Youth from Galapagos, mainland Ecuador and the U.S. engaged in conservation through EPI’s immersive field courses. A total of 283 students and teachers participated in 17 Galapagos Wildlife Ecology courses and joined Galapagos National Park rangers to collect data on giant tortoises. Participants completed an inquiry-based field science curriculum focused on the ecology of these iconic species and the unique ecosystem of the archipelago.

**2018 HIGHLIGHTS**

**GALAPAGOS FIELD PROGRAM**

Youth from Galapagos, mainland Ecuador and the U.S. engaged in conservation through EPI’s immersive field courses. A total of 283 students and teachers participated in 17 Galapagos Wildlife Ecology courses and joined Galapagos National Park rangers to collect data on giant tortoises. Participants completed an inquiry-based field science curriculum focused on the ecology of these iconic species and the unique ecosystem of the archipelago.

**CONSERVATION RESEARCH**

**Galapagos Tortoise Monitoring**

In a unique partnership with the Galapagos National Park and Dr. Washington Tapia, EPI students helped scientists understand ecology and migration patterns of giant tortoises, as well as survival and mortality rates. Students assisted park rangers in locating tortoises, then collected biometric data, tagged, and branded the shells of individuals for a population census. This year, students monitored tortoise populations at four different sites on Santa Cruz Island.

**Seed Identification**

The giant Galapagos tortoise plays a unique role in the ecosystem of the islands - that of seed disperser. To better understand the role tortoises play in distributing seeds of both native and invasive plant species as they move about the island, students assisted Dr. Stephen Blake in collecting tortoise dung and identifying the types of seeds found in samples. This field season, EPI participants identified and catalogued a total of 22,534 seeds.

**Marine Life Surveys**

The Galapagos Marine Reserve is one of the most extraordinary marine ecosystems in the world. EPI students conducted marine life surveys in the coastal areas of Santa Cruz and Isabela Islands to identify presence of fish and invertebrate species.

**FIELD PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE**

| GALAPAGOS PARTICIPANTS | 166 |
| U.S. PARTICIPANTS      | 117 |
| FIELD DAYS             | 2,042 |

**PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

| NUMBER OF TORTOISES MONITORED | 122 |
| SQUARE METERS OF INVASIVE PLANTS REMOVED | 6,106 |
| IMPROVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SCORES | 10% |

**CONSERVATION SERVICE**

The Galapagos National Park is working to protect native and endemic species by removing invasive plants such as raspberry, guava, and cascarilla in fragile areas on Santa Cruz Island. EPI students helped Park rangers restore 1.5 acres of habitat by removing invasive plants and reforestation with native species.

“EPI offered me new knowledge and inspired me to take action towards conservation in Galapagos.”

~ Ruben, Santa Cruz Island
ALUMNI & OUTREACH

EPI provides a unique opportunity for youth and community members of all ages in Galapagos to participate in local conservation efforts. Program alumni take action and develop as conservation leaders as part of EPI's Eco-Club, Mola Mola. Youth facilitate and lead community-based projects like environmental education and citizen science programs, beach clean ups, festivals, field trips, and more.

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES AT-A-GLANCE

- 248 TOTAL WORKSHOPS, FIELD TRIPS, & EVENTS
- 2,458 ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS
- 15 ACTIVE ECO-CLUB MEMBERS

ACTIVITIES

Workshops
In July, EPI held a three-day participatory planning retreat for EPI's Eco-Club. Members built leadership and team-building skills and received training to develop the tools to design, implement, and lead community-based conservation initiatives. During the workshop, members also created a new mission and vision for the Eco-Club.

Field Trips
EPI alumni helped Galapagos National Park rangers release 105 hatchlings into the wild and collect data on nest and egg conditions. This project protects nests and hatchlings from invasive species such as fire ants, feral pigs, and cats, and is a highlight for our alumni.

Awareness Events & Community Activities
Eco-Club members helped organize a festival on Santa Cruz Island to celebrate World Ocean Day. The event was spearheaded by an EPI alumnus, Ibrahí, who is part of the Youth Advisory Council in Galapagos. The Council is working to bring attention to the harm caused by plastic pollution and to engage the community in taking action to address this pressing issue. More than 50 community members attended the event, including students, teachers, and families.

With support from the Galapagos National Park and Intercultural Outreach Initiative, EPI held an International Sea Turtle Festival on a remote fishing village on Isabela Island. This celebratory event attracted more than 50 community members from Isabela Island and helped build community support for conservation efforts.

NOTABLE

For the 6th year, Eco-Club members took action to protect green sea turtle nests at Tortuga Bay in collaboration with Galapagos National Park. Local youth raised awareness in the community and collected data on nests in order to better understand threats to sea turtle populations. Alumni engaged total of 85 community members who helped protect 16 green sea turtle nests!

As part of a new inclusion project, EPI offered four local students with disabilities the opportunity to join an EPI field course. After their course experience, these four students became active members of our Eco-Club.

“The Eco-Club awakened my interest in Galapagos biodiversity and offered me a real opportunity to take action for conservation!”

~Sergio, Santa Cruz Island

This year, EPI’s curriculum in Galapagos was updated to include topics that are of critical importance to conservation in Galapagos and across the globe, including consumer habits and invasive species. Participants connect and reflect on their own lifestyle choices and learn how to make adjustments to reduce their personal impact on the environment.

Two Eco-Club members, Ibrahí and Erick, created a sea turtle protection initiative on Isabela Island. These two enterprising alumni inspired a group of nine teens from Isabela to participate in protecting green sea turtle nests on the island.

FUNDERS

Ecoventura
Houston Zoo
National Geographic LEX-NG Fund

Helmsley Trust
IGTOA

PARTNERS

Dr. Stephen Blake
Celebrity Expedition
Charles Darwin Foundation
Education Ministry of Ecuador
Galapagos National Park
Dr. Washington Tápiá