



# Galápagos Land Iguana

I could learn a lot from this iguana, but, of course, I won't.
I can't sit still that long.
I want what I want when I wanna.
On a whim.

And there's nothing there to tempt me, surrounded by the sea like a castaway among some bugs and lava rocks and prayer. It's rather grim.

Weeks into a drought he's still waiting under a cactus for one of its pads to drop, trusting everything will work out. Good for him.

About 80% of the Galápagos land iguana's diet comes from the prickly pear cactus. Everything is consumed: flowers, fruit, pads, even spines. And it's his major source of moisture.



## **Flightless Cormorant**

Most days they stand beside each other looking out at the sea, their stubby wings constant reminders that their usefulness was forfeited forever in eons past, but they don't remember what that was; just some kind of emptiness, you'd think, hangs on their backs, itching to be filled.

They're looking to the future, that's what it is. He trudges up the rocks with some seaweed which his mate gratefully acknowledges, adding it to their nest. Their necks snake back and forth cementing their commitment.

Now they fly when they fold those remnants in and dart like homing arrows underwater.

One of the world's rarest birds, flightless cormorants are found only on the islands of Isabela and Fernandina in the Galápagos. Currently, there are about 1,000 breeding pairs.









# **Marine Iguana**

Give me a rock to hug and I'll be happy to wear my sleepy mug and take a nappy.

Give me a band of blokes like bros of a feather, snorting salt, telling jokes, chilling out together.

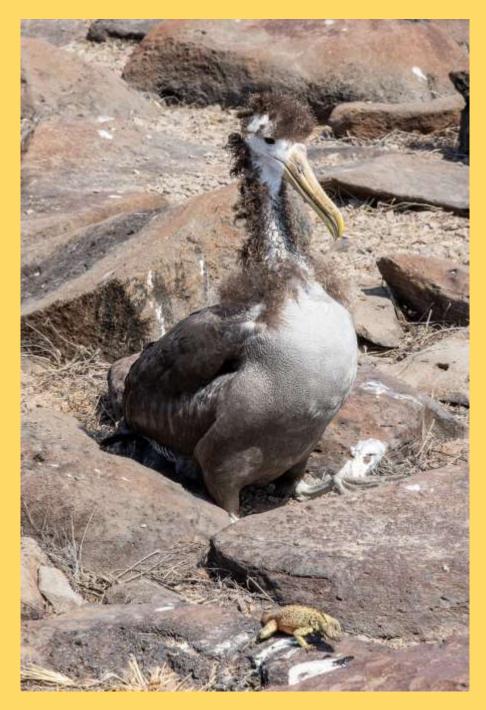
Give me beds of algae between high and low tides where I can shilly-shally and eat my fill besides.

All I ask for is sunshine and a lengthy shoreline and a close-knit colony.

It's a hard life to be carefree—

but I'm warming up to it.

The marine iguana is found only in the Galápagos. Cold-blooded, it soaks up heat from the lava rocks and beach sand before foraging in the ocean, where algae make up almost all of its diet.







## **Waved Albatross**

One of the last that will leave this season, the big bird still sports tiny tufts of down, plopped among the lava rocks like a stooge, sleepy, pot-bellied, drawing the breeze in, his wondrous wingspan yet to be unfurled.

He waits to be invited to the world, unperturbed, harboring a lazy eye. Who can judge now what will happen when he wakes from this immature stupor to find the vastnesses of sea, the soaring sky?

The waved albatross breeds primarily on Española Island in the Galápagos archipelago.



## **Blue-Footed Booby**

His goofy version of a two-step—left foot up, pause, down, then the right, head pointing to the sky as he whistles—for the doting Mrs. by his side, who, nodding her head, full-heartedly approves the display, the magnificence of the blue color redolent to her of health and wealth and ooh-la-la.

Nature has a keen imagination. From its color wheel, it chose between the tender turquoise of the sky and the aquamarine of the sea, just where the birds will entertain their zeal and prove imagination's real. Still, some things are hard to imagine. You have to see them for yourself.

About half of all blue-footed booby breeding pairs nest in the Galápagos. The name booby comes from the Spanish word bobo ("stupid", "foolish", or "clown") because the birds, like other seabirds, are clumsy on land.