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HANCOCK GALAPAGOS EXPEDITION, 1933

By WALDO L. SCHMITT

Curator, Division of Marine Invertebrates, U.S. National Museum

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It was my privilege to serve as a member of the scientific staff of Capt. G. Allan Hancock's expedition of 1933 to the Galápagos Islands, an expedition that in addition to its main purpose—scientific collecting—combined all the elements needed to make it a memorable cruise—beautiful cruiser, tropic seas, isles of romance, and an equator crossing.

With a heavy collecting outfit and a light heart, therefore, I left New York, on January 5, 1933, to join the cruiser at Panama. On January 13 we arrived at Balboa, Canal Zone, where I was met by Captain Hancock and his associate, W. Charles Swett, who is also first officer aboard the *Velero III*. The cruiser is a trim and graceful craft, approximately 200 feet long, with 30-foot beam and 1,000-ton displacement; of especially seaworthy construction of the steel hull cruiser type, following as nearly as possible navy standards, and powered by two Winton reversible Diesels capable of driving the vessel at 14 knots. She is especially noteworthy for her electrical and mechanical equipment, navigational aids being of the latest and most approved patterns. She was fully and luxuriously equipped for extended cruising, carrying sufficient supplies of all kinds to enable her to make a 10,000-mile trip without replenishing any stores.

After leaving the Canal Zone, we arrived on the morning of the 16th at Malpelo Island, a forbidding, precipitous rock which rises sheer from the ocean floor some 2,000 fathoms below. It is impossible to anchor off this island, and landing is uncertain and frequently unsafe. Good fortune was with us, however, and the low tide during the forenoon enabled us to land for a few hours. We collected an extensive series of the Malpelo land crab, of which only one specimen had heretofore been taken.

January 17 found us off La Libertad, Ecuador, in the vicinity of which we spent five days collecting. The only accident of the entire expedition occurred off Salanga Island. In coming out through heavy surf, our boat was swamped, but with the help of two native fishermen who came up at the time, we dumped the water out of the boat and shoved off safely, having suffered no ill effects other than having been thoroughly soaked.



FIG. 21.—Cruiser *Velero III*, Capt. G. Allan Hancock, director and sponsor of the expedition, commanding.



FIG. 22.—Examining results of a haul with the tangle in 56 fathoms off Charles Island, Galápagos. Two specimens of a rare ophiuran were taken in this haul.

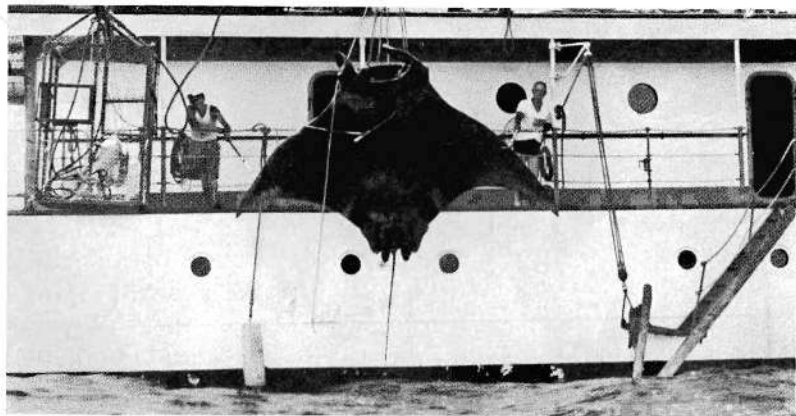


FIG. 23.—Giant Manta with a spread of 14 feet. This huge fish subsists largely on minute shrimplike animals.

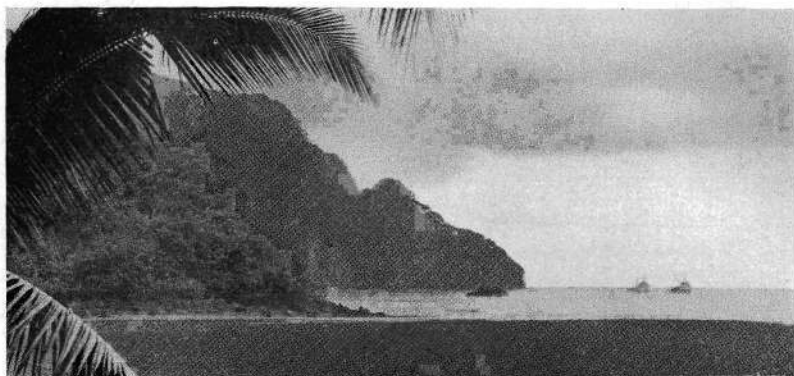


FIG. 24.—Wafer Bay, Cocos Island, the Treasure Island of history. California fishing boats in the offing.



FIG. 25.—Dr. Schmitt receiving coral clumps from native divers, Bahia Honda, Republic of Panama. A number of very interesting crustacean finds were made in these coral clumps.



FIG. 26.—One of the characteristic features of the Galápagos fauna, a rare iguana nearly 4 feet in length.

On the morning of the 24th we made our first stop in the Galápagos, at Gardner Bay, Hood Island, where we remained collecting until the 26th, when we got under way for Charles Island. On this island there are now three establishments, comprising nine persons in all, who have come here in order to live their lives as they see fit, unhampered by the conventions of civilization. They seem to be living quite contentedly, although they are obliged to do a tremendous amount of work in order to provide themselves with even the barest necessities



FIG. 27.—Staff of the expedition. Standing, left to right: C. B. Perkins, Capt. G. Allan Hancock, Waldo L. Schmitt, H. M. Wegeforth, Fred C. Ziesenhenne. Front row: Ray Elliott, Jr., Louis Filley, George Hugh Banning, Sterling Smith, Hermann Marsh, John S. Garth. Executive officer W. Charles Swett does not appear, as he took the photograph.

of existence. On Indefatigable Island is another little group of settlers, consisting of two families and two or three Norwegian and Ecuadorian fishermen. One settler is an architect from the States who, when the depression brought him low financially, came here with his wife. He preferred to live where he could establish a home and plantation by his own efforts rather than to starve or live on charity in the big cities.

Altogether, we visited 12 of the 16 islands accredited to the Galápagos group, spending from one to six days at each stop. Intensive

collecting was carried on at all times, and we obtained what will undoubtedly prove to be the most comprehensive single collection of Crustacea ever brought away from those islands. Probably the most outstanding finds were the fresh-water Crustacea found in rain-filled lava crevices and fresh-water streams on various islands. Preliminary surveys of all the material collected reveal so far three new species of crabs, a new species of starfish, a new species of pycnogonid, and many new records. The take of foraminifera alone has proved to be a revelation, containing many more new species and records than one could have believed existed in the region.

On February 27 we departed from the Galápagos Islands, making for Panama, including on the way a four-day stop at the famed treasure island, Cocos, and on the fifth of March we reached Panama, where the replenishment of stores and other wants necessitated a four-day stay at Balboa. An overnight visit to the Barro Colorado Island Laboratory was made possible through the kindness of Dr. James Zetek, resident director.

The journey homeward was as busy a time for all members of the party as had been the earlier portion of the expedition. Collections were made at Bahia Honda, Republic of Panama; Puerto Culebra, Costa Rica; and Tangola-Tangola Bay, Oaxaca, Petatlan Bay, Guerrero, Tenacatita Bay, Jalisco, Isabel Island, Sinaloa, and Santa Maria Bay, Baia California, Mexico.

Such, in brief, was our busy and crowded itinerary. Throughout, all members of the staff of the expedition and the entire crew rendered all assistance in their power to make the whole undertaking an unqualified success. Captain Hancock took an interested and active part in all of our several endeavors, and to him, as sponsor, captain of the vessel, and director of the expedition, is wholly due what measure of success we may individually have attained. Equally grateful are we to W. Charles Swett, Captain Hancock's most able lieutenant, who, in addition to his multifarious duties as first executive officer, was also the ever busy photographer and cinematographer of the expedition. All but one of the photographs adorning this account are the results of his labors.

The making fast of the *Velero III* to her dock at San Pedro, Calif., on March 25 marked the end of this glorious cruise to the Galápagos, except for packing the collections and returning to Washington.