

# TRIBUTE YACHT



## *Itinerary B*

**5 days – 4 nights**

From Sunday – Thursday

Set sail on our Central & North Galapagos Safari, a 5-day Wildlife Discovery. Begin your journey to the pristine Lobos Islet. Dive into encounters with the vibrant wildlife of Santa Fe, including endemic species. Explore the secluded wonders of Genovesa, famous for Darwin Bay and Prince Philip's Steps. Venture to Chinese Hat and Rabida, discovering unique landscapes and wildlife. Conclude your adventure with a visit to the Charles Darwin Center on Santa Cruz, where conservation and discovery merge.



## DAY 1 - Sunday

**AM:** Arrival in Galapagos and boarding the yacht

Upon arrival at San Cristobal, you will pass through an airport inspection point to insure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands, as well as to pay the park entrance fee of \$100 (unless it has been prepaid). A guide will meet you, help you collect your luggage, and escort you on a short bus ride to the harbour, where you will board the Tribute cruise. You will be assigned to your cabins, and lunch will be served shortly after.

**PM:** Lobos islet (San Cristobal) Lobos Islet harbours a colony of Galapagos sea lions. As in other colonies in the archipelago, you can approach nurturing females within a few metres. During breeding season this colony is also visited by territorial males, defending and mating their harem. There are two other emblematic species breeding here: male blue-footed boobies and great frigate birds who try to impress the females (and tourists) with clumsy dances, heaving their feet or blowing up their balloon-sized scarlet pouches.

## DAY 2 - Monday

### **AM: Santa Fe island**

During your excursion at Santa Fe island, you will get surprised at how close to you some curious sea lions waddle. Likewise approachable for a close-up are Galapagos hawks that usually perch at their outlooks, ready to snatch away a baby marine iguana or lava lizard. We start next a cactus forest trail, that gives a close-up view on how these surrealistic, house-high giant opuntia prickly pears have grown out larger than on any other island and tell a fascinating evolutionary story. At the calm, turquoise Barrington Bay, you can swim in close company with Galapagos sea lions, fluorescent blue chin parrot fishes, yellowtail surgeon fishes, whiptail stingrays, Pacific green turtles, whitetip reef sharks, and more.

### **PM: Black Turtle Cove**

You will disembark the cruise in the afternoon, to explore Black Turtle Cove from the dinghy. This place is a living illustration of how mangroves alter the marine environment to create a rich and unique habitat. Three mangrove species crowd the area from the shore out into the lagoon, which reaches almost a mile inland. As we drift through quiet waters in the zodiac, you are likely to see spotted eagle rays, which swim in a diamond formation. White-tipped reef sharks slip beneath the boat and Pacific green turtles come to the surface for air.



## DAY 3 - Tuesday

### **AM: Darwin Bay (Genovesa)**

As one of the outer islands and most exclusive places on the Galapagos, Genovesa is well worth last night's longer navigation. This compact site in the heart of its flooded crater shows the extremely varied coastal ecosystems of the Galapagos in miniature; nearly too much for a single day. Whimbrels and wandering tattlers forage actively along the surf, next to resting Galapagos sea lions. Impressive frigatebirds and red-footed boobies nest in the mangroves, where you can also see vocalists such as the yellow warbler, Darwin's finches and the Galapagos mockingbird. Uniquely, two subpopulations of the same species of large cactus finch differ in their singing

### **PM: Prince Philip's Steps (Genovesa)**

Not only because of its historical English name (Tower) Genovesa has a royal touch. Follow in the footsteps of Prince Philip – Galapagos lover for many years – and visit this favourite birding spot with the largest breeding colonies of red-footed and Nazca boobies, and look for the remarkable short-eared owl that hunts on foot!

## DAY 4 - Wednesday

### **AM: Chinese Hat**

Approaching Chinese Hat from the north, you will understand the reason of its name. You arrive just in time to witness how this young barren islet is being colonised by pioneer species sprouting from holes in the lava. The presence of Galapagos sea lions, countless marine iguanas, eagles and mockingbirds contribute to soil fertilisation. Snorkelling here is highly recommended, as it's home of a colony of Galapagos Penguins, critically endangered because of the effects of climate change. While you're swimming, they might approach curiously to your mask, alongside sea lions and elusive Pacific green turtles.

### **PM: Rabida island**

This afternoon you have a 'wet landing' on the extraordinary red beach of Rabida island. Oxidised iron particles have given its rocks and sand an intense rusty colour. Contiguous to the beach is a shallow green lagoon, an oasis on this otherwise arid island, which attracts all kind of aquatic birds, like pintails and sometimes American flamingos. Between the evergreen foliage of the surrounding mangrove bushes, many species of songbirds hide and breed. One of the most outstanding attractions is the major breeding colony of brown pelicans, the only ones in the world that plunge-divide. On return you will be picked up by the inflatable dinghies, to get ready for snorkeling.



## DAY 5 - Thursday

### **AM: Charles Darwin Research Station (Santa Cruz)**

The dinghies will bring you to the touristic pier of Puerto Ayora, in Santa Cruz island, from where you will be brought to the Charles Darwin Research Station. This institution was named after the British naturalist who developed his Theory of Evolution after visiting these islands in 1835, and works on the conservation and restoration of the Galapagos ecosystems, as well as for the sustainable development of its communities.

There is an interpretation centre about the National Park and its Marine Reserve. The most memorable part of your visit will probably be the successful breeding centre and the enclosures with Galapagos giant tortoises.

After this visit, you will disembark the Tribute, and be transferred to Baltra airport,

