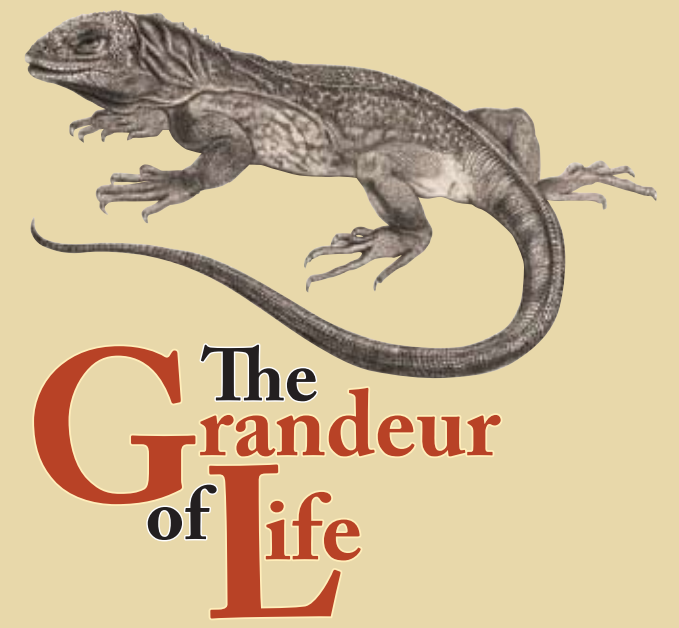


# Darwin's Finches



Above: Cactus finch, by Elizabeth Gould, from Charles Darwin, *Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle, Part III: Birds, 1841.*

Upper Right: Large ground finch, by Elizabeth Gould, from Charles Darwin, *Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle, Part III: Birds, 1841.*

Near Right: Small ground finch, by Elizabeth Gould, from Charles Darwin, *Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle, Part III: Birds, 1841.*



The finches of the Galapagos Islands, commonly known as “Darwin’s finches,” are one of the most famous groups of endemic species in the world. Darwin first encountered them when *HMS Beagle* visited the island group in September, 1835. He collected a number of specimens of all the Galapagos birds, as was his habit, but he was not aware at the time that many of these were different species of finches. When he returned to England in 1836, he turned his bird collection over to John Gould for identification, and it was Gould who determined that many of the specimens were finches, and that these species were all new, and all unique to the Galapagos Islands. Much later, Darwin would explain these finches as modified descendants from South American finches that moved to the Galapagos after the islands first arose from the sea.

John Gould named the various species, and he also made sketches of the birds, which were then painted and lithographed by his wife, Elizabeth, for the *Birds* volume of the *Zoology of the Beagle* (1841).

