

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Fundación
Charles Darwin
Foundation
GALAPAGOS



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Our Mission

The mission of the Charles Darwin Foundation and its Research Station is to *provide knowledge and assistance through scientific research and complementary action to ensure the conservation of the environment and biodiversity in the Galapagos Archipelago.*



Institutional Video



Letter from our Board President

Although 2020 brought undeniable challenges to Ecuador, Galapagos and the entire world, it was also in many aspects, a year of inspiration. We write this year's annual report with much gratitude to our donors, staff, volunteers and partners who are inspired by the natural world, and stand with us to protect one of its great treasures, the Galapagos Islands.

As you will read in the following pages, despite constraints, the year was exciting as CDF launched fresh initiatives and partnerships while adapting to new ways of working in a virtual world. Throughout the year, our team demonstrated incredible creativity, agility and resilience while never losing sight of our core mission of scientific research to ensure the conservation of the archipelago.

Of course, this progress would not be possible without you – our donors, partners and leadership. We are especially grateful to the COMON Foundation and the Wyss Foundation for their extraordinarily generous project and operational support, as well as the many compassionate donors, along with CDF's Board, who came together to support the community during the pandemic.

We also significantly advanced construction of the Inspiration Complex, CDF's new state-of-the-art Marine Research Center on campus in Puerto Ayora. The facility will considerably enhance marine research at CDF and the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor and serve as a resource to visiting scientist from around the world.

In March, our Science Director, Dr. María José Barragán took the reins as Interim Executive Director and successfully led CDF through one of the most difficult times in our 61-year history. I would like to personally thank her for her unwavering dedication to the Foundation and her energy and professionalism as interim CEO.

As we embark on the post-pandemic recovery, we are delighted to have Dr. Rakan (Zak) Zahawi steering the ship as our new Executive Director. Zak is committed to putting research into practice to promote conservation, which will guide CDF towards the realization of our vision of an ecologically sustainable Galapagos.

Thank you for your commitment to the Galapagos and our planet. Your generosity continues to inspire everyone at CDF for what we can accomplish together.

Hans van Poelvoorde
CDF Board President



Letter from our Executive Director

It is an odd dynamic to take the helm of an organization in the middle of a pandemic! Not only because you enter when it is anything but business as usual (for example, almost all staff were working from home when I arrived and there were almost no visitors to the Galapagos), but also because it is extremely hard to get a sense of what normal operations are like ... and put your finger on the 'pulse' as it were. But such has been my entry into the Galapagos Islands and the Charles Darwin Foundation in what I am sure has been a highly unusual year for everyone – no matter where you have been based!

All the odd circumstances notwithstanding, it has been an incredible experience thus far. And now that I have gotten my footing on the ground, and developed a sense of understanding of the many complexities and intricacies that the Galapagos entails, I am very much looking forward to working with all stakeholders of the Foundation over the upcoming few months to map out a strategic plan for the next five years. This document will provide key guidelines and goals for the Charles Darwin Foundation that will, in turn, help to further protect the Galapagos Archipelago and its unique ecosystems and wildlife, as well as the communities that call this place home.

While this period of uncertainty has been challenging on many fronts for the Galapagos, it is not without opportunity. For one, I see tremendous potential for growth at the Charles Darwin Foundation with the new Inspiration Complex and Marine Biology facility to be inaugurated at the upcoming annual General Assembly meeting. This facility is a complete gamechanger – not only in terms of the potential of what it can do in the marine research realm for the Charles Darwin Foundation and the Galapagos, but also how we are perceived in the public sphere. As such, I sincerely hope that this facility will serve as a benchmark for how we envision our campus to be at some not too distant time in the future! It is certainly a worthy goal to strive for. So, while there are clearly challenges ahead for the Charles Darwin Foundation, and for the Galapagos as a whole, I do see a bright future as we emerge from the pandemic-driven shutdown, and I look forward to working alongside many of you as we continue to help protect and safeguard this iconic place for future generations.

Sincerely,
Rakan A. Zahawi
Executive Director



Charles Darwin Foundation History

The Birth of the Charles Darwin Foundation: How did it happen?

Peter Kramer (Director of the Charles Darwin Research Station from 1970 to 1973 and General Assembly member)

The idea to establish a research station on Galapagos was promoted by various people and institutions in the 1930s and 1940s, but it never resulted in any action. Why was the initiative in the 1950s, leading to the creation of the Charles Darwin Foundation in 1959, so successful? Of course, the simple answer is that the time was right, that the right people were involved and that UNESCO provided the initial funding, all of which is correct, but I believe there is a deeper reason for the successful launch and effective operation of the Foundation and Station over the decades. It was the unique confluence of Ecuadorian national priorities with international initiatives: interests to ensure national sovereignty, to strengthen economic development, to conserve biodiversity, and to conduct first rate scientific research and education. These interests were then brought together to form an effective organization with strong Ecuadorian and international roots. Our founders, like Cristóbal Bonifaz, Jean Dorst and Harold Coolidge, embodied the integration of these objectives. We all follow in their footsteps, implementing their successful formula: doing research, educating and training for the conservation of the Galapagos Island, based in an international institution fully at home in Ecuador.

 | [Read more](#)



A trip to the Galapagos of
1971





Our Scientific Projects

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FISHING IN THE GALAPAGOS FISHERIES RESERVE

Our team has integrated an interdisciplinary approach to better understand small scale fisheries in Galapagos. We research the ecology and population health of economically important species like yellowfin tuna and the spiny lobster. By working with local fishers and vendors, we are researching the processes (value chain) involved in getting the fish from the hook to the table, while identifying mechanisms to make this activity more profitable for locals. We also highlight the importance of local knowledge and gender roles in small scale fisheries.



Fisheries Project

PREVENTING THE IMPACTS OF MARINE INVASIVE SPECIES

This project, through an exchange of knowledge amongst the stakeholders of the Eastern Tropical Pacific, is aiming to identify potential invasions and to create regional networks to address this critically emerging concern for the conservation of marine resources. Together, we are creating uniform protocols for Early Detection - Rapid Response (EDRR) strategies for non-native and invasive marine species, including coordinated international alerts to announce new incursions. Critically, under the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Global Biodiversity Framework contexts, we seek to place regional bio-invasion networks and EDRR protocols in a world-wide context.

SHARK POPULATION STATUS AND ECOLOGY

This project is studying the distribution and health of various species of sharks in the Galapagos Marine Reserve to better understand the connectivity of populations in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, and to determine whether marine protected areas are effectively protecting these highly mobile and endangered creatures.



Learn about the latest shark discoveries: Two shark species newly registered in the deep waters of the Galapagos Marine Reserve

POPULATION STUDIES OF MARINE BIRDS

Along with the Galapagos National Park Directorate, Charles Darwin Foundation has conducted long-term assessments of the Galapagos penguins, flightless cormorants and waved albatross populations. These data provide long-term records of population dynamics in relation to habitat changes and how globally-driven threats could affect their conservation.



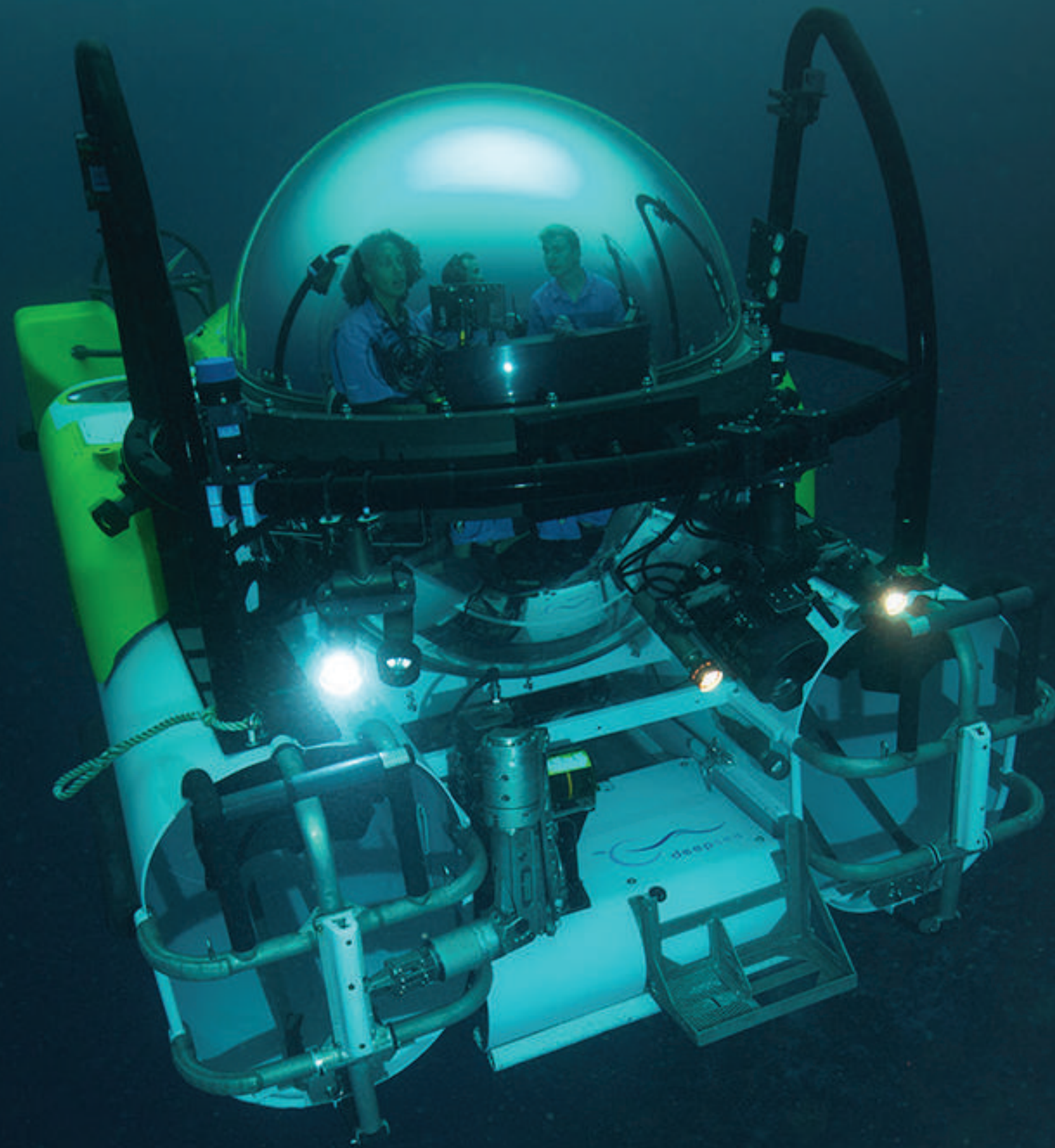
Shark Ecology Project



Population Status of Galapagos Penguins



MARINE DIMENSION



REDUCING THREATS FOR MARINE TURTLES IN GALAPAGOS

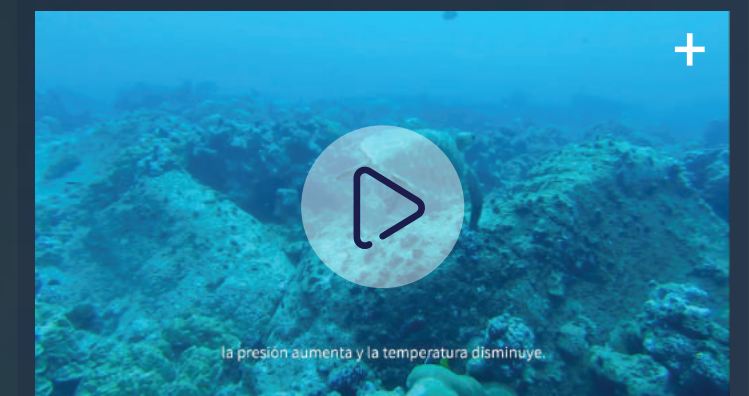
In collaboration with the Galapagos National Park Directorate, we are trying to better understand swim and dive patterns of sea turtles in order to minimize boat-turtle collision incidence in the Galapagos Marine Reserve. By mapping turtle coastal routes, studying their behaviors, and working with local boat drivers, we are identifying safe speed limits to reduce harmful collisions.

EXPLORING SEAMOUNTS AND THEIR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Seamounts are understudied ecosystems of high relevance for Galapagos. We are exploring and surveying seamounts and other deep-sea environments of the Galapagos Marine Reserve between depths of 40 and 3,200 m. Our goal is to characterize these mysterious deep water spaces and provide critical baseline datasets about the biodiversity and habitats that are present. So far, we have discovered more than 30 new species to science.



Read the project's story
from 2020



Seamounts research in the
Galapagos Marine Reserve

CONSERVATION OF THREATENED POPULATIONS OF SMALL LAND BIRDS AND THE CONTROL OF THEIR AVIAN VAMPIRE PARASITIC FLY, *PHILORNIS DOWNSI*

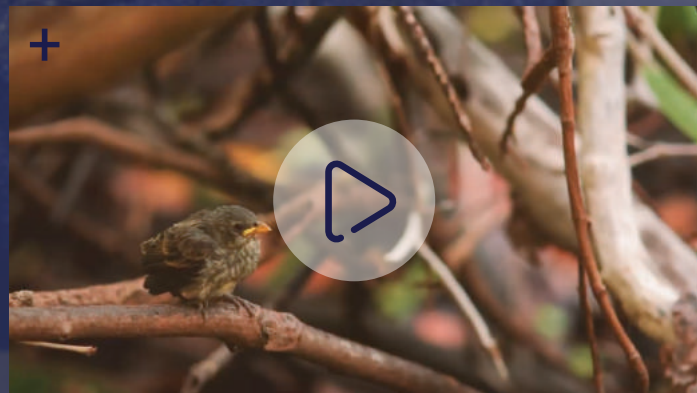
Charles Darwin Foundation scientists have been working with the Galapagos National Park Directorate and collaborating researchers to develop methods to control the invasive Avian Vampire Fly, *Philornis downsi*, which is seriously threatening endemic Galapagos landbirds such as the Little Vermilion Flycatcher and the Mangrove Finch. We are researching the treatment of bird nests with larvicides, trapping with lures, and identifying a potential biological control agent. This year we received approval from the authorities to continue our studies on the potential biological control agent, *Conura annulifera*, a parasitic wasp from mainland Ecuador. We are hoping this will offer a long-term solution for controlling this fly.



Read more about the Little Vermilion Flycatcher: Recent monitoring of the endangered Little Vermilion Flycatcher on Santa Cruz, Galapagos shows encouraging results

GALAPAGOS VERDE 2050

This project is testing innovative water-saving technologies to reestablish ecological function in degraded ecosystems, enhance the recovery of endangered plant species and promote sustainable agricultural practices. On Española Island we monitor the recovery of endangered plant species on permanent plots. Meanwhile, on San Cristobal Island we are planting endemic species in various locations and this year on Floreana Island we established an ecological corridor to facilitate the reintroduction of the Floreana Mockingbird. Additionally, as part of the sustainable agriculture project component, we work with local farmers on three inhabited islands to assess the efficiency of the water-saving technologies.



Return to the Mangrove



Galapagos Verde 2050



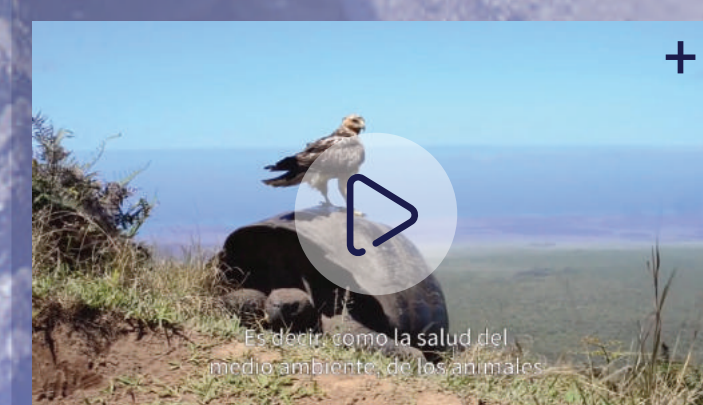


GIANT TORTOISE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT PROGRAM

Over the last 11 years, we have worked to better understand tortoise migration across the islands and the threats they face in a rapidly changing environment. We use a One Health approach to determine how the coexistence between tortoises, domestic animals, and human beings may facilitate the spread of disease and cause new challenges for the conservation of this iconic species. This year we found that Galapagos tortoises carry antibiotic resistant bacteria associated with human activities and domestic animals in the archipelago.

TERRESTRIAL INVASIVE SPECIES AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Our research team is assessing the impacts of invasive species and the effects of their control on invertebrate and plant communities, especially in the unique Scalesia forest. This includes the evaluation of restoration efforts and the search for a biological control agent for the invasive blackberry. We use drones and satellite imagery to determine the distribution and abundance of dominant plant species to help guide conservation decisions and management actions. We assess the ecology and distribution of the invasive tree frog and establish a baseline for plant and insect species in the agricultural zone.



Giant Tortoise Ecology Movement Program



The Scalesia Project



Education and Community Outreach (ECO) Program

In 2020, we designed and carried out new virtual activities for our **Shark Ambassadors Science Club**, the non-formal education component of the ECO Program. The members of the club learned about oceanography, plastic pollution, climate change and marine life in an interactive way.

As part of the formal educational component, our scientists shared their work through virtual sessions and videos for the **Student Participation Program**. We worked with three schools from Santa Cruz and Isabela Islands, where **107** high school students took part for seven months.

We organized **43** scientific webinars for community members, students, park rangers, naturalist guides, as well as other national and international audiences.

In December, we carried out the **Christmas Bird Count**, a citizen science initiative, from the comforts of our homes. In total, **106** community members from the four inhabited islands participated and reported **4,244** birds.

We produced the recipe book **Nuestras Raíces** (Our Roots) that celebrates Isabela Island's food culture through traditional practices and promotes sustainable agriculture. The recipes were written by young Isabeleños, who shared the history of the dishes and how they relate to their families.

 Download the Recipe Book

A message from



Message prepared by the Shark Ambassadors



Our Natural History Collections

With nearly 100,000 specimens, the Charles Darwin Natural History Collections constitute one of the world's largest repositories of biological diversity for the Galapagos Archipelago. By mandate of the Ecuadorian State, Charles Darwin Foundation is the custodian of these Collections. This invaluable heritage is housed in the facilities of our Charles Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora, Galapagos.

Their main function is the long-term conservation and preservation of Galapagos' flora and fauna specimens for the purposes of scientific research. These collections are of great importance to science and the preservation of the islands, therefore, we dedicate substantial resources to allow for adequate curation, ensuring the integrity of the specimens. The specimens we maintain, such as the skeleton of Lonesome George, an Ecuadorian legacy that Charles Darwin Foundation is preserving for the world.

Natural History Collections must be maintained at 21°C and 35% humidity for 365 days a year!

<i>Specimens</i>	<i>Records</i>	<i>Identified</i>	<i>Taxa</i>	<i>Incoming 2020</i>
Herbarium	45,924	41,372	2,447	155
Terrestrial Invertebrates	40,603	29,547	1,045	4,661
Vertebrates	2,666	2,195	210	0
Marine Invertebrates	8,710	4,666	993	2117



Library and Archives

The Charles Darwin Foundation's G.T. Corley Smith Library and Archives are the main repository of academic information and social memory for Galapagos. The library houses scholarly scientific documents and primary sources such as pictures and videos about the islands and their history which support our research projects and local and international interest in the conservation of the archipelago.

In 2020 we repatriated the famous "Maruri collection" of archaeological artifacts from 1963, and another historical collection taken to Australia in 2005 by an archaeological expedition.



Inspiration Complex

Regional Marine Research Center

As Charles Darwin Foundation's stakeholder role in the Marine Corridor of the Eastern Tropical Pacific continues to grow, we have refurbished and doubled the size of our marine research facilities. The Inspiration Complex will be a state-of-the-art marine science hub with offices, conference rooms, quarantine facilities, laboratories and secure housing for equipment, as well as visitor facilities. It will provide space for holding workshops and regional stakeholder meetings, and provide the resources for engaging with world class marine scientists.

This building is also the first landmark effort towards reducing our carbon footprint by becoming a zero emissions campus. The complex used recycled materials and will be equipped with solar powered facilities, wastewater treatment, water purification, and a wetland green roof. As the leading research organization in Galapagos, Charles Darwin Foundation will act as a model for eco-friendly practices for other local organizations.



©Andrés Cruz



©Rashid Cruz

2020 | Our Year in Numbers

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GENERAL

57

Scientific peer-reviewed papers

11

Scholarships granted

35

Thesis students

16 undergrad, 12 master, 7 PhD



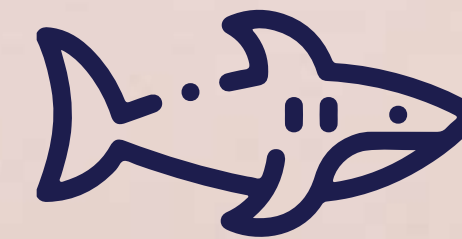
NEW POPULATION RECORDS

1,194

Galapagos penguins

2,290

Flightless cormorants



NEW RECORDS OF SPECIES

30

New deep-sea invertebrates discovered in the Galapagos Marine Reserve

2

Shark species registered for Galapagos

29

Spider species registered for Galapagos



EDUCATION

236

Primary and secondary school students participating in the ECO - Program

43

Scientific talks

64

Virtual educational sessions

25

Researchers involved in educational activities



ECOSYSTEM

6

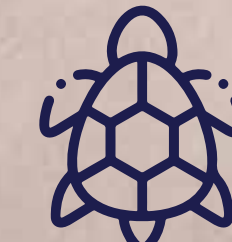
Little Vermillion flycatcher fledgings added to population on Santa Cruz Island

7

Vegetation maps created for 5 new records of plant species on 4 islands

33,654

Flies and mosquitos processed and identified from the Scalesia forest in Los Gemelos to inventory species diversity found in the Scalesia forest



TORTOISES

160

Tortoises sampled for health analysis

37

Adult tortoises with GPS tags on Santa Cruz, Española and Isabela

21

Baby tortoises born in El Chato and Cerro Fatal



The impact of Covid -19

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating both socially and economically and island regions were particularly hard hit. Galapagos was no exception, being an archipelago whose main economic activity comes from tourism.

We closed the Exhibition Hall and our Research Station, and the Emergency Committee of Galapagos halted field trips. Charles Darwin Foundation scientists worked from home to analyze data, publish scholarly articles and share their findings.

Charles Darwin Foundation educators developed new course content for the formal education component of the ECO Program, and "stay-at-home activities" for local students were part of the formal and non-formal education activities.

Staff maintained the Charles Darwin Research Station at minimum operating capacity, such as observation of the natural history collections, laboratories, library and archives, and key operation activities.

The XLIX Charles Darwin Foundation Annual General Assembly meeting was held virtually for the first time.

 | [Read more](#)



Covid-19 Community Relief Fund

©Joshua Vela

Gabriela Sommerfeld

The Covid-19 crisis had a profound impact on the Galapagos Province, where 70% of the population lives off tourism, causing a severe disruption to the livelihoods and well-being of the local people.

Charles Darwin Foundation immediately created a committee to try and alleviate the impact of the pandemic on the population and also established a Covid-19 Community Relief Fund. With funds from Charles Darwin Foundation, including donations from staff, and from donors such as Lindblad Expeditions, we raised nearly \$122,000 to support community and local authorities in strengthening laboratory and hospital facilities.

As a result, we were able to act in coordination with authorities such as the Galapagos Government Council and the Galapagos Biosecurity Agency to acquire: 2 respirators for hospitals, 1 thermocycler, PCR equipment, Covid-19 tests, mattresses and supplies for hospitals, biosecurity suits and 200 masks for different public and private institutions and organizations, more than 300 food kits and medicine for Galapagos residents on the islands and on the mainland, and technical assistance for actions from local authorities. In short, we did our best to try and alleviate the devastating effects of the pandemic for the Galapagos people most in need.



Read more



Conservation Costs



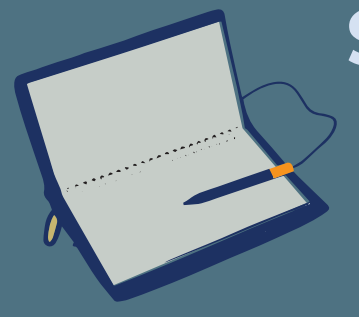
\$7

Guantes
Gloves



\$13

Trampas para mosca invasora
Parasitic fly traps



\$20

Cuaderno submarino
Underwater notebook



\$60

Servicio de equipo de buceo
Service of diving equipment



\$100

Trampa de luz para recolectar larvas de peces
Light trap to collect fish larvae



\$380

Traje de neopreno
Wetsuit



\$400

Garmin handheld GPS
GPS de mano Garmin



\$500

Publicación de un artículo académico
Publication of one academic paper




\$750

Ayuda económica mensual para un voluntario local
Monthly stipend for a local volunteer



\$1,700

Drone para localización de las plantas invasoras
Drone to identify locations of invasive plants



\$2,300

Alquiler de un barco por un día de expediciones de investigación marina
One-day boat rental for marine research expeditions



\$3,500

Impresión de cuadernos educativos para escuelas locales
Printing of educational booklets for local schools



\$5,000

Beca universitaria otorgada a un estudiante local por un año
University scholarship granted to a local student for one year



\$5,300

Estereomicroscopio para estudio de especímenes
Stereo-microscope for specimens study



\$7,000

Transmisor GPS montado en una tortuga marina para rastrear sus movimientos
GPS transmitter mounted on a sea turtle to track its movements




\$99,000

Limpieza y mantenimiento anual
Annual cleaning and maintenance cost



\$118,000

Electricidad, internet, teléfono anual
Annual cost of electricity, internet, phone



\$33,000

Curación anual de las colecciones
Annual curation cost of the collections



Audited Financial Report 2020

INCOME

Applied restricted income	3.309.399
Unrestricted pledged income	2.082.685
Unrestricted other income	122.113
Institutional promotions	110.988
Other income	98.753
TOTAL	5.723.938

EXPENDITURE

Science, conservation and Education*	3.765.213
Fundraising	402.468
Other expenditures	1.425.123
<i>Extraordinary results</i>	55.000
TOTAL	5.647.804

*Science, conservation and education

Cost of scientific projects	1.768.128
Cost of other projects	1.541.271
Services to scientists	156.733
Laboratory and collections	299.081
TOTAL	3.765.213

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Cash / cash equivalents	2.277.942
Other current assets	489.516
Non-current assets	1.136.140
TOTAL	3.903.598

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Deferred income	887.221
Other current liabilities	1.535.434
Employee benefits	580.602
Equity	900.341
TOTAL	3.903.598



Our Team

We would like to thank all the staff, scientists and volunteers who worked with us in 2020:

102
EMPLOYEES

- 60 Local
- 24 National
- 18 International

55
VOLUNTEERS

- 18 Local
- 13 National
- 24 International

20 | COLLABORATING
SCIENTISTS

11 | VISITING
SCIENTISTS



Board of Directors and General Assembly Membership List 2020

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Verónica Aguilar
Paul Baker
Mark Bauman
Alfredo Carrasco
Darrel Schoeling
Gabriela Sommerfeld
Ronald Stewart
William Sutherland
Hans Van Poelvoorde

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Juan Flaim
Dennis Geist
Peter Grant
Rosemary Grant
Henri The Grand Duke of Luxembourg
Ole Hamann
Cleveland Hickman Jr.
Hendrik Hoeck
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Katherine Coolidge Lastavica
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Inés Manzano
Conley Mc Mullen
Godfrey Merlen
Juan Pablo Moncayo
Marc Patry
Paula Tagle
Robert Tindle
Ma. Verónica Toral Granda
Alan Tye
Barbara West

 | [Find their profiles](#)

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING MEMBERS

Danny Rueda - Galapagos National Park Directorate
Paulo Proaño - Ministry of Environment and Water
Youseef Filali-Meknassi - UNESCO
Sharon Johnson - Galapagos Conservation Trust
Lenín Moreno - Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador
Norman Wray - Galapagos Governing Council
Luis Gallegos - Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ecuador

INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVE MEMBERS

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Augustín Albán - SENESCYT
Paul Salaman - Galapagos Conservancy
Galo Naranjo - AES
Oliver Dangles - IRD
Manuel Bravo - INOCAR
Diego Inclán - INABIO
Xavier Lazo - MAG
Scott Miller - Smithsonian Institution
Karina Andrade - IUCN
Rosi Prado - Ministry of Tourism
Catalina Vélez - CES
Christof Schenck - Frankfurt Zoological Society
Roque Sevilla - Metropolitan Touring
Lauren Spurrier - WWF
María Alejandra Muñoz - Vice-president of Ecuador

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David Anderson
Laura Arcos
Alfredo Arévalo Tello
Ma. Eulalia Arízaga de Balfour
Carlos Andres Baca
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Oswaldo Báez
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Guy Coppois
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José L. Villa
Pádraig Whelan
Martin Wikelski



Make a Donation

Support conservation and sustainability of Galapagos by donating to Charles Darwin Foundation!

You can make a tax-deductible donation by visiting our website: www.darwinfoundation.org

We also receive donations via check, bank and stock transfers. If you want to donate using one of these methods, please contact our fundraising team at fundraising@fcdarwin.org.ec



DONATE NOW



2020 Donors

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We thank the foundations, corporations and individuals who supported our conservation work during 2020.

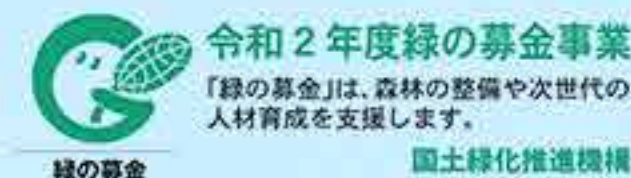
Top Foundations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Corporations

- COmON Foundation
- Wyss Foundation
- FEIG: Galapagos Invasive Species Fund
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Galapagos Conservancy
- World Bank
- Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund
- Ecoventura
- Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)
- Anonymous donor
- Galapagos Conservation Trust

Top Individual donors

- Amy Blackwell
- Rob Buys
- Darrel Schoeling & Jeff Corbin
- Linda Easler
- Dennis Geist & Karen Harpp
- Sven-Olof Lindblad & Kristin Hettermann
- George & Susan Krouse
- Ken Collins & Jenny Mallinson
- Kris Norvig
- Anonymous donors (5)

 [See complete list of donors here](#)



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Galapagos National Park Directorate for their unwavering collaboration and support.

The achievements highlighted in this report are made possible by the generosity of our donors, the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, the Galapagos Biosecurity Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, Galapagos Governing Council and other public institutions. Thank you very much for your support.



Annual Report General Layout

Rakan Zahawi
Isabel Grijalva

Editor

María José Barragán
Leslie León
Liza Nagode
Holly Torres
Eithne Tynan

Graphic Design

Sofía Vásquez

Photography Credits

William Bensted Smith
Jordi Chias
Andrés Cruz
Rashid Cruz
Kip Evans - Mission Blue
Juan Manuel García
Joshua Vela

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