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Galapagos Wildlife by Month

When and where to see Galapagos wildlife: a month-by-month calendar, species finder and the routes that cover each animal.

By local experts who have traveled the islands more than 40 times. We are not a travel agency or a cruise operator: we inform, compare and help you plan. Questions: hola@galapagosislands.cruises

1. The year in one table

Month	Season	Air	Water	Seas
January	warm season	low 80s °F (about 27–29 °C) by day	about 72–77 °F (22–25 °C)	usually calm
February	warm season	mid 80s °F (about 28–30 °C)	about 75–79 °F (24–26 °C)	calm, with good visibility
March	peak of the warm season	mid to high 80s °F (about 29–31 °C)	about 77–80 °F (25–27 °C), the warmest of the year	calm
April	warm season	low to mid 80s °F (about 27–30 °C)	about 75–79 °F (24–26 °C)	calm
May	transition between seasons	low 80s °F (about 26–28 °C)	about 73–77 °F (23–25 °C)	mostly calm, starting to change
June	start of the cool garúa season	mid to high 70s °F (about 24–26 °C)	about 70–75 °F (21–24 °C)	becoming choppier on open crossings
July	cool season	low to mid 70s °F (about 22–25 °C)	about 68–73 °F (20–23 °C)	moderate swells on open crossings
August	cool season	low 70s °F (about 21–24 °C)	about 66–72 °F (19–22 °C)	choppy at times
September	cool season	about 70 °F (21–23 °C)	about 66–70 °F (19–21 °C), often the coolest	often the roughest month
October	easing cool season	low 70s °F (about 22–24 °C)	about 68–72 °F (20–22 °C)	moderate
November	end of the cool season	mid 70s °F (about 23–25 °C)	about 70–73 °F (21–23 °C)	calming
December	start of the warm season	high 70s to low 80s °F (about 25–28 °C)	about 72–75 °F (22–24 °C)	calming

Month by month

January

- Green sea turtles mating and nesting on sandy beaches
- Land iguanas begin breeding on Isabela
- Marine iguanas on Española in red and green breeding colors
- Giant tortoise eggs hatching (December to April)
- Waved albatross absent from Española

Warm, clear water makes snorkeling comfortable on every route; the islands turn green after the first rains.

February

- Greater flamingos nesting on Floreana
- Marine iguanas nesting on Santa Cruz
- Bahama pintail ducks breeding
- Green sea turtles still nesting
- Penguins on Bartolomé

Calm seas suit travelers sensitive to motion; eastern and central routes are especially comfortable.

March

- Waved albatross begin arriving on Española late in the month
- Marine iguanas nesting on Fernandina
- Frigatebirds and boobies active
- Turtles nesting
- Warm-water reef fish at their most colorful

The warmest water of the year; ideal for families and snorkelers. Spring breaks fill boats early.

April

- Waved albatross arrive on Española and start courtship
- Green sea turtle eggs hatching
- Land iguana eggs hatching on Isabela
- Masked booby courtship on Española
- Calm, clear snorkeling

A sweet spot: calm seas, green islands and albatross arriving. Easter dates book early.

May

- Blue-footed booby courtship on North Seymour and Española
- Waved albatross laying eggs on Española
- Turtle hatchlings on beaches
- Band-rumped storm petrels nesting
- Marine iguana hatchlings on Santa Cruz

Often called one of the best all-round months: mild weather, calm seas and lots of courtship behavior.

June

- Humpback whales sometimes seen offshore (June to October)
- Giant tortoises on Santa Cruz moving to lower zones to nest
- Blue-footed boobies nesting
- More plankton, more fish and more marine life
- Sea lions very active

Cooler, nutrient-rich water brings more marine life, especially in the west. Summer vacations fill boats.

July

- Seabird activity at its peak

- Blue-footed booby chicks on North Seymour and Española
- Flightless cormorants courting on Fernandina
- Whale and dolphin sightings more likely
- Lava lizards mating

Western routes shine for penguins and cormorants; larger ships and catamarans feel steadier on crossings.

August

- Galapagos hawks courting on Española and Santiago
- Sea lion pupping beginning on many islands
- Nazca boobies nesting on Española and Genovesa
- Penguins very active in the west
- Waved albatross raising chicks

One of the busiest family months; book 9 to 12 months ahead. Choose a midship cabin if seas worry you.

September

- Penguins most active around Bartolomé and the west
- Sea lions pupping; pups curious in the water
- Seabirds still nesting
- Fewer visitors after the August peak
- Great marine life for snorkelers and divers

Quieter boats and lively seas. Some vessels use this month for annual maintenance, so check schedules.

October

- Galapagos fur seals courting
- Lava herons nesting
- Blue-footed boobies raising chicks
- Waved albatross chicks growing on Española
- Sea lion pups everywhere

A good-value shoulder month with active wildlife on every route.

November

- Playful sea lion pups in the water
- Green sea turtles mating
- Brown noddies breeding
- Band-rumped storm petrels nesting again
- Calmer crossings return

Seas settle and visitor numbers stay moderate until the holidays.

December

- Giant tortoise eggs begin hatching
- Green sea turtles mating

- Waved albatross fledglings leave Española
- Marine iguanas on Española take on breeding colors
- Holiday peak on board

Christmas and New Year sell out first; for those dates book 12 months ahead or consider a private charter.

2. Where to find each animal

Species	Where	When
Giant tortoise	Santa Cruz highlands, Isabela, San Cristóbal (breeding centers and reserves)	Seen year-round. On Santa Cruz many move to the lower, wetter zones in the cool season and back up in the warm season; eggs hatch roughly December to April.
Galapagos penguin	Western Isabela, Fernandina, Bartolomé	Year-round where cool, nutrient-rich water upwells. The cool season (June to November) is usually best for snorkeling with them.
Waved albatross	Española (Punta Suárez)	Present roughly April to December; courtship dances peak in the early months of the season. Absent from about January to March.
Blue-footed booby	North Seymour, Española, San Cristóbal, Isabela	Year-round. Courtship and nesting happen at different times on different islands; North Seymour is the classic stop.
Red-footed booby	Genovesa, San Cristóbal (Punta Pitt)	Year-round. Genovesa hosts one of the largest colonies; it is on far fewer itineraries (about 90 of 841 in our records).
Nazca booby	Española, Genovesa	Year-round, nesting on cliff edges and open ground.
Frigatebirds	North Seymour, Genovesa, San Cristóbal	Year-round; males inflate red throat pouches during courtship, often seen on North Seymour.
Flightless cormorant	Fernandina, western Isabela	Found only in the far west; reached mainly on western routes and longer itineraries.
Marine iguana	Throughout; largest colonies on Fernandina, colorful on Española	Year-round. Española males show red and green breeding colors around December to February.
Land iguana	South Plaza, North Seymour, Santa Cruz (Dragon Hill), Isabela, Fernandina	Year-round; most active in the warm, sunny months.
Sea lion	Almost every visitor site	Year-round. Pups are common in the second half of the year and are often curious in the water.
Fur seal	Santiago (Puerto Egas grottos), Genovesa	Year-round in shaded lava grottos.
Flamingo	Floreana (Punta Cormorant), Isabela lagoons, Rábida, Santiago	Year-round in brackish lagoons; numbers vary.
Hammerhead shark	Kicker Rock (San Cristóbal), Genovesa; Wolf and Darwin for divers	Seen year-round at the right sites; Wolf and Darwin are reached only on dedicated diving liveaboards.
Green sea turtle	Widespread; nesting beaches on Santa Cruz, Isabela, Floreana	Year-round in the water; mating and nesting mostly in the warm season.

Humpback whale	Open water, mainly western and southern routes	Occasional sightings, usually in the cool season. Never guaranteed.
Short-eared owl	Genovesa	Year-round; it hunts by day on Genovesa.
Swallow-tailed gull	Genovesa, South Plaza, Española	Year-round; the world’s only fully nocturnal gull.

3. Routes by wildlife

Route	Signature wildlife
Eastern	Waved albatross (Española), sea lions, frigatebirds
Western	Penguins, flightless cormorants, big marine iguana colonies
Northern	Red-footed boobies, short-eared owls, fur seals (Genovesa)
Central	Land iguanas, giant tortoises, blue-footed boobies

4. Watching wildlife responsibly

- Keep 2 meters (about 6 feet) from animals
- Stay on marked trails with your guide
- No flash, no feeding, no touching
- Take nothing, leave nothing

5. Next step

Tell us your must-see list and month at **hola@galapagosislands.cruises**, or try the wildlife finder at https://galapagosislands.cruises/galapagos-tools/wildlife-finder/.

Reference guide only. Fees, routes and vessel details change; confirm before you book. © 2026 galapagosislands.cruises · hola@galapagosislands.cruises · https://galapagosislands.cruises