

**THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS:
Aboard the *M/V EVOLUTION*
OCTOBER 16 – 25, 2009
TANDAYAPA PRE-TRIP
OCTOBER 15-16, 2009**

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A trip to the Galapagos Islands is like no other, for it involves total immersion into all aspects of the natural history of one of the world's elite travel destinations. It is one of the unique places on Earth where the wildlife is abundant, approachable, and utterly unafraid of humans. The Galapagos tortoise is the classic symbol of the islands, but the seabird colonies, marine iguanas, sea lions, and fish are equally appealing. Thousands of people from all over the world visit the Galapagos annually to experience the wildlife spectacles, to walk in the footsteps of Darwin, and to enjoy this remarkable form of tropical paradise. The best way, the only way, to really see the Galapagos is by ship, and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is proud to offer a wonderful opportunity to cruise these islands aboard the M/V EVOLUTION, a handsome vessel ideally suited for the Galapagos Islands. In addition to being with an outstanding staff of onboard leaders and naturalists, you will travel with an excellent team of VENT leaders.

The history of the Galapagos is rich. Since their discovery in 1537, they have witnessed the age of piracy and privateering, the age of the explorers, whalers, and mariners, and eventually the age of Darwin and all the scientists and collectors who came after. Through it all, the islands have endured a steady procession of those who would take from their bountiful supply of natural resources. It wasn't until 1934, however, that the government of Ecuador set the islands aside as a wildlife sanctuary. In 1959, the uninhabited areas were declared a national park in order to better preserve the unique flora and fauna. In 1962, the Charles Darwin Research Station on Santa Cruz began operation, and, in 1986, the government of Ecuador created the Galapagos Marine Resources Reserve. The national park now includes the 50,000 square kilometers of surrounding ocean that supports the entire ecosystem and preserves over 90 percent of the land area, as well as the marine resources.

The government monitors the number of tourists permitted to visit the Galapagos, and the National Park Service has set strict behavioral guidelines for all visitors. All tourists to the islands must be accompanied by well-trained and licensed Galapagos guides. These guides are not only excellent naturalists; they also have a mandate to enforce behavioral guidelines, so that this special place will remain an outstanding natural laboratory and a superb destination for the visitor. There are over 50 official tourist-landing sites, all of them areas of significant interest for natural historians, where visitors can observe and photograph the wildlife at close range. Swimming and snorkeling at select spots are an essential element to this trip and add an underwater perspective on the rich life of the islands. You may find yourself nose-to-nose with a sea turtle or trying to keep pace with a sea lion! The assortment of tropical fishes will prove that what is seen below water is as fascinating as what is encountered on land.

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Like many oceanic islands, the Galapagos are volcanic in origin and, in fact, are still young and active. Each island is different and has its own unique mix of wildlife and scenery. Climatically, most of the land at lower elevations is arid, seemingly barren and hostile but surprisingly rich in life. The surrounding marine environment provides the key to this contrast, for it supports most of the ecosystem. Several oceanic currents converge in the Galapagos, supporting an abundance of food resources and great diversity in the marine fauna, including over 300 species of fish. Seabirds, sea lions, marine iguanas, and Sally Lightfoot crabs may utilize the islands as breeding sites, but it is the abundance of food in the ocean that makes this possible.

Of the 19 species of seabirds that occur here, five are endemic breeders, including the world's northernmost penguin, the only equatorial albatross, the strange Flightless Cormorant, and one of the world's rarest gulls. The comical and absurdly tame Blue-footed Booby is one of the most abundant birds here, nesting on many of the islands and fishing the shallow inshore waters. The Nazca and Red-footed boobies, on the other hand, are more restricted in their choice of nesting areas, and fish the deeper waters farther offshore. Elegant Red-billed Tropicbirds are a frequent sight, and cruising between the islands yields pelagic species like Audubon's Shearwater, Dark-rumped Petrel, White-vented and Galapagos storm-petrels, and Great and Magnificent frigatebirds. Outstanding among the landbirds, of course, are the famous Darwin's finches, which served as the basis for his revolutionary work. Other endemic landbirds include the Galapagos Dove (surprisingly beautiful and distinctive), Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos Flycatcher, and the Galapagos mockingbirds, which were initially more important than the finches in the genesis of Darwin's ideas on the origin of species.

Because the islands are so distant from the mainland, colonization of landform has been limited. There are 29 species of resident landbirds, four native land mammals (two rats and two bats), and 22 species of reptiles. But in isolation and in response to the harsh climatic conditions, a high degree of endemism has evolved, and few of these forms now bear much resemblance to their closest relatives on the mainland. The plants, too, show a high degree of endemism. Amidst the many unique forms, the abundance and variety of cacti stand out, forming "forests" on some islands.

Aside from the legendary natural history of the islands, participants will enjoy a true tropical paradise. Awaiting the visitor are glorious sunrises and spectacular sunsets, relaxing strolls on white and black sand beaches, fascinating snorkeling in warm equatorial waters, and outdoor dinners under moonlit skies and the stately Southern Cross. Any voyage to the Galapagos is remarkable and exhilarating, and though your time among the natural wonders may seem all too brief, your memories and photos will last a lifetime.

The emphasis on this trip will be birds and general natural history. We will attempt to see all endemic birds that are possible following this itinerary. There will also be numerous opportunities for snorkeling. This is not exclusively a birding trip, however, since we feel the Galapagos offers a wealth of natural history opportunities in addition to the bird life.

An optional one day pretrip visits the Andean cloud forests of the Tandayapa Valley outside Quito. Participants will experience beautiful mountain scenery and visit a private residence to witness one of the world's greatest hummingbird shows.

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We strongly recommend participation on this optional one-day activity for protection in the event that you or your baggage are unable to arrive in Quito as scheduled. This extra day is a real bonus to this tour, as participants will have the opportunity to sample the species-rich cloud forests of the spectacular northwestern Andean slopes.

October 15, Day 1: Travel to Quito. Please book your flights so that you arrive in Quito, Ecuador, sometime this evening. After clearing immigration and customs, you will transfer to the Hotel Quito, where we will be for the next two nights.

The Hotel Quito is one of the better hotels in the city. Offering large, comfortable rooms, tasty cuisine, and good service, it is a perfect starting point for our tour. The restaurant sits near the top floor and features massive plate glass windows which provide impressive views of Quito and the high mountains surrounding the city.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

October 16, Day 2: Tandayapa Valley. Though our time at the hotel is limited, for the early risers, we recommend taking a walk through the gardens around the swimming pool before enjoying breakfast as a number of interesting species are easily found here. Eared Dove, Great Thrush, and Rufous-collared Sparrows are common, while two spectacular hummingbird species, Black-tailed Trainbearer and Sparkling Violet-ear, are highlights of the garden.

After breakfast, we will leave the large capital city and head toward the Tandayapa Valley, a two-hour drive from our hotel. We shall enter a whole other world of undamaged cloud forest, rushing streams, a plethora of tropical birds, and impressive mountain scenery. Our destination is the private home of Tony and Barbara Nunnery, who happen to host the world's greatest hummingbird show. Their home is set on a hillside overlooking the picturesque Tandayapa Valley and boasts an expansive outdoor deck, beautiful garden, and as many as 20 hummingbird feeders. What awaits the visitor is a hummingbird show unlike any other. The feeders are continually swarming with hummingbirds of all shapes, sizes, and colors. The middle elevation holds some of the highest diversity of hummers anywhere, hosting numbers of resident types and also attracting numerous other types normally found at higher and lower elevations.

It is not uncommon to see as many as 15 species in a two-hour period, with some of the world's most beautiful and striking hummers among them. Species we can expect include Green Violet-ear side-by-side with Sparkling Violet-ear, Western and Andean emeralds, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Buff-tailed Coronet, Brown Inca, Violet-tailed Sylph, and others. If we are truly fortunate, we will encounter the incredible Booted Racket-tail, lovely Gorgeted Sunangel, and glittery Green-tailed Trainbearer. Even the Collared Inca, one of the tropics' most captivating birds, both in beauty and style, is likely.

Most of the surrounding valley and forest is lightly populated and largely preserved. The setting is idyllic and lends itself to further exploration. If we can pull ourselves away from the entertainment at the Nunnery property, a check of the surrounding forest may reveal some of Ecuador's most sensational birds. The list of possibilities is long and varied, but the "blue ribbon" species that we will watch for include Masked Trogon, Golden-headed Quetzal, Toucan Barbet, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Turquoise Jay, and the extraordinary Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan. These same cloud forests are also home to one of the highest diversities of tanagers that grace the Neotropics. Their names are as attractive as the birds themselves. We hope to find Golden Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Blue-capped Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Metallic-green Tanager, and others. Though unlikely, the Grass-green Tanager is possible, and the beautiful and bold Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager is probable.

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Returning to Quito, a stop along a rushing stream in the bottom of the valley may yield White-capped Dipper and Torrent Tyrannulet. North of the city is a monument demarcating the location of the Equator. We will stop briefly for those interested. We can expect a mid- to late-afternoon return. This evening we will gather for dinner in the hotel restaurant for an official tour welcome and orientation. This is a great opportunity to meet your tour leaders and other Galapagos tour participants.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Aboard the *M/V Evolution*

October 16-25, 2009

October 16, Day 1: Flight to Quito. For participants NOT taking the pre-trip, please schedule your flights to arrive Quito, Ecuador, sometime this evening. After clearing immigration and customs, you will transfer to the Hotel Quito, where a room has been reserved in your name. Dinner tonight will be on your own (unless you are also registered on the Tandayapa Pre-Trip).

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

October 17, Day 2: Flight to San Cristóbal in the Galapagos Islands; board the *M/V Evolution*. Following breakfast, we will transfer to the international airport in Quito for our flight to San Cristóbal in the Galapagos Islands. En route we will stop briefly in the coastal city of Guayaquil before continuing on. We will arrive in San Cristóbal early this afternoon, where we will explore a portion of this island before boarding the *Evolution*, our home for the next seven nights.

The Galapagos Islands are as sensational a destination as any in the world. It is an archipelago consisting of 13 major islands and numerous islets and isolated rock towers, all volcanic in origin. While there are similarities between all the islands, there is also a tremendous range of variety that simply begs for exploration. The wonderfully unique natural history, otherworldly landscapes, and warm waters provide visitors with numerous and varied activities. We expect to visit most of the major islands and a few of the smaller islets as well. At each stop, versatile Pangas (Zodiac landing craft) will take us ashore, where our expedition leaders and naturalist-guides will lead us on walks amidst the natural wonders of the islands, with commentary and interpretation as we go. There will be ample time for photography and unlimited subject matter.

October 18–23, Days 3-8: Galapagos Islands. While our itinerary in the Galapagos is subject to final approval by the Galapagos National Park, we plan to stop at all of the islands described below. The park service, however, strictly regulates visitation on the islands in order to protect and preserve the ecosystem. The result may be that we will need to deviate from our schedule at times. Weather conditions may also restrict us from certain locations. A peculiarity of the islands is that most of them have two names, an English name and a Spanish name. This is a product of the rich history of the islands, in which they were alternately explored and named by the Spanish, then the English, and then ultimately claimed by Ecuador. The first name in the list is what we consider the primary name, while names in parentheses are secondary.

Bartolomé Island

Located off Santiago Island, this is one of the most recently created islands and represents a very fragile ecosystem still being formed. The Galapagos is among the most active volcanic sites in the world, and there is no better place for a lesson in geology than here, with the evidence all around us. A hike to the summit of

Pinnacle Rock, the island's central volcano, offers fine views of spatter cones, eroded tuff cones, old lava flows, orange sand beaches and mangrove swamps. The walk up Pinnacle Rock is leisurely and takes us along a well-built boardwalk and up several flights of stairs. The scenery from atop is breathtaking and is among the finest in all the Galapagos. To the southeast, the Daphne Islands are visible in the distance. This is the site where Peter and Rosemary Grant did their landmark research on Darwin's finches, later written about in the prize-winning book, *The Beak of the Finch*, by Jonathan Weiner. We try to time this activity for late afternoon, when the setting sun illuminates the sky over the vast Pacific Ocean in a blaze of orange, yellow, and pink. Far below, our ship rests at anchor amid the serene waters of Sullivan Bay.

Española (Hood)

Known for its dramatic scenery and abundant seabirds riding the updrafts along the windswept cliff faces, Hood is virtually the only breeding ground for the rare Waved Albatross. We will have all morning for touring this small but critically important island. An established path leads through the boulder-strewn beaches and drier uplands, promising more exploration and close encounters with nature.

Upon landing, the first bird to be seen will surely be the Hood Mockingbird. From a numbers standpoint, this species is among the rarest of the endemic birds in the archipelago. This species is found only here and on one tiny islet nearby. Fortunately, they are conspicuous and easy to see and photograph. Turning our sights inland, we will be in pursuit of the decidedly uncommon Large Cactus Finch. Hood is one of the only islands where this species occurs, and we will allot as much time as necessary to locating one. During our search, it is only a matter of time before we come across our first Waved Albatross. These magnificent birds are arguably the signature seabird of the Galapagos Islands. Both big and bold, these marvelously patterned birds never fail to steal the show. Many of them will be at rest near a nest site, while others may be engaged in the bill-clacking sequences that have made their courtship behavior famous. Photographic opportunities abound, and we will have ample time for enjoying them.

The wild, windswept cliff tops are, indeed, a sight to behold. With the rumbling Pacific far below, and the cacophony of bird calls all around, some people consider Hood Island the premier Galapagos experience. There is simply so much to see here. Red-billed Tropicbirds arc by at high speed, Waved Albatrosses float by on outstretched wings, and Nazca Boobies dot the tips of eroded rock towers. Blue-footed Boobies are common and easily photographed, as well. Their comical antics are a sight to behold!

At some point we are bound to encounter the endemic Española lava lizard, perhaps sunning on the rocks or chasing a rival out of its territory. Hood also has the largest race of the marine iguana, some of them a rare red morph. Circling back toward the landing beach, the path will conclude with a walk by several sea lion colonies scattered along the beach.

Fernandina Island (Narborough)

Westernmost of the Galapagos Islands, Fernandina is the youngest. It is a harsh land characterized by hardened lava flows, spatter cones, and barren landscapes. Volcán La Cumbre is the single active volcano on the island and rises up more than 5,000 feet. We will land at Punta Espinosa and spend several hours exploring the natural communities of the shoreline and nearby mangrove swamps. The marine iguanas found here are among the largest in the Galapagos and certainly among the most numerous. We will have no problems finding these curious beasts, as they appear everywhere—lounging in the sun, emerging from the mangroves, and even scrambling over each other's backs. Galapagos lava lizards occur commonly and offer an interesting contrast to the ubiquitous iguanas. Here, too, are Flightless Cormorants, another of the great symbols of the Galapagos. We may see them at their nest sites, or perched on the rocks surrounding the tidal pools, drying out their stubby wings. These remarkable birds are the only flightless members of this group and elicited both awe and consternation from early explorers, scientists, and mariners, many of whom felt the bird was a living relic from

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prehistory. Lava Herons patrol the edges of the tidal pools, while Striated Herons prefer the more isolated mangrove swamps. Galapagos Flycatchers and Galapagos Mockingbirds are common here, and even the Galapagos Martin is seen at times.

Following our morning outing will be an opportunity to snorkel among the offshore rocks, where multitudes of Blue-footed Boobies gather between feeding forays. This part of Fernandina will present some of the best opportunities of the trip for viewing them.

Floreana (Santa Maria, Charles)

One of the few populated islands, Floreana possesses some of the best scenery and most interesting geography in the archipelago. Our time here will include several activities that afford us exposure to different parts of the island. We will visit Champion Island, lying just offshore, to see the Charles Mockingbird. Once occurring commonly on Floreana, this species was nearly wiped out by introduced livestock that fed upon the trees and plants where the bird preferred to nest. Remarkably, a number of pairs still survive on Champion Island, and we should have little trouble finding them. Nearby is the Devil's Crown, an eroded out, half-sunken volcanic crater. The snorkeling here is fabulous and easy. By swimming with the current, participants will be carried effortlessly through the center of the crater, all the while viewing an array of beautiful tropical fish. We will land on a green-sand beach, so called because of the presence of the mineral olivine. From there a short path inland will take us to Flamingo Lagoon, where Greater Flamingos feed in their pink brilliance in the morning sun. The shallow brackish lagoon is also great for seeing White-cheeked Pintail, as well as a variety of shorebirds. Continuing farther, the path ends at a spectacular white sand beach with the consistency of flour. It is great fun to take your shoes off here and simply let the sand slide between your toes. The warm water is shallow and inviting, and gently washes the beach with each incoming roll of the sea. This is an excellent place to study the surf for the inconspicuous marbled sting rays and white-tipped reef sharks that occur here. The ambience at this site embodies the tropical island experience. On the way back, we will watch for the endemic Floreana lava lizard.

No trip to the Galapagos would be complete without a visit to Post Office Bay. In 1793 an English sea captain, James Colnett, visited the islands for the purpose of making navigational charts as he explored the area for its whaling potential. About this time, the first post office was erected on Floreana. This so-called post office was really nothing more than a barrel and was seen as a way for mail to be delivered to England and the United States. The idea was that whalers, sailors, and mariners would leave their mail in the barrel, and homebound ships would stop, pick up the mail, and deliver it. The beach where the barrel was placed became known as Post Office Bay. While the original barrel is long gone, the tradition is alive and well. Most visitors to the island will deposit a post card and then sort through the stack, looking for a card to hand-deliver to somebody they might know back home.

Later this afternoon, we will hop aboard a local "bus," which is really a modified truck (and must be seen to be believed), and head to the highlands in search of several very special birds. Our ride inland will take us out of the arid coastal zone and up into more lush vegetation. Our destination is the middle elevation interior of the island, where birds are abundant and views of the surrounding landscape are superb. Floreana is studded with over 50 small volcanic cones and at least one sizeable mountain, which is the most prominent feature from our elevated perch. Our main quarry is the Medium Tree Finch, which is restricted entirely to Floreana. During our search for this species, we are likely to also turn up others of Darwin's finches, including Small Tree Finch, Small Ground Finch, and Medium Ground Finch, as well as Galapagos Flycatcher.

This part of Floreana is also the focal point of a bizarre tale concerning several German and Austrian settlers, whose interaction led to an amazing sequence of lies, deceit, murder, mystery, and wild jealousy. While the stories coming out of the island became tabloid fodder for readers in Europe, the entire tale was chronicled more thoroughly by John Treherne in his 1983 book, *The Galapagos Affair* (see suggested reading section for more information).

Isabela Island (Albermarle)

Isabela is easily the largest of the islands and accounts for half the total landmass. The landscape owes its barren appearance to the five major volcanoes whose eruptions created the island. Like Fernandina, it is one of the youngest. Depending on the discretion of our expedition leader, we will go ashore in at least two places.

We'll cruise down the Bolivar Channel, the body of water separating Fernandina from Isabela. The trip is both glorious and relaxing. The rugged, volcanic landscapes of the islands merge with the calm, protected waters of the channel, which harbors big flocks of feeding birds, including Brown Pelican, Blue-footed and Nazca boobies, Waved Albatross, Magnificent Frigatebird, scores of Audubon's Shearwaters, White-vented and Galapagos storm-petrels, and Brown Noddies. We will want to keep a sharp eye out for the endemic Dark-rumped Petrel, which breeds high up on the sides of the volcanoes but uses the surrounding waters for feeding grounds. Near the southern end of the island, we will have excellent opportunities for viewing the Galapagos Penguin. The northernmost of the world's penguins, their existence here on the equator is possible because of the cooling effect of the Humboldt Current. Their numbers are probably no higher than 5,000 pairs in all the islands, thereby making them vulnerable. Flightless Cormorants are fairly common here as well. One morning we may anchor off Southern Isabella Island and visit the picturesque port town of Puerto Villamil.

North Seymour

Situated off the coast of Baltra, North Seymour is actually an uplifted submarine lava formation. It is not a very large island, but does feature an easy 2 km hiking trail that traverses the interior of the island. We'll walk a portion of the trail out to the rocky coast for what should be a fine introduction to the Galapagos. This island is particularly well known for its large nesting colonies of Blue-footed Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebirds, and Swallow-tailed Gulls. North Seymour is one of the better places to see the Galapagos Land Iguana, which is now a highly range restricted animal.

San Cristóbal (Chatham)

San Cristóbal holds one of the largest human populations in the islands. It is home to one of the two airports in the Galapagos and is where our trip will begin and conclude. This island is one of the oldest, geologically speaking, and therefore holds the most vegetation. The volcanic soils are thicker on this island, as it has had more time to erode. Not surprisingly, it is one of the most bird-rich of all. We will board a bus for the interior of the island and will spend several hours our first afternoon exploring the native vegetation and dry interior. The special bird of the island is the Chatham Mockingbird, a once common species whose numbers seem to be in slow decline. While searching for them we will likely encounter Smooth-billed Anis (introduced), Yellow Warblers, and Small and Medium ground-finches. Dark-billed Cuckoo is here as well, and is a distinct possibility. On the far side of the island is a newly created tortoise preserve, where semi-wild Galapagos tortoises dwell under the protection of the National Park Service. A well-maintained loop trail will take us through the dry forest where more Chatham Mockingbirds are found, as well as a variety of Galapagos finches. Both the Vegetarian Finch and Woodpecker Finch occur among the far more common Small and Medium ground-finches and Warbler Finches. There are usually at least a few tortoises somewhere along the path.

The waterfront at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno is often filled with California (Galapagos) sea lions hauled up on the beaches, while Blue-footed Boobies and Brown Pelicans loaf on the boats and pilings.

Santiago (San Salvador, James)

Beginning with a wet landing at Puerto Egas on the west side of the island, we will be in for an action-packed morning of wildlife viewing and snorkeling. The feature activity is a walk along one of the best tidal zones in the Galapagos. Here, amid the wave-washed shore, shimmering tidal pools, and algae-covered boulders,

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flourishes a profusion of life. Bright-orange Sally Lightfoot crabs of all sizes scurry here and there in search of food. Depending on our route, we may encounter our first marine iguanas. Mostly they will be lounging on the rocks above the waterline, but with patience we will see them swimming through the surf or moving from one set of rocks to another. It is this peculiar adaptation that defied the belief of early explorers, who were dumbfounded by the sight of seemingly prehistoric lizards in the water. This tidal zone is also an excellent place for viewing shorebirds. Whimbrel, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Willet, and Wandering Tattler are all found here, as well as the striking American Oystercatcher. Cryptic Lava Herons stalk the tide pools, always on watch for an easy meal. California (Galapagos) sea lions are common and are seen in numbers hauled out on the rocks.

The walk to the tidal zone will take us at first along the shoreline, where waves have cut deep grottos in the lava bed, and then up through an area of scrubby uplands, where the birding can be quite good. Small Ground Finches are common, Large Ground Finches are uncommon but regular, and the dainty Galapagos Dove will often walk right up to our feet. Galapagos Hawks are regular here, and we should have excellent looks at perched and flying birds. Galapagos Mockingbirds sing from exposed snags, scolding us, much like they must have scolded Darwin some 170 years ago. For added measure, Galapagos lava lizards are common amongst the volcanic boulders and dry scrubland around us.

Returning to the beach, we will offer a snorkeling trip in James Bay. This is an activity we encourage all tour participants to take advantage of, as this is one of the best places in the Galapagos for snorkeling. The protected bay is excellent for studying a wide range of coral and tropical fish. Endangered Galapagos fur seals will approach to within inches, while Pacific green sea turtles paddle effortlessly by, totally unconcerned by our presence. The fur seals prefer the cool water of the nearby Humboldt Current and tend to be more numerous here than other places. Back on board the ship, Galapagos and White-vented storm-petrels flutter effortlessly over the calm waters of the bay.

Santa Cruz (Indefatigable)

Situated toward the middle of the archipelago, Santa Cruz is one of the largest of the islands and is home to the headquarters of the Galapagos National Park and the world-famous Charles Darwin Research Station. Our boat will rest at anchor in Academy Bay, from which we will ride to shore to spend the morning exploring the environs of the research station and the shops and stores of nearby Puerto Ayora. The station is a world-class facility and is designed primarily to ensure the survival of the Galapagos tortoise. The paths, pens, and propagation facilities are all tastefully constructed. As we tour the grounds, our Galapagos guides will have much information to offer about the tortoises and the methods employed for reproduction and conservation. These long-lived and gentle creatures are the largest tortoises in the world, but their numbers were sadly reduced by centuries of relentless hunting and collecting, and now it is believed that only 11 of the 14 races still survive. Research at the station is still ongoing, and great effort is being made to ensure their long-term survival.

The natural setting around the station is most attractive. Huge columnar cacti dominate the immediate precincts and make this area possibly the best in the Galapagos for viewing the Common Cactus Finch. The whole area is loaded with finches and gives us more opportunities for sorting out this confusing group. Large Ground Finches are found here and offer nice comparisons to the Cactus Finches.

The highlight of our time on Santa Cruz will be an afternoon excursion into the scenic highlands to the giant tortoise reserve. We will have little trouble locating the massive beasts as they feed in the open pastures of the reserve. Depending on the specific site we visit, we may even get to see the diminutive Galapagos Rail, a rarely seen resident of the moist highlands. Mist from the clouds sweeping the highlands (the “garua”) creates a much wetter environment than at the low-elevation deserts, and tall scalesia trees dominate the remnant forests here. Among the tall trees, we will search for several of the finches of the upper zone, most notably Large Tree Finch, Vegetarian Finch, and Woodpecker Finch.

Tower (Genovesa)

This eroded, partially sunken volcano is widely regarded as the wildest island in the archipelago. Tower is also one of the most isolated, and, therefore, supports the largest colonies of breeding birds. A trip to Tower is essential, as it epitomizes the Galapagos experience. Not only are the sheer numbers of birds overwhelming, but their confiding nature allows for close-as-can-be experiences. Nesting birds, resting birds, and preening birds cover the bushes and the ground around us, allowing for dazzling photographic opportunities and easy study of their often fascinating behavior.

On the eastern side of Darwin Bay is a path up the side of the crater and then overland to the other side of the island. We will be sure to walk as far as we can, as each step on the path reveals more fantastic interactions with nature. Nazca and Red-footed boobies are literally everywhere! If we are lucky, we may see them engaged in their entertaining courtship behavior. Sharp-beaked Ground Finches and Warbler Finches are the two latest additions to our growing list of Darwin's finches and can easily be seen on or near the ground throughout. The Warbler Finch, in particular, is fascinating, as it looks and acts entirely unlike a finch. As the path winds toward the far side of the island, we will come upon the massive Galapagos Storm-Petrel colony, several million birds strong. The profusion of these little birds is simply mind-boggling. Seemingly more like insects, they dominate the landscape around us, flying to and from the sea to their hidden burrows. This species is the only member of its family which is diurnal at its nesting colony, presumably because of the near-absence of predators here. Only the endemic race of Short-eared Owl hunts them; often these owls are sitting about, lending themselves to easy study as they pick at the hapless storm-petrels who fail to get away. Beyond the colony are the towering cliffs, where Magnificent Frigatebirds and sublime Red-billed Tropicbirds soar effortlessly by. The tropicbirds, especially, round out the scene. Their dazzling white plumage accentuates their deep red-colored bills, and their long, streamer tails blow about in the strong ocean breeze.

The sight of it all is unforgettable. The stark rock of the nearly barren island covered by thousands of birds, the air swirling with millions more, the deep blue Pacific reaching to the horizon—all of this is the Galapagos. All of this is wild nature.

Back on the other side of the bay, an afternoon walk along the beach will take us through a colony of nesting Great Frigatebirds and a lot more Red-footed Boobies. Swallow-tailed Gulls are common and lounge on the waterfront. They surely must be one of the world's most beautiful gull species. At times they seem to pose for the camera. The much rarer Lava Gull is here as well, and like the Lava Heron that haunts the rocky coastline, this cryptic, smoke-colored denizen of the islands reflects adaptations to the volcanic surroundings.

October 24, Day 9: Departing the Galapagos; return to Quito. With memories and photos to last a lifetime, we must leave the Galapagos this morning, disembarking after breakfast and flying back to Guayaquil on the mainland and then on to Quito. Prearranged transportation will shuttle us to our hotel for check-in.

This evening we will gather in the hotel restaurant for a final group dinner.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

October 25, Day 10: Departure from Quito. Participants may depart Quito at any time today.

SIZE: The Tandayapa Pre-trip and the Galapagos Cruise will be limited to 30 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Paul Greenfield and Kevin Zimmer.

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Paul Greenfield grew up near New York City and became interested in birds as a child. He received his B.F.A. from Temple University where he was an art major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated with the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador*, which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador's avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with various foundations, as well as working with local government and communities to encourage their involvement in the protection of "their" biodiversity and the promotion of birding tourism in Ecuador. He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for over two decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. He and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.

Kevin Zimmer has authored three books and numerous papers dealing with field identification and bird-finding in North America. His book, *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*, deals with finding and identifying birds in the western United States. Living in Alaska contributed to his affection for the Far North, where he has anchored VENT's tour program since 1986. For the past 20 years he has concentrated his attention on the Neotropics, particularly on Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. He has directed VENT's Brazil program since 1991. Kevin has a PhD in biology (research emphasis in Avian Evolutionary Ecology) from New Mexico State University, and is currently a field associate of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology and a Research Associate of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. He has authored numerous technical papers on the taxonomy, distribution, and behavior of Neotropical birds, particularly those of the Amazon basin. In 2003 he completed (with co-author Mort Isler) the major chapter on the *Thamnophilidae* (antbirds) for the prestigious *Handbook of Birds of the World* series. In 2006, he and Curtis Marantz coauthored a six-CD compilation of *Bird Voices of Alta Floresta and Southeastern Amazonian Brazil* (produced by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds) that represents the most comprehensive set of commercially available bird recordings for any part of the Amazon Basin. He and Andrew Whittaker are currently at work on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil, to be published by Princeton University Press. Kevin lives in Atascadero, California with his wife Susan. Their daughter Marina completed her master's degree in psychology at Dominican University in May 2008. Recently married, she and her husband are now living in Napa, California.

CRUISE INFORMATION

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: Prices quoted are per person based on double occupancy. All staterooms are outside cabins with two lower beds or one queen and private facilities. Cabins will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Sole occupancy cabins are available in Cabins C4-C5 & D1-D4 only. Single accommodations are limited and not available in all categories. You will be charged the single price if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

Cabin A1	\$ 6,450
Cabins A2 & A3	\$ 6,150
Cabins C1 – C3 & C6 – C9	\$ 5,750
Cabins C4 – C5 & D1 – D4	\$ 5,450

Single Occupancy:

Cabins C4 – C5 & D1 – D4	\$ 8,175
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Included in your cruise package:

- Seven nights (October 17-23) aboard the *M/V Evolution* in the Galapagos Islands.
- Hotel accommodations in Quito on October 16 and 24.
- Meals beginning with breakfast on October 17 through breakfast on October 24.

- Use of ship snorkeling equipment and wet suits.
- Galapagos National Park entry fee and entry fees to all sites shown in the itinerary
- All port charges and service taxes
- Land transfers including airport to hotel on October 16; hotel to airport on October 17; bus rides in the Galapagos Islands; airport to hotel on October 24 and hotel to airport on October 25
- Services of the tour leaders and naturalist guides in the Galapagos;
- Gratuities to the staff and crew of the *M/V Evolution*.

Not included in your cruise package:

- International roundtrip airfare from your home to Quito
- Domestic airfare Quito-Galapagos-Quito*
- International or domestic departure taxes
- Passport expenses
- Pre-trip tour fee
- Insurance for baggage loss, accident, or trip cancellation
- Items of a personal nature including laundry, postage, internet usage, alcoholic beverages
- Emergency evacuation charges
- Fuel surcharges
- Gratuities to the Expedition Leader and local guides
- Gratuities to VENT leaders

***Please Note: Domestic airfare Quito-Galapagos-Guayaquil is not included in the tour fees above. VENT will have a group block of seats on these flight segments and will automatically assign to these flights as you register for the cruise. At the time of printing the approximate cost of these two air segments is \$495 but is subject to change without notice until the time of ticketing.**

TANDAYAPA VALLEY PRE-TRIP:

Price: \$595 per person based on double occupancy.
Single supplement: \$75

Included in the optional Tandayapa Pre-trip:

- Accommodation in Hotel Quito on the night of October 15
- Land Transfers including airport to hotel on October 15 and the birding outing from the hotel to the Tandayapa Valley and back on October 16.
- Entrance fees and conservation contributions
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner on October 16
- Gratuities to local leaders/bus drivers
- Services of VENT leaders

Not included in the pre-trip:

- International roundtrip airfare from your home to Quito.
- Items of a personal nature: laundry, postage, telephone calls, internet fees
- Hotel accommodations prior to, and after, October 15
- Meals prior to breakfast and after dinner on October 16.
- Alcoholic beverages
- Gratuities to VENT leaders

PLEASE NOTE: Galapagos expeditions are intended for persons in reasonably good health. Walking conditions can be slightly to moderately difficult on certain islands, over rocky and uneven surfaces, including the possibility of a few relatively strenuous hikes. By forwarding the expedition deposit, you certify that you do not have any physical condition or disability that would create a hazard for you or other passengers. Victor Emanuel Nature

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Tours reserves the right to decline, except, or detain you or any other passenger should your health, actions, or general deportment impede the operation of the expedition or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other passengers.

REGISTRATION: To register for this cruise, complete the application form and return it with a deposit of **\$1000**. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. A second installment of **\$2000** is due six months prior to the departure date. The balance of the fee is due 120 days prior to your departure date. Deposit for the Tandayapa Valley Pre-Trip is **\$125** with the balance of the tour fee due 120 days prior to your departure date.

Because of the agility required for cruises on board an expeditionary vessel, travelers with disabilities, heart and/or respiratory problems, or other significant physical limitations or conditions are advised not to participate in expeditionary cruises. Please be advised that medical conditions that are discovered at any time during or prior to boarding and which, in the sole and reviewable opinion of the Captain, may jeopardize the health or safety of the Passenger or any other individual, will be grounds to deny the Passenger permission to board the ship at the point of embarkation, and/or to require the Passenger to leave the ship and terminate his or her continued participation in the cruise. By forwarding the deposit for this cruise, the Passenger certifies that he or she is in good physical health and capable of performing normal activities on this expedition.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS: If cancellations for the Tandayapa Valley Pre-trip occur outside of 4 months before the departure date, **\$50** of your deposit is refundable. For cancellations occurring within 4 months of the departure, all money paid is non-refundable.

If cancellations for the Galapagos Cruise occur outside of 6 months before the departure date, **\$500** of your deposit is refundable. Cancellations occurring between 6-4 months prior to the departure date will be refunded all money paid less **\$1000**. For cancellations occurring within 4 months of the departure, all money paid is non-refundable. Any refunds will be reduced by applicable airline cancellation penalties. No refunds will be made in the event of “no shows” or cancellations made on the day of sailing. **We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance and/or travel insurance to protect yourself.**

Due to the nature of the expedition, weather conditions or government regulations may require changes to be made to the itinerary and/or the cancellation of certain shore excursions. Every attempt will be made to adhere to the itinerary described within the limits of safety and time. In the event of changes, passengers have no right to any refund or other compensation. Expedition fees are based on group participation. Should you choose not to take part in any activity or make use of services provided, no refund will be made.

GENERAL INFORMATION

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this voyage. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of brochure printing. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Our prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made

to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

Because of the agility required for cruises on board an expeditionary vessel, travelers with disabilities, heart and/or respiratory problems, or other significant physical limitations or conditions are advised not to participate in expeditionary cruises. Please be advised that medical conditions that are discovered at any time during or prior to boarding and which, in the sole and reviewable opinion of the Captain, may jeopardize the health or safety of the Passenger or any other individual, will be grounds to deny the Passenger permission to board the ship at the point of embarkation, and/or to require the Passenger to leave the ship and terminate his or her continued participation in the cruise. By forwarding the deposit for this cruise, the Passenger certifies that he or she is in good physical health and capable of performing normal activities on this expedition.

TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE: Application forms for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. We **strongly recommend** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available, however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of VENT. Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to assist you in making International air arrangements. **Please Note: Requests for International airline ticket assistance must be received by VENT no later than 90 days prior to departure. Within 90 days, participants must make their own arrangements.** Airline tickets carry restrictions due to the airfare used. You may find that your ticket cannot be reissued or exchanged for another air carrier or routing. Cancellation penalties and change fees may be assessed for any changes to the ticket. These charges are solely your responsibility. **The flights between mainland Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands are on AEROGAL on a Boeing 727-200 and tickets will be issued automatically for all participants on the tour.**

CONDITIONS:

The Ship: The M/V Evolution is a 192 ft. long small cruise ship that accommodates up to 32 passengers in 16 cabins, single or twin. Ideally suited for a cruise among the Galapagos Islands, she offers a mix of beautifully furnished salons, open decks, and private areas for those looking for a close experience with the surrounding environment. This vessel preserves the smaller boat atmosphere and attention to detail we look for when selecting the right vessel for VENT trips to the Galapagos. All cabins have a window, private facilities, and climate controls.

Dining: Meals are served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. The menu is international but with an Ecuadorian flair Vegetarian requests.

Zodiac Landing Craft – Expedition cruise ships carry fleets of Zodiac landing craft (known as *Pangas* in the Galapagos Islands). Developed as a means for gaining access to places where larger vessels cannot go, Zodiacs are employed to bring greater intimacy to your travel experience. Each craft is constructed of high performance plastimer fabrics and outfitted with a powerful motor, and designed to withstand the challenging conditions of the Galapagos environment. During your cruise you'll make numerous excursions to shallow bays and along rocky coasts and land on isolated beaches, coming face-to-face with an assortment of wildlife. Each craft holds as many as 10 passengers. Although flat-bottom design allows for direct on-shore landings, passengers will need to walk through shallow surf on some occasions.

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While on Land – Walking conditions on land are generally not difficult, yet it is important to pay close attention to footing and walking conditions. The diversity of topography in the Galapagos Islands guarantees that you'll experience a variety of terrain, from soft sand, to coarse gravel, to sharp and uneven lava flows. Walks along sandy and rocky beaches and along trails through brush frequently involve short outings of varying length. The highlands of Floreana and Santa Cruz feature some trail walking through open forest, but the degree of difficulty of these activities is low. No participant will be expected to participate in any activity they are not physically capable of or are comfortable with.

While at Sea - While cruising at sea, you'll have options to join your leaders on the viewing decks for sea watching or remain below decks and relax in the library, the passenger lounge, or your stateroom. The seas in the Galapagos are generally calm, but some inter-island crossings may require transits through moderately rough water.

SAFETY AT SEA: Safety at sea is a major objective. The ship contains the latest in firefighting equipment and fully complies with the strict provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), July 1998 requirements. In addition, all officers are specially trained in emergency procedures, and regular drills are held to instruct the crew in their emergency duties.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: The city of Quito is located at 9,000 feet. Nights can be cool with temperatures dropping to 50-60° and daytime highs usually 70-75° and sunny. Most of our birding will be in the Mindo/Tandayapa area about 1.5 hours west of Quito at an elevation of about 5,000 feet. Temperatures in the Mindo/Tandayapa area will be mild (60-80°), but rain or heavy fog is a possibility. The Galapagos has two different climates. The period from January to June is known as the warm/wet season with warm air temperatures and clear skies, but with occasional heavy rain. Temperatures range from 81-95°. From June to December, the season is known as the “garua” or cool/dry season, when air temperatures are cooler, but conditions generally drier. The mornings can be overcast and misty, but the lowlands are virtually free of precipitation, while the highlands can be much wetter. Temperatures during the day range from 68-77° and the evenings are in the 50s. The water temperatures in the Galapagos vary throughout the year. It can range from cold, 62-68°F between June and December, to a rather warm 80-85°F from January to May.

BAGGAGE: The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. **Please consult your pre-departure materials and airline to find out specific weight restrictions.**

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, essential toiletries, medications, a change of clothing, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag.

CLOTHING: For your trip to the Galapagos, comfortable, casual clothing in the expedition spirit is all that is necessary. The Galapagos are desert islands on the equator, and you should be prepared for warm daytime temperatures and sun most of the time. The mornings may be marked by light overcastting and fine mist. We recommend 1 or 2 pairs of shorts, and 1 or 2 pair of lightweight pants. You should pack several t-shirts, short and/or long-sleeved, as well as items of attire that you may find appropriate for a tropical vacation, such as short-sleeved button-down shirts. Many people now favor the lightweight designer shirts that offer well-ventilated seams, numerous pockets, and roll-up sleeves that button down. *Ex-officio* and *Columbia* make these products, and they are easily found in most outdoor or sporting goods stores. In the event of rain, morning mist, or an overcast sky, a poncho or warm sweater is highly recommended as well. Since the islands of the Galapagos are widely distributed, conditions can vary considerably from island to island. The highlands of Santa Cruz and Floreana are usually cooler than the surrounding lowlands. A hat for protection from the sun is absolutely essential. It would be useful to consider two pairs of shoes. For the time on the boat, a deck shoe or sandal with straps is certainly adequate and possibly preferred. When we land on the islands, there will be some places where “wet landings” are unavoidable. For this reason an open-toed sandal is a good choice. Various brands include *Teva*, *Nike*, and *LaSportiva*. These are merely examples, but any sporting good store will offer a

selection of such shoes. For those who prefer more stability, a light hiking boot or trail walking shoe will do the job, particularly when we are on the various islands and walking on old lava flows. A swimsuit is essential, since snorkeling is an important element to our Galapagos trips.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is provided by the ship staff for an extra charge. Check with the staff upon embarkation for procedures and turnaround time.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your Galapagos adventure:

- **Backpack** – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all landings and excursions
- **Ziploc bags** – Excellent for keeping small items or any items of value dry; bring several different sizes
- **Notebooks and pens**
- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Cameras, lenses, film, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Collapsible walking stick**
- **Tissue packs**
- **Binoculars** – We strongly recommend good binoculars of at least 7 x 35, 8 x 42, 10 x 40, or 10 x 42 magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7 x 35 or 8 x 42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes - Since most wildlife viewing will take place on a moving ship or zodiac, or among the birds and animals at very close range, you do not need to bring a spotting scope. Your tour leaders will have one available for group use on the occasions where it is necessary to have one.

SNORKELLING: For snorkeling, the *Evolution* is fully equipped with fins, masks, snorkels; wet suits ('shorty' type only) and carries a variety of sizes and enough for all participants. Those participants who prefer to bring their own equipment are welcome to do so. If you get cold easily, we recommend bringing your own wetsuit, and one that is rated to comfortably insulate you in water temperatures in the 50s.

CONDITIONS: Between Quito and the Mindo/Tandayapa area, travel will be aboard a medium-size bus. Walking will be limited and restricted to graded dirt roads. In the Galapagos, most travel will be aboard the *M/V Evolution*, where cruising among the islands is effortless. We will spend time on most of the major islands, which will involve short Panga (a.k.a Zodiac) rides from the boat to shore. The majority of our landings will be dry, but some will certainly be wet (meaning that water up to the shin is possible), and participants need to prepare accordingly.

Due to the fact that the Galapagos Islands are one of the world's great natural history destinations, this trip is more than a birding tour. While we will certainly work to see as many species as possible, especially the endemic ones (those found nowhere else), we will take time to appreciate all facets of natural history, including geology, botany, herpetology, and even star-gazing. The Galapagos, however, is also a place to have fun! Most days will include opportunities for snorkeling in different bays on different islands. This activity is something we strongly encourage participants to take advantage of, as what we see below the water surface is every bit as beautiful and impressive as

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what we see above the surface. For information regarding snorkeling gear, please refer to the equipment section of this itinerary.

Shopping opportunities in the Galapagos are very limited, but the outdoor shops at San Cristobal and, especially, the shops at Puerto Ayora and the Charles Darwin Research Station on Santa Cruz, offer a fine variety of clothing, books, wood carvings, post cards, and souvenirs. The *Evolution* keeps an inventory of shirts and post cards aboard available for purchase, also.

PASSPORTS AND DOCUMENTS:

PASSPORTS

A valid passport is required. Please check the expiration date on your passport. **If it is not valid for at least six months after your trip return date, you will need to get it renewed.** You will also want to make sure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps.

If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of your trip departure date. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis. In the United States this can be done at the nearest passport office, most post offices, or the county clerk's office. You may also visit www.state.gov/travel/ for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so **do not pack it in your checked luggage.**

On board ship, it is customary for the purser to hold all passports for clearance with Customs and Immigration authorities. Your passport will be collected prior to or upon embarkation, and returned upon disembarkation.

VISAS

Visas are not required for U.S. citizens for entry into Ecuador.

CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS: Your trip to the Galapagos includes most necessary expenses, including all meals aboard the ship. You will want to bring enough cash to cover such extra expenses as taxi rides (if you come early or stay after the program), gifts, laundry, gratuities, and meals on your own before and after the cruise, and personal items. Cash and credit cards are recommended for meeting expenses during the cruise. Traveler's checks may not be accepted. Small denominations of cash are best as the places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. Shipboard accounts can be paid with cash or credit cards. Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

The unit of currency in Ecuador is the U.S. Dollar (\$USD).

Should you extend your vacation in Ecuador beyond what is offered in the cruise program, you'll want to consider carrying bill in small denominations. Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are widely accepted. ATMs are available in places. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas.

TIME: Ecuador stays 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and does not observe Daylight savings time. At this time of year, the Galapagos are one hour ahead of EDT.

ELECTRICITY: Electrical outlets aboard the *Evolution* are the same as they are in the U.S., 110 volts, 60 cycles.

HEALTH: Currently, there are no vaccinations required for travel to Ecuador or the Galapagos Islands. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with "routine" inoculations for influenza,

chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) and consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B. If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the expedition safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

Motion Sickness – Since our cruise route will not take us far from shore, travel in rough water is not expected. However, those travelers especially sensitive to motion sickness should be prepared. Most cruise ships typically carry a supply of anti-motion sickness medication for general availability to passengers. We recommend that you consult your physician for an appropriate medication.

Sun Exposure – The sun's ultraviolet rays are more dangerous at the equator than most other places in the world. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

The crew is trained to handle medical emergencies and is in contact with other boats, as well as the nearest sources of help in the islands. Any condition that cannot be dealt with on board and that requires emergency treatment will result in the evacuation of a debilitated passenger, either by boat or helicopter.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

SUGGESTED READING: Our web site at www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com, or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

The Galapagos Islands have received great acclaim and publicity as a world-class destination for many decades. As a result, there is a wealth of material available on the Galapagos to help you prepare for your trip, and this list offers only a few of the possible suggestions. Aside from the above-mentioned websites, almost all of the major natural history magazines also have articles on the Galapagos from time to time. Finally, most major bookstores will also offer a variety of books pertaining to the Galapagos.

Field Guides:

Birds:

Ridgely, Robert S. and Paul Greenfield. *The Birds of Ecuador, Volume II: Field Guide*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.

This is the definitive guide to the birds of Ecuador written by two men who arguably know the country best. While the guide is large and bulky, it covers all species known to have occurred in Ecuador. It will come in handy for those taking the Tandayapa Pre-trip, which covers a portion of the upper-elevation cloud forest of the

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northwest Andean slope. It does not, however, cover the Galapagos Islands, which are part of Ecuador. Should you elect not to bring this guide with you, your tour leader will have one available for group use.

Swash, Andy and Rob Still. *Birds, Mammals & Reptiles of the Galapagos Islands*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2nd edition, 2006.

This is an excellent pocket guide, composed entirely of photographs, to all of the birds, mammals, and reptiles of the Galapagos. It is by far the single best resource for quick and easy identification of all the more prominent forms of life found in the archipelago. Its treatment of seabirds and the mockingbirds and finches of Darwin fame is very good. Both 1st and 2nd editions can be found on Amazon.com, but supplies are limited.

Mammals:

Shirihai, Hadoram and Brett Jarrett. *Whales, Dolphins and Other Marine Mammals of the World*. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

This is the most recent, and one of the best field guides available for information on identifying the world's ocean-going mammals.

Fish:

Humann, Paul and Ned DeLoach. *Reef Fish Identification: Galapagos*. New World Publications, 2nd edition, 2003.

Wildflowers:

McMullen, Conley K. *Flowering Plants of the Galapagos*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Natural History

Jackson, Michael H. *Galapagos: A Natural History*. 2nd Edition. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2nd edition, 1993.

This book is more of a companion to the field guide, but offers a far more in-depth look at all facets of the Galapagos Islands. It gives nice overviews of all aspects of the archipelago's natural history, yet does so in a way that is very user-friendly. It is structured in a way that is well-suited for the first-time visitor who possesses nothing more than a casual interest, but also for the more serious-minded observer who prefers a more substantive body of work. It is certainly one of the better all-around resources for the Galapagos, as it provides much information but avoids becoming bogged down in overly scientific or technical information.

Kricher, John. *Galapagos: A Natural History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Written by accomplished ecologist, John Kricher, this is one of the newer books providing a comprehensive overview of Galapagos history and wildlife.

Stewart, Paul D. *Galapagos: The Islands That Changed the World*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

This is one of the newer guides to the human history and general natural history of the Galapagos Islands. Though we have not yet tested it in the field, the reviews of this book are highly favorable. An added bonus is the 150 color photographs that further illuminate the islands.

Historical:

Beebe, William. *Galapagos: World's End*. Dover Publications, 1988. A great naturalist's account of his expedition to the islands in 1923.

Barlow, Nora. *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*. New York: Norton Co. 1958.

Browne, Janet. *Charles Darwin: Voyaging*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. A vivid picture of Darwin as a man and scientist.

Darwin, Charles. *Voyage of the Beagle.* **England: Penguin Group, 1989.** Originally published by Henry Colburn, 1839. A chronicle written by Darwin himself of the classic five-year expedition that would forever cement his place in history.

Treherne, John. *The Galapagos Affair.* **New York: Random House, Inc. 1983.** This book is something of a classic, as it deviates from the standard Galapagos fare, which tends to focus on science or related topics, and recounts some of the human history of the islands. In particular, this is a sordid story of three unrelated German parties who settled independently on Floreana Island. As the three groups invariably come into contact, the results are quite mixed and replete with lurid tales of intrigue, lying, deceit, strange disappearances, jealousy, and murder. At the end of this wildly entertaining novel, the reader will come away left to draw his own conclusions.

Science and Evolution:

Attenborough, David. *The Life of Birds.* **Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.** Created by the legendary nature documentarian, this book is an instant classic.

Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species: by Means of Natural Selection.* **Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968.** Originally published by J. Murray, London, 1859.

Larson, Edward J. *Evolution's Workshop: God and Science on the Galapagos Islands.* **Basic Books, 2001.** This is one of the most outstanding books to appear in the last 10 years on the Galapagos Islands. Written by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, the book delivers an excellent historical treatise of the Galapagos Islands in an enjoyable and easily readable style. In 243 pages (short for such a project), the reader is taken on a 500-year historical rampage that begins with the discovery of the archipelago in 1537 and builds through the age of pirates and privateering and on to the monumental achievements of Charles Darwin, and then through the great collecting expeditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and finally to the establishment of the islands as a national park and modern conservation concerns. Aside from reciting dates and events, Larson effectively frames his narrative with a sense of time and place against a backdrop of religion and politics. The effect is that the reader not only gains a profound appreciation for the accomplishments of the greatest scientific minds of the time, but also for the very real struggle that played out permanently following Darwin, surrounding god, science, and man's role in the world around him. Finally, one of the finer points of this story is the humanistic approach that Larson takes in recounting this history, as all the major players were revealed in-depth, including their successes and character flaws.

Mayr, Ernst. *Evolution and the Diversity of Life.* **MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.** A great resource written by one of the great evolutionary biologists of the 20th century.

Quammen, David. *The Flight of the Iguana.* **New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.** Written by the author who produced *Song of the Dodo*.

Weiner, Jonathan. *The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in Our Time.* **Random House Incorporated, 1995.** This is an award-winning story of long-term research on the Darwin's finches done by Peter and Rosemary Grant, who worked with them for more than 20 years. A highly insightful and readable story.

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