



The Galapagos Islands May 11-23, 2022

The Galapagos Islands are a fantastic destination for birding as well as general incredible wildlife viewing. It has an incomparable wealth of fauna and flora. The islands are home to many endemic bird species, such as Galapagos Penguin, Flightless Cormorant, Lava Gull, Galapagos Dove and Galapagos Hawk. LifeBird Tours embarked on this excellent general wildlife and birding tour of the archipelago. We had 8 days aboard a comfortable 16 passenger yacht exploring the islands. We explored the beautiful islands with activities including birding via hiking and boat rides of the islands, as well as snorkeling with sea lions and penguins.

Day1- We flew into Quito, Ecuador where we were met by our wonderful hostess, Mercedes Rivadeneira who was instrumental in helping to orchestrate the details of getting us to the Galapagos. We stayed at her lovely lodge, The Puembo Birding Gardens. We had arrived a day early so we had an opportunity to do some pretour birding. Mercedes arranged for us to spend the day at Balcon Tumpiki where they had gorgeous Plate-billed Mountain-toucans coming in close to feed on bananas! Also Toucan Barbets, Crimson-rumped Touncanets, and an amazing assortment of tanagers and hummingbirds were coming to the active feeders. It was a great way to start the tour with a splendid day of birding!



Day 2- We were up early to catch our domestic flights to the Galapagos. We flew into the island of San Cristobal. We were greeted by our friendly naturalist guide and taken to a local hotel to stay for 2 nights. That afternoon we birded the Cerro Tijeretas trails of San Cristobal and began finding endemics: Galapagos Flycatcher, Medium and Small Ground-Finches, Great Frigatebirds. Also we saw lots of Yellow Warblers and Smooth-billed Ani's and the beaches were literally covered with Galapagos Sea Lions!



Day 3- We took a day boat trip to the magical island of Espanola. Here we walked among colonies of nesting Waved Albatross, Blue-footed and Nazca Boobies, and Swallow-tail Gulls! Waved Albatross are critically endangered seabirds and only nest on this one island. These beautiful birds as well as all the Galapagos wildlife have no fear of humans and although we respected them and gave them space it was difficult at times when they are lying across the trails. There was a 3 kilometer trail that wound through the colonies of birds, sea lions and marine iguanas. It ended at a





rocky blowhole known as
“El Soplador” (the blower)
that sprays water around
75 feet (25m) into the air.



After exploring Espanola we took our first snorkel on a beautiful reef accompanied by Sea Turtles and curious Sea Lions.



Day 4- We left San Cristobal and took a water taxi to the next island, Santa Cruz. Thankfully while walking to the dock we found a San Cristobal Mockingbird which are endemic only to San Cristobal so we were very happy to get looks at it before departing the island!

We drove across Santa Cruz through the island highlands and birded along the way picking up Woodpecker Finch, Large and Small Tree-Finch and Green Warbler-Finch.



After crossing the island of Santa Cruz by van we were happy to board the yacht, Angelito! This would be our home for the next 8 days/7 nights and it was an awesome yacht with an excellent friendly crew! The food was plentiful and delicious!



Our first stop on Angelito was to the island of Baltra for an afternoon of exploring a beautiful beach with a trail leading to a hidden flamingo lagoon. This was followed by a snorkel on a nice reef off the beach.



Day 5- We took a dingy ride (aka Panga ride) and explored the birds nesting in the rocks of Playa Seymour, such as Brown Noddies and Blue-footed Boobies. Also had Red-billed Tropicbirds, Elliott's Storm-Petrels and many Galapagos Shearwaters flying about.



The afternoon was spent hiking up Dragon Hill where we saw our first of many Land Iguanas.





Day 6- Overnight the crew had navigated us around the island of Isabella to its western side while we were sleeping. We awoke to new beaches and birds. We saw our first Flightless Cormorants nesting along the rocky coastline. These birds have adapted so well to swimming that they have lost the need to fly and therefore their wings have become stunted.



Also due to the cold Humboldt current dominating the western islands we were seeing many more Galapagos Penguins.



The afternoon was spent exploring the island of Fernandina where we saw our first Galapagos Hawk and lots of Marine Iguanas.



Day 7-9 More exploration of Isabella which is the largest of the Galapagos Islands. We saw Giant Tortoises that would walk right up

to us making for great photos!

Day 10 - We visited the beautiful island, Floreana. This island has many birds including White-cheeked Pintail, American Flamingo, Lava and Swallow-tail Gulls, Striated Heron and always there are finches! We were happy to find a Medium Tree-Finch which is endemic to the Floreana island only.



In the afternoon we had an amazing time snorkeling on the "Devil's Crown" reef.





For our last night the wonderful crew prepared us a fantastic festive farewell dinner.



Day 11- This was our final day in the Galapagos and it was hard to leave this unspoiled paradise. At the airport before our departure we had a couple lifer Galapagos Doves running around.



Notable Galapagos Birds: Waved Albatross, Blue-footed Booby, Nazca Booby, Red-footed Booby, Flightless Cormorant, Red-Billed Tropicbird, Elliot's Storm-Petrel, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, Galapagos Petrel, Brown Noddy, Striated Heron, American Flamingo, Galapagos Penguin, Magnificent Frigatebird, Great Frigatebird, Swallow-tailed Gull, Lava Gull, Smooth-billed Ani, Espanola Ground-Finch, Small Ground-Finch, Medium Ground-Finch, Large Ground-Finch, Small Tree-Finch, Medium Tree-Finch, Large Tree-Finch, Woodpecker Finch, Green Warbler-Finch, Gray Warbler-Finch, Vegetarian Finch, Common Cactus-Finch, Yellow Warbler, Galapagos Dove, Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos Flycatcher, Galapagos Martin, Espanola Mockingbird, San Cristobal Mockingbird, Galapagos Mockingbird.

