



Photo by Alton Biggs



GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

with Texas Association of Biology Teachers
July 24-August 3, 2015



Fascinating wildlife, stunning landscapes, and compelling geological formations are just a few of the things that make the Galápagos Islands unlike any other place on Earth. Join the Texas Association of Biology Teachers on an unforgettable expedition aboard the M/Y Yolita II into the captivating world of sea lions, blue-footed boobies, and marine iguanas. As you explore the archipelago that inspired Darwin's theory of evolution, learn about the islands' endemic species, conservation initiatives, and diverse geography.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Come face-to-face with the iconic wildlife of the Galápagos, including blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas, Darwin's finches, and the Galápagos penguin.
- Discover fascinating geological history while trekking volcanoes and lava fields.
- See rare and endangered tortoises at the Tortoise Breeding Center on Isabela Island.
- Hike to the summit on Bartolomé Island for spectacular views of Pinnacle Rock, the most photographed place in the Galápagos Islands.
- Snorkel with sea lions and other marine life.
- Watch sea lion colonies playing on the dark red beaches of Rábida Island.
- Explore the rich biodiversity of Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve on mainland Ecuador.

ITINERARY

JULY 24 - QUITO

Upon arrival in Quito you will be met and escorted to your hotel.
Overnight at Rincón de Puenbo.

JULY 25 - QUITO

After breakfast transfer to Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve for lunch and an orientation. Afterward, explore the trails and the rich biodiversity of the cloud forest. Transfer back to Quito later this afternoon. *Overnight at Rincón de Puenbo. (BLD)*

JULY 26 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning you will be escorted to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos Islands. Please note that there is a weight limit of 44 pounds on the internal flights and bags should be packed accordingly. Upon arrival you will be met by your naturalist guide and transferred to the M/Y Yolita II. Your adventure begins with a visit to the beautiful Bachas Beach on Santa Cruz Island. *Overnight aboard M/Y Yolita. (BLD)*

JULY 27 - GALÁPAGOS

Today disembark on Genovesa. The island's volcanic sea cliffs and salt bush offer a prime habitat for the birds of the Galápagos, making it an excellent birdwatching location. Visit Darwin Bay, the caldera of an extinct volcano that has been partially eroded and offers excellent conditions for swimming and snorkeling. After lunch, continue to the youngest geological area of the island, El Barranco, located in the southern part of Darwin Bay. The cliffs in the south are composed of very fragile lava, and the natural erosion of the lava flows produces the ideal habitat for nesting storm petrels. You can see two species of petrels nesting in cavities and holes in the lava, the night-feeding Madeiran storm-petrel and the diurnal Galápagos petrel. Red-footed boobies only nest in the outer islands of the archipelago: Punta Pitt, Gardner (Florena), Wolf, Darwin, and Genovesa. Nazca boobies are also found on Genovesa. During panga rides along the cliffs, fur seals can be seen along with several species of seabirds. *Overnight aboard M/Y Yolita. (BLD)*

JULY 28 - GALÁPAGOS

Bartolomé Island is home to Pinnacle Rock, the "Guardian of the Isles," which rises sharply from the coast. The lunar-like landscape is home to one of the islands' most endearing residents: the Galápagos penguin. Hike to the island's summit to enjoy a great view of your surroundings, including Pinnacle Rock's eroded tuff cone. On the way to the summit, watch for colonies of marine iguanas, lava lizards, tiquilia and various cacti. You will have an opportunity to snorkel and spot Galápagos penguins, sea turtles, and whitetip reef sharks (from a safe distance) as well. After lunch, visit Sullivan Bay to observe fascinating geological features. A hike to a cactus forest affords a close look at land iguanas and their habitat before continuing in search of local sea lion colonies. This small island is known as a great place to watch seabirds in flight, and walking along the cliff top provides perfect views of red-billed tropicbirds, frigatebirds, pelicans, swallow-tailed gulls, and others. *Overnight aboard M/Y Yolita. (BLD)*

JULY 29 - GALÁPAGOS

The visitor site "Wetlands" is a complex of trails consisting of multiple sites that combine to form spectacular scenery. The trails travel through lava rock paths, mangrove forests, volcanoes, and beaches, containing a variety of birds and plants. The Tortoise Breeding Center of Isabela contains 330 juvenile and adult tortoises, including many breeds in danger of extinction. Later see the Sierra Negra volcano, considered the oldest of the volcanoes on Isabela. *Overnight aboard M/Y Yolita. (BLD)*

JULY 30 - GALÁPAGOS

Located on Isabela Island's west shore, Elizabeth Bay is a fascinating place to observe marine life, including more Galápagos penguins. A

small passage lined with mangroves guides you into an enclosed cove that hosts marine turtles, rays, flightless cormorants, sea lions, and Galápagos hawks. Learn about the eruptions of the five volcanoes that formed this island as you hike the trail to Darwin's saltwater lagoon and enjoy excellent views of lava fields and volcanic formations. *Overnight aboard M/Y Yolita. (BLD)*

JULY 31 - GALÁPAGOS

Today trek the trail at Urbina Bay, located at the east base of the Alcedo Volcano. The trail starts on the beach and runs through sand substrates, pumice rock, and lava formations along the coast where burrows of land iguanas can be found. Later visit Punta Espinoza, a narrow ledge of lava and sand that extends from the base of the volcano to the sea. There is a vivid description by Captain Benjamin Morrell of his experience witnessing an eruption of Fernandina in the 1820s, likely resulting in the rise of the point. In 1975 there was another uprising of approximately 90 centimeters, which is why the landing pier can only be used during high tide. *Overnight aboard M/Y Yolita. (BLD)*

AUGUST 1 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning visit Playa Espumilla on the northern coast of Santiago Island, a critical nesting site for marine turtles. Explore Buccaneer Cove, an area with steep cliffs and dark beaches that is used as nesting grounds by several species of seabirds. The expedition continues at Rábida, considered the geographic center of the Galápagos because it has the archipelago's most diverse volcanic rocks. Rábida's volcano-formed beach is dark red and frequented by sea lions. While hiking here you will have the rare opportunity to see pelicans nesting up close and visit one of the best saltwater lagoons for viewing flamingos. Between July and September you can observe brown pelicans nesting in the salty bushes. Several species of boobies and Darwin's finches can also be spotted. After your hike you can take a dinghy ride or snorkel above the reefs. *Overnight aboard M/Y Yolita. (BLD)*

AUGUST 2 - GUAYAQUIL

This morning visit Daphne Island, located off the coast of Santa Cruz Island. The island is the location of a long-term study of Darwin's finches. You will have your last chance to see the iconic blue-footed and Nazca boobies before heading to Baltra Island to disembark. Afterward you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Guayaquil. Lunch will be served during your flight. This afternoon is at leisure. A farewell dinner will be served at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Oro Verde. (BLD)*

AUGUST 3 - GUAYAQUIL

Transfer to the airport for your flight home. (B)

PROGRAM PRICING

\$4,675 (minimum 7 participants)

Cost includes Galápagos National Park fee and flights from and to the mainland. Does not include gratuities or international airfare, estimated at \$1,180 from Dallas-Fort Worth. Other departure cities are available.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room on mainland Ecuador, add \$300. A \$350 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to secure your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable until February 24, 2015 excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than April 20, 2015. Cancellations received after this date are not refundable. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information visit travelinsured.com or call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

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