

The Jewel of South America—from the Andes to the Amazon

ECUADOR

February 22–March 1, 2012

including Optional Extension to the Galapagos Islands, March 1-6

Dear Members & Friends:

Discover the great beauty of highland **Ecuador**—the jewel of South America—and the fascination of the **Galapagos Islands** on this 14-day expedition.

Join naturalist **Bob Nansen** and the Society's **John Burns** as we explore outstanding reserves to see diverse plants and animals of Ecuador. Explore the eastern and western slopes of the **Andes**, an orchid reserve, historical and UNESCO World Heritage sites, and the world-renowned Galapagos Islands on the optional extension.

Discover the tropical forests at **Maquipucuna Reserve**, at 4,000 feet in elevation, one of the biodiversity hot spots in South America. Visit the paramo at 12,000 foot **Papallacta Pass**. Stay in a thatched lodge in the rainforest of the Ecuadorian Amazon, with superb birdlife, bromeliads, and tropical forest.

Visits include:

• **Papallacta Pass, Andean Cordillera**—Edged by the unique habitat of the paramo, a mixture of hardy grass, bromeliads, and stunted plants at about 12,000 feet. The pass is often windswept with low clouds. Birds range from giant hummingbirds to the Andean condor with many species found only in this montane treeless habitat.

• **Guacamayos River Valley, Upper Amazon**—On the eastern slope of the Andes, with rainforest at mid-elevation level. There are several forest types including riverine habitat, bamboo forest, with colorful orchids and bromeliads. The bird diversity is outstanding and small colorful frogs can be found both day and night.

• **Loma Pahuambo Orchid Reserve**—an excellent reserve along a steep-sided stream with a moist habitat for orchids and bromeliads. See



and photograph many species of orchids and ferns in this moist cool canyon. The visitor center displays many orchids from western Ecuador.

• **Maquipucuna Biological Reserve**—on the Pacific slope of the Andes between 1,200 and 2,800 meters above sea level. This reserve was purchased by The Nature Conservancy in 1987 and is now managed by a foundation. It is 80% primary forest, with secondary forest going through stages of ecological succession. It has been acclaimed as one of the richest biodiversity locations on earth by Conservation International.

• **Quito**—the capital of Ecuador and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with cobblestone streets, historic cathedrals, white-washed, tile-roofed buildings, and fascinating people and handicrafts.

• **Galapagos Islands**, Darwin's enchanted isles—For five days, we may explore the Galapagos on board the excellent 100-passenger M/V Legend on our trip extension. Our itinerary will include **San Cristobal, Espanola, Floreana, Santa Cruz, Daphne**, and **Baltra Islands**. We will discover the amazing wildlife of the Galapagos Islands, from giant tortoises to sea lions, and nesting birds, as well as many endemic plants of interest.

We invite you to join us!

Sincerely,

Bonnie Drexler,
Education Director
New England Wild Flower Society



ITINERARY

Day 1 — Home to Quito, Ecuador

Depart home for Miami International Airport for our flight to Quito, Ecuador. Arrive Quito, situated at 9,300 feet in elevation at the foot of volcanic Mt. Pichincha, and transfer to our hotel.

Day 2 — Papallacta Pass & Upper Amazon Basin

Our expedition will begin as we depart Quito for the unique habitat of the paramo at Papallacta Pass on the northern slope of Volcano Antisana. The Antisana Reserve, together with Mt. Cotopaxi National Park and the Cayambe Coca Ecological Reserve are the critical central parts of the 560,000 hectare Condor Biosphere Reserve. At the pass, we will walk among terrestrial bromeliads (*Puya*) with flower stalks six feet tall along with flowering asters, heaths, and colorful lichen-covered boulders. We will look for the two species of *Cinclodes*, giant conebills, Andean snipes, and condors that are confined to this high elevation habitat. Afternoon drive down the eastern slope of the Andes to the Upper Amazon Basin. *San Isidro Cabanas (3 nights)*. B,L,D

Day 3 — Upper Amazon Basin

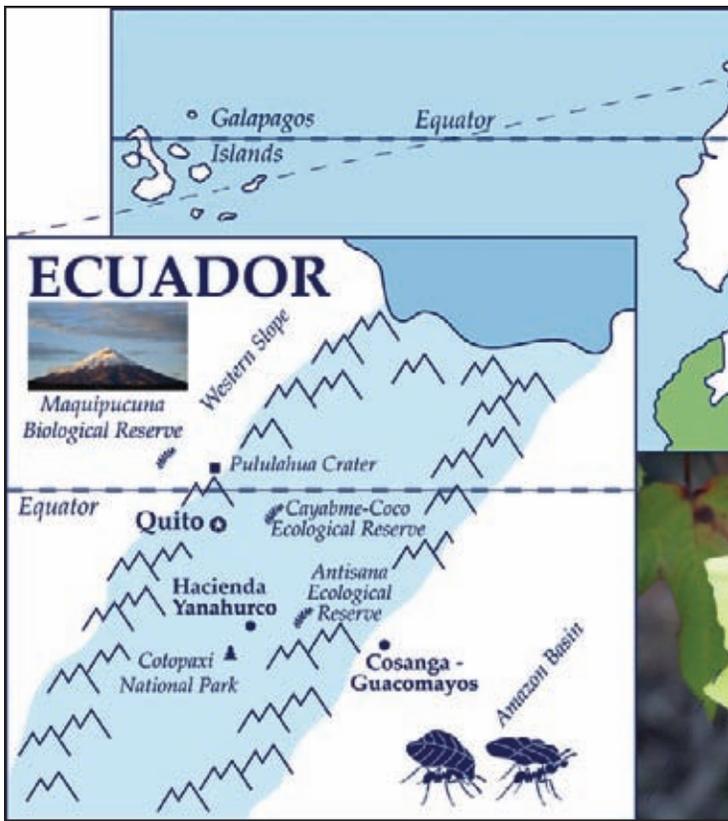
Awaken today to the sounds of the rainforest with many species of birds only heard at dawn. Our first walk will take us into a tall rainforest with understory tree ferns, *Monochaetum*, and large leafed *Piper*. We will look for the many vines of the forest like *Marcgravia*, *Centropogon*, and then stop to listen to the sounds of a tropical rainforest. This afternoon we will explore the bamboo forest. We will look and listen for insects and birds that are specialists in bamboo. In the early evening bats can sometimes be seen eating the fruits of the *Piper* plants near the lodge. B,L,D

Day 4 — Guacomayos River & Valley

The Amazon rainforest has had millions of years of relatively stable temperature and precipitation. This has allowed time for forests to become exceedingly complex with many different micro-habitats and niches. Where we find tree branches that have fallen to the forest floor, we will look for ferns, mosses, liverworts, bromeliads, orchids, and a surprising number of *Peperomia* plants. We will explore micro-habitats within walking distance to see ferns, flowering plants, butterflies, amphibians, and birds. Guacomayos is the local name of the macaw, the largest member of the parrot family. B,L,D

Day 5 — Papallacta Pass to Lomo Pahuambo Orchid Reserve & Maquipucuna

After an early morning walk, we will drive up Papallacta Pass to the paramo, and continue over the Andes to Lomo Pahuambo Orchid Reserve. The Reserve is located in a narrow canyon with canopy trees overhead and a waterfall



at the upper reaches. Many species of orchids are growing naturally and the Visitor Center displays many others found on the western slope of the Andes. Arrive at Maquipucuna and the *Maquipucuna Ecodge (3 nights)*. B,L,D

Day 6 — Maquipucuna Biological Reserve

The reserve has three different life zones: humid pre-montane forest, humid lower montane, and humid upper montane ranging from 1,200 meters to 2,800 meters. Nearly 2,000 species of plants are found here, including over 200 species of ferns and about 250 species of bromeliads and orchids. The prevalence of Aroids at Maquipucuna is especially notable, with 70 species. Look for *Erythrina*, *Hibiscus*, *Cecropia*, strangler figs, and many species of *Heliconia*.

There is also a high diversity of birds, with more than 325 species identified thus far, including saltators, 15 species of tanagers, flower-piercers, many species of flycatchers, and Andean cock-of-the-rock. The mountain and valleys are bathed in mists with species diversity that rivals the best tropical lowland forests. Leaf-cutter ants can be seen busily carrying their leaf parasols across our trails and colorful butterflies will be seen in the sunny gaps in the forest. We will have a night walk to discover insects feeding while predatory birds are sleeping. B,L,D

LEADERSHIP

Leading the expedition will be **Bob Nansen**, Field Operations Coordinator for Betchart Expeditions, and the Society's **John Burns**.

Bob Nansen lived and worked in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands for two years where he was involved in establishing the trail and interpretive systems in the Galapagos Islands. He has led numerous trips to Ecuador and Galapagos, including trips for plant enthusiasts from UC-Berkeley's Jersom Herbarium and Pacific Horticulture Magazine.

John Burns has an M.S. from Antioch College and has been studying the flora in New England and Brazil for many years. He is the Administrative Coordinator of the Society's Plant Conservation Volunteer Program and oversees the conservation activities of 200 volunteers throughout New England each year. He looks forward to sharing his enthusiasm and knowledge of tropical plants and wildlife with you.





Day 7 — Maquipucuna

We will take a dawn walk to hear the sounds of birds and insects at the start of the day. After breakfast explore the trails or you may choose to sit quietly by the grove of *Heliconia* plants and see the hermit hummingbirds that feed on nectar and then pollinate these yellow flowers nearly hidden by bright red bracts. After lunch, we will look for purple *Meriania* and the red-tipped *Columnnea*. Our local guides will assist with the many species of canopy-growing *Guzmania*. B,L,D

Day 8 — Maquipucuna to Quito

After an early morning walk we will drive to Quito and explore the charming historic colonial area of Quito (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). See the central plaza, government buildings, massive churches, and local markets. Dinner overlooking the brightly lit churches of colonial Quito. B,D

Day 9 — Quito to USA or begin Galapagos Extension

After breakfast, we will transfer to the Quito airport for flights back to the USA, or begin the optional Galapagos Extension.

**Galapagos Extension
March 1-6, 2012**

Day 1 — Galapagos & San Cristobal Island Cerro Tijeretas & Galapaguera Cerro Colorado

After breakfast, we will transfer to the Quito airport for a flight to Guayaquil and on to the Galapagos Islands, the 20th province of Ecuador. We will land on the island of San Cristobal (the capital of the Galapagos). We will board our ship, the 100-passenger *M/V Legend*, settle into our cabins, have lunch and begin our voyage with a cruise to Cerro Tijeretas. This is the name commonly used for frigate birds in Ecuador. This is one of the only places where you can see two species of frigate birds nesting in the same colony.

We will continue to the Galapaguera, a breeding location that was built to improve the status of the population of the island tortoises, *Geochelone chatamensis*. Conditions are similar to their natural state. It is one of the few places where we may see *Calandrinia galapagosa*, a plant endemic to San Cristobal that is in danger of extinction.

Day 2 — Espanola Island, Gardner Bay/Osborn & Gardner Islets

In the morning, we will venture ashore at a spectacular long white beach. You may swim and snorkel here, or venture inland to see the endemic *Palo Santo* trees and giant Candelabra cactus. Look for Galapagos hawks, American oyster catchers, Galapagos doves, Hood mockingbirds, three species of Darwin's finches, yellow Warblers, lava lizards, and marine iguanas. In the afternoon see the sea lion colonies at Suarez Point, and look for nesting blue-footed and Nazca boobies.

Day 3 — Post Office Bay — Floreana

This morning, we will stop at the historic Post Office Bay. Here you may place un-stamped postcards inside the barrel which may reach their destinations for free. Also look for the Hood mockingbird, Darwin's finches, yellow Warblers, and lava lizards. In the afternoon, visit Point Cormorant which features endemic plants such as *Scalesia villosa*, Galapagos daisies, white and black mangrove, and holy stick.

Day 4 — Highlands of Santa Cruz

Disembark at Puerto Ayora this morning, and drive into the highlands of Santa Cruz Island. Here we will walk to see the giant tortoises in their natural habitat. The *Scalesia* forest is the most fertile zone in Galapagos, with abundant ferns, vines, and flowering plants. The *Scalesia* genus is comprised of 13-15 different species which are distributed throughout the archipelago. In the afternoon, we will visit the giant tortoise breeding center in Puerto Ayora. See the world's most famous tortoise, Lonesome George, the last surviving specimen of his species.

Day 5 — Daphne Island & Baltra to Quito

This morning we will see Daphne Island, a volcanic tuff cone, which was formed by successive explosions produced by a mixture of lava and water. The blue-footed booby nests inside the craters and Nazca booby nests on the flanks of the cone and crater edges. We will also look for the tropic-bird which nests in cavities in the cliffs. Disembark at Baltra Island for our return flight to Guayaquil and Quito.



Day 6 — Quito to Miami & Home

Depart Quito this morning on flights to Miami and home.

RESERVATIONS #1228

Yes! I/we want to join the **Ecuador & Galapagos Islands Expedition, February 22-March 6, 2012**, offered by **New England Wild Flower Society**. Please reserve _____ space(s). As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for \$ _____ (\$1,000 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account for _____ Ecuador only or _____ Ecuador and Galapagos extension.

Name(s) _____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____

Work (_____) _____

Email Address _____

Ecuador only: \$2,995 per person twin share + air.

Galapagos extension: Galapagos only aboard the *M/V Legend* per person based on share of cabin + air from Quito of \$420 per person (indicate 1st, 2nd, 3rd choice):

___ **Moon cabin** with private bath..... \$1,990

___ **Junior Suite** with private bath..... \$2,490

___ **Legend Suite** with private bath..... \$2,790

Roommate Preference:

___ Twin ___ Single ___ Twin Share ___ with a friend or

___ Nonsmoker ___ Smoker ___ assign a roommate

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Mail To: Ecuador & Galapagos Islands 2012
Betchart Expeditions Inc.,
17050 Montebello Road,
Cupertino, CA 95014-5345**



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TIME VALUE



Explore Ecuador!

February 22–March 1, 2012

with *Optional Extension to the Galapagos Islands, March 1-6, 2012*



COSTS & CONDITIONS

Ecuador Expedition Fee: \$2,995 + air of approximately \$995 from Boston or \$695 from Miami to Quito, round trip including tax.

Ecuador Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport; group airport transfers; accommodations twin share; meals as indicated; tips to drivers and guides; entrance fees; baggage handling where available; leadership; administration.

Ecuador Expedition Fee Does Not Include: International air fare (quoted separately); independent transfers; some meals; gratuity to leader; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, snacks, sodas; personal insurance; Quito airport departure tax.

Galapagos Extension Fee: From \$1,990 to \$2,490 or \$2,790 depending on cabin category plus \$420 air fare from Quito + \$110 park tax.

Galapagos Fee Includes: Accommodations twin share on board 100-passenger *M/V Legend* in Moon Cabin, Junior Suite, or Legend Suite; one night hotel in Quito twin share; all meals on board ship, zodiac excursions, and naturalist program.

Galapagos Fee Does Not Include: Air fare \$420 pp RT Quito to Galapagos; Galapagos national park taxes \$110; one dinner; personal expenses such as alcoholic beverages, tip to crew or naturalist guides; or Ecuador airport departure tax.

What to Expect: This expedition is for travelers who would enjoy exploring the superb tropical habitats of Andean Ecuador with excellent naturalist leaders, with a special emphasis on the flora, birds, and wildlife.



Explore the Amazon and Pacific sides of the Andes, visit an orchid reserve, and explore the World Heritage site of Quito at 9,300 feet in elevation. There is an optional extension on an excellent cruise ship in the Galapagos Islands with local naturalist guides. You will cross over a 12,000 foot pass. The trip will be an outstanding experience for travelers with a love of the natural world who delight in discovery! (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals please.)

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: Air fare quoted is based on air fares as of January 1, 2011. Please contact Renee or Taunya, (800) 252-4910 for an air fare quotation. AIR FARES AND TAXES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE UNTIL TICKETED.

Single Supplement: Ecuador only is \$495 per person. For Galapagos the single supplement is 50% of the rate quoted.

Reservations, Deposits & Payments: To reserve a place on this expedition, please mail a deposit of \$1,000 per person with the completed reservation form to:

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands 2012
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
7050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

Balance of land fee is due 60 days before departure.

Cancellations & Refunds: The initial deposit for Ecuador is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There is no refund after the 60-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.

Questions: Please contact **Marisa Eide, Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

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Fax: (408) 252-1444

Email: Marisa@betchartexpeditions.com

On the Web: www.betchartexpeditions.com