



HISTORIC SUMMARIZATION OF THE COLUMBUS ARCHIPELAGO

Here you will find interesting information about the history of these wonderful Ecuadorian islands.

The bishop Fray Thomas de Berlanga discovered the Columbus Archipelago accidentally, during year 1535. He gave them the name of "the Galapagos Islands", due to the similarity that he found between the terrestrial turtles, which lived in some of the islands, and the Galapagos or women saddle. There were many of such turtles in those islands. Today, they are officially called "the Columbus Archipelago".

After knowing the existence of the islands, they were visited and used.

Pirates were the first on visiting the islands for over 200 years, since this archipelago was the best hiding place; an excellent place to heal their injures after the combats, careen their ships and re-provide of water, meet and oil for their new robberies. Eventually, the hunting and fishing lead to whale and tuna floats captains to this far away -but rich in species-world. Every time, the fame of the islands grew more and many groups of oil-searching men, furrier were getting there, as plant and zoo animals collectionists, and people interested in research.

During Juan José Flores presidency in 1832, and with all the geographical and historic rights, the Ecuadorian State, takes possession of the Galapagos Archipelago, and colonizes the islands by territorial protection and economic reasons.

In 1835, the famous researcher DARWIN joints the researchers ahead. During the five weeks he was in the islands, Darwin visited four islands. He was the most important scientist of the natural history, and the one who would leave the most important legato for the nature study on his book "Origin of the Species".

The islands were very difficult to be colonized, and the number of habitants was three or four hundred in 1930, aprox.

The first law to protect the Galapagos Islands was decreed on 1934.

These were the first days when Galapagos and its people listened for first time the word "protection" for the species. However, they were never protected because the applied politics of that time did not give positive results.

One hundred years later, in 1959, to celebrate the publication of Darwin's book "Origin of the Species", the Ecuadorian Government, declares the islands as "NATIONAL PARK", with the exception of the colonized areas.

The Darwin Scientific Station (E.C.C.D) was created in 1959 in Brussels, as a nature conservation international organism, with an office located in Santa Cruz - Puerto Ayora. It has a main roll, with the Galapagos National Park Service, on the protection and



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conservation organization. Besides, many other programs are standing today due to the welfare of the native Galapagos Islands' flora and fauna and of the people that had colonized them.

Galapagos tourism was short and without organization until 1968.

Since then, Galapagos has suffered substantial changes in its mentality, of positive form for the conservation ideals of the Galapagos National Park.

Sources of economical incoming were agriculture and fishing; after, they were changed to the tourism. Therefore, small wood ships which used to be fishing boats, served as the transportation and lodging for the adventure tourists. Progressively, residents and colons learn that taking care of the islands and their species, their incoming source could be greater and better distributed.

Galapagos and the Park Administration have well-defined protection and control policies. This gives consequently the continuous use of the tourism area, which makes the money for the conservation, maintenance, and control programs of these beautiful islands, which floats over the blue water of the South Pacific Ocean.

On these days, we count on crafts that offer: security, transportation, lodging, comfort, three daily foods, naturalist guides, and schedules authorized by Galapagos National Park. This way, you will be able to totally enjoy the beauty and the sight of Galapagos's flora and fauna.

Besides, we have good hotels, restaurants, artisan stores, banks, tourist information offices, medical attention centers, etc.

There are three airports in Galapagos; main ones are located in Baltra and San Cristobal islands; second one in Isabella Island.

TAME (Ecuadorian Military Air Transportation), has daily frequencies to Galapagos. Baltra Island, which is a satellite of Santa Cruz Island, where the Galapagos National Park cedes and Darwin Scientific Station are.

There is an airport in the Isabella Island, just for small planes of internal use.