Ecuador’s Highlands & Islands

Tablecloth embroidery.
Hacienda Zuleta.
Day 5, Monday 25 April, 4:47PM.

Photography by Christopher Unkel
About the images

I took all the photographs during Wilderness Travel’s trip Ecuador’s Highlands and Islands: A Photography Expedition with Jonathan Green, 21 April to 5 May 2005. The two-week trip included several days in the mountains of Ecuador as well as a week in the Galápagos; the inside and outside back cover contain a detailed itinerary and map of the Galápagos respectively. The trip itinerary was designed as much as possible with photographic needs in mind, especially the need for good light. A majority of photographs contained in these pages were taken within two hours of sunrise or sunset.

The Galápagos are rich with photographic opportunity and the selection of photographs here reflect that. 31 of the 46 photographs here are from the islands. Wildlife is abundant and can often be approached very closely. In particular, birds are the subject of many of the photographs.

Among the 15 photographs from the Ecuadorian Andes, two locations stand out. The weekly market in Otavalo features the bright colors of both the wares and garb of the Otavaleño Indians. Hacienda Zuleta, where we spent three nights, is a seventeenth-century farmhouse on beautiful grounds. Zuleta is now a productive dairy and vegetable farm and the estate also serves as a focal point for such projects as embroidery and rehabilitation of Andean condors.

The description of each image includes an approximate location and exact local time the picture was taken. For photographs in the Galápagos, the location generally identifies the island and landing site; the photograph may have been taken some distance from the landing site. All photographs were taken with a Canon EOS 20D.

Finally, special thanks go to trip guide Jonathan Green, for invaluable photographic advice and for leading a most enjoyable trip.

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Galápagos map created from Mountain High Maps® Copyright © 1997 Digital Wisdom, Inc.
Rise to meet the sun

Sea lion.
Puerto Egas, Santiago.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 6:49AM.
Spread your wings

Waved albatross. 
Punta Suarez, Española. 
Day 9, Friday 29 April, 5:12PM.
Sparkling violetear.
Hacienda Zuleta.
Day 5, Monday 25 April, 6:03PM.
Meet new people

Child in textile booth.
Otavalo Market.
Day 3, Saturday 23 April, 9:30AM.
Girl by the side of the road between Zuleta and Cusin.
Day 6, Tuesday 26 April, 10:49AM.
Otavalo Market.
Day 3, Saturday 23 April, 9:12AM.
Do some shopping

Bags for sale.
Otavalo Market.
Day 3, Saturday 23 April, 9:14AM.
Embroidered blouses for sale.
Otavalo Market.
Day 3, Saturday 23 April, 11:16AM.
Yarn for sale.
Otavalo Market.
Day 3, Saturday 23 April, 9:11AM.
Watch the birds

Male frigate bird.
Caleta Tortuga Negra, Santa Cruz.
Day 14, Wednesday 4 May, 7:29AM.
Great blue heron.
Puerto Egas, Santiago.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 6:44AM.
Sparkling violetear.
Hacienda Zuleta.
Day 5, Tuesday 25 April, 6:02PM.
Andean condor.
Condor rehabilitation project, Zuleta.
Day 5, Tuesday 25 April, 1:18PM.
Lava heron.
Punta Espinosa, Fernandina.
Day 12, Monday 2 May, 4:30PM.
Pelican.
Puerto Egas, Santiago.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 7:57AM.
Ponder life’s forms

Cheese molds. Hacienda Zuleta cheese factory. Day 5, Monday 25 April, 10:00AM.
Sail somewhere new

S/S Sagitta.
Off Punta Morena, Isabela.
Day 11, Sunday 1 May, 6:33AM.
Climb the peak...

Bartholomé.
Day 13, Tuesday 4 May, 3:12PM.
...for a new perspective...

S/S Sagitta
from peak of Bartolome.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 3:54PM.
Volcan Cayambe.
Day 6, Tuesday 26 April, 10:42AM.

...or view it from afar.
Lounge around

Sea lion.
Bartholomé.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 4:34PM.
Have some lunch...

Great blue heron with lava lizard.
Puerto Egas, Santiago.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 7:49AM.
...play with your food...

Lava gull with small fry.
Off Punta Espinosa, Fernandina.
Day 12, Monday 2 May, 8:44AM.
...just don’t fight over it

Marine iguanas fighting over fish backbone.
Puerto Egas, Santiago.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 8:04AM.
Take a siesta

Tortoise.
Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz.
Day 8, Thursday 28 April, 4:17PM.
Bask in the sun...

Sea lion.
Gardner Bay, Española.
Day 9, Friday 29 April, 8:20AM.
Land iguana.
South Plazas.
Day 8, Thursday 28 April, 6:53AM.
Land iguana carcass.
South Plazas.
Day 8, Thursday 28 April, 7:00AM.

...just not too long
Enjoy the accommodations.
Don’t be a crab

Sally lightfoot crab.
Punta Espinosa, Fernandina.
Day 12, Monday 2 May, 5:15PM.
Step out for a while

Pelican. 
Puerto Egas, Santiago. 
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 7:58AM.
Survey your domain

Marine iguana.
Day 13, Tuesday 3 May, 8:07AM.
Puerto Egas, Santiago.
Look for romance

Sally lightfoot crabs copulating.
Punta Espinosa, Fernandina.
Day 12, Monday 2 May, 5:17PM.
Pink flamingos.
Punta Cormorant, Floreana.
Day 10, Saturday 30 April, 7:12AM.

Leave time for reflection
Lava heron.

Punta Espinosa, Fernandina.

Day 12, Monday 2 May, 4:33PM.
Reflection of blue footed booby. Caleta Tortuga Negra, Santa Cruz. Day 14, Wednesday 4 May, 7:34AM.
Find fresh faces

Marine iguana. Punta Suarez, Española. Day 9, Friday 29 April, 4:04PM.
Waved albatross.
Punta Suarez, Española.
Day 9, Friday 29 April, 4:55PM.
Marine iguana.
Punta Espinosa, Fernandina.
Day 12, Monday 2 May, 4:24PM.
Watch the sunset.

Sunset.
Islas Mariela.
Day 11, Sunday 1 May, 5:57PM.
Blue footed booby against sunset.
Punta Suarez, Española.
Day 9, Friday 29 April, 5:54PM.
Day 1, Thursday 21 April
Air travel  San Francisco to Miami to Quito
Night  Hotel Colon, Quito

Day 2, Friday 22 April
AM  Drive to Cusin
PM  Visit yarnmaking and weaving
Night  Hacienda Cusin, Cusin

Day 3, Saturday 23 April
AM  Visit Otavalo Market
PM  Drive to Zuleta
Hike to overlook of Zuleta
Night  Hacienda Zuleta, Zuleta

Day 4, Sunday 24 April
AM  Horseback riding to overlook of Zuleta
PM  Tour milking house
Night  Hacienda Zuleta, Zuleta

Day 5, Monday 25 April
AM  Tour cheese factory
Horseback ride to condor project and salmon farms
PM  Visit embroidery project
Presentation of Jonathan’s slides
Night  Hacienda Zuleta, Zuleta

Day 6, Tuesday 26 April
AM  Walk through Zuleta community
Drive to Quito
PM  Bus and walking tour of Quito
Dinner at Teatrum
Night  Hotel Colon, Quito

Day 7, Wednesday 27 April
Air Travel  Quito to Guayaquil to Baltra
PM  Board Sagitta, Baltra
Navigation  4nm to N. Seymour
1400-1430  Snorkel, Isla Seymour
1600-1800  Dry landing, Isla Seymour
Navigation  14nm to Plazas

Day 8, Thursday 28 April
0615-0845  Dry landing, S. Plazas
0945-1030  Snorkel, S. Plazas
Navigation  19nm to Academy Bay, Santa Cruz
1445-1500  Dry landing, Puerto Ayora, Charles Darwin Research Station
1900-2100  Dinner at Angermeyer Point
Navigation  43nm to Punta Cormorant, Floreana

Day 9, Friday 29 April
0730-0930  Landing, Gardner Bay, Floreana
1030-1115  Snorkel, El Baho, Floreana
Navigation  4nm to Punta Suarez, Floreana
1530-1800  Landing, Punta Suarez, Floreana
Navigation  4nm to Punta Cormorant, Floreana

Day 10, Saturday 30 April
0615-0830  Dry landing, Punta Moreno, Isabel
Navigation  91W for whales and hydrophone
Stop at dusk for whale sharks

Day 11, Sunday 1 May
0630-0815  Dry landing, Punta Moreno, Isabel
Navigation  11nm to Derek’s Cove, Isabel
1115-1215  Snorkel, Derek’s Cove, Isabel
Navigation  3nm to Islas Mariela
1500-1715  Panga ride and kayaking, Isabel
1730-1815  Sunset photography from panga, Islas Mariela
Navigation  15nm to Urvina Bay

Day 12, Monday 2 May
0615-0815  Wet landing, Puerto Egas, Santiago
Navigation  14nm to Punta Espinosa, Fernandina
1100-1200  Snorkel, Punta Espinosa, Fernandina
1545-1815  Dry landing, Punta Espinosa
Navigation  92nm to Puerto Egas, Santiago

Day 13, Tuesday 3 May
0630-0830  Wet landing, Puerto Egas, Santiago
0930-1100  Snorkel off Puerto Egas, Santiago
Navigation  32nm to Bartholomé
1445-1630  Landing Bartholomé
Navigation  19nm to Caleta Tortuga Negra, Santa Cruz

Day 14, Wednesday 4 May
AM  Panga ride, Caleta Tortuga Negra, Santa Cruz
Navigation  5nm to Baltra
Disembark Sagitta, Baltra
Air travel  Baltra to Guayaquil to Quito
PM  Farewell dinner
Night  Hotel Colon, Quito

Day 15, Thursday 5 May
Air travel  Quito to Miami
Night  Holiday Inn Coral Gables, Miami

Day 16, Friday 6 May
Air travel  Miami to San Francisco

All times are approximate.