (Floreana)**

This site offers probably the best Flamingo lagoon in the Galapagos; it is also one of the largest in the islands. It's situated between two tuff lava cones that give the area a special atmosphere. There are various species of shorebirds to observe besides flamingos; the most frequent are common stilts, white-checked pintail ducks and other migratory birds. It is very interesting to see the two distinct beaches: "The Green Beach" (due to its high percentage of olivine crystals in the sand) and the "Flour Sand Beach" which is made up of coral. After our visit of Cormorant Point we will continue with our yacht to the nearby islet known as Corona del Diablo (Devil's Crown), where we can enjoy some great snorkeling.

## **Day 7 – Monday**

### **AM: Sullivan Bay (Santiago)**

Santiago, also called James, or San Salvador Island, is located in the west central part of the Galapagos archipelago. It is the fourth largest island in the archipelago (following Isabela, Fernandina and Santa Cruz). Along with some of the large western volcanoes of Isabela and Fernandina, Santiago is also volcanically active, with many young flows and cones to be seen, particularly along the south, west, and east coasts. These may even be seen from the summit of Darwin Volcano and from space. A number of historic eruptions have been reported over the last 2 centuries. Santiago actually consists of two coalesced volcanoes: a

typical shield volcano on the northwest end and a low, linear fissure volcano at the southeast end.

**PM: Bartolome**

Bartolome Island is situated across Sullivan Bay. It has an altitude of 114 meters, from where we can observe one of the most beautiful sceneries of the Galapagos Islands such as: Volcanic cones, lunar-like craters, lava fields, and the famous Toba formed pinnacle eroded by the sea. There is very little vegetation on this island.

It has two breathtaking beaches where marine turtles exist and at the base of the pinnacle, as well as a very small colony of Galapagos penguins.

**Day 8 – Tuesday**

**AM: Black Turtle Cove (Santa Cruz)**

This little cove is located at the northern side of Santa Cruz Island, this is a red mangrove lagoon very calm and quiet which makes it an ideal place as nursery for many sharks and rays. Its crystal waters permits to observe large groups of white-tip reef, black tipped reef and hammer heads sharks, schools of golden rays and spotted eagle rays. There are no landing sites so the visit is done by zodiac. Sea turtles are frequently seen and sometimes they are seen mating in the mangrove-lined waters. Pelicans and Herons are also seen in this area. Transfer to Baltra airport for your flight back to Guayaquil or Quito.