

Coronavirus reaches world heritage Galapagos Islands

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Four permanent residents of the Galapagos archipelago have tested positive for the COVID-19 disease

The coronavirus pandemic has reached Ecuador's Galapagos Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage site, an official source said on Tuesday.

Norman Wray, president of the Galapagos Government Council, told the state EcuadorTV channel that tests results on Monday established that four people had contracted the COVID-19 disease.

The four permanent residents of the archipelago had returned to the [islands](#) from the port of Guayaquil, the worst affected city in Ecuador with more than half of its near 1,000 confirmed cases.

The archipelago of volcanic islands lies just over 900 kilometers to the west of Ecuador.

English naturalist, biologist and geologist Charles Darwin developed his Theory of Evolution after studying endemic species in the Galapagos islands.

More than 30,000 people live on the islands, which

have a limited medical infrastructure.

A week ago, the government ordered a total ban on visitors to the islands, where measures are already in place to restrict the movement of people.

In 2019, more than 270,000 people visited the Galapagos islands, including many from countries that have been badly affected by the [coronavirus](#), such as France, Spain and the United States.

Without giving more details, Wray said there was "still a large number of people who went to Galapagos more than 14 days ago who haven't been able to leave," both foreigners and Ecuadorans.

Ecuador, one of the worst coronavirus-affected countries in Latin America, has taken a number of steps to combat the spread of the disease, including closing its borders, nighttime curfews, restrictions on the circulation of vehicles, a closure of schools and universities, a lockdown, and a state of exception.

The infected people in the Galapagos will undergo health protocols before being transferred to the mainland, the regional government said.

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