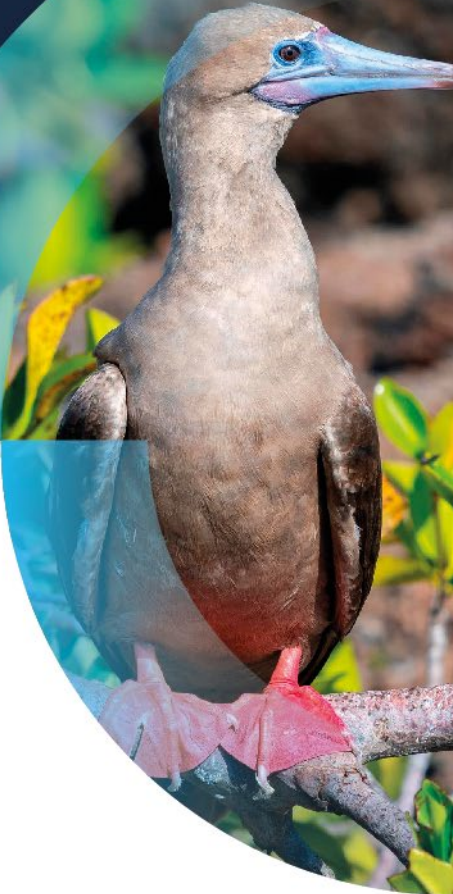




DISCOVER  
THE GALAPAGOS'  
**HIDDEN  
TREASURES**



**UNRAVEL THE  
SECRETS OF THE  
ARCHIPELAGO'S  
MOST ICONIC  
SPECIES**

Welcome to our catalog of the 20 most iconic species that call the Galapagos Islands home.

Here, you'll meet creatures that have adapted to thrive in this unique archipelago, where the land meets the sea and the sky. Each species paints a vivid picture of evolution and survival, telling a story that extends millions of years back in time.

As you dive into this guide, prepare to be amazed, enlightened, and inspired by the wonders of nature that await.



# LAND SPECIES

Our journey begins on land amidst the rugged lava formations, lush highlands, and sun-drenched beaches of the Galapagos. From lumbering giant tortoises to scurrying lizards, these land-dwelling species have each carved out their niche in these diverse habitats. They're a testament to resilience and adaptation, reminding us of nature's remarkable ability to flourish against all odds. Let's set foot on this journey and unravel the extraordinary stories of the Galapagos' land species.




GALAPAGOS  
**GIANT TORTOISE**


Learn about the intriguing giant tortoises that live on the enchanted Galapagos Islands! These magnificent reptiles are renowned for having the **longest lifespans among terrestrial giants and growing to enormous proportions**. In addition, they have developed distinctive and sturdy shells to fit their island habitat. It is an incredible experience to watch these tortoises meander calmly through their natural environment. They stand for the tenacity of life and the wonder of biodiversity in the Galapagos Islands. Let these famous creatures draw you in as you explore this unmatched natural wonderland.

**Scientific name:** *Chelonoidis spp.*

**Common names:**

 Tortuga gigante de Galápagos

 Tortue géante des Galápagos

 Galápagos-Riesenschildkröte

**Mating season:** June to December

**Mating ritual sightings:** Possible, primarily in the early mating season

**Island locations:** Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal, Isabela, and several other islands

**Best time for spotting:** Year-round

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. Galapagos giant tortoises live long. Some of **these magnificent creatures live up to 150 years**. The Galapagos' clean environment and hardiness explain their longevity.
2. The shell forms and sizes of giant tortoises species are remarkable. Tortoises with distinctive shells live on each Galapagos island. **Each tortoise population is a living monument to the archipelago's different ecosystems** due to its adaptations to each island's environment.
3. **Humans and invasive species have hampered Galapagos giant tortoises**. Thus, dedicated conservation efforts have preserved and restored their numbers. The Galapagos National Park and international groups work hard to safeguard these famous species. They preserve these amazing tortoises via habitat restoration, breeding initiatives, and rigorous controls.



**Check this species' fun fact!**

**Galapagos giant tortoises can swim!** They have been observed traveling great distances between islands.



**Keep in mind this information!**

The environment of the Galápagos Islands depends heavily on the magnificent and rare species of Galapagos giant tortoises. For these species to survive and prosper for many years to come, **it is crucial to safeguard them and their environment.**



GALAPAGOS  
**SEA LION**




**Get ready to be charmed by the Galapagos sea lions in the enchanting Galapagos Islands!** These playful and sociable creatures are sure to steal your heart. With their sleek bodies and captivating eyes, they gracefully navigate the crystal-clear waters, showcasing their impressive agility. Their infectious energy is simply impossible to resist, whether they are playing in the waves or lying in the sun on sandy beaches. Don't be surprised if you find yourself engaged in a delightful underwater dance with these curious sea lions during a snorkeling adventure. Witness their captivating behaviors and feel the connection with these iconic inhabitants of the Galapagos.

### **3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:**

- 1. Galapagos sea lions are a distinct and exceptional endemic species** since they can only be found in the Galapagos Islands. As a result, their presence has come to be associated with the archipelago's abundant biodiversity.
- 2. Galapagos sea lions have a kind and friendly nature.** They also reside in big colonies. They are well-recognized for their lively demeanor and are frequently observed performing flips, jumps, and swimming competitions. They may approach snorkelers and divers with curiosity and occasionally even join in the action, so experiences with them are genuinely memorable because of their engaging character.
- 3. Fishing operations and pollution were among the problems the Galapagos sea lions** had to deal with in the past. However, their number has increased again due to intense conservation efforts. The creation of marine protected zones and ethical fishing methods has greatly helped their survival. It is proof of the Galapagos Islands' continued conservation efforts to see these tough animals surviving in their native habitat.

**Scientific name:** *Zalophus wollebaeki*

**Common names:**

-  Lobo Marino de Galápagos
-  Otarie des Galápagos
-  Galápagos-Seelöwe

**Mating season:** May to January, peaking between August and November

**Mating ritual sightings:** Possible during peak mating season

**Island locations:** Widespread throughout the archipelago

**Best time for spotting:** Year-round



#### **Check this species' fun fact!**

The sea lions of the Galapagos Islands are avid sunbathers and are frequently spotted in entertaining and unusual poses. Their hilarious and carefree sunbathing poses never fail to make visitors grin.



#### **Keep in mind this information!**

The foraging habits of Galapagos sea lions are **remarkably adaptable**, allowing them to use various food sources and displaying the resilience required for survival in a changing marine environment.



GALAPAGOS  
**LAND IGUANA**



Discover the fascinating Galapagos land iguanas, reptiles that perfectly capture the distinctive charm of the Galapagos Islands. **They stand out in contrast to the volcanic terrain thanks to their vibrant yellow and orange coloring.** With the help of their razor-sharp claws, these gentle herbivores can easily traverse the steep terrain. Seeing their beautiful movements and unique feeding behaviors is a genuine pleasure. Prepare to be mesmerized by their ancient look and the beauties of their natural environment.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. **Galapagos land iguanas' distinctive "sun-basking" behavior** involves stretching out and absorbing heat from the sun to maintain body temperature.
2. **In times of shortage, these iguanas may drink saltwater** thanks to a unique gland in their nasal tube that aids in expelling extra salt.
3. **Galapagos land iguanas are crucial for spreading seeds** across their habitat due to their consumption of fruits and the excretion of seeds during their journeys,.






#### Keep in mind this information!

Because they regulate the development of vegetation through herbivory, **Galapagos land iguanas are essential to preserving the delicate balance of the Galapagos environment** and guaranteeing the survival of other species in their habitat.

**Scientific name:** *Conolophus subcristatus*.

#### Common names:

-  Iguana terrestre de Galápagos
-  Iguane terrestre des Galápagos
-  Galápagos-Landleguan

**Mating season:** January to March

**Mating ritual sightings:** Possible, including male combat and head bobbing.

**Island locations:** Santa Cruz, Isabela, Fernandina, and several other islands

**Best time for spotting:** Year-round



#### Check this species' fun fact!

While most iguanas might be considered leaf munchers, the Galapagos Land Iguana has a unique palate. It has a surprising penchant for the prickly pear cactus - spines and all! It's a hardy herbivore, demonstrating impressive resilience and adaptation. But don't worry; it's not all prickly dining for these reptiles. Over time, they've developed thick, tough skin and a specialized digestive system that allows them to consume and process the spines without harm. Talk about a diet that truly sticks with you!



GALAPAGOS  
**GREEN SEA TURTLE**

The intriguing Galapagos green sea turtle, a species that personifies the allure of the Galapagos Islands, will astound you. **The emerald shells of these friendly marine reptiles shine brightly as they float elegantly across the aqua waves.** They may reach a maximum length of 5 feet and have more than 80 years of lifespan. Explore the fascinating world of the Galapagos green sea turtles, and take in their mesmerizing presence as they move around their clean underwater environment.



### Check this species' fun fact!

Green sea turtles in the Galapagos Islands are renowned for their coordinated “turtle-yoga” moments. They gather in groups and appear to strike amusing positions as if they were participating in their own underwater yoga session.






### Keep in mind this information!

**The Galapagos green sea turtles are essential to preserving seagrass meadows and coral reefs.** They feed on seagrass as herbivores, which helps them develop and provides habitat and food for various marine creatures.

**Scientific name:** *Chelonia mydas agassizii*

### Common names:

-  Tortuga verde de Galápagos
-  Tortue verte des Galápagos
-  Galápagos-Grüne Meeresschildkröte

**Mating season:** December to June

**Mating ritual sightings:** Unlikely, as mating occurs at sea

**Island locations:** Widespread throughout the archipelago

**Best time for spotting:** Year-round

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. The green sea turtles of the Galapagos are famed for their extraordinary migration routes, covering thousands of kilometers between their feeding sites and breeding beaches.
2. These turtles may return to where they were born to deposit their eggs because of their extraordinary capacity to use the planet's magnetic fields to guide them.
3. The temperature at which the eggs are incubated determines the gender of the hatchlings. More girls are born when it is warmer outside, whereas more men are born when it is cooler.





# BIRD SPECIES

Prepare to meet the Galapagos Islands' feathered stars! The true show-stoppers, these birds are strutting their thing in style. They provide color and personality to the archipelago, from the amusing blue-footed boobies to the rare flightless cormorant. Get ready for plenty of laughing and extreme bird envy!



GALAPAGOS  
**PENGUIN**

Prepare to encounter the adorable Galapagos penguin as you explore the islands of the Galapagos! **These cute little critters will win your heart with their adorable waddle and lively personalities.** They are exceptional since they are the only species of penguin found north of the equator. They stand out against the volcanic terrain thanks to their sleek black and white feathers. Observe their incredible diving prowess as they float over the clear seas, displaying how well-adapted they are to the Galapagos marine environment.



### Check this species' fun fact!

Due to their tiny legs and hefty bodies, Galapagos penguins waddle and **hop around wonderfully and funnily when "running" on land.**






### Keep in mind this information!

Galapagos penguins, **the only species found north of the equator,** confront particular difficulties because of their small range and vulnerability to environmental changes. For the survival of this iconic species and the general well-being of the marine ecosystem in the Galapagos, it is essential to safeguard their nesting locations and ensure sustainable fishing methods.

**Scientific name:** *Spheniscus mendiculus*

### Common names:

-  Pingüino de Galápagos
-  Manchot des Galápagos
-  Galápagos-Pinguin

**Mating season:** May to January, peaking in August and September

**Mating ritual sightings:** Likely during peak mating season

**Island locations:** Fernandina, Isabela, and Bartolomé

**Best time for spotting:** Year-round

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. Galapagos penguins are one of the smallest species of penguins worldwide, measuring only approximately 19 inches tall.
2. They have an extraordinary capacity to control their body temperature, given that they can survive in both the chilly seas and the sweltering tropical heat of the Galapagos.
3. They are exceptional divers, locally called torpedos, because of the speed the penguins can dive, reaching up to 100 feet of depth to hunt their preferred foods, such as fish and tiny crustaceans.



BLUE-FOOTED  
**BOOBY**



The beautiful blue-footed boobies will prepare to astound you on your Galapagos vacation. **These recognizable birds are incredible with their eye-catching blue feet and distinctive mating dance.** You'll be in awe of their extraordinary aerial acrobatics and unique hunting methods. As you tour the incredible Galapagos Islands, get ready to experience their fabulous presence and lively personalities.



### Check this species' fun fact!

Blue-footed boobies have a hilarious way of walking, often performing an awkward and endearing high-stepping strut that looks like they're practicing their own fancy bird dance moves.





### Keep in mind this information!

**Indicators of the health of maritime ecosystems include blue-footed boobies,** an important species in the Galapagos environment. The availability of their primary food sources impacts their population's health, highlighting the significance of maintaining the delicate balance of the marine environment for their protection.

**Scientific name:** *Sula nebouxii*

**Common names:**

 Piquero patas azules

 Fou à pieds bleus

 Blaufußtölpel

**Mating season:** Year-round, with peaks in April-May and November

**Mating ritual sightings:** Likely, including their iconic "sky pointing" dance

**Island locations:** North Seymour, Española, and Isabela

**Best time for spotting:** Year-round

**Interesting fact:** The blue color of their feet comes from carotenoids found in their diet.

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

- 1. Blue-footed boobies' brilliant blue feet indicate their health** and are essential to their mating displays.
- 2. These birds have outstanding diving skills** and can precisely capture fish by diving into the water from enormous heights.
- 3. Blue-footed boobies are well known for their distinctive courting dance,** in which they elevate and display their blue feet to show off their strength to prospective partners.

Photography: gillbsydney



RED-FOOTED  
**BOOBY**

These captivating birds are incredible with **their distinctive red feet and stunning aerial performances**. They gently glide through the air as they precisely dive into the beautiful seas. Join us as we explore the magical Galapagos Islands and take in the allure of these recognizable red-footed boobies.



### Check this species' fun fact!

When returning to their nests, **red-footed boobies have a lovely habit of clumsily crash-landing on trees**, creating amusing and awkward moments.






### Keep in mind this information!

Red-footed boobies, the smallest booby species, **preserve the island's biodiversity by being effective hunters and seed dispersers in the environment**. These amazing birds' survival and the Galapagos ecosystem's sustainability depend on safeguarding their nesting locations and feeding areas.

**Scientific name:** *Sula sula*

### Common names:

-  Piquero Patas Rojas
-  Fou à pieds rouges
-  Rotschultertölpel

**Mating season:** Throughout the year, with a peak from February to June

**Location:** They nest on several islands, with the largest colonies on Genovesa Island.

**Best Viewing Time:** February to June

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. The red-footed booby is **renowned for its fantastic fishing skills**, diving into the sea from considerable heights to capture its prey.
2. **Male red-footed boobies flaunt their brilliant red feet in a complex courtship ritual** to entice females, unlike their blue-footed relatives.
3. **These birds have an unusual approach to breeding;** they frequently create big colonies and build their nests in trees and bushes, resulting in a thriving neighborhood.

Photography: Charles J Sharp



NAZCA  
**BOOBY**

The unusual Nazca boobies are pretty magnificent with their distinctive black-and-white coloring. They fly gracefully, with an amazing wingspan, gliding over the heavens with style. Join us as we explore the amazing Galapagos Islands and take in the fantastic sight of these recognizable Nazca boobies.



### Check this species' fun fact!

Nazca boobies are the largest of the booby species found in the Galapagos, and they are known for their practice of siblicide, where one chick will kill its sibling to gain more resources from its parents.



### Keep in mind this information!

Nazca boobies play an important role in the Galapagos Islands' ecological balance as top predators in the marine environment, **controlling fish numbers and sustaining a robust ecology**. For these fantastic birds' survival and the Galapagos archipelago's long-term viability, it is essential to safeguard their breeding locations and feeding grounds.

**Scientific name:** *Sula granti*

**Common names:**



Piquero de Nazca



Fou de Grant



Nazcatölpel

**Mating season:** Year-round, but with peaks between December and March.

**Location:** Commonly found on Espanola, Genovesa, and Clipperton Island.

**Best Viewing Time:** December to March

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. Nazca boobies are renowned for their **extensive courting rituals**, which include complex dances, bill fencing, and mutual preening to forge close ties.
2. **They dive into the water from great heights to capture fish** and other marine prey, making these birds superb divers.
3. **They have a prominent face mask of black feathers around the eyes**, adding Nazca boobies a distinctive and stunning look.

Photography: David Marques



GALAPAGOS  
**PETREL**

With their sleek bodies and broad wings, **these beautiful seabirds are masters of the prevailing winds.** They offer a captivating sight as they glide through the air with grace. Join us as we explore the Galapagos Islands' treasures and take in the magnificent presence of these recognizable Galapagos petrels.



### Check this species' fun fact!

Galapagos petrels have a **fairly entertaining habit of performing collective "air dances"** where they soar and glide in elaborate patterns, almost like a synchronized flying ballet.






### Keep in mind this information!

Galapagos petrels are important members of the ecosystem in the Galapagos and **help to cycle nutrients between the marine and terrestrial ecosystems.** Nonetheless, this species is endangered, with invasive species being the main threat to their survival.

**Scientific name:** *Pterodroma phaeopygia*

### Common names:

-  Petrel de Galapagos
-  Pétrel des Galápagos
-  Galapagos-Sturmvogel

**Mating season:** They breed throughout the year, but peak activity is between October and March.

**Location:** They breed in the highlands of the larger islands like Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal, Santiago, and Floreana..

**Best Viewing Time:** October to March

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. Galapagos petrels are nocturnal seabirds that **spend their days at sea and only come ashore at night** to build their nests on the islands.
2. They have a distinctive strategy for fending off predators. When threatened, **they can spew pungent oil from their bellies** to scare off would-be attackers.
3. Galapagos Petrels are **renowned for their extraordinary navigational abilities**, which they employ to navigate their lengthy maritime voyages using the planet's stars and magnetic fields.

Photography: Shawn Billerman



WAVED

**ALBATROSS**



While on your vacation in the Galapagos Islands, get ready to be amazed by the gorgeous Galapagos albatross! **These giant seabirds provide the archipelago a magical air with their enormous wingspans and beautiful flight.** Prepare to experience the beautiful presence of these recognizable Galapagos albatrosses while discovering the islands' beauties.



### Check this species' fun fact!

**As they approach and land on their breeding grounds,** Galapagos albatrosses have a slightly awkward landing style, frequently mimicking a hilarious "crash-landing" with their big wings and bodies gently plopping into the ground.






### Keep in mind this information!

Due to its limited population to a single island, **the Galapagos albatross is severely endangered.** For the survival of this magnificent species and the maintenance of the fragile marine ecosystems of the Galapagos Islands, it is essential to safeguard their breeding grounds and employ sustainable fishing techniques in their foraging regions.

**Scientific name:** *Phoebastria irrorata*

### Common names:

-  Albatros de Galápagos
-  Albatros des Galápagos
-  Wellen-Albatros

**Mating season:** April to June

**Mating ritual sightings:** Likely, including their intricate courtship dance

**Island locations:** Española

**Best time for spotting:** April to December

**Interesting fact:** Waved albatrosses can live up to 40 years and mate for life.

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. The wingspans of Galapagos albatrosses **can reach up to 8 feet.** They are among the largest of any bird species, enabling them to fly smoothly over the ocean for lengthy durations.
2. They are well known for their **extraordinary courting rituals,** including elaborate displays, bill clacking, and the tying of necks in a lovely dance that deepens pair connections.
3. Galapagos albatrosses are **expert fliers and may cover great distances in the ocean,** occasionally even going around the world in one lifetime.

Photography: Robert Cicchetti



FLIGHTLESS  
**CORMORANT**

An intriguing creature that lives on the Galapagos Islands is the flightless cormorant. These unusual birds have astoundingly evolved to the harsh environment of the Galapagos Islands. **They stand out against the volcanic surroundings with their sleek black feathers and brilliant blue eyes.** Unlike their flying counterparts, they have developed strong legs and webbed feet, which are ideal for diving and swimming beneath the surface in search of food. During your Galapagos cruise to the western islands, watch out for these charming cormorants, highlighting the extraordinary diversity of the islands' famous biodiversity.



### Check this species' fun fact!

Flightless cormorants have a **peculiar habit of stretching their wings out to dry after swimming**, almost like they're practicing their nonexistent flying skills, providing a comical sight.






### Keep in mind this information!

The flightless cormorant is an **excellent example of adaptive radiation in the Galapagos Islands.** They stand out among other species in this exceptional archipelago for their unique evolutionary adaption to a life without wings.

**Scientific name:** *Phalacrocorax harrisi*

### Common names:

-  Cormorán no volador
-  Cormoran aptère
-  Flugunfähiger Kormoran

**Mating season:** Year-round, peaking between May and October

**Mating ritual sightings:** Possible, including nest building and courtship displays

**Island locations:** Fernandina and Isabela

**Best time for spotting:** Year-round

**Interesting fact:** The flightless cormorant is the only cormorant species that has lost the ability to fly.

## 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. The flightless cormorant is **the only cormorant species in the world that has lost its ability to fly** due to its adaption to the Galapagos environment.
2. They can successfully hunt because of their **exceptional underwater eyesight**, which enables them to see prey even in low light.
3. In contrast to most other cormorant species, this species **does not have oily waterproofing on their feathers**, enabling them to dive deeper and swim faster.



GALAPAGOS  
**HAWK**

**The Galapagos Hawk is an endemic bird to the Galapagos Islands.** This majestic bird of prey is at the top of the island's food chain and serves as an indicator of ecosystem health due to its position as a top predator. Despite its somewhat regal bearing, it's known to be a scavenger as well as a hunter.

### **3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:**

- 1.** The Galapagos Hawk can live up to **20 years in the wild.**
- 2.** It's known for its polyandrous mating system, where **one female mates with multiple males.**
- 3.** The population of Galapagos Hawks is about **150 breeding pairs.**






#### **Check this species' fun fact!**

Unlike other raptors, which typically hunt alone, **the Galapagos Hawk exhibits fascinating communal behavior.** This extraordinary bird of prey has adapted to the Galapagos Islands' habitat by learning to hunt effectively as part of a group. They can enhance their hunting success with this unorthodox strategy, demonstrating exceptional cooperation and coordination among members of a species more commonly associated with ferocious individuality.

**Scientific name:** *Buteo galapagoensis*

#### **Common names:**

-  Gavilán de Galápagos
-  Buse des Galapagos
-  Galápagos-bussard

**Mating season:** Throughout the year, peaking between August and November.

**Mating ritual sightings:** During courtship, the male will chase the female in a rapid, twisting flight and perform a "sky-dance."

**Island locations:** Found on all major islands in the Galapagos.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact:** The Galapagos Hawk has no natural predators.



#### **Keep in mind this information!**

The Galapagos Hawk, an integral part of the islands' ecosystem, is currently **listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List** due to its small and variable population. The species' survival is challenged by its limited geographical range, slow breeding rate, and susceptibility to diseases and invasive species. Given these circumstances, targeted conservation efforts are vital to safeguard this iconic bird and preserve the ecological balance of the Galapagos Islands.

# WHERE TO FIND THEM?



Galapagos Penguin



Blue-footed Booby



Red-footed Booby



Nazca Booby



Galapagos Pretel



Waved Albatross



Flightless Cormorant



Galapagos Hawk



# MARINE SPECIES

Welcome to the 'Marine Mingle' - the most unique underwater party on the planet, hosted right here in the Galapagos! This is where Marine Iguanas perfect their salty sneezes, Whitetip Reef Sharks enjoy cave naps stacked like sardines, and the Galapagos Hawks fly the friendly skies. With a guest list boasting everything from the world's smallest penguins to the giant Whale Shark, the 'bouncers' of the ocean, this is a soiree of marine marvels like no other. Dive into the extraordinary world of Galapagos marine species, and get ready to be drenched in delight and awe!



MARINE  
**IGUANA**



The Marine Iguana of the Galapagos Islands is a unique creature. With their prehistoric appearance, these animals have intrigued visitors and researchers alike for years. **They are the world's only marine lizards and have adapted to life in the Galapagos archipelago's** harsh intertidal and marine environment.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. **They can dive up to 30 feet deep** and stay underwater for 30 minutes.
2. **Marine Iguanas vary in color and size**, which change depending on which island they inhabit.
3. **Marine Iguanas can shrink their bodies to survive** when food is scarce.






#### Check this species' fun fact!

The Galapagos Marine Iguana is **perfectly adapted to life in the ocean's salty environment**. It's the only kind of iguana that sneezes forth salty liquid. A staple of an iguana's diet is the salty sea algae. They have salt-regulating glands in the area of their noses. These glands remove the salt from their bloodstream and expel it through sneezing. This remarkable evolutionary adaptation allows marine iguanas to keep their salt levels stable, which increases their chances of surviving in salty environments. The sneezing of the Marine Iguana is a peculiar behavior.

**Scientific name:** *Amblyrhynchus cristatus*

#### Common names:

-  Iguana marina
-  Iguane marin
-  Meerechse

**Mating season:** Mating season varies by island, generally between December and March.

**Mating ritual sightings:** Male iguanas perform 'head-bobbing' behavior to attract females and assert dominance.

**Island locations:** Found on all the islands of the Galapagos.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact:** The Marine Iguana is the only lizard in the world that can swim in the sea.



#### Keep in mind this information!

The Marine Iguana faces conservation challenges primarily due to invasive species, pollution, and climate change. Classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN, it is particularly susceptible to rising sea temperatures, which can skew sex ratios by causing more female iguanas to be born. This unique species, the only sea-going lizard in the world, is thus a significant focus of research and conservation efforts. Safeguarding the Marine Iguana also contributes to preserving the overall biodiversity and health of the unique ecosystems within the Galapagos Islands.



WHITETIP REEF  
**SHARK**

The Whitetip Reef Shark is a small species of shark known for its **distinctive, slender shape and the prominent white tips on its fins**. These creatures are primarily nocturnal and can often be seen resting in caves and crevices during the day. However, they become active hunters at night, known for their agility and relentless pursuit of prey.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. **They can survive on very little oxygen**, which allows them to enter and rest in low-oxygen environments where other predators cannot go.
2. **Whitetip Reef Sharks have been known to live up to 25 years.**
3. **They often hunt in packs** to herd and capture prey.



#### Check this species' fun fact!

**The Whitetip Reef Shark is the ultimate night owl of the ocean.**

While many sharks are known to be active hunters during the day, the Whitetip Reef Shark flips the script and does most of its hunting at night.

When the sun sets, these sharks emerge from their daytime hideouts in caves and crevices and search for food. They are known to squeeze themselves into tight spaces in the reef to root out their prey, showing a level of persistence and flexibility that's truly impressive. So sleep tight, don't let the Whitetip Reef Sharks bite!

**Scientific name:** *Trienodon obesus*

**Common names:**



Tiburón de arrecife de punta blanca



Requin à pointes blanches



Weißspitzen-Riffhai.

**Mating season:** No specific season, but peak mating activity occurs in the early evening.

**Mating ritual sightings:** Females signal their readiness to mate through distinct body movements. This is followed by a violent mating process where males grasp females by biting their fins.

**Island locations:** Found throughout the Galapagos archipelago.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact:** The Whitetip Reef Shark is one of the most common sharks in shallow tropical and warm temperate seas.



#### Keep in mind this information!

**Whitetip Reef Sharks, nocturnal predators contributing to coral reefs, confront conservation concerns.** Bycatch in fisheries, targeted hunting, and habitat deterioration due to climate change and pollution threaten its function in managing marine animal populations and maintaining biodiversity. This species is "Near Threatened" by the IUCN and has a limited reproduction rate, highlighting the need for targeted conservation measures to safeguard the shark and its vital habitats.



GALAPAGOS  
**SEA STAR**

The Galapagos Sea Star is one of the most recognizable marine creatures in the Galapagos waters. **Their beautiful shape and range of colors make them a favorite among divers and snorkelers.** But, like all sea stars, they play an essential role in the ecosystem by helping to keep the ocean floor clean.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

- 1. Galapagos Sea Stars are true superheroes of the underwater world with a superpower that would make even a comic book character envious:** they can regenerate! If injured or under attack, they have the astonishing capability to regrow parts of their bodies. Even if only a single arm is left, given time and the right conditions, they can regenerate an entirely new sea star from that solitary arm. This incredible biological feature is a remarkable example of nature's resilience.
- 2. Galapagos Sea Stars have a stomach-churning (literally) method for their dining habits.** In a bizarre twist on conventional feeding, these creatures expel their stomachs out of their bodies to consume prey. Then, once their meal is partially digested outside their bodies, they retract their stomachs back in to complete the digestion process. It's an out-of-body dining experience that's both unusual and fascinating.
- 3. Variety is the spice of life, and in the Galapagos, Sea Stars have taken this adage to heart.** The islands boast many Sea Star species, each with unique colors, sizes, and traits. This biodiversity underscores the Galapagos Islands' reputation as a special haven for marine life, offering a spectacular showcase of nature's creativity. From species with vibrant color patterns to those with numerous arms, the Sea Star diversity within the Galapagos is a testament to the richness of this marine ecosystem.






#### Check this species' fun fact!

Some species of Sea Stars are the ultimate team players - **they can switch sexes depending on the colony's needs.** When the population balance calls for it in certain conditions, a male Sea Star can transform into a female or vice versa. This incredible adaptive mechanism helps to ensure a healthy balance of sexes within the colony and ultimately aids in the species' survival. So talk about a Sea Star with a fluid sense of identity for the greater good of the community.

**Scientific name:** *Pharia pyramidata*

**Common names:**

-  Estrella de mar de Galápagos
-  Étoile de mer des Galapagos
-  Galapagos Seestern

**Mating season:** Not specific, but typically during warm weather months.

**Mating ritual sightings:**

Reproduce by releasing eggs and sperm into the water where fertilization occurs.

**Island locations:** Found throughout the Galapagos archipelago.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.



#### Keep in mind this information!

Galapagos Sea Stars are remarkable due to their **biological variety and unusual behaviors**, yet they are susceptible to habitat changes. Many aquatic creatures face climate change. Global warming is increasing water star disease outbreaks. Sea Star Wasting Syndrome produces lesions, deterioration, and fragmentation, destroying specific Sea Star populations. Ocean warming has caused this. We must fight climate change to protect marine life for future generations while appreciating its incredible diversity.



KING

**ANGELFISH**

**The King Angelfish is one of the most vibrant fish in the waters of the Galapagos.** They are known for their striking coloration, which changes as they grow. They inhabit rocky reefs, feeding primarily on algae and small invertebrates.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

- 1. King Angelfish, known for their vibrant colors and majestic presence, are not to be overlooked when it comes to size either.** These regal underwater dwellers can reach an impressive length of up to 35 centimeters. That's about the length of a standard office ruler! This makes them one of the larger members of the angelfish family and a truly eye-catching sight for divers and snorkelers in the Galapagos waters.
- 2. In an underwater love story, King Angelfish form monogamous breeding pairs.** Once they choose a partner, they stick together, defending their shared territory and spawning their eggs on the rocky ocean floor. This relationship loyalty isn't just romantic - it's also a strategic move that allows both parents to protect their eggs and increase the chances of survival for their offspring.
- 3. When it comes to survival strategies, young King Angelfish certainly stands out with their intriguing roles as underwater cleaners.** They offer a much-needed service in their marine community by picking off and consuming parasites from other fish. This behavior not only provides the young angelfish with food but also protects them from potential predators, who tend to avoid harming their helpful cleaners. It's an ingenious survival strategy that benefits the young angelfish and the larger aquatic community they serve.



#### Check this species' fun fact!

King Angelfish are the vibrant 'beauticians' of the marine world. As juveniles, **they set up 'cleaning stations' to pick off and eat parasites from 'client' fish.** This service helps the young King Angelfish receive nutrients while providing a parasite-removal service for other marine creatures. It's an undersea beauty salon with a fantastic health benefit for the aquatic community!

**Scientific name:** *Holocanthus passer*

**Common names:**



Pez Ángel Rey



Poisson-ange roi



König Kaiserfisch.

**Mating season:** Not specific, generally year-round with peaks in warmer months.

**Mating ritual sightings:** Males display aggressive behaviors to establish territory before courting females.

**Island locations:** Found throughout the Galapagos archipelago.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact about the species:** The King Angelfish change their color pattern as they mature.



#### Keep in mind this information!

King Angelfish are beautiful and distinctive yet vulnerable to ocean threats. **Pollution, habitat loss, and climate change threaten their populations.** Due to their attractiveness, these fish are overfished for aquariums. Due to these risks, King Angelfish stocks must be maintained through responsible fishing and marine conservation. King Angelfish's resilience is vital to marine ecosystems.



SPOTTED  
**EAGLE RAY**



The Spotted Eagle Ray is one of the most elegant sights in the ocean with its **large, triangular pectoral fins, whip-like tail, and distinctive spotted pattern**. This highly active ray is known for its leaps above the surface of the water and its graceful swimming style.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

- 1. The Spotted Eagle Ray is famed for its grandeur and grace in the water, much of which comes from its incredible wingspan.** This magnificent creature can have a wingspan reaching up to 3 meters (nearly 10 feet), enabling it to 'fly' elegantly through the water.
- 2. The Spotted Eagle Ray lives up to its name with its beautiful array of spots across its dorsal surface.** But did you know these spot patterns are as unique to each ray as fingerprints are to humans? That's right, no two Spotted Eagle Rays have the same spot pattern, making each individual truly unique.
- 3. Spotted Eagle Rays have a fascinating approach to feeding.** They use their snouts to dig in the sand of the ocean floor and uncover their prey, primarily small fish, mollusks, and crustaceans. To consume their food, they have specially adapted plates in their mouths to crush hard shells – a unique adaptation that makes mealtime in the sand a breeze!

**Scientific name:** *Aetobatus narinari*

**Common names:**

 Raya águila moteada

 Raie léopard

 Gefleckter Adlerrochen

**Mating season:** Late spring to early fall

**Mating ritual sightings:** During courtship, males pursue females and bite at their discs, eventually grasping the edge of the female's disc to assist in copulation.

**Island locations:** Found throughout the Galapagos archipelago.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact about the species:** The Spotted Eagle Ray is known for its ability to leap out of the water when pursued.



#### Keep in mind this information!

While the Spotted Eagle Ray is an incredible sight to witness in the ocean, you should know that it **is now considered to be in a 'Near Threatened' status by the IUCN**. Overfishing, both incidental in commercial fisheries and intentional for their flesh and cartilage, is another significant danger to these rays. And because of their poor reproduction rates, replenishing their numbers after a decline is difficult. To ensure the long-term survival of these beautiful marine acrobats, conservation efforts must focus on sustainable fishing techniques, marine pollution reduction, and habitat preservation.



#### Check this species' fun fact!

**Spotted Eagle Rays are the 'acrobats' of the ocean.** These graceful creatures not only glide through the water with ease but they're also known to leap out of the water, soaring into the air! This unusual behavior is believed to be a method for evading predators, attracting mates, or perhaps just for fun. Either way, it's a spectacular sight that adds a dash of aerial drama to their underwater elegance!



HAMMERHEAD  
**SHARK**

**The Hammerhead Shark is one of the most iconic species of the Galapagos.** Their peculiar head shape makes them easily recognizable. Despite their intimidating appearance, Hammerheads are generally non-aggressive. Divers highly value them for their unique appearance and behavior.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

- 1. Hammerhead Sharks stand out in the shark world due to their distinctive 'hammer-shaped' head, known as a cephalofoil.** This unique adaptation enhances their sensory capabilities. In addition, the widely spaced eyes and nostrils provide a better visual range and improved stereoscopic vision, aiding them in effectively locating prey.
- 2. Unlike most other shark species, Hammerhead Sharks are known for their social behavior.** They form large schools, sometimes consisting of hundreds of individuals, providing them with protection from predators and increasing their hunting efficiency.
- 3. All sharks can detect electrical signals from other animals using particular sensory organs known as ampullae of Lorenzini.** However, Hammerhead Sharks take this a step further. Their broad, flat heads give them an increased surface area packed with these sensory organs, making them highly adept at sensing the electrical fields of hidden prey, even those buried under the sand.

### Keep in mind this information!

**Human activity threatens Hammerhead Sharks, known for their unusual head shape and intriguing behavior.** Overfishing has threatened many Hammerhead Shark species on the IUCN Red List. Their fins are prized for shark fin soup, a delicacy in some cultures. They are also commercial fishery bycatch. Slow growth and low reproduction rates make population recovery difficult. Support sustainable fishing, shark finning prohibitions, and conservation initiatives to safeguard these unique species and our ocean ecosystems.

**Scientific name:** *Sphyrna lewini*

**Common names:**



Tiburón martillo



Requin-marteau



Hammerhai

**Mating season:** December to March

**Mating ritual sightings:** Males perform biting rituals to grasp the female during copulation.

**Island locations:** Found throughout the Galapagos archipelago.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact about the species:** Hammerhead Sharks are known for their unusual head shape, which is thought to enhance their ability to find prey.



### Check this species' fun fact!

Hammerhead Sharks are extraordinary in their appearance and hunting skills and **have a fascinating quirk related to the sun.** These unique creatures use the sun to regulate their migration patterns and are known to travel in the direction of the sun. In fact, they've been observed swimming along the water's surface with their dorsal fin exposed, a behavior known as 'finning,' which is believed to be a way to absorb more sunlight. It's a solar-powered shark spectacle!

Photography: Alex Mustard



# WHALE **SHARK**

The Whale Shark is the largest fish in the ocean, **reaching lengths of up to 12 meters or more**. Despite their size, these gentle giants are known to be placid and slow-moving, feeding primarily on plankton and small fish. Seeing a Whale Shark in the wild is a thrilling experience and a privilege.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

- 1. Whale Sharks hold the title of the world's largest fish**, reaching lengths of up to 18 meters (60 feet). Despite their massive size, these creatures are known for their gentle, docile nature and pose no risk to humans.
- 2. Whale Sharks have a unique feeding strategy.** They're filter feeders, consuming large quantities of plankton, small fish, and squid by drawing water into their mouths and filtering out their food through their gill rakers.
- 3. Just like fingerprints in humans, the pattern of spots and stripes on a Whale Shark's skin is unique to each individual.** These patterns can identify individual sharks, aiding in research and conservation efforts.



#### Keep in mind this information!

Whale Sharks, despite their colossal size and widespread fascination, are currently listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List. **Their populations are believed to have decreased by more than 50% over the past 75 years.** This decline is primarily attributed to human activities, with hunting for their fins and meat and accidental entanglement in fishing gear posing significant threats. Furthermore, their slow growth and late sexual maturity mean their populations take a long time to recover from such losses. Whale Shark tourism must be managed carefully to prevent stress and harm to these gentle giants, and we should support efforts to protect their critical habitats.

**Scientific name:** *Rhincodon typus*

**Common names:**

 Tiburón ballena

 Requin baleine

 Walhai

**Mating season:** Not specific, but often seen in aggregations between May and September, which may indicate a mating event.

**Mating ritual sightings:** Mating behavior has rarely been observed in the wild.

**Island locations:** Found throughout the Galapagos archipelago, especially the northern islands of Wolf and Darwin.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact about the species:** The Whale Shark is the largest known extant fish species.



#### Check this species' fun fact!

Despite being the largest fish in the ocean, **Whale Sharks have tiny teeth.** In fact, they have around 3,000 tiny teeth in their mouth, each only about 6mm long, which is less than a quarter of an inch! Surprisingly, they don't use these teeth to eat - instead, they filter their microscopic food out of the water. This shows that even in nature, size isn't everything!

Photography: wildestanimal



# GALAPAGOS **SHARK**

The Galapagos Shark is a large species of shark found predominantly around oceanic islands. **Known for their curiosity and boldness, these sharks are a highlight for divers visiting the Galapagos.** Despite their name, they are found in the Galapagos and warm, temperate seas worldwide.

### 3 EXCITING SPECIES FACTS:

1. **Galapagos Sharks are known for their broad diet**, which includes a variety of prey such as fish, octopus, squid, and even smaller shark species. Their varied diet contributes to their successful adaptation to various marine environments.
2. **Galapagos Sharks are adept divers** and have been known to plunge to depths of over 180 meters (590 feet) in search of food. Their ability to thrive in both shallow and deep waters speaks to their versatility in the marine environment.
3. **These sharks are not solitary creatures.** They prefer to live in large groups or 'schools,' particularly in their juvenile stages. As they mature, they become more isolated, although they are often seen in groups. This fascinating social behavior provides a rich area of study for scientists.



#### Keep in mind this information!

The Galapagos Shark is widely distributed and highly adaptable, yet it is nevertheless considered to be in a 'Near Threatened' status by the IUCN. **Significant risks to their populations come from overfishing for their flesh, fins, or bycatch and from the destruction of their environment.** Because of their low reproduction rate and late age of development, their populations are less resilient to threats to their survival. Given their status as top predators in the marine food web, their extinction would have far-reaching consequences. To preserve the survival of these beautiful sharks, conservation efforts must be supported, such as sustainable fishing techniques and the protection of marine habitats.

**Scientific name:** *Carcharhinus galapagensis*

#### Common names:



Tiburón de Galápagos



Requin des Galapagos



Galapagos-Hai

**Mating season:** Not specific, but often during warm weather months.

**Mating ritual sightings:** Males bite the female's body during mating.

**Island locations:** Found throughout the Galapagos archipelago.

**Best time for spotting:** April to December.

**Interesting fact about the species:** The Galapagos Shark is very curious and often approaches swimmers closely.



#### Check this species' fun fact!

Despite being named after the Galapagos Islands, the Galapagos Sharks are not exclusive to this region. These versatile sharks have a **wide geographical distribution** and can be found in warm, tropical waters worldwide. So, while they're honored in their name by one of the world's most unique ecological sites, they're also global explorers in their own right!

# WHERE TO FIND THEM?



Marine Iguana



Whitetip Reef Shark



Galapagos Sea Star



King Angelfish



Spotted Eagle Ray



Hammerhead Shark



Whale Shark



Galapagos Shark



The Galapagos is more than an archipelago; it's a living, **breathing showcase of life's incredible diversity and adaptability**. As you conclude your journey through this catalog, we hope you carry forward not just newfound knowledge about these 20 iconic species but also a sense of wonder and a deeper appreciation for the delicate balance of our natural world. Remember, we all have a role to play in ensuring these species and their extraordinary habitats endure for generations to come.

**Happy exploring!**



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