



Charles Darwin Foundation

# Penguins

of the Galapagos Islands





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Charles Darwin Foundation  
Library, Archive and Museum  
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This document, dedicated to the penguins of the Galapagos Islands, combines a series of photographs by the British researcher Godfrey Merlen, preserved as slides in the audiovisual collection of the Library, Archive & Museum of the Charles Darwin Foundation, with a selection of texts about the archipelago that are part of the "Historical Bibliography" of the *Galapagueana* digital project.

Using both resources, and connecting the visual works with fragments of narratives and chronicles, a comprehensive approach to one of the most iconic Galapagos species is sought. An approach that goes beyond mere scientific knowledge and that places this species in a broad and comprehensive framework. The minimalist design reinforces the importance of the images, which are already part of the audiovisual heritage of the Galapagos.

The texts included in these pages are quoted in their original version and language. At the end of the book, whenever necessary, a possible translation of them is offered.

Our thanks to Godfrey Merlen for the images, and to all the chroniclers, travelers and scholars who left, in their field notebooks, testimony of the natural wonders they found on their way through "The Encantadas".

Edgardo Civalero | Charles Darwin Foundation







"In this expedition we saw great numbers of penguins,  
and three or four hundred seals."

James Colnett. *A Voyage to the South Atlantic and  
around Cape Horn into the Pacific Ocean...* London:  
printed for the author by W. Bennett, 1798.







"The rocks were everywhere covered with seals, penguins, guanans, and pelicans, and the sea filled with green turtle, which might have been taken with the greatest ease, had we been enabled to take them into our boat."

David Porter. *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean...* Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1815.







"About halfway down the steep south-east side of the Island, a volcano burns day and night; and near the beach a crater was pouring forth streams of lava, which on reaching the sea caused it to bubble in an extraordinary manner. We returned to the ship in the afternoon, having taken forty-six large green turtle, but failed of getting any terrapin. We also killed some seals, pelicans, and penguins, and saw sea-lions sporting about the rocks."

Lord Byron. *Voyage of H. M. S. Blonde to the Sandwich Islands in the Years 1824-1825*. London: John Murray, 1826.







"The peculiar species of the Galapagos [*Spheniscus mendiculus*] has probably the most northern habitat of any member of the family. Its nearest ally is *S. magellanicus*, from the Straits of Magellan and the Falkland Islands."

Osbert Salvin. On the Avifauna of the Galapagos Islands. *The Transactions of the Zoological Society*, 1876, pp.447-510.







"We had a long pull to the landing-place, passing multitudes of seals, penguins, turtle, &c., whilst an occasional iguana blinked at us from the black scoriae with which the whole coast was surrounded."

W. R. Kennedy. *Sporting Adventures in the Pacific: Whilst in Command of the "Reindeer"*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1876.







"Both albatross and penguin appear to have been known on the islands, the latter a species characteristic of the group."

A. Agassiz. Reports on the dredging operations off the West Coast of Central America to the Galapagos, etc., by the U.S. Fish Commission Steamer "Albatross". *Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College, in Cambridge*, vol. XXIII, pp. 1-90.







"Sept. 8. Got two penguins.  
Nov. 6. Saw a dozen penguins.  
Nov. 15. Got flamingo, penguins and *Sula*."

Walter Rothschild. A Review of the Ornithology of the Galapagos Islands. *Novitates Zoologicae*, 6, August 1899, pp. 85-205.







"This species is most common at Tagus and Iguana Coves on Albemarle, about Narboro [Narborough], and on the east side of the Seymour Islands. It probably if seldom occurs at the more northern islands of the group — Abingdon, Bindloe, Tower, Wenman and Culpepper."

Robert E. Snodgrass, Edmund Heller. Papers from the Hopkins Stanford Galapagos Expedition, 1898-1899. XVI. Reptiles. *Proceedings of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, 5, 1904, pp. 231-372.







"It rained last Sunday while we were in the crater, and in one of these holes quite a little water had collected. Beck knocked over a penguin with the boathook, and we got the bird on board in a lively condition. He could walk finely, standing up on his feet, sometimes using his tail as a brace, more often not — waddling along at times quite rapidly; he kept his wings well away from his body, and pointed down a little in advance of it."

Walter Rothschild, Ernst Hartert. Introductory Notes to "A Review of the Ornithology of the Galapagos Islands, the Diaries of Messrs. Harris and Drowne, and General Remarks about the Fauna of the Galapagos Islands. *Novitates Zoologicae*, 6, 1899, pp. 85-142.







"It shot up to the surface, shook itself vigorously, and turned into a little Galápagos penguin, paddling along now like a fat, high-shouldered duck."

William Beebe. *Galapagos: World's End*. New York & London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924.







"Two years ago when I visited these islands, I watched the little penguins waddling about with their ever inimitable gait..."

William Beebe. *The Arcturus Adventure*. New York & London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926.







"I had an exceptionally good time surveying the mangrove-beach of Fernandina with its sea-lions, penguins and wingless cormorants."

A. De Waard. Some thoughts about future visits to the Charles Darwin Research Station. *Noticias de Galápagos*, 7-8, diciembre de 1966.











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