Birds of the Galapagos Islands

Endemic, Indigenous, and Migratory Birds

Flightless Cormorant. The Galapagos Cormorant has small vestigial wings that can no longer support flight.

Endemic Birds

Endemic birds are those native birds that are only found in a specific geographic area. The Galapagos Islands have 45 species of birds that are endemic to these islands. Due to the remote location of the islands, these birds have not migrated to other geographic areas.

Endemic birds have adapted through natural selection to the unique conditions of the Galapagos Islands. These small populations have are specifically suited to life in the Galapagos and are not able to find other habitable locations. For example, many endemic land birds are now flightless as wings provided no benefit to survival on the islands. Other birds have unique shaped beaks adapted to harvesting the unique fruits, nuts and food sources available on the island.

Indigenous Birds

Birds native to the Galapagos Islands but can be found elsewhere

3

Sea Birds

The Galapagos Islands hosts millions of sea birds. These birds forage for food at sea and return to the island to rest and mate.

Many migratory birds also flock here for breeding. Breeding flocks display mating rituals, build nests, incubate eggs and feed their young on the island.

Sea birds include varieties of the following:

I. Penguins
II. Gulls
III. Cormorants
IV. Frigate Birds
V. and many more

4

Great Frigate Bird

Magnificent Frigate Bird

Frigate Birds

"Man of War" birds

Large black birds with large wings

Hooked beaks and forked tails

Eat fish, squid and ocean scraps

Lays single egg with both parents incubating

5

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Shore Birds in millions	
Herons	16
Egrets	12
Pintails	8

Shore Birds

Shore birds consist of indigenous birds and migratory birds. Shore birds differ from sea birds in that sea birds forage for food off shore. Shore birds forage for food at or near the shore line. Shore birds typically have long legs and long beaks to wade in the water and catch food.

6

Herons

Herons are shore birds that catch fish and crustaceans.

Herons have long legs for wading in shallow waters.

Herons have long sharp bills to catch and hold prey.

Herons eat prey live, but will often dismember crabs.

7

Galapagos Islands Human Population

Island	Population
Santa Cruz	12,000
Isabela	2,200
Floreana	100
San Cristobal	6,000

8