Galápagos Field Seminar 2015

Itinerary

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**
**STANFORD, CA**
Alumni participants arrive at Stanford in time for a welcome reception, dinner on campus and an orientation with students and staff. (D)

**MONDAY & TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 & 8**
**STANFORD, CA**
Professor Bill Durham gives lectures and leads discussions on key aspects of evolution, wildlife and environmental history in the Galápagos Islands. (B,L,D—BOTH DAYS)

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**
**DEPART THE U.S. / QUITO, ECUADOR**
Depart on an early morning flight from San Francisco to Quito and transfer to our hotel upon arrival late this evening. HOTEL HILTON COLON

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10**
**QUITO / BALTRA ISLAND**
Depart on an early morning flight from Quito to Baltra Island via Guayaquil and transfer to our hotel. Enjoy dinner and a lecture at our hotel this evening. SOL Y MAR HOTEL (B,L,D)

**FRIDAY TO THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 TO SEPTEMBER 17**
**EXPLORING THE GALÁPAGOS**
On Friday afternoon check out of our hotel and embark *La Pinta*. For the next seven days, cruise among the islands and disembark for daily shore excursions with our trained naturalists. Conditions permitting, we plan to call at the following islands:

- Enjoy an afternoon excursion to **North Seymour** where a huge colony of blue-footed boobies and frigate birds introduce us to the sounds and smells of the Galápagos. The following morning, explore **Isabela Island**’s Punta Vicente Roca. The dramatic geology of the coastline can best be appreciated from the water. See flightless cormorants nesting, as well as Galápagos penguins, blue-footed and Nazca boobies, sea lions and Galápagos fur seals. An afternoon visit to Punta Espinoza on **Fernandina Island** introduces us to the youngest island of the archipelago. Take a hike over dark, hardened lava and observe the highest density of marine iguanas in the Galápagos.

- Spend an entire day on **Isabela Island**, the largest land mass in the Galápagos. This morning we walk along the shoreline of Urbina Bay, which lies at the foot of the Alcedo and Darwin volcanoes. In the afternoon we have the opportunity to hike up the back of Darwin Crater. Darwin is one of Isabela’s six volcanoes and provides a remarkable contrast to the low-lying islands to the east of the archipelago.

- On another day we disembark on the red-colored beaches of **Rabida Island**. The volcanic sand takes on this unique hue, due to an unusually high content of iron. Here we see several species of Darwin’s finches, plus mockingbirds, yellow warblers and sea lions. Hike to the salt pond and view flamingos feeding. Snorkel off the beach before heading to Cerro Dragon on **Santa Cruz Island**, where we’ll visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to observe the giant tortoise breeding program. Then travel to the highlands to see giant tortoises roaming in their natural habitat.

- Spend a day at **Florea Island**, making stops at Baroness Cove, Post Office Bay and Punta Cormorant, where we can stroll along a white sand beach that is a nesting place of sea turtles.

- Our final day in the Galápagos combines a morning of snorkeling among harems of sea lions, strolling the cream-colored sand beach of **Santa Fe Island** and hiking the black lava landscape of **South Plaza**
Island where brightly hued Sally Lightfoot crabs provide a striking contrast against the dark background. LA PINTA (B,L,D—ALL 7 DAYS)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18
SAN CRISTÓBAL ISLAND / DISEMBARK/ QUITO
After breakfast, disembark our ship and fly to Quito where we enjoy a reception and dinner this evening to celebrate our journey. HOTEL HILTON COLON (B,D)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
QUITO / U.S.
On our last day in Ecuador, take a city tour that highlights the history of Quito and Ecuador. Once a prosperous Indian town, Quito eventually became the northern capital of the Inca Empire and an important colonial center. In 1979, the United Nations declared Quito a historical site to be treasured and conserved. The contemporary city is full of contrasts: narrow, cobblestoned streets leading to enormous churches on spacious plazas; homes with tall windows and wooden doors still painted Moorish blue; and intimate gardens behind whitewashed walls, recalling medieval Andalucía. Also visit the temple of La Compañía de Jesús with its amazing gilded interior and the Monastery of San Francisco. Enjoy time this afternoon for some last-minute exploration and packing and a light dinner at our hotel before our transfer to the airport for late-night flights back to the U.S. arriving on Sunday, September 20. HOTEL HILTON COLON - DAY ROOMS (B,L,D)