



Dear Friends,

We hope you and your family will find some time to relax and enjoy the holiday season. It is hard to believe that 2023 is around the corner, but as we reflect on 2022, we are very proud of what our Galapagos Initiative has accomplished in our 10th anniversary year. Thank you for being part of our journey!

We have loved sharing stories about our research, education, and community outreach with an even wider audience to share why our work is important both locally and globally and are proud that we had two stories recently featured on [PBS NC](#)! Now, it is time to whisk yourself away to the Galapagos in our latest newsletter!

**Support UNC Center
for Galapagos Studies**

Help Support our CGS Seed Grant Campaign!



We have until Dec 31st to try and reach our \$25k goal to support 5 new seed grants for UNC researchers, to allow them to dig deeper into solving global challenges. Please consider a gift today of any amount to help offset costs to allow UNC researchers to get to the Galapagos to test their hypothesis and gather integral data as a starting point - with the goal to then take these initial findings and leverage them to attract greater funding in the future! We have had projects that began with a \$5k seed grant go on to secure \$1.2m from the National Science Foundation and have an even greater impact on both local and global communities. Find out more about our [seed grant campaign here!](#)

Burdens of Paradise



Our Galapagos Initiative prides itself in always taking into consideration how humans and the environment interact – in other words, not losing sight of the nearly 35,000 residents that live in Galapagos when conducting our research. This summer, Josh Miller (PhD Student in UNC's Dept. of Nutrition) was able to begin his research in Galapagos to better

understand the [prevalence of water and food issues in Galapagos](#) as a member of a team of researchers who focus on an often-overlooked population.

Cetacea Galapagos Program & Citizen Science Making Strides

In the fall of 2021, Dani Alarcón, a researcher from the Galapagos Science Center, and Hector Guzman, senior scientist from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, first set out to tag blue whales off the coast of the Galapagos Islands. After many years of searching for and registering cetaceans in the Galapagos, Dani and her team of researchers alongside citizen scientists are compiling data that [shed light on how these species are using the Galapagos waters.](#)



UNC Undergrad Takes Path Less Traveled



As a high school senior in Japan in 2020, Emma Rudy Srebnik couldn't visit any colleges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In place of visiting the UNC campus, she arranged a virtual meeting with Professor John Bruno to discuss his research at UNC. A few summers later, Emma Rudy would board a flight to the island of San Cristóbal, Galapagos to help support Bruno's lab – finding herself working with juvenile scalloped hammerhead sharks and gain [hands on experience of field research in Galapagos.](#)

Algal Rhythms

"I feel like one of the luckiest marine biologists of all because I am able to work in this paradise doing something that I love." These are the words of Isabel Silva-Romero, a graduate student in the Department of Biology within the UNC College of Arts and Sciences. Hear how Isabel's positive mindset and adaptability has led her to now be following her dream of studying how [ocean temperatures affect the food web on rocky reefs around the Galapagos Islands.](#)



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I hope you enjoyed reading these impactful stories from Galapagos and look forward to sharing more with you in the future! If you would like to support our Center to allow us to continue making an impact in this way please click [here](#) or feel free to reach out to me at weaverk@email.unc.edu to arrange a phonecall or Zoom to learn more!

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Kind regards,

Kelly Weaver
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