

Galapagos Newsletter



Mimus parvulus

A Galápagos mockingbird resting on a tree branch



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November 2013

LET`S GO FOR ONE MORE!

November is here again. While it is snowing and flooding in other parts of the world, here in the Galapagos we are lounging on our beaches and enjoying the sunshine. Just over two years ago, in October 2011, our first volunteer came here to work, and the number of volunteers continues to increase. Recently all the volunteers and staff had a delicious dinner together in one of the local restaurants. We are continuing our work with the tortoises and have been taking care of a botanical garden in Alejandro Alvear Kindergarten. We supplied endemic plants, and the volunteers go every day to water them and look after the garden, which is now looking lovely. Our volunteers always get together, and go on trips to neighbouring islands, such as Isabela, Floreana and Santa Cruz. It is easy to travel around by motorboat between the islands.



William Puga
Country Director, Ecuador

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CONSERVATION PROJECT

by Thomas Poulsen - Denmark



I have just under 4 weeks left of my 12 weeks' stay here on San Cristobal in the Galapagos Islands and it makes me kind of sad. There are so many things I am going to miss here, whether it is feeding the



turtles or the overpowering smell of sea lion excrement beside the malecon.

During my stay, I have been working on numerous conservation projects with Projects Abroad. Being a volunteer has given me a unique opportunity to see the fantastic wildlife of the Galapagos from a perspective a normal tourist would never have experienced.



The variety of conservation projects I've worked on is really broad. We have been feeding the giant tortoises, tripping in the turtle ponds whilst trying to clean them, making compost for the local farms or working with a machete until our arms cry, amongst others.



Before I came to Galapagos, I could not speak a word of Spanish whatsoever. This created somewhat of a language barrier at first with my host family, but from the outset I could sense they were very



caring and fun, and were interested to know about how I was doing. My Spanish is still very limited, but it does not keep me from having fun with my host family every day!



During the afternoons and the weekends, all the volunteers from every organization goof around together. We are always doing something fun and random that I never would have expected before leaving home. We go to the bars, spend time at the beach, travel to the other islands and even swing our salsa hips at Zumba 3 nights a week!

Hasta manzana Galapagos – I will miss you!
Thom

MY EXPERIENCE IN THE TEACHING PROGRAM

by Kim Gartner - Germany



The first (and until now only) thing that got lost here on San Cristobal was my feeling for time, not only because I've learnt already during my first day, what "Ecuadorian time" means, but also because I don't know how that amount of experiences and impressions could fit in only one month.

Arriving on the island, I was totally flashed by ...well, in fact, everything: the sun, the sea, the people, and sea lions lying just on the boardwalk. Sometimes it is still unreal for me that I'm really here. Until now, there hasn't been one single boring hour, because something is always going on, whether it is activities with the other volunteers, snorkeling, playing sports, Zumba, going out, watching Norwegian soccer games, camping, visiting other beautiful islands, going on Sunday trips with my great (!!) host family to their Finca in the Highlands or just lying at the beach

watching sea lions playing and kissing, or preparing lessons. The latter sometimes takes, thanks to some technical problems, a bit more time ...I would have expected the whole teaching project to be a bit different. The way of teaching and learning really differs a lot to the one in Germany (especially concerning the number of students and their understanding of group work).



However, with time and supported by Kairstin, a student from the US, I think, we have started managing the classes quite well and every time we notice the students have come to understanding a topic, it feels like a small success.

Looking back at all those impressions, I really don't know if my head will be able to manage capturing the next two months, but I'm looking forward to them!



VOLUNTEERS TAKING PART IN DIFFERENTS ACTIVITIES



SIMON`S B-DAY



Social after Dirty Day



Congratulations for your outstanding performances

If you have any suggestions about our work, please contact ecuador@projects-abroad.org.

Best wishes from Ecuador!