### **Galapagos: Wonders of the Prehistoric World**

The Galapagos Islands are a unique and awe-inspiring destination, home to a diverse array of plant and animal life that has evolved in isolation for millions of years. This article explores the wonders of the Galapagos, from its iconic giant tortoises to its playful sea lions and marine iguanas.



#### Galapagos: Wonders of a Prehistoric World

by Charles L Starke MD

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#### **Giant Tortoises**

The Galapagos Islands are most famous for their giant tortoises, which are the largest tortoises in the world. These gentle giants can live for over 100 years and weigh up to 500 pounds. They are found on all of the Galapagos Islands, but the largest populations are found on Santa Cruz Island and Isabela Island.

Giant tortoises are herbivores, and their diet consists mainly of leaves, grasses, and fruits. They are also known to eat cactus pads and bark. Giant tortoises are slow-moving animals, and they spend most of their time grazing on vegetation. They are also very strong animals, and they can crush large objects with their powerful jaws.

Giant tortoises are an important part of the Galapagos ecosystem. They help to disperse seeds and pollinate plants. They also create wallows, which are depressions in the ground that collect water. These wallows provide a vital source of water for other animals during the dry season.

#### Sea Lions

Sea lions are another iconic animal of the Galapagos Islands. These playful creatures are found on all of the Galapagos Islands, but the largest populations are found on San Cristobal Island and Floreana Island.

Sea lions are carnivores, and their diet consists mainly of fish, squid, and crustaceans. They are also known to eat birds and sea turtles. Sea lions are excellent swimmers and divers, and they can dive up to 1,000 feet deep. They are also very social animals, and they often form large colonies.

Sea lions are an important part of the Galapagos ecosystem. They help to control the populations of fish and other marine animals. They also scavenge for food, which helps to clean up the environment.

#### **Marine Iguanas**

Marine iguanas are unique reptiles that are found only in the Galapagos Islands. These fascinating creatures are the only lizards in the world that feed on algae. They are found on all of the Galapagos Islands, but the largest populations are found on Fernandina Island and Isabela Island.

Marine iguanas are herbivores, and their diet consists mainly of algae.

They are also known to eat seaweed and other marine plants. Marine iguanas are excellent swimmers and divers, and they can dive up to 60 feet

deep. They are also very strong animals, and they can crush algae with their powerful jaws.

Marine iguanas are an important part of the Galapagos ecosystem. They help to control the populations of algae and other marine plants. They also scavenge for food, which helps to clean up the environment.

The Galapagos Islands are a unique and awe-inspiring destination, home to a diverse array of plant and animal life that has evolved in isolation for millions of years. The wonders of the Galapagos include giant tortoises, sea lions, marine iguanas, and many other fascinating creatures. These islands are a true natural paradise, and they offer visitors a chance to experience the beauty and diversity of the natural world.



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