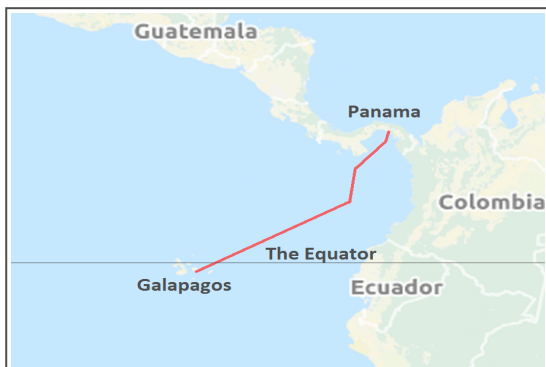




## 2. Galapagos 2017



by Johan Kjellander 2017



Panama City to Galapagos is an interesting route to sail. If you can. There is often very little wind or no wind at all because you are very close to the equator. The distance is about 900 NM shortest way but the books recommend a route east of Maipula Island to gain advantage of good winds and that makes the route longer.

We had good winds first 24 hours, then weak winds for another 24 hours and then very little wind for the rest of the journey. We had to burn diesel, but with only one engine running and both sails up we saved a lot of fuel and only used about 300 litres. This way we did the 1000+ NM in eight days.

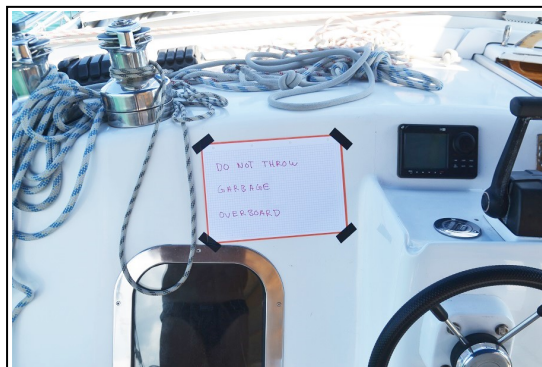
Average fuel consumption with 2 sails up most of the time and only one engine running to give a speed of 5 knots turned out to be approx. 0.4 litres/NM which is much less than I expected. At 7 knots with both engines running and no sails up Bird of Passage needs close to a litre/NM. This is a big difference. It is nice to know that you can save a lot of fuel by lowering the speed, turn one engine off and use the sails as much as possible when motoring. Winds of 1-2 m/s may not be enough to do good speed under sail only but motor sailing is definitely an alternative.



Passing the equator on a sailing ship for the first time was dangerous in old times. You might get "celebrated" by King Neptune, with tar and feathers and a swim in the ocean, but on Bird of Passage that time is over. Instead, we celebrate with champagne !



As we approached Porto Ayora on Santa Cruz it was finally time to raise the courtesy flag and the Q-flag. We had now to find our agent and start the tiresome bureaucratic check in process. Galapagos has strict rules for visiting boats and it takes a lot of inspection, paperwork and money before everybody is happy.



Some of the rules are clearly intended for larger "ships" than ours, but still apply and have to be followed. Signs telling passengers not to throw garbage over board, for example, must be clearly visible. We solved this with a pencil and a piece of paper which the inspector accepted.



There are no moorings, so you have to use your own anchor and there is no place to land your dinghy, so you have to use a "Water taxi". One US-dollar per person, per ride.



The first locals you meet when the Water taxi lets you ashore are the Sea Lions. They are totally unafraid of people, you can find them almost anywhere on the pier.



Another local is Mr. Darwin, not alive any more but sitting on a sofa in bronze.



The road along the shoreline is named after Charles Darwin, who else? If you follow it a bit to the east you will find a Fish market. This is a good place to take photographs of animals you don't see at home.



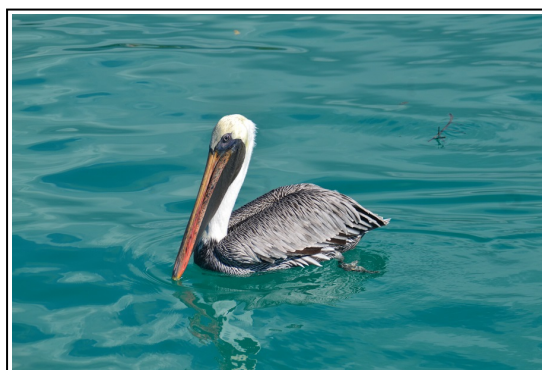
We saw Marine Iguanas (Sv:Havsleguaner) coming up from the water, endemic (unique) to the Galapagos islands.



We also saw a Lava Lizard (Sv:Lavaödlä). Land based and much smaller than the Iguana. Also endemic.



A Sea Lion had a big piece of fish that it struggled hard to tear into pieces. In the end it lost most of it to the Pelicans...



...who are very common, and they seem to love the Fish market.



So do the Frigate Birds...



...and the endemic Lava Gull (Sv:Lavatrut), we also saw them fishing close to our boat many times.



Another endemic bird is the Lava Heron (Sv:Galapagoshäger).



In the harbour we saw Golden Cownose Rays (Sv:Örnrocka) several times.



Every Saturday there is a bigger market on Karl Angermeyer street, with all kinds of fresh food and more. Crowded with local people.



Fruit and vegetables, fish and meat, all very fresh.



Galapagos Islands are all of volcanic origin. The biggest one, Isabella, is 1700 meters high. Santa Cruz is only 864. One day we took a tour into the highlands of Santa Cruz to see the nature and to look for turtles.

The big turtles were once very common but humans hunted them and destroyed their environment until they were almost lost. Today the few old turtles that are left are used as egg producers, hatching is artificial and the babies kept in breeding stations until they are old enough to be returned to the wild.



From about 250.000 turtles in the 16:th century the numbers declined to around 3.000 1970. Five of originally 15 species are extinct and the rest are now involved in various restoration programs to save them for the future. The total number of turtles is estimated to have exceeded 19.000 year 2000, all according to Wikipedia.



We saw many turtles but also remains of volcanic activity, the two pit craters Los Gemlos, 700 meters above sea level, a lava tunnel, many birds and a nice walk through a wild forest.



Having seen the highlands of Santa Cruz we also wanted to see one of the other islands. So one day we took a fast ferryboat over to Isabela, 50 NM west of Santa Cruz (See the map at the top of the page). It took two hours to get there, so the boat must have done around 25 knots.



First stop on Isabela was Flamingo Lagoon...



...where we also saw a couple of Common Gallinules (Sv:Amerikansk Rörhöna).



To see more of the marine life of Isabela we took a taxi boat to Tintoreras, a small group of islets just outside the harbour of Villamil. A long time ago, lava floated here and cooled down to form the landscape. I guess the white colour is due to a lichen that grows on the black stone.

When we saw this lava field our thoughts went to Dimmuborgir on Iceland where we sailed 30 years ago. Suddenly we realized that many of the islands we have seen are volcanic. The Azores, the Liparian islands in Italy, the Canaries, the Caribbean Windward Islands and so on. And now we can add Galapagos to the list.



Marine Iguanas are very common. They get their food from the bottom of the sea and then come up to get warm in the sun.



In many places, just along the water line, you can see the beautiful Sally Lightfoot crab. (Sv:Röd Klippkrabba, Lat:Grapsus grapsus) The story tells that it was named after English barmaids, who were known for their orange hair.



We also saw several of Tove's favourites, the Blue footed Booby and Galapagos Penguins.

On our excursion to Isabela we met a group of people talking Spanish but good English as well. One of them had a house in Porto Ayora and when they heard we were sailors they invited us to join them for dinner to hear more about our life at sea. We soon understood that we had been really lucky to meet these very hospitable and nice friends. We had a great time that evening in their fantastic house, Villa Scalesia.



The next day they invited us to come with them on a trip to El Garrapatero, a lonely beach on the east coast of Santa Cruz. We had a great time in the water with picnic on the beach and then back to their house for drinks and a swim in the pool.



El Garrapatero is a long lonely beach with white sand. You can get there by taxi (11 km) and a short walk down to the water. Remember to instruct the driver when to come back and take you home, there is no phone coverage and it's a long way to walk.

The same evening our new friends invited us for dinner in "The Waterfront" restaurant on point Angermeyer, one of the most expensive in Puerto Ayora. I don't think I have ever been treated with so much hospitality. They insisted on having us as their guests, even paying the bill for us. Thank you so much !

Angermeyer is a well known name in Port Ayora. In the 1930:s when the political situation in Germany was getting difficult three brothers Angermeyer left Germany to find peace else where. After several years of traveling they ended up on Santa Cruz in Galapagos. They had no belongings so all three had to start from scratch. Gus Angermeyer found a cave where he settled down and lived of what the sea could give. After some years they started boat building and made money.



Today the land area south west of Porto Ayora is called Point Angermeyer and the cave where Gus lived is converted to a fashionable hotell and restuarant, see: Angermeyer Waterfront Inn. His son, Teppy is the manager and we met Teppy the night we were there. Like his father, Teppy is also interested in boat building, currently adding a new room to the restaurant in the shape of a boat. It was quite a surprise to hear that he sailed around the world when he was 15 and then lived for many years in Sweden !



From the restaurant, you can follow a trail that leads west to a water filled fracture called Grietas. It's less than a kilometer one way and easy walking. Popular place to swim. On your way you also pass an area with salinas, shallow sea water lakes used for salt production.



A longer hike is the one to Tortuga beach. You start on Charles Binford street in Porto Ayora, walk north west and soon the street is replaced by a nice footpath that leads through a dry landscape about 3 km's to the fantastically beautiful Tortuga beach. If you walk along the beach (about one

km) and a bit further you will find another beach, smaller but also very nice. Lots of marine iguanas here.

When you sail across the Pacific, Galapagos is the last place to get provisions before a long passage to French Polynesia and you have to start off sailing south to find the trade wind. In this way it reminds a lot of the Canaries that we left last year. To avoid hurricanes, you sail from the Canaries to the Caribbean during *European winter*, but Polynesia is on the south hemisphere so the situation is opposite, that is, you sail from Galapagos to Polynesia during *European summer*. Hurricane season in Polynesia is from November to April while hurricane season in the Caribbean is from June to November. Complicated ? Yes, it took me some time to sort it all out.

For this reason many boats follow the same route almost at the same time. It is therefore not a surprise that we met more or less the same handful of Swedish boats in Galapagos, that we met in Panama. Some of them were participating in the World-ARC rally but most were "privateers", just like us. As far as we know, the following Swedish boats are on their way across the Pacific right now: (March 2017)

- Amiga
- Atla (Facebook page)
- Loupan
- Spray
- Sandvita
- Hakuna Matata
- Tina Princess
- Blå Ellinor

I'm quite sure we will meet some of them again in Polynesia.

A final note about visiting Galapagos: It is not easy to get detailed information about what you see. Sometimes there are signs with a few words in English but if you want to know more and ask a tourist guide, they usually don't know or do not speak English well enough to be understood.

I strongly recommend you get one or two textbooks about Galapagos history, flora and fauna before you go there. In Panama, we bought "The Galapagos Islands" by Marylee Stephenson, ISBN 978-1-59485-917-5. Good reading

on long night watches on our way to the islands. In Porto Ayora I also bought a pocket guide of Galapagos Birds.



One species I identified with the help of the pocket guide was the Sanderling (Sv:Sandlöpare). I don't know if these were different from the ones you see on beaches in other parts of the world but they sure are common.

In the library of the Darwin Foundation Research Centre in Porto Ayora, I bought a copy of "The Galapagos Report 2009-2010", ISBN 978-9978-53-045-0. An assembly of research papers about Transportation, Marine management, Geographic Footprint, Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration. Not difficult to read for a non expert and very interesting as it goes behind the usual tourist text and describes the current situation, pinpoints problems and proposes solutions for the future. I had lots of pleasure reading this because it answers many of the questions that came to me about every day life in Galapagos.

There is of course, much more to read. Another second generation Angermeyer, Johanna Angermeyer, has written "My Fathers Island" which seems interesting and there is also: "Satan Came to Eden: A Survivor's Account of the Galapagos Affair" by Dore Strauch, now also available as documentary on DVD. Seems very interesting, I will definitely try to see that film some time.

Finally, there is Internet of course, with Google and Wikipedia. Porto Ayora has a 4G-LTE network that worked very well in the boat. We bought a SIM-card from Claro and payed 5 USD/400Mb of data.



**End of Galapagos 2017**

