

Galapagos dropped from UNESCO endangered list

29 July 2010



A Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) swims underwater in San Cristobal island, Galapagos Archipelago, in 2009. UNESCO's World Heritage Committee said Wednesday it has removed Ecuador's Galapagos Islands from its list of endangered sites, due to Quito's protective efforts in the Pacific archipelago.

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee said Wednesday it has removed Ecuador's Galapagos Islands from its list of endangered sites, due to Quito's protective efforts in the Pacific archipelago.

"By a vote of 14 to five, with one abstention," the committee removed the islands from its endangered environments list, where it was included in 2007, said Brazil's Culture Ministry, which presides over this week's committee meeting in Brasilia.

"It's important to recognize the Ecuadoran government's effort in protecting and preserving this heritage site," Brazilian Heritage Institute president Luiz Fernando de Almeida said in a statement.

Brazil had requested that the Galapagos be removed from the [endangered list](#).

Located 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) west of

Ecuador's coast, the Galapagos archipelago of 13 main islands and 17 islets has been a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) since 1978 for its rich plant and animal life both on land and in the surrounding sea.

In 2007, the organization declared the island chain's environment endangered due to the increase of tourism and the introduction of invasive species.

Some 10,000 people, mostly fishermen, live on the volcanic archipelago, which rose from the Pacific seabed 10 million years ago and became famous when Darwin visited to conduct research in 1835.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's List of World Heritage in Danger includes 31 cultural or natural sites around the globe at imminent risk of degradation or destruction.

The 34th annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee this year takes place in the Brazilian capital from July 25 to August 3.

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