

INSIDE GALAPAGOS

A GUIDE TO CONSERVATION AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM



GALAPAGOS CONSERVATION TRUST WHO WE ARE



Galapagos Conservation Trust (GCT) is the only UK-registered charity to focus solely on the conservation of the Galapagos Islands.

Our vision is for the unique nature and beauty of the Galapagos Archipelago to be conserved and protected in perpetuity.

Since 1995, we have been working with a range of partners including Ecuadorian authorities, NGOs, local communities and leading scientists

to support, develop and deliver projects that protect the unique nature of Galapagos. We believe that a collaborative approach to conservation is the only way to ensure the future of Galapagos.

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Reg. Charity No. 1043470



GALAPAGOS WHALE SHARK PROJECT

We are supporting the Whale Shark Monitoring project which is looking to uncover the secret lives of the world's largest fish. By tagging individuals throughout the Archipelago, scientists are learning about the species' life history and migration patterns.

This critical data will inform conservation management strategies and help the team to reach their goal of creating more marine protected areas around Galapagos.

PLASTIC POLLUTION

We are working with the Galapagos National Park and other partners to implement the Plastic Pollution Free Galapagos programme (PPFG). This brings together an alliance of NGOs, local communities and scientists to identify the sources of plastic pollution and its impacts on wildlife and people, and to support circular economy solutions that prevent plastic pollution. Our goal is to reduce plastic pollution by 30% on Galapagos coastlines by 2030.



BARCODE GALAPAGOS

Launched in 2020, the Barcode Galapagos project uses non-invasive 21st century genetic barcoding techniques to catalogue the biodiversity of the Islands. The goal is to describe the genetic profile of all species found in the Archipelago, a feat that will help scientists measure the health of Galapagos environments. The project also provides alternative livelihoods by training and employing Galapagos residents to assist with the research.



GIANT TORTOISES

The Galapagos Tortoise Movement Ecology Programme (GTMEP) tracks tortoise movements to understand their journeys from hatchling to adult. So far, >120 adults and >100 hatchlings on 3 islands have been tagged. This is a significant step towards the project's goal to protect this species against anthropogenic pressures such as plastic pollution and land-use change and support conservation management solutions with the Galapagos National Park.



IGUANAS FROM ABOVE

Iguanas from Above is a pioneering project that is counting the number of marine iguanas in aerial photographs taken with the latest drone technology. The project's goal is to save the marine iguana from extinction by estimating the size and location of all important marine iguana populations across the Archipelago.



RESTORING FLOREANA

We are supporting efforts to restore Floreana's ecosystem, a world first for a populated island of this size. The project is currently focussed on eradicating invasive species from the island. Once completed, the team's goal is to reintroduce 12 locally extinct species to the island, including the Floreana mockingbird.



"Galapagos is one of the most extraordinary places on Earth, home to many plants and animals found nowhere else. But it is also particularly vulnerable. I urge you to support Galapagos Conservation Trust, which is working to increase ocean protection, restore biodiversity and build climate resilience across the Islands."

Sir David Attenborough



DISCOVERING GALAPAGOS

The goal of our educational resource, *Discovering Galapagos*, is to engage the future conservation ambassadors of Galapagos. We fund local students and youth groups to go into the field with our science projects to experience conservation first-hand. We also provide educational materials for teachers and students, making it possible to learn about Galapagos from anywhere in the world.

SAVING THE MANGROVE FINCH

We have been supporting the Charles Darwin Foundation to save the Critically Endangered mangrove finch, one of the world's rarest birds, with ~100 individuals left in the wild. To increase populations, our vital work focuses on controlling invasive species such as rats that predate on eggs and avian vampire fly larvae that feed on nestlings' bodily fluids. Our goal is to improve breeding success and chick survival rates to stabilise the small remaining population.



SHARKS AND RAYS

We support research tracking the migratory routes of sharks and rays, as well as research into shark and ray nursery sites in the mangroves surrounding San Cristóbal and Isabela. This data was instrumental in the creation of the Hermandad Marine Reserve in 2022, an important step towards creating the world's first protected 'swimway' between Galapagos and Cocos Island in Costa Rica and protecting 30% of Ecuadorian waters by 2030.



CONNECTING WITH NATURE

The Connecting with Nature programme gives young people the chance to experience the natural world around them and develop conservation values through extra-curricular activities including microplastic surveys and visits to the Galapagos National Park. A key goal for the project is to improve accessibility to nature by supporting >1,000 young islanders' visits to the National Park.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism offers people a window to the wonders of Galapagos, and is currently an important source of revenue for local communities.



Galapagos Conservation Trust encourages an ethos of responsible tourism by supporting projects that respect local people, educate tourists and minimise the negative impact of tourism on the biodiversity and habitats of Galapagos.

PLASTIC-FREE GALAPAGOS

Galapagos is facing a plastic pollution crisis with over 8 tonnes of plastic washed up on beaches each year. As a visitor, you can help us work towards our vision of a plastic-free Galapagos by taking some very simple steps.



5 ways you can help reduce plastic pollution:

1. Refuse a plastic straw – In 2018 the Galapagos authorities banned the use of plastic straws. We are working with restaurants and hotels to encourage them to reduce their plastic straw use, but if you do spot any please help us by refusing a straw.



2. Take a refillable water bottle – Degraded plastic bottles are one of the many waste items frequently found polluting Galapagos coastlines. There are places to refill your bottle on the island.



3. Bring reusable bags – The Islands have a plastic bag ban, so please keep to the rules and bring a sustainable carrier for your possessions and when shopping.



4. Don't take any toiletries that contain microbeads – Small plastic beads cannot be filtered from waste systems very easily, and can be ingested by marine animals. Please read the ingredients on products before purchase.



5. Take your plastic back with you – Taking your plastic back to the mainland to recycle will help to reduce the pressure on recycling and waste management systems on the islands.



For more information please visit pacificplasticsscienetosolutions.com



HOW YOU CAN HELP

We have supported some of the most successful conservation stories in Galapagos, including saving a number of the most critically endangered species in the world. We can only do this thanks to voluntary income including membership, donations and gifts in people's Wills.

JOIN US

You can become a member of GCT from as little as £4 per month or £48 per year and help support a wide range of projects.



You will receive:

- A collectable pin badge
- Our biannual magazine
- Priority bookings for GCT events

Please visit galapagosconservation.org.uk/membership

FOLLOW US

- @galapagossip
- @GalapagosConservation
- @galapagosconservationtrust
- @galapagos-conservation-trust

DONATE

Help us protect the wildlife of Galapagos by making a one-off donation or donating to our latest appeal. Every penny you give will go towards our vital work.



Please visit galapagosconservation.org.uk/donate

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Our annual photography competition is a great way to get involved. The overall winner will be featured in our annual calendar and all other category winners and runners up will be shown on our online gallery.



Please visit galapagosconservation.org.uk/photography-competition for more information including some great tips on taking the best photos, and how to enter.



"It's almost impossible to take a bad photograph in Galapagos – the stark beauty of the Islands, the deep blue of the water and equatorial skies, and of course the unique wildlife, make it a photographer's dream."

Monty Halls, GCT President.

ADOPT AN ANIMAL

Adopting a Galapagos animal is a great way to conserve these threatened species and the islands they call home.



Our six current adoption packs come with a personalised certificate, a collectible fact file and an ethically sourced soft toy. You will also receive email updates about the work that we are doing to help protect these species.

Please visit galapagosconservation.org.uk/adopt

LEAVE A LEGACY

Leaving a gift in your Will to GCT is one way in which you can directly impact Galapagos for years to come, as it will help us continue our vital work securing a brighter future for its wildlife and habitats.



For more information, please visit galapagosconservation.org.uk/legacies

WHEN IN GALAPAGOS

We hope that your encounters with the wildlife of Galapagos leave you with lasting memories. It is important that visitors respect the rules set by the Galapagos National Park to help protect this fragile ecosystem. Here are some of the key things to remember:

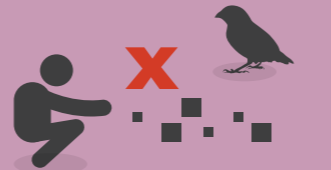
KEEP TO PATHS AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Young animals touched by well-meaning people may cause their parents to abandon them. Please keep your distance!



DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS

Please don't feed any of the wildlife you encounter. It can cause them health problems or even death.



DON'T USE FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

Using a flash can be intimidating to wildlife and is outlawed by the National Park.



BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU BUY

Don't buy any souvenirs or trinkets that contain illegal materials such as black coral, shells, lava rock, animal parts, or any native wood or vegetation. If you're not sure, just don't buy it!



HAVE YOU SEEN ANY OF THE WILDLIFE WE HELP TO PROTECT?



Galapagos sea lion



Galapagos giant tortoise



Galapagos green turtle



Marine iguana



Galapagos land iguana



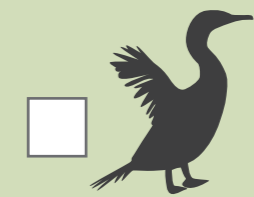
Darwin's finches (can you work out which species they are?)



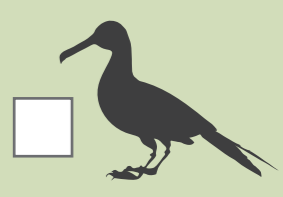
Mockingbirds (can you work out which species they are?)



Galapagos penguin



Flightless cormorant



Magnificent frigatebird



Lava lizard



Red-billed tropicbird



Red-footed booby



Blue-footed booby



Waved albatross

What else have you seen?