

# Galapagos Newsletter



*Pelecanus occidentalis*

A Galapagos pelican enjoying the first light of  
day



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September 2013

# NEWS FROM THE GALAPAGOS!

As usual, we have had a very busy month. The community and our volunteers were involved in a coastal cleanup that takes place every year, when many islanders tidy the beaches and coastal areas in order to protect the local eco system. We also welcomed new volunteers to help with our English teaching project, which goes from strength to strength. We are currently teaching more than 100 youngsters. The local schools benefited from having the volunteers here because we have been busy tidying the playground at a local kindergarten and working in the care centre. We would also like to thank Cassandra, one of our volunteers, for organising the production of a giant mural called 'Mother Nature', which can be seen by the whole community. We also planted trees and cleaned the area the mural is found in.

I would also like to share with you what it is like to spend a typical day on the Care Project in the Galapagos. They walked from their homes and first of all the volunteers are greeted by all the children at 7.30am. They all go up to them, hugging them and calling out their names. The children are very grateful to have them in their classes. Their teacher started their day by talking about what she was going to do in class with them. The volunteers assisted the teachers, by helping the children with different activities, such as cutting, sharing, singing, painting, playing, exercising, learning the days of the week, socialising, tearing, drawing, and learning the meaning of family. At 9am, they had a break and it was time for lunch. The volunteers helped the children eat the meals they brought from home, such as drinks and sandwiches. After lunch, they got ready to play games in the playground. When recreation time finished, they went back into the classrooms and continued to help the teachers until 12 o'clock, when everyone went home to have lunch with their families, where they shared their experiences and stories about the morning.



**William Puga**  
**Country Director, Ecuador**



# MY EXPERIENCES IN THE PROJECT

By Kim Brinkhoff - Germany- 2 Months



After five weeks on the Galapagos Islands, I can say that I am really enjoying my time here; living so differently from what I am used to at home. The fact that I am living with a host family gives me the opportunity to be part of the local community. All of them treat me like another member of society and want me to feel at home. It is important for them than I learn as much as possible about their way of life, but nevertheless they are interested in other cultures as well. Because of this, I get to

know a lot about life on the Galapagos Islands and Ecuadorian culture. In addition to that, I have had quite a lot of experiences in the school where I am working.

My class of four-year-olds is very cute and welcomes every new volunteer.

The children expect us to understand what they are saying, so it is another opportunity to exchange knowledge. The volunteers improve their Spanish and help the children with their exercises, such as painting, dancing and puzzles. Besides the work and the host families, the volunteers have enough free time to spend time together, to make new friends and to exchange experiences.

During the weekends, it is also an awesome opportunity to travel to the other islands or places on San Cristobal. To sum up, it was the best decision to come here! I would highly recommend coming to volunteer on the Galapagos Islands because of the hospitality of the people, the culture, nature and wildlife.





# CONSERVATION PROJECT IN THE GALAPAGOS

By Jordan Berry — USA — 1 Month



Feeding breakfast to tortoises and getting chased by a sea lion in the afternoon. This has become a normal day for me on San Cristobal Island.

Before I came here, my Spanish skills only covered saying hello and my name. I had never been so far away from home for an extended period of time. "Am I even qualified to be working on a conservation project?" I kept wondering. Needless to say, I was internally freaking out upon my arrival.

However, the moment I walked into my new home for the first time my host mom had an entire meal waiting for me and I was welcomed with open arms by both my host family and the other volunteers at work.

Day to day work is never the same here. Some days we collect seeds and are

planting them. Other days we are working with the National Park, hiking the sides of steep, muddy hills, looking for the buried nests of endangered birds.

No matter what we are doing, we always get the opportunity to stop and fully appreciate where we are and what's happening around us.

Sometimes that means watching a sea turtle poking its head out of the ocean, while other days it is enjoying the fruit of the nearby orange trees.

At least one day a week we work in town helping the local people, which is always very rewarding. Lately we have been digging a foundation, so a family can have a new house and their first real bathroom. Last week we painted and cleaned a park for young schoolchildren.

The conservation project has not only taught me about the species of plants and animals on the island, but the people and culture as well. It has allowed me to see much more of the island and what it has to offer than I would have had on the other projects.



# INTERNATIONAL CLEANUP

For the last five years, the environmental proposal initiated by Ocean Conservancy has achieved global proportions, and in a short time has gone from being a local effort to a global one. Today, on the third Saturday of each September, the world is organised and involved in cleaning its shores. This event is International Coastal Cleanup, and the Galapagos Islands also take part, on Santa Cruz, San Cristobal and Isabela.

Some ships, during their regular routes, have learned about the event and collect the solid rubbish that they see. This important campaign serves to improve the quality of the coastal environment, resulting in benefits to the community and the ecosystem of the National Park and Marine Reserve.

The coasts are not the only areas that are covered in trash, because some of the garbage also covers the seabed, so cleaning is done under the surface of the ocean around the coastal areas.

This was our first year to be part of this activity, and involved local school pupils, university students, the Galapagos National Park, the Municipality, marine and other invited organisations, including roughly 150 people, who worked in terrestrial and marine groups.





# VOLUNTEERS TAKING PART IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES





# GROUP ACTIVITIES



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If you have any suggestions about our work, please contact [ecuador@projects-abroad.org](mailto:ecuador@projects-abroad.org).

Best wishes from Ecuador!