

# The galapagos islands argumentative essay



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The Galapagos Islands Brandy Nicole Welch SCI 230 Instructor Amy Hurst

July 25, 2009 ‘ Hence, both in space and time, we seem to be brought somewhat near to that great fact – that mystery of mysteries – the first appearance of new beings on this earth’ was the description Charles Darwin gave when describing his experience on the Galapagos Islands during his five year expedition on board the Beagle. (Levy, 2007) Many may ask What are the Galapagos Islands, and why are so many trying to save them? The Galapagos Islands are also called the Islas Incantadas. They are located about 600 miles west of Ecuador and are straddling the equator.

The Galapagos has a total land area of 7, 882 square kilometers which consist of 13 major islands, six small islands and many islets and rocks. Each of the islands included in the archipelago are of volcanic origin. Two of the islands, Fernandina and Isabela, are still both sites of frequent eruptive activity. (Finch, n. d. ) Although Charles Darwin was not the founder of the Galapagos Islands, he is considered “ the most celebrated visitor to Galapagos”. He arrived on board the HMS Beagle in 1835 on his way home after charting the coasts of South America from the Rio Plata round to Chiloe in Southern Chile.

It was on the Galapagos that Darwin stumbled upon many diverse life forms. (Finch, n. d. ) The beauty and uniqueness Charles Darwin recognized on the Galapagos Islands are in danger of extinction by human interaction. More than 100, 000 people travel to the Galapagos a year to tour the multiple sites on the islands. The introductions of both domestic and non-domestic animals to the islands threaten the native creatures. In an effort to preserve the creatures and plant life on the islands there re multiple conservation

programs currently in place to minimize the effects of human interaction on the Galapagos. (Finch, n. d. There are multiple diversities of life forms found on the Galapagos Islands. The finches are one of the first life forms Darwin discusses in his diary of the voyage on the HMS Beagle. There are 14 different species of finches found on the Galapagos Islands. (Levy, 2007) According to Darwin before arriving on the islands he only knew of one species of finches which could be found on the mainland of South America approximately 600 miles away. Each species of finch found on the Galapagos differs in beak size and shape due to the different diets of each one. (Anthro, 2009) Another life form in danger of extinction is the Galapagos Tortoise.

Like his predecessors, Darwin and the crew of the HMS Beagle saw the tortoises as a food source and fifty or more of them were captured on the islands. They were all eaten on the Journey home and none of the shells were preserved for science. (Galapagos, natural breeding of the Galapagos Tortoise by devouring the tortoises' eggs and young before they are able to reach the safety of the water. pic] [pic] Lonesome George, one of the tortoises in the nature preserve, was found in 1971 on the island of Pinta and is the first tortoise recorded on the island since 1906. pic] [pic] One- third of the 560 native species of plants found on the Galapagos Islands are endemic to the islands. (Galapagos, 2008) Although many plants have difficulties surviving not only the voyage to different islands but also the adaptation of the new environments, the plant life found among the Galapagos seem to have adapted Just as well as Darwin's finches. (Galapagos, 2008) The Galapagos Islands have its own species of otton, pepper, guava, passion

flower and tomato. And many of the other floras differ greatly from others found elsewhere in the world.

The Galapagos tortoises have had a hand in disbursing the different species of flora over the multiple islands of the Galapagos. The plant life is eaten by the tortoises and disbursed over the islands through defecation. Human interaction on the Galapagos Islands has placed many of the native life forms of the island in danger. Since the 1990's tourism on the islands has increased dramatically. The islands' population today stands at 28, 000. Galapagos Conservancy, 2008) The human population has introduced multiple plants, insects and animals which are devastating to the native wildlife on the Galapagos Islands.

The isolation native plants and animals have evolved in cause the introduced predators to have an overwhelming advantage. As of today, over 526 invertebrates, 750 plants, and 29 species of vertebrates have been introduced to the Galapagos Islands. (Galapagos Conservancy, 2008) Many of these animals and plants introduced to the island are causing destruction. The cats, dogs, rats, etc are preventing the ortonises from repopulating the islands by devouring the eggs and young of the tortoises before they are able to reach the safety of the water. Goats, which have been introduced to the islands, are feeding on many of the endemic vegetation.

Some of the plant life introduced to the islands is inhibiting the native plant life to grow due to the shading they create. This shading prevents the sun from getting to the native plant life causing them to slowly become extinct. The growing human population has also caused many diseases to appear on

the islands. Avian malaria, West Nile Fever, and bird flu are some of the major illnesses causing problems for the native life forms on the island. [pic] So many may ask Why is conserving the Galapagos Islands so important and how is the conservation taking place? There are three major reasons for the conservation of Galapagos. Galapagos Conservancy, 2008) First, the Galapagos has often been called “ a living laboratory of evolution” because of its scientific value. According to Galapagos. org, “ 95% of its pre-human biodiversity remains intact, and there is no other island ecosystem that can come close to that significant achievement”. Secondly, the archipelago brings in approximately \$350MM annually to Ecuador as a tourism site. And lastly, the Galapagos Islands are one of the world’s last Wild’ places. There are currently many conservation projects in effect to help protect the Galapagos Islands.

For starters, the Galapagos Conservancy is the only US organization which focuses ONLY on the Galapagos. There are multiple other dedicated to just saving the Galapagos. The World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) are two organizations which support the wildlife found on the Galapagos Islands. On the WWF website, those who are interested in donating money to the islands can purchase multiple items specifically targeted for the Galapagos such as stuffed animals like the Galapagos Penguin or Tortoise, T- shirts, bags, and much more.

Another project, which has been in effect since 1968, is the fact that 97% of the land area on the islands was designated as National Park and Marine Reserve. This prevents any hunting or killing of the wildlife and plant life over all of the islands. Yet another step in trying to save the Galapagos are the <https://assignbuster.com/the-galapagos-islands-argumentative-essay/>

ultiple sanctuaries for the native life forms on the islands, such as a Wildlife Sanctuary and International Whale Sanctuary. The Galapagos Islands are one of earth's many wonders.

Not only did the islands give Darwin the insight on natural selection, but the Galapagos is also home to an amazing list of wondrous life forms. Besides the finches, tortoises and diverse plant life, the islands are home to unique creatures such as the Galapagos penguins, sea lions, hammerhead sharks, and so many more. Each of the creatures on the islands have adapted in so many ways in order to survive. The Galapagos Islands should be protected and reserved at all costs. Natural wildlife is few and far between in our world today.