

SUMMER 2022

GALAPAGOS

POST

The most impactful species
in Galápagos is our own.



- CONSERVANDO GALÁPAGOS: A LOCAL REVOLUTION IN CONSERVATION
- ADOPT A REAL GIANT TORTOISE NOW!
- FIRST EVER WISE COMMUNITY FAIR
- GRAND OPENING: GALÁPAGOS CONSERVATION CENTER
- EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE



Galápagos
Conservancy
galapagos.org

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The Future of Galápagos Conservation

Dear Galápagos Conservancy Community,

We are on the cusp of an important transformation in the culture of conservation of Galápagos.

Since the beginning of the environmental movement in the Islands, international non-profit organizations have dominated the landscape. Few Galápagos-focused entities and not nearly enough local people have had a say in initiatives and actions that protect their unique biodiversity and sustain their livelihoods.

But that is changing.

Galápagos Conservancy is proud to announce our long-term support for the newly established organization, Conservando Galápagos, which is run entirely by and for Galápagos residents – Galapagueños themselves. Based on Santa Cruz Island, Conservando Galápagos draws upon and strengthens the capacity of local community members in directing sustainability initiatives on their home islands.

We recognize there are many dedicated and capable Galapagueños eager to contribute more to preserving and protecting their shared natural heritage. By supporting Conservando Galápagos, Galápagos Conservancy is at the forefront of an important cultural shift towards local ownership of the targeted actions needed to protect Galápagos’ natural resources.



Dr. Paul Salaman
President

In collaboration with Conservando Galápagos, we can better identify strategic conservation priorities and then make more efficient and effective moves to protect the wildlife and ecosystems we all hold dear. In partnership, our two organizations will work together with the Galápagos National Park Directorate to address the unprecedented threats jeopardizing the future of Galápagos, like invasive species and climate change.

For the first time, Galapagueños are at the forefront of defining and driving conservation action in the Islands. This represents a major milestone for non-profit organizations working in Galápagos — with Conservando Galápagos leading conservation action in the Archipelago — and we could not be more proud to be involved in forging a long-term partnership with them.

Thank you for supporting this transformative evolution for Galápagos conservation.

Yours in conservation,

Dr. Paul Salaman, President

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Adopt a Real Giant Tortoise

FOR THE FUTURE OF GALÁPAGOS THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GIVE

Online Gifts Make a Difference!

Online donations have the lowest overhead cost.
When you give online, your support makes the biggest impact for conservation action.



Become a Galápagos Guardian with Your Monthly Recurring Donation

When you become a monthly sustaining member at \$10+ per month you will receive this beautiful Pink Iguana iron-on patch and a new Galápagos wildlife patch each year! But the best part about becoming a Galápagos Guardian is that you will provide reliable support with the lowest overhead cost so we can plan for expeditions, scientific research, invasive species management, and so many other important conservation projects.

Make a One-Time Gift Online



For online gifts of \$50+ you will receive this beautiful 4x9" Galápagos wildlife magnet, made of 75% recycled material.



For online gifts of \$100+ you will receive this gorgeous, sustainably handmade metal mug.

galapagos.org/summer2022



More Ways to Give

Galápagos Forever!

Join the Legacy Society with a planned gift.

By making the incredible gift of including Galápagos Conservancy in your will, you ensure the remarkable wildlife and ecosystems of Galápagos will be protected forever. Contact ambassador@galapagos.org

IRAs - If you are over age 70½, you may make a qualified charitable contribution from an IRA as a tax-free distribution to Galápagos Conservancy.

Workplace Giving - Does your employer match your gifts to charity? If so, you can instantly double your donation.

Donor Advised Funds - A donor-advised fund (DAF) is a philanthropic giving account that provides an immediate tax benefit to you and allows you to recommend gifts to your favorite charity. (Galápagos Conservancy of course!)

Galápagos Conservancy will also graciously accept gifts in almost any form your financial advisor recommends including QCDs, stock, charitable trusts, insurance policies, mutual funds, savings bonds, and more.



For more about ways to support Galápagos Conservancy, contact member@galapagos.org or 703-383-0077
1630 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C 20009 ♦ Nonprofit Tax ID: 13-3281486

News Bulletins from Galápagos



Galápagos Conservancy Supports 84 Projects in Past Year

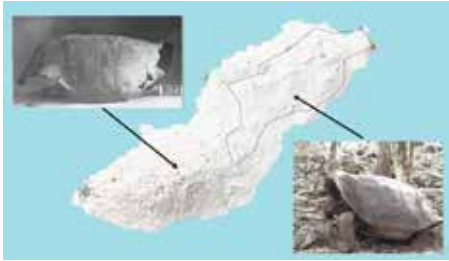
To date, 84 conservation impact projects received funding from Galápagos Conservancy. This adds up to \$2,643,000 for direct conservation project support in the Galápagos Islands during the last 12 months. Of these, the majority of projects are led by women from Galápagos. All Impact Grant projects carry out specific research and conservation goals that directly address the priorities identified by the Galápagos National Park Directorate and Galápagos Conservancy. This June, Galápagos Conservancy awarded a third round of 24 new grants for conservation action focusing on residents and institutions of the Galápagos province and research universities outside the island. This August a fourth call for propoasals opened.



New Research from the Summit of Wolf Volcano, Isabela Island

In February, a team of Galápagos National Park Rangers and Galápagos Conservancy staff spent 20 days exploring the habitat and potential nesting areas of the Pink Iguana on Wolf Volcano on Isabela Island, collecting essential information to broaden the knowledge of the species' ecology,

reproductive biology, and the threats it faces. The researchers used camera traps to study the Pink Iguana's environment, and identified feral cats as potential threats to this endemic reptile. This research is part of Iniciativa Galápagos, a joint project by Galápagos Conservancy and the Galápagos National Park Directorate to safeguard, among other species, the critically endangered Pink Iguana of which an estimated 211 individuals remain. We have now established a near continuous presence on the summit of Wolf Volcano to research and protect the Pink Iguana.



Tortoise New to Science Discovered on San Cristóbal Island

New DNA analysis of century-old tortoise bones contained a startling revelation: the Giant Tortoise species living on San Cristóbal Island represents a genetically distinct and undescribed taxon (or lineage) that is new to science. Until now, it has been presumed that the tortoises living on San Cristóbal belonged to a single species (*Chelonoidis chathamensis*) which was described on the basis of the physical characteristics of one living tortoise and bones collected in a cave during a 1906 California Academy of Sciences expedition. However, researchers from University of Newcastle, Yale University, Galápagos Conservancy, and other institutions extracted DNA from these specimens and made a remarkable discovery: the DNA does not match that of the tortoises currently inhabiting the

island. This means that: 1) The 8,000 tortoises living on San Cristóbal today may not be rightly called *C. chathamensis* since they are an entirely different species that has no formal description or scientific name; 2) The species that the name *C. chathamensis* belongs to lived in the island's highlands where it is now almost certainly extinct; 3) San Cristóbal Island was previously home to two different taxa of tortoises living together — one in the highlands and one in the lowlands, each likely with different nesting areas — until the extinction of the highland species in the mid-20th century. But, this new discovery reinvigorates hope of finding remaining survivors of the San Cristóbal highland species.



"Fernanda" Again Confirmed as Fernandina Giant Tortoise

Genetic data analysis performed in early 2021 and published in June 2022, confirmed that Fernanda, the lone female Giant Tortoise found in 2019 on Fernandina Island, is in fact a Fernandina Giant Tortoise (*Chelonoidis phantasticus*). Although her identity had previously been declared in 2021, further genetic analysis was performed to better understand her genome, as well as that of her species. In particular, researchers were interested in understanding how the "Fantastic Giant Tortoise" of Fernandina Island fit into the Galápagos Giant Tortoise family tree writ large. By comparing her DNA with that of a specimen collected in 1906, scientists were able to confirm that both individuals

were indeed of the same species, a species which was also found to be distinct from all other tortoises in Galápagos. Fernanda is both a symbol of hope and a call to action for conservation in Galápagos. Her mere existence after over 100 years of presumed extinction is incredible. Her story will turn into tragedy if it follows the same trajectory as Lonesome George, the last Pinta Giant Tortoise who died in 2012. Whether Fernanda is the last of her species or not, she represents an exciting discovery that engenders hope that even long-unseen species may yet survive.



Dire News for the Fernandina Giant Tortoise

In March, Galápagos Conservancy scientists and Galápagos National Park Rangers completed a series of intensive searches of Fernandina Island in an effort to locate more Fernandina Giant Tortoises. The world's foremost experts at finding tortoises in these harsh conditions have now explored nearly all habitat on the island that could be suitable for these animals. Tortoises leave abundant signs — tracks, droppings, trails, and bite marks on vegetation — wherever they occur. Lacking any further sign of tortoises after exhaustive searches of the island, anticipation of finding more Fernandina tortoises is waning. "Hope is fast running out to find a mate for Fernanda, the sole known survivor of her species," stated Dr. Paul Salaman, President of Galápagos Conservancy. Another expedition is planned for the coming

months, when the team will use a helicopter to search the last remaining habitats.



Ecological Restoration of Santa Fé Island Showing Progress

In May, a team of scientists from Galápagos Conservancy and Park Rangers from the Galápagos National Park Directorate (GNPD) undertook a seven-day expedition to Santa Fé Island to carry out biodiversity monitoring activities as part of the Iniciativa Galápagos program. Starting in 2015, the GNPD began to repopulate the island with tortoises from Española Island (*Chelonoidis hoodensis*) in the hopes of restoring balance to the ecosystem. Data collected during the May 2022 expedition showed that repatriated tortoises are expanding their range across the landscape, which allows us to learn more about the "ecosystem engineering" effects of native reptiles. This new data also provides information about the restoration status of Opuntia cacti on Santa Fé in the 51 years since feral goats were removed. Additionally, Dr. Dan Sherman, Galápagos Conservancy Board Chair, trained a team of Park Rangers and scientists to use super high-resolution panoramic photos as a long-term ecological monitoring tool. These photos, when compared with pictures taken in the past, allow researchers to evaluate the changes that have occurred over time. These comparisons will assist future researchers as they assess the health and ongoing changes of the Santa Fé ecosystem.



New Website Evolves Digital Presence

Galápagos Conservancy is evolving to better meet the changing needs of Galápagos. To continue to share news of our impact with supporters like you, we refreshed our digital identity with a newly launched website. This new site has a stronger focus on storytelling so we can better communicate the impact of your generosity. It will also help us expand our reach and share tales of the Enchanted Isles with an even wider worldwide audience. For 40 years, Galápagos Conservancy has been a stalwart protector of the wildlife and ecosystems of the Galápagos Archipelago. In recent years we have significantly ramped up the breadth of our conservation and sustainability initiatives, all while honing our ability to make our investments more efficient. This new site will allow us to share this essential work with you and the world. Thank you for making this possible. And, as always, your connection to the Galápagos Islands is galapagos.org.





Premiere: "We Are Galápagos Conservancy" Video

To complement the launch of the new website, Galápagos Conservancy created a brand new video entitled "We Are Galápagos Conservancy" to showcase our organization's values, mission, and impact in the Galápagos Islands. Watch Here



galapagos.org/WeAre



Galápagos Conservancy Launches Local Radio Program

In July, the radio program Conexión Galápagos launched as a permanent channel for disseminating the activities of Galápagos Conservancy across the Archipelago. Under the motto "conservar, proteger, y restaurar" ("conserve, protect, and restore"), Conexión Galápagos broadcasts information about the conservation initiatives of local visionaries. Guests on the show will include women entrepreneurs, scientists, public and private institutions, leaders in community sustainability, and others who receive Impact Grant support from

Galápagos Conservancy. Wacho Tapia, the General Director of Conservando Galápagos, hopes that this new communication project will better integrate the community into conservation efforts to achieve sustainability for the Archipelago. Conexión Galápagos broadcasts every Monday at 08:30 AM Galápagos time, locally via Radio Encantada, and internationally on Galápagos Conservancy's Facebook page via Facebook Live. No Facebook account is required to tune in. Program is transmitted in Spanish.



Ship Trafficking Galápagos Wildlife Seized by Ecuadorian Navy

In June, the ship Xavier III was boarded by members of the Ecuadorian Navy, and found to be illegally trafficking wildlife. Many Giant Tortoises and Land Iguanas were found in boxes and bags aboard the ship, and were confiscated by Ecuadorian maritime authorities. Galápagos Conservancy fiercely condemns the trafficking of species endemic to the Galápagos Islands. We congratulate the Ecuadorian Navy for this capture. Galápagos Conservancy continues to provide robust support for anti-poaching measures. Through our partnership with the Galápagos National Park Directorate and our longterm relationship with the Ecuadorian Ministry of the Environment, we are also supporting the process of returning these stolen animals to their islands of origin. The legal process for addressing this high profile case is ongoing.



Galápagos Conservancy Supports Reading and Learning Initiatives

Alice Bartlett opened The Book Shop on Santa Cruz Island in November 2020 as a marketplace for books by Galapagueños featuring the unique wildlife and ecosystems of their home islands. But more than a shop, Alice's business strives to promote a culture of reading and self-learning in the local community through creating a fun and welcoming meeting space for children and readers of all ages. Alice is also linking up with local schools and educators to create age-appropriate environmentally themed reading lists. "My goal is to showcase local authors who defend the unique ecological world of the islands and are the best people to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the conservation of Galápagos. Awareness is key to the conservation process, and what better way to achieve it than through the magic of books!" Galápagos Conservancy is proud to support this endeavor through the Women in Sustainable Entrepreneurship grant program.



Support for First Ever Dehydrated Fruit Factory in Galápagos

The first artisanal factory for the production of dehydrated fruits in the Galápagos Islands opened this

spring. Galápagos Conservancy supports this project through the Conservation Action Grants program with Galápagos resident Vicente Peñafiel leading the project. During the early stages of the pandemic, Vicente began planning for his visionary business and is now positioned to succeed thanks to Galápagos Conservancy's support. His product benefits farmers who provide the fruit as raw material, as well as traders and sellers. Dehydrated fruits are a rich source of vitamins and minerals, and for the first time in Galápagos, there is a local factory. Galápagos Conservancy promotes these initiatives because local food production contributes to the sustainability of the Archipelago.



New Breeding Center Nesting Sites to Restore Floreana Tortoise

Galápagos National Park Rangers, volunteers, and staff from Galápagos Conservancy prepared additional nesting sites at the Fausto Llerena Giant Tortoise Breeding Center on Santa Cruz Island to accelerate the restoration of the extinct Floreana Giant Tortoise, part of a comprehensive initiative to restore the island to its original state, known as Project Floreana. The breeding program was launched in 2017, two years after a joint expedition by the Galápagos National Park Directorate and Galápagos Conservancy discovered 19 tortoises on Wolf Volcano with partial ancestry to the now-extinct Floreana species.



Expeditions to Baltra and Seymour Islands Completed

In July, a team including National Park Rangers and scientists from Galápagos Conservancy and the Charles Darwin Foundation assessed 6770 acres between Baltra and North Seymour Islands to learn about the status of the populations of several keystone species such as Land Iguanas, Opuntia cacti, and various native woody plants. The results obtained from this intensive fieldwork will allow the Galápagos National Park Directorate (GNPD) to make informed management decisions to guarantee, in the case of North Seymour, the maintenance of the island's ecological integrity and, in the case of Baltra, direct the process for its ecological restoration. There is compelling evidence of recovery in the population of Land Iguanas (*Conolophus subcristatus*) on Baltra Island, with an estimated population of around 2467 individuals. Additionally on North Seymour, a population of at least 3930 iguanas was estimated. Dr. James Gibbs, Vice President of Science and Conservation of Galápagos Conservancy said, "In the case of Baltra Island, the success in the restoration of the iguana population — which until a few decades ago was extinct — is the result of the conservation efforts of the GNPD in cooperation with the Ecuadorian Air Force and other entities such as the Charles Darwin Foundation."



Connecting Galápagos Kids with Marine Environments

Galápagos Conservancy is investing in the work of YachtAid Global and several local organizations to grow a community sailing and swimming school that will provide life-changing opportunities for hundreds of young people in the Islands. Galápagos Conservancy is proud to support this project because it will help young Galapagueños develop a deep connection with marine environments in Galápagos, and instill a commitment to protect the Galápagos Marine Reserve. Participants will develop self-confidence and problem-solving skills while on the water. Many will be inspired to learn about the math and science behind sailing, navigation, and weather systems. Some will develop interest and skills to pursue careers in the marine and yachting sectors, locally or beyond the Islands. Our partners at YachtAid Global report that the Sailing and Swimming School has achieved several milestones in 2022, including training local instructors and refining a sustainable business model. Once the school is fully functional on San Cristóbal, operations may be expanded to other inhabited islands.

For more breaking news from the Galápagos Islands visit galapagos.org/newsroom.

Conservando Galápagos

Revolutionizing Community-Based Conservation

BY WASHINGTON "WACHO" TAPIA, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF CONSERVANDO GALÁPAGOS

The Galápagos National Park Directorate has protected the terrestrial and marine ecosystems of Galápagos for decades with the help of dozens of non-governmental organizations. But after a survey of those organizations operating in the Islands, we identified that few were locally managed. Therefore, we found it necessary to take steps to strengthen the efforts of dedicated local people who are capable of leading conservation action from within the Archipelago.

I am proud to announce a historic achievement for Galápagos conservation. On February 17, 2022, Galápagos Conservancy supported the establishment of a new local operating affiliate in Ecuador: Conservando Galápagos.

Conservando Galápagos is a 100% Galapagueño-managed organization, composed of a seasoned technical team of dedicated conservationists. The new foundation will work hand-in-hand with the Galápagos National Park, local conservation organizations, and community members to preserve, protect, and restore wildlife and ecosystems, alongside ensuring a sustainable future for the residents of Galápagos.

Galápagos Conservancy aims to invest a total of \$20 million over the next five years to fund on-the-ground conservation priorities identified by Conservando Galápagos and the Galápagos National Park to save the most endangered species of Galápagos. The highly experienced team at Conservando Galápagos will oversee grants and provide technical assistance to grantees. With this new agreement, support of

generous donors to Galápagos Conservancy will be used even more efficiently for direct on-the-ground conservation action than ever before.

I'm honored to serve as the General Director of Conservando Galápagos and to directly collaborate with Galápagos Conservancy and its President, Dr. Paul Salaman, who said, "The fate of so many vibrant species that call Galápagos home has always been in the hands of local people. Conservando Galápagos represents a major milestone because its team of highly experienced local people is committed to preserving the Island's natural heritage. Galápagos Conservancy is proud to support its formation and commits to its long-term operating costs to ensure the team can maximize efforts to save their flora and fauna."

Galápagos Conservancy remains laser-focused on what is best for the Galápagos Archipelago, its wildlife, and especially its people. This is why the Board of Directors and staff of Galápagos Conservancy wholeheartedly believe it is essential that Galapagueños are empowered and trusted to lead conservation action where they live. Conservando Galápagos will be officially inaugurated on Santa Cruz Island on September 9, 2022.

This is the beginning of an exciting new age for bold conservation in Galápagos.

¿Quien es Conservando Galápagos?

Who is Conservando Galápagos?

Washington (Wacho) Tapia is the General Director of Conservando Galápagos. A Galápagos native, reptile expert, and specialist in conservation ecology and ecological restoration with decades of field experience, Wacho will be leading this exciting new conservation venture.

After completing a graduate thesis on the Giant Tortoises of Cinco Cerros on Isabela Island, he worked for 15 years leading the management and science program for the Galápagos National Park Directorate. In 2014, Wacho joined the Galápagos Conservancy staff to direct Iniciativa Galápagos.

"My hope for the future is that, through the joint conservation work between Galápagos Conservancy and Conservando Galápagos, we actively contribute to building a sustainable Galápagos. I'm convinced that the only place around the world where the conservation of natural capital and human well-being can be made compatible is Galápagos, but the road is long."



Washington (Wacho) Tapia
General Director

Dr. Jorge Carrión
Director of Conservation



"Today, we have a lot of professionals looking for a chance to contribute to the conservation of the Archipelago. Conservando Galápagos offers us this chance to work while preserving the Islands. An empowered community is very important in successful conservation efforts; therefore, supporting local conservation initiatives is a way to include the community in the task of conservation."

Gabriela Vivas
Director of Operations



"With the creation of Conservando Galápagos, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that there are local professionals who are passionate about working to preserve the place where we live for future generations. Conservando Galápagos allows more local people and organizations to develop projects that promote the integration of human beings and nature for the protection of the Archipelago, in addition to providing opportunities for local entrepreneurs to grow their economies by creating environmental awareness."

Cristian Gil Jaramillo
Technical Assistant: Isabela



"Conservando Galápagos, for me, means hope for Galapagueños — a space where the community can feel involved in the development of science and contribute to the sustainability of the Islands. The support for Conservando Galápagos is very important, because at present, the Islands are experiencing real threats on different scales, which demand enormous efforts to collect information and support projects for the conservation of all Galápagos ecosystems, including where people reside."

Not Pictured: **Willians Castro**, Conservation Assistant; **Xavier Castro**, Environmental Journalist; **Ivonne Torres**, Conservation Center Coordinator; **Walter Chimborazo**, Field Assistant; **Judith Moreira**, Administrative Assistant



Adopt a Real Giant Tortoise

And Make a Life-long Connection to Galápagos

Galápagos Conservancy is proud to announce the launch of our Adopt a Giant Tortoise program to support the vital work of the Giant Tortoise breeding centers on Santa Cruz and Isabela Islands.

This initiative, the only one of its kind in the world, connects a supporter with one real, individual tortoise for the life of that animal — sometimes 150 years! That supporter, who could be a person, a classroom, a business, or a family, can for the first time uniquely name their baby Giant Tortoise and follow their animal through the full rearing process and its release into the wild. Plus one day soon, adopters may choose to place a geo-locating tag humanely on their tortoise's shell. This will allow restricted access to view time-lapse movements of their tortoise roaming free on their home island.

This opportunity presents a unique gift for a loved one, perhaps a grandchild or grandparent, and will connect them to Giant Tortoise conservation at the beginning of each tortoise's very long life.

Importantly, this is not a symbolic adoption.

Only one person or group can adopt each tortoise, and have unique naming rights for their new family member.

Each baby tortoise starts life in one of the Giant Tortoise breeding centers, managed by the Galápagos National Park Directorate and supported by Galápagos

Conservancy. The most endangered tortoise species are bred and hatched in state-of-the-art facilities, so they may safely and comfortably grow until the age of five, at which time they are physically prepared for conditions in the wild with shells strong enough to keep them safe from invasive predators. They are then released to their native island where they can live freely and do their important work as “ecosystem engineers” to rewild Galápagos.

The Adopt a Giant Tortoise program sponsors the care tortoises receive at the breeding centers. This includes the incubation equipment that will hatch your tortoise from their egg, the veterinary staff who keep your tortoise healthy, the security to keep your tortoise safe while it grows, and all the delicious leaves and fruit they can eat.

As an adopter, you will not only have the chance to name your tortoise, but you will receive photos and updates of your adoptee twice per year until they are released into the wild.

Now, you can have an intimate look at the critical work we do to prepare baby tortoises for success on their home islands. Through our Adopt a Giant Tortoise program, you, your children, grandchildren, and perhaps even great-grandchildren can have a life-long connection to Galápagos, its magnificent tortoises, and more importantly, a deep connection to conservation.

Visit adopt.galapagos.org to learn more about this one-of-a-kind opportunity.



Each tortoise hatchling is given a unique ID number that is painted on its shell with a color that corresponds to the hatchling's native island. This number will follow the young tortoise throughout its half-decade at the breeding center, and will be provided to each adopter to keep you up to date on the well-being of your adopted tortoise.

LEARN
MORE



ADOPT
NOW

[ADOPT.GALAPAGOS.ORG](https://adopt.galapagos.org)





“Walter Chimborazo, together with our Park Rangers, collaborates in the specialized care of the Giant Tortoises of Galápagos. His contribution to the conservation of this species is very important to us. We are grateful to have him and Galápagos Conservacny on our side”

Danny Rueda
Director, Galápagos National Park

WALTER CHIMBORAZO

The Tortoise Expert



Almost every day you can find me, Walter, at the Fausto Llerena Giant Tortoise breeding center on Santa Cruz Island. I work alongside other field assistants from the Galápagos National Park Directorate to restore the most iconic endangered species of Galápagos by ensuring their daily needs are met.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the animals are fed, mainly fresh plants such as Porotillo (Common Coral Bean) and Otoy (Arrowleaf). On non-feeding days, we focus on maintaining the tortoises’ corrals, which we set up to be as natural as possible. Everything inside the corrals must be cleaned regularly, including the platforms on which the tortoises feed, as well as the pools they use to cool down their body temperatures and quench their thirst. Vegetation control is also a regular task, especially in the corrals where adult tortoises live. It is important that they get enough sunlight to regulate their body temperatures which requires access to sunny spaces that the plants have not taken over.

The hard day-to-day work to raise these tortoises begins at 7:00 AM and ends at 5:00 PM. Some weeks, especially during nesting season, I can work seven days in a row, checking on eggs kept in incubators and adjusting machine temperatures for optimal incubation.

My favorite thing about this work is seeing the tortoises grow, a privilege not afforded to many people. But now, through the new and innovative sponsorship program, people can adopt a Giant Tortoise of their own and watch them thrive in the breeding center before release. Visit adopt.galapagos.org to care for these incredible animals with me.

A WISE Community Fair



by Kelly Weatherman

Walking down Ave. Charles Darwin in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island, I am in awe as I watch a Sea Lion sleeping on the bench next to the pier where local fishermen are selling their fresh catch. Pelicans and other seabirds surround the fish market hoping for a chance to snatch a morsel. I’ve been in Galápagos for approximately three hours, and I already know what I have heard is true — this place is enchanting.

I arrive at Plaza Pelican Bay for the Women in Sustainable Entrepreneurship (WISE) Fair. Immediately, the sense of community is infectious. There are tents on either side of the plaza where WISE recipients are featuring their projects and sharing them with fellow Galapagueños. The plaza is bustling on this Friday night with family and friends.

I speak first with Mayra Elizabeth Hernandez Ñacato, creator of Más Arte, Menos Basura (More Art, Less Trash), a project that features unique jewelry and art made of plastics mostly found on Galápagos beaches and streets. One of her displays is an art project she did with local school children of a Hammerhead Shark made with small pieces of plastic and bottle caps. Mayra says, “This project involved children that do not live near the beach and are not aware of all the trash that ends up there. Creating art is a way for them to learn more about the species that live here and take responsibility to recycle.” She beams with passion for educating the youth of Galápagos and the importance of taking care of the environment.

The WISE program is made possible through a partnership with Goldman Sachs.

The owner of Jardines Nativos (Native Gardens), Mirian Silva, also shares a commitment to education. Her family has been living in Galápagos for many years, and I can feel how strong her dedication is to the Islands as she talks about saving native plants. “I am inspired by my heritage and family. It is so important that we learn about plants that live around us and take action to protect them. We can replant them in the town where they’ve been taken out and ensure the people and wildlife of Galápagos benefit.” Jardines Nativos has done just that. Mirian points out several gardens near the plaza and main street in Puerto Ayora that she helped replant with native flora.

Looking around the fair, seeing people gather in support of one another, I feel the sense of pride the community and all the WISE recipients have for their home. The women that run these entrepreneurial projects express their gratitude to Galápagos Conservancy for making their ideas a reality and providing support after COVID-19 deeply impacted many of their businesses. Karina Bautista, another WISE recipient and founder of Huerta Luna, a farm focused on discovering the best growing practices for local produce, expresses her appreciation: “Galápagos Conservancy helped me with marketing and writing a book after losing so much from COVID-19.”

These WISE women all share the same aspiration. They wish to create a more sustainable Galápagos for themselves and their families.



“Empowering women has always been one of the key elements of building stronger, more responsible, and healthier communities. And it is very challenging to advance conservation in Galápagos without a strong and supportive local community. I hope that with WISE, we can meaningfully accelerate and deepen our impact in the Archipelago and preserve this incredible ecosystem.”

- Bartosz Ostenda, Galápagos Conservancy Board Member and WISE Sponsor





An Open Door to Conservation

by Ivonne Torres and Xavier Castro

On June 6, 2022, the Galápagos National Park Director and Galápagos Conservancy President officially opened the Galápagos Conservation Center in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island to illustrate the tremendous conservation efforts to save the Galápagos Islands' most iconic species, the Giant Tortoise.

Visitors to the newly unveiled center learn about the inspiring history of Galápagos Giant Tortoises and the incredible ongoing process of restoring and rewilding their populations.

Galápagos Conservancy's President, Dr. Paul Salaman shared, "The creation of the Conservation Center is a joint effort between Conservando Galápagos, Galápagos Conservancy, and the Galápagos National Park as part of Iniciativa Galápagos, a collaborative venture with the goal of scaling-up efforts to save all 12 extant species of Giant Tortoises across the Archipelago."

"The restoration of Giant Tortoises is one of the priorities of our partnership. With the new Conservation Center, we hope that local, national, and international visitors can learn about the history of these iconic species and support the efforts required to protect and restore their populations," Salaman stated.

The Center presents chronological information on the history of tortoises beginning with the arrival of humans and the first threats caused by their presence, and continuing through the decimation of all Giant Tortoise populations — including the extinction of the Pinta species with the death of Lonesome George. It also highlights current efforts to recover endangered species. The Conservation Center reveals how the Galápagos Giant Tortoise Breeding Centers operate, including where tortoises are incubated and raised until they are five years old, after which the little tortoises are repatriated to their native islands. "This outstanding Conservation Center illustrates that almost

Left, Lonesome George Wood Carving in the Conservation Center

Right, Grand Opening. Left: Dan Sherman, Galápagos Conservancy Board Chair. Right: Danny Rueda, Director of Galápagos National Park

all species of Giant Tortoises are endangered," noted Washington Tapia, Conservando Galápagos General Director. "We are especially concerned for the plight of the Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul Giant Tortoises on Isabela Island, while hope for the Fernandina Giant Tortoise is fast running out with Fernanda as the lone known survivor of her species."

But thanks to the efforts of the Galápagos National Park Directorate, Conservando Galápagos, and Galápagos Conservancy, Giant Tortoises throughout the Archipelago are on the path to recovery. Restoring endemic tortoise populations supports the recovery of native vegetation and the entire ecosystem upon which all amazing species of Galápagos depend.

Ivonne Torres, Coordinator of the Galápagos Conservation Center stated, "The Center is an open door to conservation and it has come to fill a niche of information about tortoises and the restoration

programs that most visitors do not receive elsewhere on the Islands. We are delighted to give interpretive talks and share our knowledge of these unique animals with our visitors."

Galápagos Conservancy is grateful to our generous supporters who helped facilitate the creation of this interpretive space, and we especially want to thank the Manitu Fund for making this dream a reality.



ANSWER THE CALL OF CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER WITH GALÁPAGOS CONSERVANCY

The Galápagos Islands consist of 13 major islands, six smaller islands, and more than 100 smaller rocks and outcroppings, situated 600 miles west of mainland Ecuador. When taken in totality, this isolated Archipelago contains just over 3,000 square miles — area which is populated by some of the most awe-inspiring lifeforms on Earth.

Protecting all this land, its inhabitants, and the surrounding seascape is certainly no easy feat as any of us here at Galápagos Conservancy can tell you. In fact, the truth is...

We need your help.

That is why we at Galápagos Conservancy are thrilled to announce an opportunity unlike any other: a once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience Galápagos' natural heritage while participating directly in the work necessary to conserve these Islands' unique biodiversity.

Through our new volunteer program, participants who can dedicate a minimum of two months will stay free of charge in exclusive villas within the Galápagos National Park headquarters property on Santa Cruz Island near the breeding center. Volunteers will contribute to hands-on projects such as Giant Tortoise caretaking at the Santa Cruz breeding center and visitor interpretation at the newly opened Conservation Center. Assistance on other projects and activities will be possible when available.

As a member of our dedicated community of supporters, your love for the Galápagos Archipelago runs deep, and now you have the opportunity to turn that passion into action.

Galápagos needs you. Will you answer the call?

VISIT [GALAPAGOS.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://galapagos.org/volunteer) TO LEARN MORE



Galapagueño Artist Profile by Cecil Hynds-Riddle

When the new Galápagos Conservation Center needed a life-sized, hand-carved replica of Lonesome George, complete with his pensive gaze and missing toenail (pictured on page 16), there was one artist clearly up to the task: Jorge Torres. In their tidy and expansive woodshop on the outskirts of Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island, Jorge Torres and Patricia Solano lovingly transform invasive Cuban Cedar trees into lifelike miniature representations of Giant Tortoises, Blue-footed Boobies, Scalloped Hammerhead Sharks, and the other charismatic wildlife, sought-after in the shops along Charles Darwin Ave. But for Jorge, this work is more than his vocation. He takes pride in perfecting each sculpture, chiseling texture into each tortoise's shell and skin, and capturing the serious yet whimsical nature of the Blue-footed Booby dance in his captivating artwork.

While visiting the Artesanias Torres Naysara shop, I learned that the following *extremely simple steps* are all you need to accomplish such remarkable artistry. (Our lawyers say, "Don't try this at home.")

- 1) Slice a hunk of invasive *Cedrela odorata* (Cuban Cedar) from a tree trunk with a chainsaw.
- 2) Make the general form of the animal you want to produce on a whirring bandsaw. Sidenote: if you want to make an exact replica of a particular Giant Tortoise species, such as Isabela, Santa Cruz, Fernandina, etc., first trace a stencil onto your wood, then cut the outline precisely and deftly, with said bandsaw.
- 3) Sit down at your home-made, lathe-like, high-speed spinning sandpaper machine and, without seeming to bat an eye as to the incredible difficulty of this task, proceed to shape the remainder of your piece.
- 4) Paint or stain if you care to, but not necessary. Polish. Polish some more.
Y listo! Tienes una tortuga, una iguana, un tiburón, etc.!



Tortoise Stencils



Replica, Diego the Super Tortoise

In all seriousness, Jorge Torres and Patricia Solano are incredible artists who call the Enchanted Isles home. We are so lucky to have a true masterpiece of theirs to greet visitors in the Conservation Center.

Learning Through and About Galápagos

by Richard Knab

“The old saying is true: it is hard to love and care about something you don’t know. Education for Sustainability helps teachers and students understand our special surroundings and how the Islands fit into the broader world. We learn that everything we do has consequences and that by better understanding the place we live, all of us — individually and collectively — can make more responsible decisions.”

Mayra Flores, school principal and teacher on Isabela Island, shared these thoughts following Galápagos



Teacher and Principal,
Mayra Flores

Conservancy’s June Teacher Institute — the 11th weeklong professional development event presented by our Education for Sustainability of Galápagos (ESG) Program.

Through ESG, all 400 teachers in Galápagos are helping students to learn core subjects in the context of local and global sustainability issues. This

involves interdisciplinary approaches, experiential learning outside of the classroom, connections with sources of expertise in the local community, and learning while conducting projects focused on real-life issues.

Since 2017, the ESG Program has been developing a cadre of 60 teacher-leaders able to replicate the instructional coaching provided by program staff throughout the year. In addition to supporting their

peers, teacher-leaders now play active roles in program delivery. For the past two Institutes, teams of leaders worked with program staff to develop model interdisciplinary units connected to essential topics and learning standards of the new Contextualized Curriculum for Galápagos. In October 2021, the month-long units focused on issues related to invasive species. In June, marine and terrestrial biodiversity was the integrating theme. During the Institutes, leaders explained their thinking behind the design of the units and helped their peers adapt them for specific grades and islands, adjusting or redesigning activities and developing new supporting materials.

In June, teacher-leaders also served as training facilitators, each responsible for groups of approximately 30 teachers throughout the week, replacing facilitators previously contracted from outside of the Islands. Mayra reports, “[Being a facilitator] has helped me strengthen my skills related to collaborative interdisciplinary planning, contextualized learning, and tapping local sources of expertise, including scientists, naturalist guides, and other members of the community.”

Mayra says teachers are becoming much more comfortable with sustainability education. “Six years ago, when the program began to talk to us about sustainability, it seemed like an abstract and complex concept that had little to do with our work as teachers. But now we know that understanding sustainability is essential for everyone living in Galápagos. And for teachers, it provides a powerful framework for teaching and learning.”



Thank you to our Platinum Travel Partners!

Celebrity **X** Cruises®

Celebrity Cruises seeks to preserve and protect Galápagos species and habitats through the Celebrity Xpedition Galápagos Fund. Since 2006, Celebrity has encouraged guests to donate, and as a gift for their contributions, donors are given vouchers for future Celebrity cruises. More than 60 projects have been executed through this partnership, thanks to cruise guests, who have contributed over \$1.3 million.

“We are proud to work with our guests, staff, partners, and the local community on long-term projects with significant impact to keep this unique World Heritage Site for future generations,” said Fausto Arcos, Associate Vice President at Celebrity Cruises.

 **SILVERSEA®**

The Silversea Fund for Galápagos promotes healthy and sustainability-minded communities in Galápagos through funding initiatives related to children and youth empowerment, education and training, and science, technology, and conservation. Donors on board the M/N Silver Origin are encouraged to support Galápagos Conservancy and are then awarded a travel voucher that applies to future cruises to Silversea destinations around the world.

“Our new partnership with Silversea is a shining example of collaboration that ensures their guests can make a real and lasting impact to ensure the precious treasure trove of Galapagos wildlife is forever preserved for future visitors.” said Dr. Paul Salaman, President of Galápagos Conservancy,



The Board and staff of Galápagos Conservancy and Conservando Galápagos with educational leaders in Puerto Ayora, June 2022.

The most impactful species in Galápagos is our own.

We often celebrate the exceptional wildlife and wild places of Galápagos, but they only persist because people near and far tirelessly invest in their future.

From Galápagos National Park Rangers to scientists and conservation volunteers, passionate people dedicate themselves to protecting and restoring Galápagos. But they cannot continue doing the hard work of conservation without proper resources, like well-maintained boats to patrol the marine reserve and high-quality camping gear for fieldwork in the harsh habitats of Galápagos.

It's true that humans abused the Archipelago's natural wonders, but now we humans are painstakingly restoring Galápagos ecosystems to health. Through innovative rewilding programs, vital ecosystem restoration projects, and community-based conservation initiatives, local people are at the forefront of rebuilding what's been lost in Galápagos. Together, by supporting their critical conservation work, we can ensure the ecosystems and wildlife of the Galápagos Islands flourish forever.

Thank you for protecting Galápagos with us.



VISIT [GALAPAGOS.ORG/SUMMER2022](https://galapagos.org/summer2022) TO DONATE NOW.
OR, SCAN THE QR CODE.



"Local conservation initiatives are important because they fulfill the role of adapting conservation concepts and paradigms that are used in the world to the reality of Galápagos, and it is at this point that the Galapagueños play an important role." - Cristian Gil Jaramillo

PHOTO: CREDIT: J. JARAMILLO



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Please enjoy the Summer 2022 edition of Galápagos Post, a biannual publication of conservation news from the Galápagos Islands for Galápagos Conservancy supporters and friends. Your support for Galápagos Conservancy is the driving force behind our efforts to preserve, protect, and restore Galápagos today and forever. Thank you!

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Image: Joshua Vela

