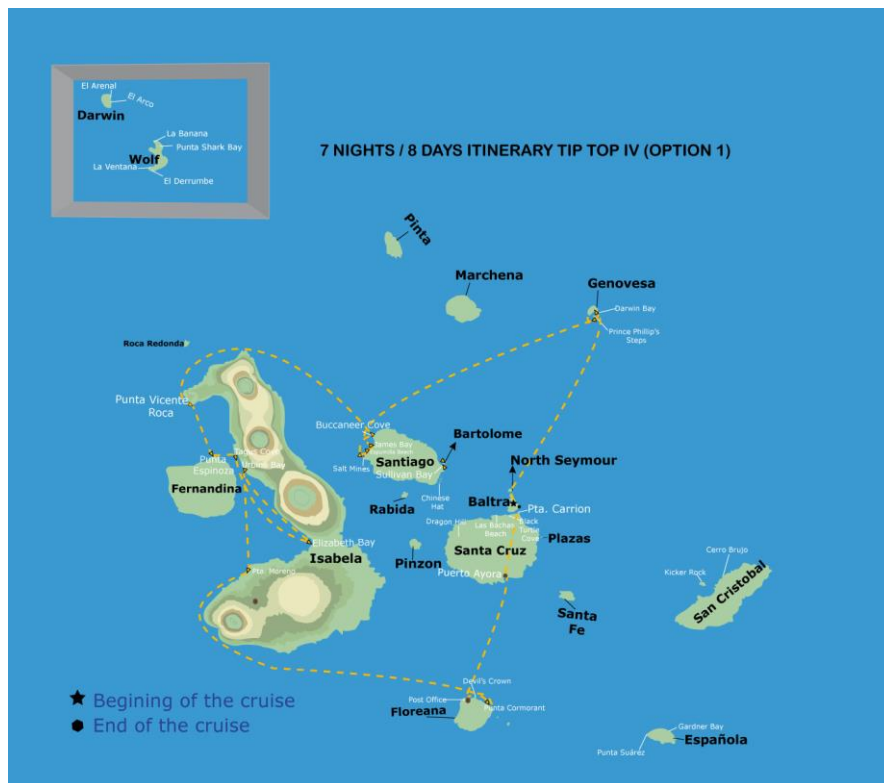




## Tip Top IV

The Tip Top IV is owned by the Wittmer family, one of the oldest in the Galapagos, which has a great reputation for good food, good service and a very helpful crew. The company has become a leader in Galapagos for attaining international certification for its environmental and safety practices. This is the yacht we sometimes charter for our escorted group trips. A steel-hulled Motor Yacht, the Tip Top IV was built in 2006 and is very spacious, light and comfortable, with three decks including a roomy sundeck, well-stocked bar, library and dining room and carpeted throughout. The yacht has been awarded the SmartVoyager qualification for sound environmental practices.





The western islands have a pristine untouched quality, which is most evident as you sail along the western coast of Isabela and through the narrow Bolivar Channel separating the Island from Fernandina. The western islands receive a double dose of upwelling (from both the Humboldt and Cromwell Currents) and as a result there is cool nutrient rich water, which makes for abundant marine life, in the form of colonies of penguins, Flightless Cormorants, Marine Iguanas, dolphins and whales. Going on deck at night and seeing the numerous large bioluminescent particles is quite an experience.

## Day 1      Arrive Baltra

You will be met at the airport by your guide and crew from the Tip Top IV and will set off navigating to your first visitor site.

### North Seymour

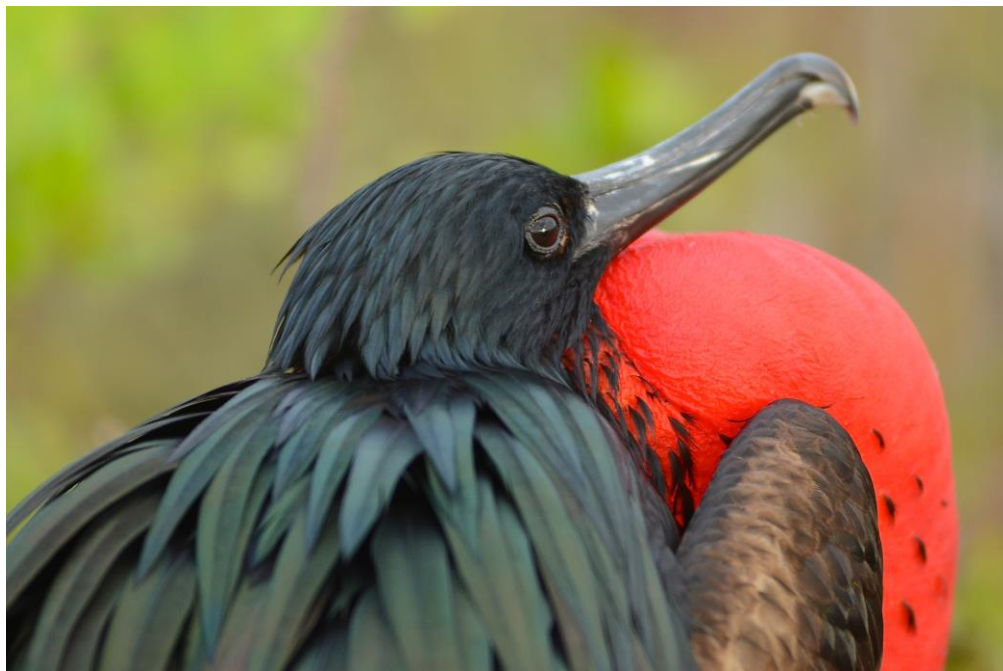
A great variety of Galapagos wildlife is provided in the loop trail on this small island. The highlight of your visit here will be the largest colony of Magnificent and Great Frigatebirds in the Galapagos as well as a colony of Blue-footed Boobies. In addition, there are Sea lions, Marine Iguanas, Lava Lizards, Swallow-tailed Gulls, and a few secretive, but very large Land Iguanas.

**Activities:** Hiking (1.2 mi / 2 km), Snorkelling & dinghy ride

**Difficulty:** Moderate/difficult

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Land & Marine Iguanas, Frigatebirds, Blue-footed Boobies, Sea lions, sea birds. Snorkelling: Rays, Reef Shark, fish, Garden Eels



## Day 2      Genovesa – Tower

A highlight of any visit to the Galapagos, a truly beautiful island thanks to the richness of its birdlife. Located in the northeast portion of Galapagos, the island is an outpost for many seabirds (as is Española in the South). Interestingly there are no land reptiles here and only very small Marine Iguanas, due to direction of ocean currents which apparently would not have carried terrestrial animals here. You will visit the following sites.

## Genovesa - Darwin Bay

This bay is actually the caldera of an extinct, partially eroded volcano, with the surrounding cliffs forming the inner portion of the rim. You will land on a coral beach, and will immediately be struck by the amount of birdlife. The trail is loaded with Great Frigatebirds (mating season from February to May), Red-footed Boobies nesting in the mangroves, Swallow-tailed Gulls, Lava Gulls, Yellow-crowned Night Herons. Your trail takes you past a beautiful tide pool area where herons try to catch small fish.

**Activities:** Hike (0.9 mi / 1 ½ km), snorkelling, kayaking & dinghy ride

**Difficulty:** Easy/moderate

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing.

**Highlights:** Nazca Boobies, Red-footed Boobies, Great Frigatebirds, Swallow-tailed Gulls, mangroves, coral pebbles beach. Snorkelling: rays, colourful reef fish and hammerhead sharks



## El Barranco or Prince Philip's Steps

The tour begins with a great dinghy ride along the base of the cliffs where you see Red-billed Tropicbirds trying to make a precise landing in their nest. Squadrons of frigatebirds are seen flying back and forth, whilst Red-footed Boobies perch on branches of Palo Santo trees which seemingly grow out of the cliffs. Once you arrive on land and climb to the cliff-top, you enter an area where nesting Nazca Boobies and Great Frigatebirds are found. It is also a great place to see Galapagos Doves and Vampire Finches (Sharp-beaked Ground finches) ...ask your guide for the full story on the name! You will also see a large colony of Storm Petrels which attracts Short-eared Owls, often observed stalking at these small sea birds, even during the day.



**Activities:** Hike (0.9 mi / 1 ½ km)

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Type of Landing:** Dry, difficult landing

**Highlights:** Red-footed Boobies, Great Frigatebirds, Short-eared Owls, storm petrels, Galapagos Doves, Darwin Finches.



This site is of great geological interest and is located southeast of Santiago Island. Sullivan Bay offers a rare look at a recently formed lava field. Located on the eastern coast of James Island, just across from Bartolome, this lava field is thought to have been created in eruptions that took place around 1890.

**Activities:** Hike (0.9 mi / 1.5 km) swimming and snorkelling

**Difficulty:** Moderate.

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing at the rocky shore and a wet landing at the white sand beach

**Highlights & Animals:** Pahoehoe lava flows, which has hardened in accordion-style formation. Small glass-like bubbles of lava can be found, called “hornitos”. Penguins in the coastline.

### Day 3

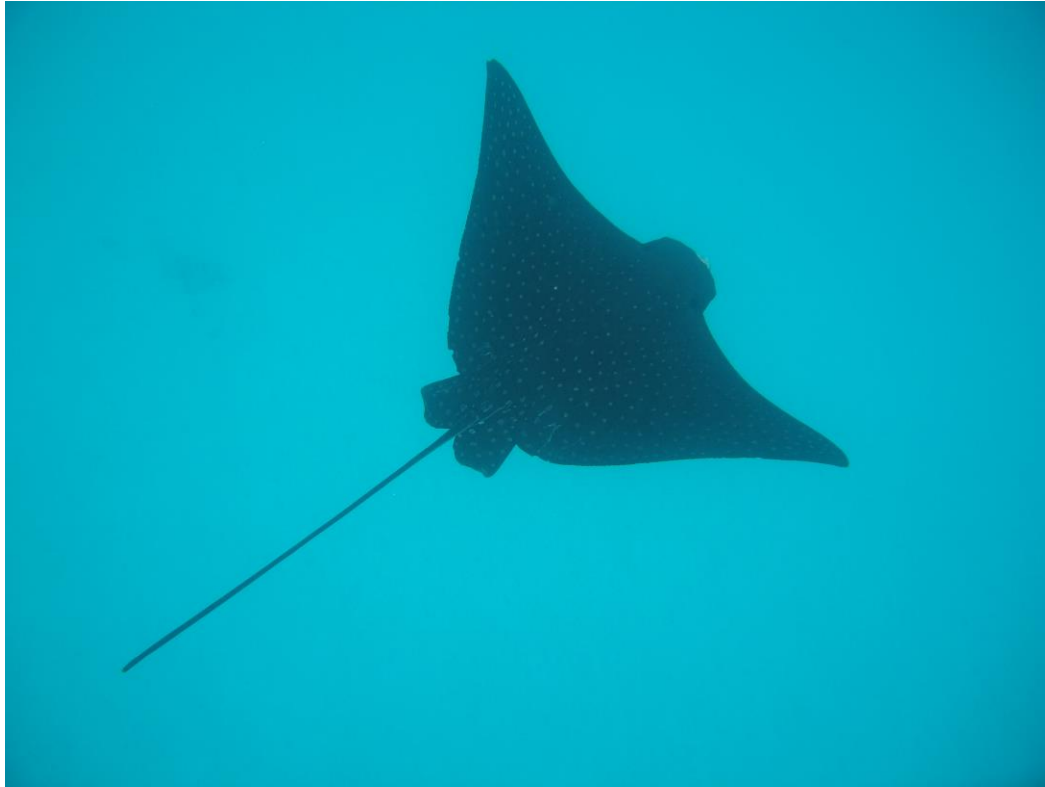
**James – (Santiago) - James Bay (Puerto Egas)** This was the island where Charles Darwin spent the majority of his land visits in Galapagos. At James Bay, the Fur Seal Grottos provide great chances to get close views of both Fur Seals and Galapagos Sea Lions in a series of rocky pools. This visit also provides some of the best opportunities for tide-pooling in the Galapagos, and chances to see shore birds such as Plovers, Sandpipers, Herons and Oystercatchers. The snorkel from the beach is excellent.

**Activities:** Snorkelling, hike (1.2 mi / 2 km)

**Difficulty:** Easy /moderate

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights:** Galapagos Fur Seals, Galapagos Sea lions, tidal pools and “grottos”, Galapagos Hawk, Oystercatchers, Marine Iguanas, finches. Snorkelling: Reef Sharks, Turtles, Rays, nice underwater formations.



### James (Santiago) – Buccaneer Cove

This is the place where Darwin landed and built his base camp on his visit to James. It is a geological marvel since it offers wonderful scenery and chances to see both new and old ash formations. There is no landing site, so visit here can be only done either by dinghy or kayak. During the dinghy ride you might see Blue-footed Boobies, Brown Noddy, Galapagos Fur Seals and Swallow-tailed Gulls.

**Activities:** No landing. Boat tour along the coast. Kayaking and Snorkelling

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** No landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Sea birds, scenery, snorkel, spectacular rock formations.



## Day 4

### Isabela Vicente Roca Point

Beautiful volcanic scenery, amazing lava intrusions and huge sea cliffs make this place one of the most scenic in the Galapagos. Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies sit along the cliffs whilst Flightless Cormorants stay along the shoreline and if you are lucky you will see penguins in the water. The upwelling of cold water currents has created an abundance of marine life here, making for great snorkelling.

**Activities:** Dinghy ride, snorkel.

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** No landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Spectacular landscapes, sea turtles, Blue-footed Boobies, Nazca Boobies, penguins, Flightless Cormorants. Snorkel: sea turtles, penguins, gorgonians and other invertebrates.



### Fernandina Punta Espinosa

Punta Espinosa, is a truly spectacular visitor site and a real highlight for any visitor to the Galapagos. A narrow strip of land extending out from the base of the Fernandina Volcano, it is home to the largest colonies of Marine Iguanas in the Galapagos. You will also have the chance to see Flightless Cormorants here, sea lions, and Galapagos Hawks often perch on the mangrove trees looking for prey. Along the coast, tidal pools provide a perfect environment for invertebrates and shorebirds, such as oystercatchers, plovers, turnstones and whimbrels.

**Activities:** Hike of approx. (1.2 mi / 2 km). Snorkel.

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Type of Landing:** Dry but sometimes slippery at low tide

**Highlights & Animals:** Sea lion colony, Flightless Cormorant, vast numbers of Marine Iguanas, sea turtles, Sally Lightfoot Crabs, shorebirds, herons. Snorkel: penguins, Marine Iguanas feeding underwater, cormorants, sea turtles.

## Day 5

**Tagus Cove** The walk will take you up the slopes of the Darwin Volcano, along the edge of a salt water lagoon to a small hill from which you will see spectacular views of the northern lava fields of Isabela. Most of the fauna will be observed during a dinghy ride along the coast, with dramatic colours and beautiful tuff formations, Blue-footed Boobies, penguins, Marine Iguanas, pelicans and shorebirds.

**Activities:** Long uphill hike (1.1mi /1.8km), Snorkelling, dinghy ride, Kayaking.

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Darwin Finches, lowland native vegetation, beautiful landscapes, penguins, Flightless Cormorants, Blue-footed Boobies, Darwin Volcano & Lake



### Elizabeth Bay

Located on the west coast of the Isabela, no landings are permitted here, but it makes for a beautiful dinghy ride. This is one of the best areas to see Galapagos Penguins as they prefer the cooler waters found on western Isabela. Flightless Cormorants and Marine Iguanas are common and often seen basking in the sun on rocks along the shore. As you then enter a narrow cove lined with large Red Mangrove trees, you will see marine turtles, rays and shore birds.

**Activities:** Two-hour dinghy ride

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** No landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Mangrove forest, sea turtles, penguins, rays, herons, sea lions.





## Day 6 Isabela Urbina Bay

In 1954, almost 4 miles of coastal seabed dramatically uplifted about 15 ft exposing the sea floor and killing thousands of fish and turtles. Since then, vegetation has largely colonized the area but many signs of the uplift can still be observed. This area is now a nesting site for Land Iguanas and occasionally, giant tortoises coming from the moist uplands. This is a good trail to see Darwin finches and it is not rare to see Galapagos Hawks

**Activities:** Snorkelling, dinghy ride & hike, 2 trails: short (0.6 mi / 1 km), long (1.9 mi / 3km)

**Difficulty:** Easy (short trail) / Difficult (long trail)

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Land iguanas (the biggest in Galapagos), hawks, uplifted coral reef, Giant Tortoises. Snorkelling: turtles, rays, tropical fish



## Punta Moreno

With dramatic seascapes and one of the best sunrise areas in the Galapagos, the visit to this site begins with a dinghy ride along the beautiful rocky shores where shore birds, penguins, cormorants and herons can be spotted. The barren lava fields host a surprising amount of wildlife due to the presence of many sinkholes which are home to flamingos, stilts and pintail ducks.

**Activities:** Hike (1.3 mi / 2.1 km) Snorkelling, dinghy ride

**Difficulty:** Moderate/Difficult

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Flamingos, gallinules, pintail ducks, sea turtles, reef sharks, penguins.

## Day 7 Floreana



### Floreana - Punta Cormorant

At Punta Cormorant you will walk on an olivine beach (a mineral known for its olive-green quality, that is found in meteorites, the moon and mars as well as on earth), visit a large lagoon where Greater Flamingos sometimes nest, and walk over to Flour Beach, a beautiful white sandy beach to look for Green Sea Turtle nests.

**Activities:** Hike (0.7 mi / 1.2km)

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights and Animals:** An easy walk along a coastal lagoon where flamingos are often found, along with stilts and ducks. White sand beach.



## Floreana - Post Office Bay

The famous Post Office Bay is where people leave their mail to be picked up and delivered by others in the “post office” barrel—a time-honoured tradition begun by whalers more than two hundred years ago.

**Activities:** Short hike (less than 0.2 mi / 0.3km), lava tunnel & snorkelling

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights:** Barrel Post Office, lava tunnel inland (difficult access), nice sandy beach

## Day 8

### Santa Cruz – Highlands

The highlands of Santa Cruz are home to fascinating geological features, like lava tubes and the twin sinkhole craters of Los Gemelos, which are home to some 300 different fern species as well as a forest of Scalesias, a relative of sunflowers. This is an excellent area to look for some elusive endemics like the Woodpecker Finch (one of only a few bird species in the world to use tools), Small Tree Finch, Vegetarian Finch and Galapagos Rail. The highlands of Santa Cruz are one of the best places to see Giant Tortoises in the wild.

**Activities:** Hike (0.9 mi / 1 ½ km)

**Difficulty:** Easy /moderate

**Type of Landing:**

**Highlights & Animals:** Pit craters, Scalesia Forest, Darwin finches, Warblers, Flycatchers.



