

# Costa Rica & the Panama Canal

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 19 – 29 April 2022











# San José; Turtle Island

DAY 1 | Tuesday 19 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 09°58.302'S

Longitude: 084°49.859'S

Course: 063.7°

Speed: 0.0 knots

Wind Speed: 9 knots, gentle breeze from W

Barometer: 1022

Air Temp: 26°C

Little do you know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

— Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881

Last breakfast on land for 11 days at least. A chance to have some of that fine Costa Rican coffee before we start our journey on the *Greg Mortimer*.

The group has been preparing for this adventure for a while now, and the day has finally come. We boarded the buses in San José for the 1.5hr drive to meet the ship in Puntarenas. There it was, looking magnificent and alone on the end of the long pier. We were greeted at the gangway with a group of four local traditional dancers and some great music.

Some of the crew and expedition team welcomed us on board and showed us to our cabins. Quite a few of the passengers had been on Aurora voyages in the past and commented on how luxurious the new ship is.

Lunch was the first activity on the itinerary after settling into the cabins.

A mandatory lifeboat drill was next, and it was a little different doing one in such tropical weather, with no down jackets, beanies, gloves, or polar gear to be seen on deck 7.

The lecture room was the place for meeting all the expedition team and some of the crew. We had a briefing on Zodiac safety, and were given some good information regarding the ship.

Our first destination was Isla de Tortuga (Turtle Island) located just off the Nicoya Peninsular. It was a short visit, but a dip at the beach and watching the sun setting was a perfect way to start the journey. After returning to the ship, we changed out of our soggy gear for dinner and enjoyed a beautiful meal in the company of new friends.

Expedition leader Roger gave us a quick briefing after dinner on what adventures lay ahead for us tomorrow.

Costa Rica – Ché Chiva ! Yep, it's pretty cool.









# Quepos; Manuel Antonio National Park

DAY 2 | Wednesday 20 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 09°25.599' S

Longitude: 084°10.617' W

Course: 054.9°

Speed: 0.6 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots, light breeze from NW

Barometer: 1023

Air Temp: 25°C

Peace consists, very largely, in the fact of desiring it with all one's soul. The inhabitants of my small country, Costa Rica, have realized those words by Erasmus. Mine is an unarmed people, whose children have never seen a fighter or a tank or a warship.

—Oscar Arias

While some of us were daunted by the threats of a pre-5 am wake up call, we generally agreed that it was very much worth the early start. Manuel Antonio National Park is an awe-inspiring place and many of us felt that we had been thoroughly spoiled already by what was just the second landing of the trip.

We took the Zodiacs into a marina in Quepos, a harbour town on Costa Rica's central Pacific Coast, and hopped onto some buses once we could tear ourselves away from the scarlet macaws that we found sitting in the treetops. Manuel Antonio is the country's smallest national park, but nonetheless absolutely packed with life, as we were to see. Once through the queues at the ticket station, we split into three groups, each with our own local guide. The guides were immensely knowledgeable and seemed to have an extra sense when it came to spotting illusive creatures deep in the undergrowth.

We all seemed to agree that the experience was unforgettable. For myself, I'd not expected to see so much variety of wildlife, nor have such ease of access to seeing the animals. Sloths, howler monkeys, white tailed deer, agouti, hummingbirds, these were just a few of the exotic and fascinating creatures that we were lucky enough to see. The guides gave a very thorough run down on each and every wonder along the way, in addition to telling us all about the general ecosystem and workings of the rain forest.

After lunch, we set out again on the Zodiacs. While some went into Quepos to have a stroll around town, most of us headed over to Biesanz beach to play around in the water. The sky was increasingly overcast but the water was deliciously warm. The guides had set the beach up with inflatable kayaks and stand up paddle boards and we had a brilliant couple of hours playing around.

We arrived back at the ship in time for a spectacular sunset, the ideal opportunity for taking a drink up onto the top deck.

Before dinner we gathered into the bar for Captain's Cocktails to meet the Captain himself and his team. We raised a toast to the ship and each other and celebrated the adventure that we are all sharing together.









# San Pedrillo, Corcovado National Park

DAY 3 | Thursday 21 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 08°49.887'

Longitude: 083°46.243'W

Course: 127.6

Speed: 6.4 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots, light breeze from NE

Barometer: 1024

Air Temp: 28°C

Costa Rica seduced the young solo traveler me in the mid-1990s with visions of tropical beaches, smoking volcanoes, abundant wildlife and friendly locals

—Wendy Yanagihara

Feliz Cumpleaños Bronwyn!

Today was Bronwyn's birthday and she got a special wake up song!

A little bit of a sleep in today compared to yesterday. Those that were awake early they were greeted with Pantropical Spotted Dolphins feeding and competing with the Brown Boobies diving in to get their share.

Today we visited the Corcovado National Park.

Phoebe gave us a wonderful, insightful introduction to this great park. There we learnt about its famous variety of wildlife, containing an amazing 2.5% of the world's biodiversity. Her love for the place was very infectious, and we were excited to see what we could find.

Vamos por ello!

Conrad, as our Costa Rican part of the team, enlightened us all with a brief history of his native country, including explaining the way the country has been formed and shaped up until today.

Then it was time to pack our pre-made lunches, cameras, wet and walking shoes and sunscreen for the day ahead. Corcovado National Park had its own boats (Pangas) to take us ashore. We had to anchor the ship a long way from the landing beach due to it being a protected area, so for roughly 5 nm we sped along the coastline to our destination. It is safe to say, it was occasionally bumpy.

We split into three groups and met our guides for the afternoon: José, Angela, and Cesar. Their local knowledge was very evident as we walked through the forest. Before we had left the beach, we had already spotted a crocodile in the lagoon.

After crossing a small tidal inlet we headed into the jungle and walking along with our guides we saw a variety of interesting species. The three groups (combined) reported seeing spider monkeys, a bird catcher snake, howler monkeys, a sloth mother and young, many hermit crabs near the beach, small pools of tadpole eggs, and even a blue morpho butterfly blowing through the lianas. Qué belleza!

Our lunch on a rocky coast was a welcome break.

After lunch there was more to explore and see. The flora was also impressive, the forest full of vines, tree-ferns, coconut palms, flowering trees, strong looking fig trees and so much more. A few of the birds that were spotted included: an oystercatcher, a bare throated-tiger Heron, an ant-tanager which is endemic to the Osa Peninsula, and some other beautiful and colourful birds that made us forget (for a while at least) the amount of ants and small insects crawling on our skin.

On return to the ship, we had a couple of hours' rest before our dinner which was very welcome. Another full day, another good meal, another round and away we go again tomorrow. What will we see next!

Today, we definitely had a sense of what Costa Ricans love to say: Pura Vida!









# Parque National Piedras Blancas; Golfo Dulce

DAY 4 | Sunday 22 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 08°38.771'S

Longitude: 083°20.162'W

Course: 314.4°

Speed: 6 knots

Wind Speed: 2 knots, light breeze from NNW

Barometer: 1025

Air Temp: 25°C

Con gusto (con goo-sto) - You're welcome. Costa Ricans say this instead of 'de nada,' which is commonly used in other Spanish speaking countries.

All night the ship sailed down the coast of Osa Peninsula, at times in tropical downpours, and during the dogwatch (midnight till 0400) we rounded the Cape and sailed into Golfo Dulce. At sunrise we were deep into the gulf, with calm seas and a clear sky. The Captain dropped anchor just on breakfast time in shallow water close to shore off Soladero village.

After breakfast we went ashore and landed on the clean pebble beach in front of Soladero Eco Lodge, where we met our local guides, really nice, courteous, young people. The gardens of the resort are full of flowering plants and scrubs and while walking around many birds were seen; toucans, scarlet macaws and others, including a woodpecker high up in a palm tree, and even a Caracara perched in the coconut palms looking for prey. Also in the garden were fruit trees like avocado, mango, lemon, and a soursop bush, all organic of course. The guides treated us to freshly sliced pineapple taken from the plants that grew beside the path.

The resort is within the Parque National Piedras Blancas and several tracks lead into the wet tropical jungle. Under the trees it was quite cool, but very humid while in the gardens. The tropical heat was a bit too much for some, so it was good to return to the ship for an early lunch.

After lunch it was time for a Zodiac cruise at the head of the gulf. Brown pelicans paddled frantically trying to get out of the way of the boats and a pair of crested terns rested on a big log. A lot of fresh water from rivers and streams enters the gulf and the line between fresh and salt water was clearly visible. That is where we spotted a large pod of bottle nosed dolphins, feeding on bait fish, and we were able to observe them for quite some time.

Back on board we had a most interesting lecture from Phoebe about the biodiversity of this 200m deep tropical fjord, one of only four in the world. While we were properly informed the ship sailed to Golfito, a small settlement on an inlet of the same name, where we cleared customs as this was our last port of call in Costa Rica.

Before dinner, we received a recap of our time in Costa Rica, as well as a lecture by Dan about the geologically significant land bridge that is Central America, and its importance in connecting the North and South American continents. Adios Costa Rica, hopefully we will be able to come back and see more of this beautiful country.









# Coiba Island

DAY 5 | Saturday 23 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 07°34.944' S

Longitude: 081°42.738' W

Course: 272.5°

Speed: 1.2 knots

Wind Speed: 8 knots, light breeze from SSW

Barometer: 1023

Air Temp: 25°C

Panama has been a global crossroads ever since humans first passed through the country. The earliest evidence of humans in South America is 12,500 years old. That means that humans passed through Panama before that.

—William Howard Taft

A grey sky greeted the *Greg Mortimer* as it sailed into Panama and dropped anchor near the tropical island of Coiba. Here the expedition had planned to land in amongst the small island archipelago that neighbours the larger land mass. This collection of verdant green islands lies scattered around the coast of Coiba, thick vegetation running right down to the waters edge, with golden beaches that appear and disappear with the tides.

As the expeditioners boarded Zodiacs and set out from the ship, large black clouds loomed over the ocean. Curtains of rain whipped across the flat waters, bringing a welcome freshness to the humid air. With days of watching clouds building up before pouring down everywhere but on the expeditioners, it was finally our turn to experience a tropical downpour ourselves.

Undeterred by these conditions, the team made a landing on the small islet of Pepito and set about preparing for the first snorkel session of the trip. Here the team divided everyone into three groups to explore the underwater world at their own levels. The first group set out with the intent of circumnavigating the islet, the second to explore the limits of the cove, and the third braved their first snorkel session. No matter where you went however, sea life was there to welcome you. From small damsel fish to shoals of trevally, parrot fish to white tipped reef sharks. It was a wonderful first snorkel experience for the expedition.

From Pepito some expeditioners chose to head into the ranger station to see the local crocodile Tito, at home in his bay. This American crocodile has been living in Coiba national park since it was young and grown accustomed to the care of the rangers.

Whilst some people were visiting Tito, the local museum and the sights of the ranger station, others were jumping back in the water again. This second snorkel was off the shores of Coco Island. A rocky outcrop and choppy sea made for more challenging snorkel conditions. But the rewards were worth it, including the snorkellers seeing multiple hawksbill turtles that seemed as surprised as they were to see each other.

The afternoon brought presentations from Conrad and Phoebe as the ship set sail further south and deeper into the nation of Panama. Smooth seas and clear skies made this a pleasure to travel through.

The rainy start to the day was a complete contrast to its conclusion, the sky lighting up for an incredible sunset. Pinks, purples, and oranges reaching up into the clouds and over the coastal ranges of Panama. The golden light was a glorious end to another wonderful expedition day in Central America.









# Bartolome Island, Pearl Islands

DAY 6 | Sunday 24 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 08°11.955' S

Longitude: 079°32.914' W

Course: 026.8°

Speed: 6.3 knots

Wind Speed: 5 knots, light breeze from W

Barometer: 1022

Air Temp: 25°C

Panama is known as a transit country because of the Panama Canal. While the country is known for its famous canal, its natural attractions include birding, whitewater rafting, and snorkeling tours. Panama's biodiversity has been said to be three times higher than the United States, Canada and Europe combined.

Buenos días, *Greg Mortimer!* Waking up to a beautiful sunrise, we made our way through the Gulf of Panama, enroute to Bartolome Island. The coffee was hot, our breakfast was hearty and the wildlife along the ship abundant. Phoebe gave us a lecture on sea turtles and her work in Costa Rica, including the challenges, the successes and the education. Soon after, Conrad enlightened us on the traditional ways and life of the Embera People, which was super helpful since we'll be making our way down the Chagres River tomorrow to visit an Embera Village. What a mellow morning it was!

Upon approaching the Pearl Islands Marine Sanctuary, we got a call that there was a whale shark next to the ship. These are the largest fish in the sea and a very rare sighting, so everyone made their way up to Deck 7. Although not everyone was able to see the whale shark, there was still a tonne of beauty to be seen... nevertheless, there was still a ton of beauty to be seen on the outer decks as we approached Bartolome Island. It was a perfect weather day - the sun was shining, winds were low, and a white sandy beach awaited us after our lunch.

Hoping to paddle board, kayak, and snorkel, our expedition staff made their way towards the beach, with water activity gear in tow. Getting closer to the beach, it seemed there was quite a big swell coming in, creating a shore break and jeopardising our day of water sports. Nevertheless, our team got everyone onto the beach, where we enjoyed a beautiful swim in turquoise waters and a snorkel & kayak when the conditions mellowed out a bit. Although we weren't able to fulfill our Plan A, Plan B was a success and even some of the ship's crew came out to enjoy the beach and warm water. They work so hard, so it was really good to see them all having a good time.

Making our way back to the ship, we had a debrief and our Ship BBQ on deck, where the margaritas were flowing and the music was pumping! Filling our bellies and singing along to some well known tunes, Allan started dancing, and by the end of the evening, he had a few other expeditioners and e-team up cutting footloose. A fun way to end a great day in Panama! Tomorrow we head to the city, but tonight we dream under the stars. Buenas noches, *Greg Mortimer...* qué duermen bien!









# Panama City: Embera Village

DAY 7 | Monday 25 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 08°54.744'S

Longitude: 079°30.822'W

Course: 328.8°

Speed: 0.5 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots, light breeze from NE

Barometer: 1022

Air Temp: 26°C

## Fun Facts of Panama!

- Panama is the only place in the world where you can see the sun rise on the Pacific and set on the Atlantic.
- Panama was the first country outside the United States in which coca cola was sold.
- Panama was the first Latin American country to adopt the U.S. currency as its own.

The morning started with the uncertainty of the possibility of the staff having to go ashore at 6am for a face check. Luckily it is common practice for Central America's government officials to keep the visitors on their toes.

Off we went to the village to meet our local guides.

We did take cover inside a large thatch roof house where we saw their dance presentation and heard their explanations. As we finished with that the rain conveniently stopped and off we went to the forest with four young Embera boys. They astonished us with their knowledge of the species in the forest, including the many species of amphibians that had become active with the recent rain. We were very lucky to be there at the precise moment they were active.

In the forest we had good looks at the Cuipo trees that are one of the trees that the Harpy Eagle nests on. Several species of birds were spotted that we didn't see in Costa Rica, such as the Crimson-backed Tanager, a great example of sexual dimorphism. Interestingly, the male birds are sometimes more colourful than the females.

To understand any adaptation in this neotropical forest we must see that they guarantee the survival of the species and not the individual bird. A male will use his colours to court the female and to intimidate other males for a territory and the right to mate. Once the female is impregnated or has eggs and chicks the male will use his colouration to attract predators away from the nest. If he gets killed he has served the purpose of protecting his genes. This demonstrates the fact that we, the males, are expendable.

The day was finished with a Recap/Briefing from Dan, Liz and Roger followed by yet another scrumptious dinner from our fabulous kitchen staff









# Panama City: Lago Gatun, Casco Viejo

DAY 8 | Tuesday 26 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 08°54.732'S

Longitude: 079°30.801'W

Course: 111.7°

Speed: 0.5 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots, light breeze from NNW

Barometer: 1022

Air Temp: 25°C

Our ability to perceive quality in nature begins, as in art, with the pretty. It expands through successive stages of the beautiful to values as yet uncaptured by language.

—Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

After a delicious buffet breakfast, we headed out on the Zodiacs to Flamenco Marina. The lovely local guide, Jean, was waiting for us and we headed out towards Lake Gatun where two local boats were waiting to take us on the water. We passed a huge Costco Shopping cargo ship which had close to 5,000 containers onboard. Just think of all the things that they must have contained!

Conrad was able to spot some interesting birds including the snail kite which feeds solely on snails - thankfully they aren't able to pass their snail pace on as we soon saw him soar as high as a kite and as fast as lightning. Conrad has an extremely keen eye for birds and his passion for them is definitely infectious.

Soon after, we found some cheeky capuchin monkeys. There are several species of capuchin monkey in the Americas and the correct name for the species found here is white throated capuchin. Some were very confident and jumped on the roof of our boat, probably looking for food. We then spotted four howler monkeys taking a midday nap high up in the tree tops along the same bank. Even the sound of the boat motors didn't make them stir, they just continued in their deep sleep the whole time we observed them. It's a wonderful thing being able to watch wildlife with natural behaviour and know you are not disturbing them.

After a full morning we had a delicious lunch at Casa Blanca restaurant in Casco Viejo, the old town, which is located right next to the president's work office. You could literally spend hours exploring the little paved roads of this area. Each building is unique and full of history. Some of our expeditioners enjoyed the canal museum while some enjoyed a spot of souvenir shopping and strolling. After some time to explore, we reunited at the cathedral, which is the oldest building in Casco Viejo, dating back to the 1600's.

Once back on board, a fun recap was given by the team. Lelia explained to us that the Panama Hat is actually from Ecuador and not Panama, the story was really interesting! Conrad followed with an introduction to the history and mechanics of the Panama Canal, and then Roger gave a briefing for the next day.

After another delicious dinner, a documentary about the Panama Canal was shown in the lecture room.

Now, time to go to bed as tomorrow we are passing through the canal. What a treat!









# Panama Canal

DAY 9 | Wednesday 27 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 08°52.307' S

Longitude: 079°32.034' W

Course: 010°

Speed: 0.1 knots

Wind Speed: 11 knots, light breeze from WNW

Barometer: 1022

Air Temp: 25 °C

A finer body of men has never been gathered by any nation than the men who have done the work of building the Panama Canal; the conditions under which they have lived and have done their work have been better than in any similar work ever undertaken in the tropics; they have all felt an eager pride in their work; and they have made not only America but the whole world their debtors by what they have accomplished.

—Theodore Roosevelt

Momentous.

Perhaps it will not be honoured or recognised worldwide, but in the archives of Aurora and in the sometimes-sharp memories of the staff and expeditioners onboard, it will never be forgotten.

On this day 27/04/2022: The *Greg Mortimer* successfully passed through the Panama Canal system for the first time. She is no stranger to the Atlantic waters and has spent plenty of time in the Pacific now, but to join the two oceans together with an inaugural crossing of the canal was indeed a special event.

At 5:30am we were joined by a pilot and our guide John to navigate our way through the loch systems. We arrived under the Bridge of the Americas before breakfast, our entrance to the canal.

All the action was on the observation deck 8. It was perfect for an event like this. The buzz of excitement was there too, and all the railing was occupied by expeditioners and crew. The vantage point from deck 8 was spectacular. Some people brought breakfast up or skipped it, to capture every moment.

The ship was to pass through the old set of lochs first. The first three step up being the Miraflores lochs. Before entering, the ship invites a team of line handlers onboard that catch and throw lines to and from shore. Those lines are then attached with wire cable to four locomotive engines, two on each side, front and aft. These kept the ship in rigid position so it could not touch the canal walls. The captain and navigation team no longer control steering, only forward movement now, as we are enclosed in a chamber the water filling up around us until we are level with the next chamber. The second and third set of lochs were a similar process with a lot of activity and workers busy in the background. They were the Pedro Miguel and Gatun. Between these sets, we popped open a few bottles of champagne and celebrated the occasion.

As well as all the impressive industry around us, we were surprised to see a few American freshwater crocodiles swimming in the canal, lurking in the murky waters way below us. A whole group photo was taken as we passed Centennial Bridge.

It was a perfect location for an outdoor lunch on deck 8, the timing also perfect as a solid downpour of rain came just as lunch was ending. Ice cream and sweets topped off a great day. As a bonus, we spotted a group of large capybaras grazing along side the canal. Exotic animals indeed. A truly great day.









# Caribbean Sea

DAY 10 | Thursday 28 April 2022

## Position at 0600

Latitude: 09°55.044' S

Longitude: 078°24.461' W

Course: 080.1°

Speed: 6.7 knots

Wind Speed: 17 knots, moderate wind from NE

Barometer: 1021

Air Temp: 26°C

The three great elemental sounds in nature are the sound of rain, the sound of wind in a primeval wood, and the sound of outer ocean on a beach. I have heard them all, and of the three elemental voices, that of the ocean is the most awesome, beautiful and varied.

—Henry Beston

Our first and only sea day on the ship! Today we sailed non stop through the Caribbean Sea towards our final destination; Cartagena de Indias in Colombia.

This morning, the greatest challenge was wrestling with the complicated forms we needed to fill out in order to enter Colombia. But in the end we won!

'The people that would not kneel' was the title of the lecture by Conrad, where we learned a little bit more about the lifestyle of the Kuna Yala, a first nations culture that still inhabits this beautiful part of the world.

After lunch, we were fortunate enough to have a special tour of the *Greg Mortimer's* bridge. The technology of this new ship really is first class. We enjoyed discovering how all the navigation systems are operated. This was quickly followed by an enlightening talk from Dimitar, Ion and Igor on the engineering and sustainability of the ship. All of this made us appreciate even more, the training and experience of the Captain and his crew. We were really lucky to have this opportunity!

This afternoon was occupied with preparing for our departure tomorrow. One last Rapid Antigen Test, some last minute shopping at Reza's kingdom, and trying to fit everything back into our suitcases. Where did all this stuff come from? Fortunately we can pack as many memories and experiences as we want. This is what we did!

One last gift from nature was waiting for us outside. A nice pod of Atlantic spotted dolphins spent some time playing at the bow of the vessel, they were happily jumping and darting through the waves. There were also some flying-fish rapidly escaping the path of the ship. It made us wonder, how far can they actually fly across the water? It seems they were giving us a final farewell greeting.

With our bags more or less packed, we made our way to the elephant bar to congratulate and toast Captain Maxim and his heads of department for a job well done. Muchas gracias!

After another delicious meal, we regrouped in the lecture theatre for the voyage photo slide show. Conrad's eye for detail captured the beauty of Costa Rica and Panama. We connected with the images, remembering just how spectacular our voyage had been over the last ten days. The places we have been, the things we had done, the people we have met, the animals we encountered, and all the new friends we have made. This is what our expedition is really all about.

Hasta luego amigos!









# Cartagena

DAY 11 | Friday 29 April 2022

Position at 0600

Latitude: 10°19.018'S

Longitude: 075°34.413'W

Course: 085,.9°

Speed: 10.4 kts

Wind Speed: 2 knots, smooth from NE

Barometer: 1021

Air Temp: 26°C

Disembarkation at 0830 am.

Aurora Expeditions and the ship's crew thank you for joining us aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* to Costa Rica, Panama & Colombia. We hope to see you on the high seas again someday!









# Activity Log

## Tue 19th April | Isla De Tortuga

Today was embarkation day and there was a lot of information to cover and the lifeboat safety drill to perform. We sailed over to Turtle Island a short distance away, hopped into the Zodiacs for the first time and landed easily at the beach. It was wonderful to slip into the water and float around for our first outing in Costa Rica. As we returned to the ship, the Sun was setting over the lush forests around us. A great spot for a swim and a lovely, relaxed evening for day one.

## Wed 20th April | Biesanz Beach

It was a lot to take in this Morning at Manuel Antonio National Park. So much wildlife, and us still adjusting to the humidity of Costa Rica. This afternoon we zoomed out in our Zodiacs to a small beach tucked amongst the forest, Biesanz. Some locals were also enjoying the afternoon there. The team had arranged inflatable kayaks and stand up paddle boards on the beach. The tide was coming in and stealing our sand, so we had to move fast. Eamon took a group of six for a lazy kayak out into the bay while Liz instructed another group closer to the beach on SUPs. The kayaks were very stable, but the SUPs proved to be a bit wobbly, or maybe that was the paddlers. By the end though there were many successful SUPers standing tall. Well done. All the activity must have looked strange to the two monkeys watching from the tree near the beach; I'd like to see them do better.

## Thurs 21st April | Corcovado National Park visit

AM: A guided walk through the rainforest at Corcovado.

## Friday 22 April | Golfo Dulce

AM: Saladero Eco Lodge visit

PM: Dolphin watch, Zodiac cruise

## Sat 23rd April | Coiba - Cocos Islands

This morning was going to be our big snorkel day. After a quick change to head to a small group of islands (off the larger Coiba Island), we had a great venue for some tropical snorkelling. The small, densely vegetated Cocos Islands reminded us of similar places in the South Pacific or Indonesia. After landing on a very small beach shaded by coconut and other trees, we divided the snorkellers into three groups. One would stay within the sheltered bay, a second would venture out a little further and explore the rocky points, and the third more confident team would snorkel around to the other side of the island. Each group had a guide join them and a Zodiac was on hand in case we needed a break or a quick pick up. The fish variety here is fantastic. Plenty of colour in the water with tiny wrasses and damsels darting around, lots of Surgeon-fish, needle-fish, sergeant-fish, parrot-fish, angel-fish, and puffers. A few spiky scorpion-fish and lovely Moorish idols and lovely Moorish idols, a white tipped reef shark spotted, as well as a few crown of thorn star fish, seen munching away on some coral.

A keen group of snorkellers went out to another site for a second outing, on a neighbouring island with a lot of local operators. The marine life continued to amaze. The highlight for many were the turtles - green sea and hawksbill turtles are shy, but were seen briefly by some. Those that did not go for a second snorkel opted for the warmth of the ship or a visit to the nearby Ranger's station on Coiba main island. Tito, the resident old crocodile was there today in the shallow waters so needless to say, we decided not to swim here. A great morning in an amazing location. One place we agreed we would love to revisit.

## Sunday 24th | Bartolome Island – Pearl Islands

AM: The morning was spent at sea heading south to the Pearl Island.

PM: The Pearl Islands are a group of Islands about 1.5 hrs by boat off the coast of Panama City, in Panama Bay. One of the tiniest of the group is Bartolome Island. Small as it was, it was popular with tourists and locals alike. It was Sunday, and the sun was out in force. There is one main beach on the island that we could land at with all the SUPs and inflatable kayaks. When the expeditioners initially arrived, the waves were breaking on shore, making the exit from the Zodiacs pretty sporty. Most went in for a swim to cool off. After a while, the tide was receding and the waves not so big. We decided to offer a guided Kayaking tour and some snorkelling off the rocks for anyone keen. A slow paddle around the island took only about 30-40 minutes, with time to watch the pelicans fly in for a shaky landing. Snorkelling was popular also, with less coral than Cocos Islands but still plenty of fish activity away from the busy beach. Two groups of kayakers circumnavigated the island. Yes, it was small, but it was an interesting paddle. We decided not to SUP today as the swell and wind might have taken us back up to Costa Rica. Tomorrow, we visit the Embera Village outside Panama city.









# Bird Sightings

## Bird Species

19 - 29 April 2022

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Spotted Sandpiper		●	●	●							
Magnificent Frigatebird	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Brown Booby			●			●		●	●	●	
Brown Pelican	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		
Sandwich Tern	●							●	●		
Royal Tern	●			●	●			●	●		
Laughing Gull	●	●					●	●	●		
White Ibis						●		●	●		
Anhinga							●	●			
Southern Lapwing									●		
Black-bellied Whistling Duck							●	●			
Neotropic Cormorant						●	●	●	●		
Great Egret					●	●					
Bare-throated Tiger Heron		●		●	●						
Black-crowned Night Heron						●	●				
Yellow-crowned Tiger Heron									●		
Tricolored Heron									●		
Green Heron							●				
Purple Gallinule							●				
Common Gallinule							●	●			
Wattled Jacana							●	●			
Great-tailed Grackle	●	●			●		●	●	●		
Tropical Mockingbird		●					●	●	●		
Blue-crowned Motmot		●									
Pale-billed Woodpecker				●							
Golden-naped Woodpecker		●									
Red-crowned Woodpecker		●		●			●	●			

## Bird Species

19 - 29 April 2022

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Great Tinamou		●									
Snail Kite								●	●		
Common Black Hawk		●	●	●							
Roadside Hawk		●		●							
Yellow-headed Caracara		●	●	●	●	●		●	●		
Peregrine Falcon										●	
American Kestrel										●	
Black Vulture		●	●	●	●	●		●	●		
Turkey Vulture	●	●	●	●		●		●	●		
Scarlet Macaw		●		●							
Red-lored Amazon Parrot					●			●	●		
Orange-chinned Parakeet		●		●			●	●	●		
Keel billed Toucan							●		●		
Yellow-throated Toucan				●							
Fiery-billed Aracari				●							
Collared Aracari							●	●			
Black-throated Trogon			●								
Slaty-tailed Trogon				●							
Little Hermit Hummingbird		●									
Long-billed Hermit Hummingbird			●	●							
Gray-breasted Martin					●		●	●	●		
Mangrove Swallow							●	●			
Barn Swallow								●	●		
Great Kiskadee		●					●	●	●		
Rusty Margined Flycatcher							●	●			
Royal Flycatcher			●								
Social Flycatcher				●			●				



## Bird Species

19 - 29 April 2022

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Common Tody Flycatcher							●				
Fork-tailed Flycatcher									●		
Lesser Elaenia							●				
Squirrel Cockoo											
White-tipped Dove		●		●			●				
Rudy Ground Dove											
Pale-vented Pigeon								●			
American Redstart										●	
Northern Waterthrush			●								
Cerulean Warbler						●					
Red-eyed Vireo									●	●	
White-throated Shrike Tanager			●								
Black-cheeked Ant Tanager			●								
Palm Tanager				●				●			
Blue-grey Tanager				●				●			
Cherie's Tanager				●				●			
Crimsson backed Tanager											
Red-legged Honeycreeper					●						
Masked Tityra				●							
Cocoa Woodcreeper				●							
Chestnut-backed Antbird		●	●								
Black-hooded Antshrike			●								
Rose-throated Becard				●							
Comon Pauraque		●									
Riverside Wren		●									
House Wren							●	●			
Yellow-faced Grassquit				●							

## Other Species

19 - 29 April 2022

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Blue Morpho Butterfly		●	●				●				
Small Postman Butterfly				●							
Anartia fatima Butterfly											
Anartia Jatrophae Butterfly				●							
Leaf Cutter Ants		●	●	●							
Halloween Crab		●									
Hermit Crab		●		●							
Yellow-tiped Damselfly			●								



Macaw

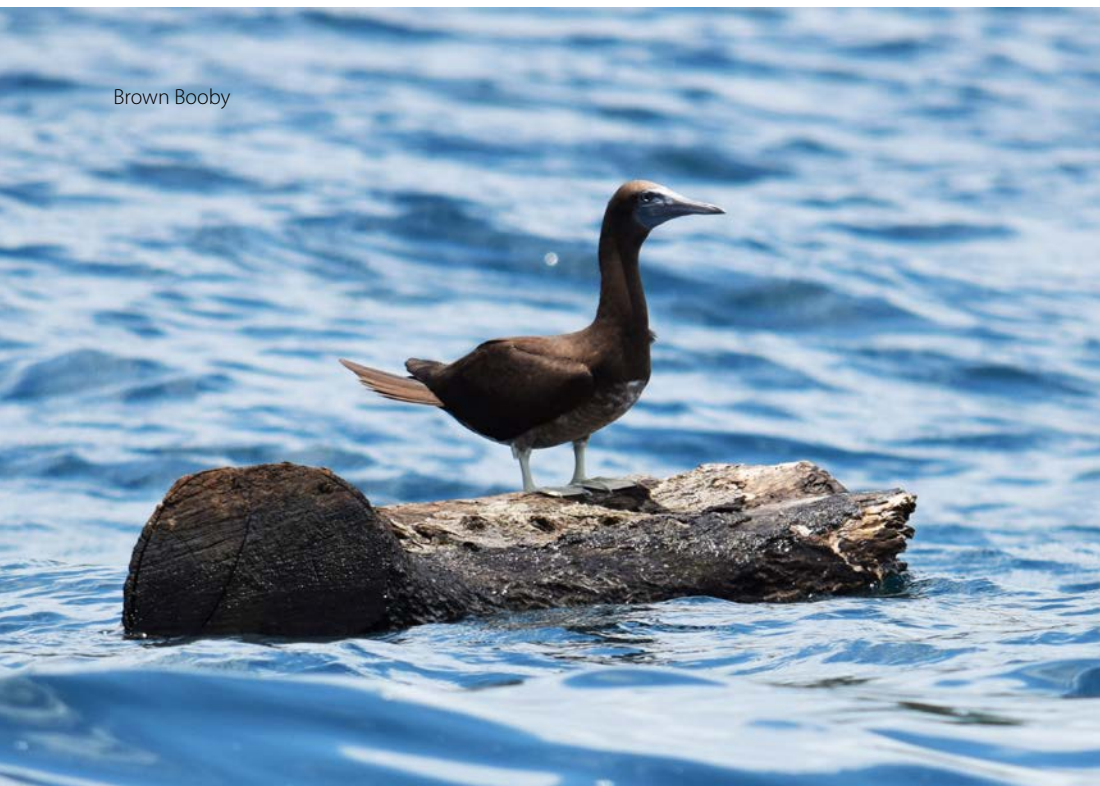




Sandwich Tern



Social Flycatcher



Brown Booby



Palm Tanager



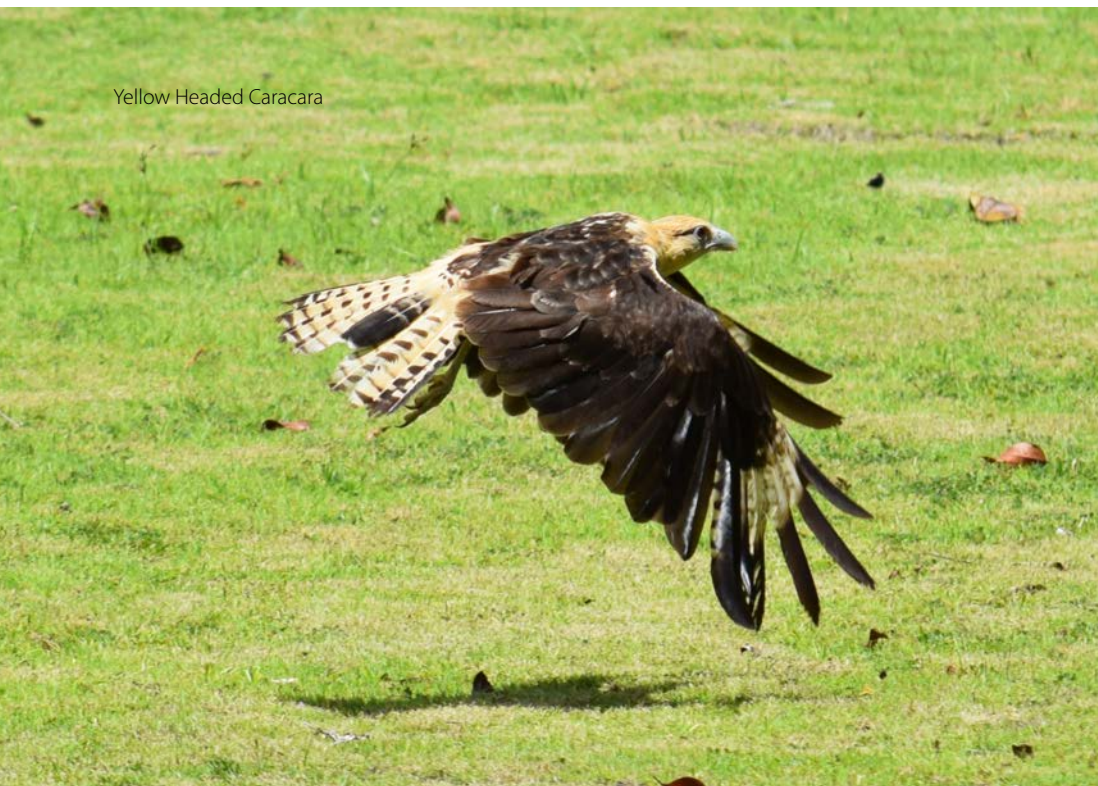
Brown Pelican



Brown Booby



Yellow Headed Caracara



Rusty-Margined Flycatcher





# Reptiles, Amphibians and Mammal Sightings

## Reptile Species

19 - 29 April 2022

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Brown Basilisk Lizard		●						●			
Green Iguana		●									
Ctenosaur Lizard		●									
Norops Lizard		●									
American Crocodile			●	●					●		
Bird Eating Snake			●								
Green vine Snake								●			
Green Turtle						●					
Hawksbill Turtle						●					

## Amphibian Species

19 - 29 April 2022

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Red-eyed Tree Frog		●									
Masked Smilisca Frog		●									
Hyla Frog							●				
Piglet Litter Frog							●				
Forest Litter Toad							●				
Bird Eating Snake											
Green vine Snake											
Green Turtle											
Hawksbill Turtle											

## Mammal Species

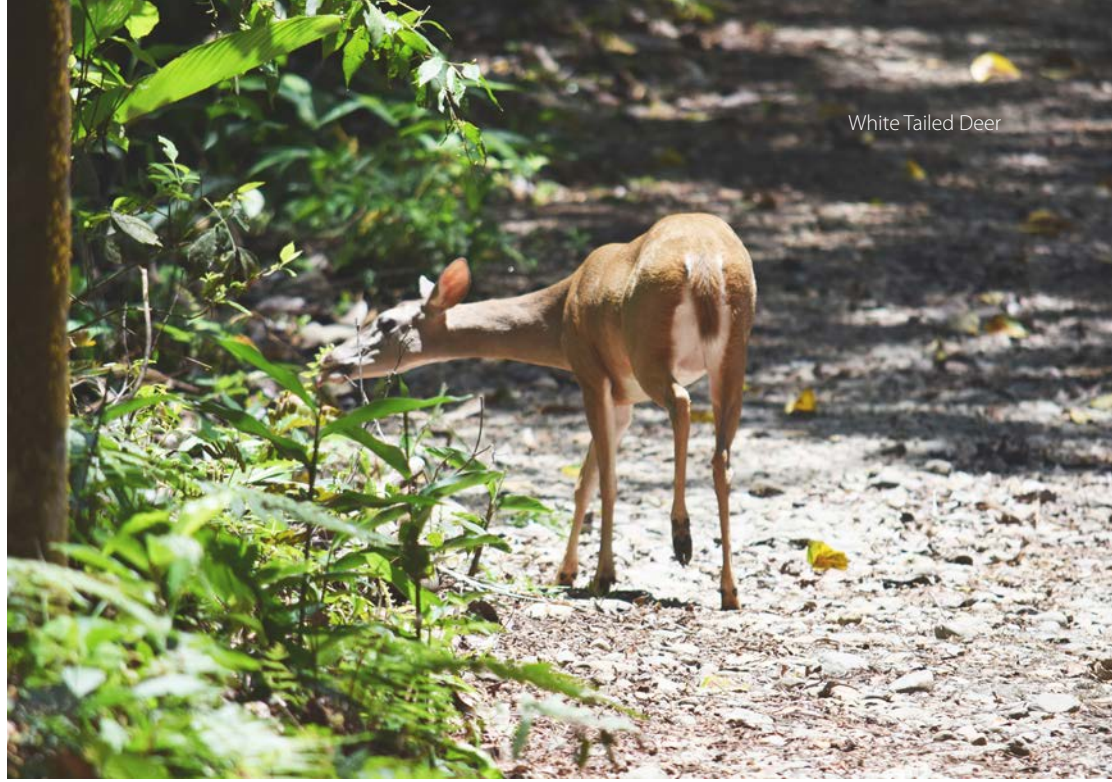
19 - 29 April 2022

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Collared Pecari	●										
Northern Raccoon		●									
White-lined Tent Bat		●									
Long-nosed Bat		●						●			
Three-toed Sloth		●	●								
Two-toed Sloth		●	●					●			
Central American Agouti		●									
Coiba Agouti					●						
Variegated Squirrel								●			
Capybara									●		
White-tailed Deer		●									
White-throated Capuchin Monkey		●						●			
Mantled Howler Monkey		●	●					●			
Central American Spider Monkey			●	●							
White-nosed Coatimundi		●									
Pantropical-spotted Dolphin			●		●	●					
Atlantic-spotted Dolphin											●
Boottle-nosed Dolphin				●		●					





Three Toed Sloth



White Tailed Deer



Hyla Frog



White Throated Capuchin Monkey

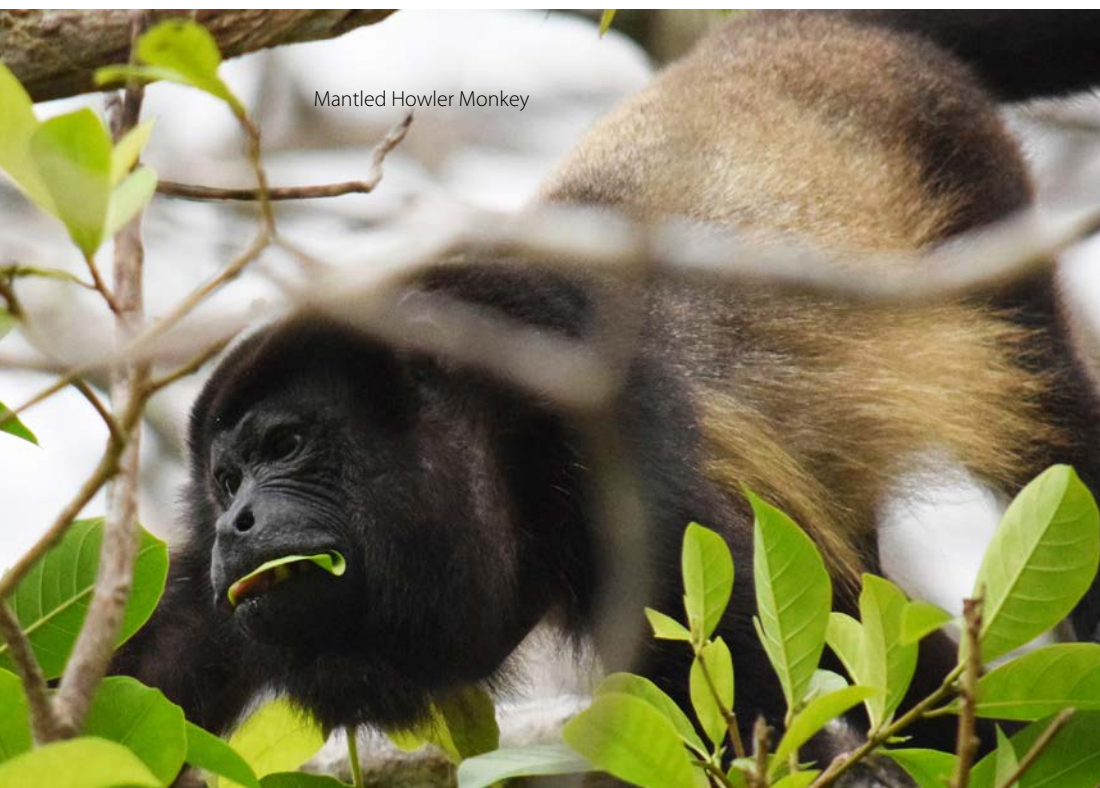




American Crocodile



Banded Orange Butterfly



Mantled Howler Monkey



White Lined Tent Bat





Shield Bug



Anartia Butterfly



Bird Eating Snake



Basilisk Lizard





**Costa Rica:**

1. Puntarenas — 9°58.30' N 84°49.86' W
2. Isla Tolinga, Islas Tortugas — 9°46.19' N 84°53.49' W
3. Manuel Antonio National Park — 9°25.60' N 84°10.62' W
4. Quepos & Biesanz Beach — 9°25.60' N 84°16.79' W
5. San Pedrillo, Corcovado National Park — 8°49.89' N 83°46.24' W
6. Saladero, Golfo Dulce — 8°38.77' N 83°20.16' W
7. Golfo Dulce Zodiac Cruise — 8°38.77' N 83°20.16' W

**Panama:**

8. Islas Cocos, Coiba National Marine Park — 7°34.94' N 81°42.74' W

9. Bartolomé Island, Islas Perlas — 8°11.95' N 79°32.91' W
10. Flamenco Marina & Amador Causeway — 8°54.74' N 79°30.82' W
11. Ella Puro Emberá-Wounaan Village — 9°13.85' N 79°80.11' W
12. Lake Gatún, Gamboa — 9°13.84' N 79°53.48' W
13. Casco Viejo & Canal Museum — 8°95.23' N 79°53.48' W
14. Miraflores Locks, Panama Canal — 8°99.64' N 79°59.06' W
15. Gatún Locks, Panama Canal — 9°27.23' N 79°91.30' W
16. Caribbean Sea Crossing — 10°36.87' N 77°09.66' W

**Colombia:**

17. Cartagena, Colombia — 10°42.52' N 75°55.00' W











## Expeditioners:

Neal Bostock	James Millar
Yvonne Bostock	Carolyn Morgan
Allan Braun	Gaby Palacios
Graham Brown	Nigel Price
Richard Coombs	Carol Price
Jill Downie	Louise Quinn
Phoebe Edge	Carlo Raciti
Helen Iatrou	Simon Rowland
John Kerr	Tina Rowland
Frances Kerr	Linda Ryer
Beverly Kershaw	Peter Ryer
Nick Kontis	Dirk Selderyk
Estelle Lemieux	John Stephenson
Kris Loodus	Bronwyn Stephenson
Kirk Maynard	Astrid Stevenson
Susan Maynard	John Stewart
Rob McFarland	Pat Stewart
Rosemary Millar	Jennifer Turnbull

## Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Roger Kirkwood  
Assistant Expedition Leader: Isabelle Howles  
Onboard Expedition Manager: Anne Oyasaeter  
First Responder/Expedition Guide: Daniel Stavert  
Expedition Guide: Eamon Larkin  
Expedition Guide: Lelia Cataldi  
Kayaking Guide: Eamon Larkin  
Expedition Guide/Lead Snorkelling Guide: Liz MacNeil  
Photography Guide/Lecturer: Conrad Weston  
Marine Biologist/Destination Expert: Phoebe Edge  
Zodiac Master: Sergei Hincu  
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Reza Rusooly

## Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Maxim Makarovskiy	Head Waiter: Narendra Seeram
Chief Officer: Ivan Romanov	Hotel Controller: Rohmat Nurhidayat
Safety Officer: Andrey Zakalashnyuk	IT Officer: Ihor Yesmienieiev
Second Officer: Edgar De Venechia	Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska
Bosun: Oscar Antonio Castejon Torres	Receptionist: Marie Annecy Reynoird
Deck Cadet: Vlad Nicolescu	Head Stateroom: Elieser Nunez Almendarez
Deck Cadet: David Bote Martin	Spa Manager: Alena Antonova
Ship Doctor: Anzor Chomakhidze	Able Seaman: Mohamed Elsayed Abdekhamid Rodes
Ship Nurse: Susara Hendrika Mostert	Able Seaman: Bobby Penuliar Payumo
Chief Engineer: Dimitar Ivanov Vasilev	Able Seaman: Yevgen Kotuz
First Engineer: Ion Toma	Able Seaman: Maksym Khlivniuk
Hotel Director: Franz Wusits	Able Seaman: Joel Valdevieso Noble
F&B Manager: Miguel Cabanillas Alvarez	Able Seaman: Giovanni Dela Torre
Chief Purser: Liza Merillo	
Chef: Nellan Lewars	

## Photography thanks to:

Astrid Stevenson	Yvonne Bostock	E Team:
Dirk Selderyk	John Stephenson	Conrad Weston
















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