

Isabela and Fernandina Islands

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Marine iguana.

Oyster catcher eating sally light foot crab.

We navigated to cross the equator in the first hours of the morning, and at sunrise we were in the northern hemisphere cruising along the coast of Isabela Island. Isabela has the shape of a sea horse and is by far the largest island in the Galapagos archipelago. This island is made up of 5 and one half giant volcanic calderas all joined together. What incredible scenery!

After breakfast we joined Captain Patricio in the bridge and watched the 00.00 degree appear on the GPS as we crossed the equator. Once the ship was anchored we boarded the four Zodiacs and scoped the coast at Punta Vicente Roca. After that, we headed onto a Zodiac ride " and we were delighted to find a few Pacific green sea turtles in the area plus sea lions, very large marine iguanas, penguins and our first flightless cormorant. The best sighting of all was a huge manta ray that swam along beside several of our Zodiacs in turn. The turtles slept on the sandy floor or swam in the water column and above the rocky reef near the point. We soon went snorkeling within the same area we explored earlier and we were lucky to swim with 6 turtles who floated peacefully while fish cleaned their shells of marine algae. A fast moving penguin darted after tiny, panicked schooling fish and a cormorant dove below us searching for his meal on the sea floor.

The afternoon walk at Punta Espinoza was also quite lovely. From a distance the dark shield volcano appeared lifeless and barren. Nothing could be further from the truth! We had to step carefully among the hundreds of marine iguanas and found lava lizards, a snake, and the ever charming sea lions. A tiny sea lion pup just a few days old was particularly adorable. What an amazing day, to visit the youngest of the Galapagos Islands and some of the best islands in the world.