



The Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galápagos Islands is seeking a Vertebrate Paleobiologist

Role:	Vertebrate Paleobiologist
Place:	Galapagos, Ecuador
Type of work:	Full-time
Deadline:	July 7th, 2026
Duration:	Annual, renewable for second year (up to September, 2028)

Introduction

The Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galápagos Islands (CDF), in collaboration with The California Academy of Sciences (CAS), is recruiting a Terrestrial Vertebrate Paleobiologist to work on a collaborative, multi-institutional project to study the pre-human faunal baselines for the islands. Recently, CAS received funding from the Global Environment Fund to participate in a multiorganization effort to restore extirpated species to island ecosystems in the Galápagos. The project focuses on the islands of Floreana, Santiago, Santa Fe, Pinzon, and Rabida, which have already seen extensive work to eradicate invasive vertebrate species, and the project includes partners from Fundacion Jocotoco, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, and Island Conservation, working in partnership with the Galápagos National Park. The primary objective of this project is to increase knowledge of recent vertebrate assemblages in order to help inform species translocation efforts and improve ecosystem and to understand the causes and timings of local vertebrate extinction events. Secondary objectives include building significant paleobiology collections and reference bone collections on the islands to increase the local capacity for future paleobiological work.

Position Objective

The Terrestrial Paleobiologist will support the development and implementation of research activities in the Galápagos Islands, in alignment with program commitments and in collaboration with CDF's regional research partners. This includes organizing and carrying out fieldwork and collecting on focal islands, as well as labwork at CDF to study and curate the collections. The position reports to the Principal Coordinator of the Natural History Collections at CDF ([Miguel Pinto](#)) and to the PI from CAS ([Jack Dumbacher](#)) and will work with staff from the Galápagos National Park Directorate (GNPD), as well as with other researchers, students and volunteers, and scientific, logistical, and administrative support staff, to successfully achieve the project's objectives and expected outcomes.



Activities

The main responsibilities of the position include:

- Collaborate on and conduct scientific research and data analyses that improve baseline understanding of the pre-human vertebrate fauna of the Galápagos islands:
 - Organizing expeditions to the project focal islands of Floreana, Santiago, Santa Fe, Pinzon, and Rabida;
 - Identifying and developing sites with paleobiology deposits and potential for pre-human and early-human remains;
 - Identifying bones and bone fragments to species using morphological and genetic techniques from paleobiology specimens;
 - Characterization of early island fauna assemblages;
 - Additional studies of sites and materials to infer information about the timing and causes of faunal changes;
 - Other related scientific studies as appropriate.
- Increase capacity and develop scientific infrastructure that will support paleobiological work into the future:
 - Collecting, preparing, cataloging, and curating bones, other paleo remains, and geological specimens for the permanent collections of the CDF;
 - Collecting and preparing bone reference collections for the vertebrate fauna of the Galápagos, using salvaged and/or collected voucher specimens of species as permitted.
- In coordination with the PIs and the CDF Scientific Directorate, plan and organize fieldwork and provide support to visiting international expeditions as needed, including occasional extended fieldwork periods on remote islands.
- In coordination with the PIs, manage and prepare quarterly and annual progress reports and accounting reports for the funders and for the Galápagos National Park.
- Generate educational materials and actively participate in outreach related to CDF, CAS, Galápagos National Park, as well as with Galápagos authorities, regional project partners, and the local community.
- Produce technical and scientific reports, including at least one peer-reviewed publication (as lead or co-author) submitted annually to scientific journal(s) to contribute to the knowledge and management of vertebrate ecosystems on the islands.
- Provide mentorship and support to CDF students and volunteers throughout the program.
- Support the development of additional funding proposals.

Minimum Requirements

- PhD or Master's degree in paleobiology, geology, evolutionary biology, or related fields.
- At least two years of experience (PhD) or five years (Master's) working in vertebrate paleobiology science-related fields.



- Proven track record of publishing research results in high-impact scientific journals and presenting at international conferences.
- Strong scientific communication skills, both oral and written, with emphasis on dissemination of results to diverse audiences.
- Written and conversational proficiency in Spanish and English.
- Strong critical thinking and writing skills in both English and Spanish, including preparation of reports and related documentation in appropriate format and style.
- Experience working in interdisciplinary and multicultural environments.
- Proficiency in MS Office, statistical analysis, and data manipulation and visualization.

Desirable Experience

- Previous experience in multi-institutional scientific research expeditions.
- Experience in contemporary terrestrial conservation topics and applied conservation.
- Experience organizing expeditions to remote locations.
- Experience in open-source data sharing and knowledge management.
- Previous experience working in remote locations and/or developing regions.
- Experience with manipulation of large datasets, ancient DNA work, and statistical programming (e.g., R).

Selected candidates should meet most of the above requirements, though not necessarily all. If you believe you meet some of the requirements but are highly motivated and possess unique skills that make you suitable for the position, we encourage you to apply.

Employment Conditions

The selected candidate will be based at the Charles Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz, Galápagos Islands, Ecuador.

The candidate must comply with the CDF Internal Regulations and Code of Ethics and conduct fieldwork strictly following GNPD laws and regulations.

Salary and vacation benefits are in accordance with CDF policies and will be determined based on the candidate's qualifications. Benefits include private health insurance and 30 calendar days of paid annual leave.

Working hours are 07:45–12:30 and 14:00–17:15. Due to the nature of the project, the hired individual must maintain a flexible schedule to accommodate additional needs, such as excursions on Santa Cruz and throughout the Galápagos Archipelago. The position will require frequent field expeditions and occasional evening or weekend work.

CDF's Human Resources department will oversee all residency-related documentation as part of the hiring process. Candidates must obtain the necessary legal documents in their country of origin. Foreign applicants will require an Ecuadorian government work visa.



Restrictions

Please note that the Galápagos Government prohibits the introduction of domestic pets to the Galápagos Islands.

Interested in Applying?

Interested candidates must follow the link below to submit their application and required documentation: <https://forms.gle/JEYug3D3kFyZW6vAA>

Required documents:

- A cover letter detailing relevant experience (maximum 2 pages).
- Updated CV.
- Contact information for three professional references (names, email addresses, and phone numbers).

Application deadline: July 7, 2026.

The Charles Darwin Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.