***Lonesome George***, recommended links:

Lonesome George was a male Pinta Island Galapagos tortoise (*Chelonoidis niger abingdonii*) discovered living alone on the island of Pinta (outer Galapagos Island) in 1971. He was the last known member of his subspecies and was known as the rarest animal in the world for a number of years. For the 41 years following his discovery humans searched for a breeding partner for George. Ultimately the destruction humans had already caused, and to a lesser extent George’s personality issues, stood in the way of success. Sadly, he passed away at age 102 on June 24, 2012, childless.

It’s likely that his subspecies went extinct with George’s death. However, DNA analysis of some of the 2,000 tortoises on Isabela have revealed hybrids from George’s subspecies, suggesting the possibility a living member of the subspecies might still exist (remember we’ll see tortoises in the wild on Isabela on May 15th). The search continues today.

I highly recommend these links to learn about Lonesome George:

- Charles Darwin Foundation brief Lonesome George overview: This is the foundation that runs the Charles Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora. We’ll get to actually see Lonesome George there during our tour of the Research Station on May 18th.

<https://www.darwinfoundation.org/en/blog-articles/224-remembering-the-story-of-lonesome-george-in-the-galapagos-islands>

- Duolingo Lonesome George podcast: This is a great podcast that I listened to before I ever thought I’d have a chance to go to the Galapagos and highly recommend. It’s an extended interview with Washington Tapia. He was raised in the Galapagos, loved animals, and eventually became a biologist and leader in Galapagos tortoise conservation efforts (bio pasted below). It provides some insight into the history of the Galapagos, the tortoises there, culture, and more. The podcast is in English and relatively slow Spanish, it’s also downloadable (perfect for our flights today).

<https://www.galapagos.org/about_galapagos/about-galapagos/biodiversity/lonesome-george/>

