



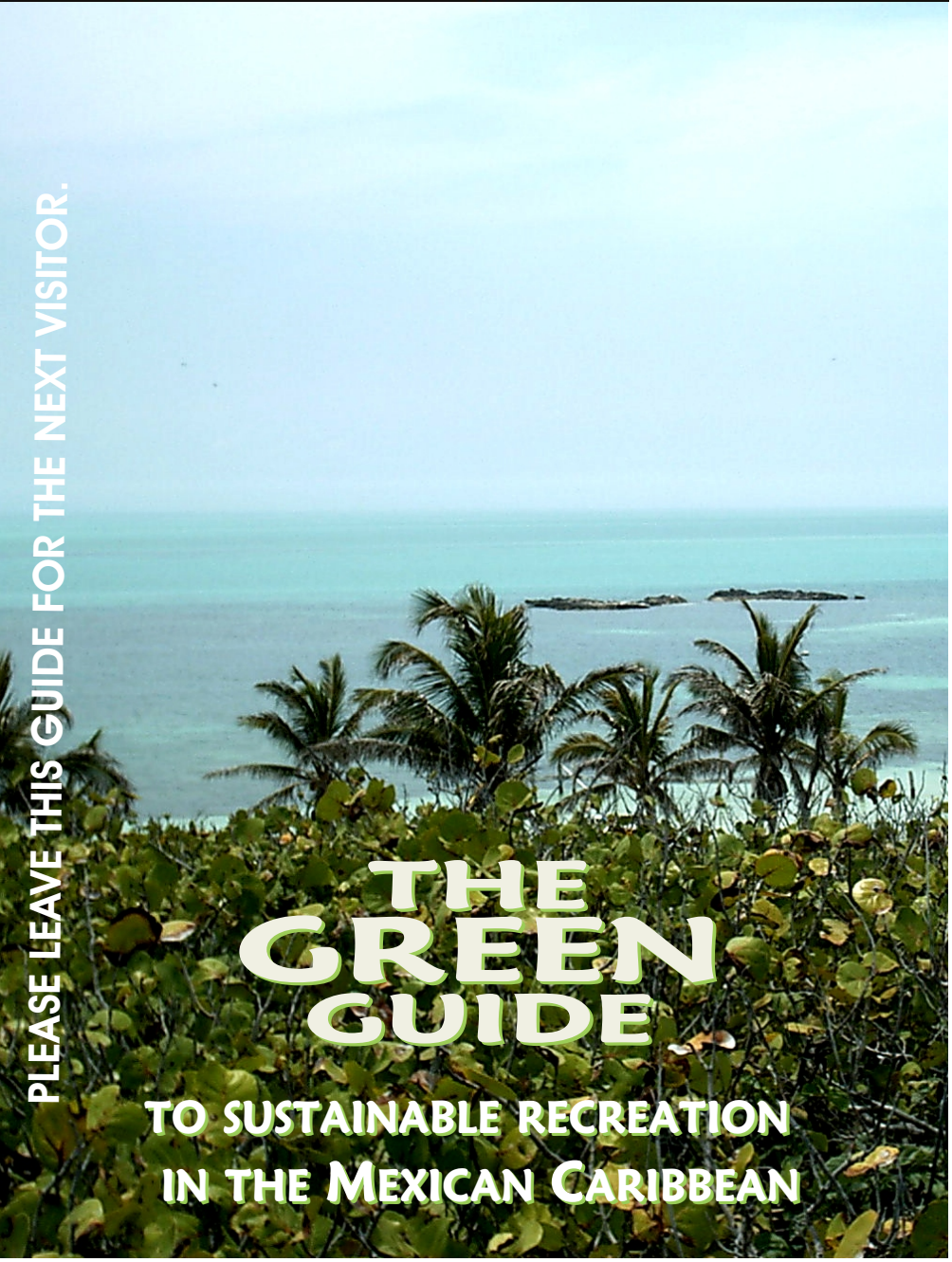
AL RECREO SUSTENTABLE  
EN EL CARIBE MEXICANO

# GUIA VERDE

FAVOR DE DEJAR ESTA GUIA PARA EL PROXIMO VISITANTE.

Mexi**CON**servación  
Protejamos nuestro patrimonio natural.

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# THE GREEN GUIDE

TO SUSTAINABLE RECREATION  
IN THE MEXICAN CARIBBEAN



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# introduction

WELCOME TO THE BEAUTIFUL MEXICAN CARIBBEAN

The Yucatan peninsula is home to an astonishing number of ecosystems, such as mangroves, lagoons, cenotes, costal dunes, seagrass beds, the most extensive subterranean river system in the world, and the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (the second largest barrier reef on the planet). All of these ecosystems contribute to the region's breathtaking beauty, with its dazzling abundance and diversity of Life.

---

***Mexico is home to the greatest number of reptile species in the world.***

***The second highest variety of mammal species on earth can be found in Mexico.***

***Mexico has the fourth largest amount of plant and animal species on the planet.***



Crab



Green Turtle

Mexico is home to an amazing variety of life, but sadly more than 1,200 of its species are listed as threatened or endangered. Many of these live in the Yucatan peninsula including sea turtles, manatees, ocellated turkeys, and margays. These animals and their habitats are threatened by unsustainable development, pollution, illegal fishing/hunting, and climate change.

The growth of tourism, accompanied by a widespread lack of understanding about the region's habitats, places enormous pressure on the natural environment. Visitors to the Mexican Caribbean have the opportunity to help. Tourism generates a large percentage of Mexico's revenue and well-informed tourists can help maintain the prosperity of this region while safeguarding its natural wonders.

# & purpose

MEXICONSERVACION IS A PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. IT IS DEPENDENT ON THE HELP OF LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE MEXICAN CARIBBEAN (AND THROUGHOUT MEXICO). THIS GREEN GUIDE IS INTENDED TO BE BOTH USEFUL AND INTERESTING. ANY COMMENTS OR CONCERNS REGARDING THE GUIDE ARE WELCOMED, AND MAY BE DIRECTED AT [WWW.MEXICONSERVACION.ORG](http://WWW.MEXICONSERVACION.ORG) **THANK YOU.**

The purpose of this guide is to educate both individuals and businesses as to the value of the region's biodiversity, and the threats it faces. By providing the necessary practices to help preserve the diversity of life found along the Mexican Caribbean, it arms both tourists and the tourism industry with the basic tools necessary for the protection of the very things that make this region so attractive to all: its biodiversity and natural beauty.

---

***The Mexican Caribbean has one of the largest concentrations of endangered species in Mexico. It is home to Green, Loggerhead and Hawksbill sea turtles; the black howler monkey, and the Central American spider monkey; the jaguar, puma, ocelot, and margay; Baird's Tapir, the white-lipped peccary, the King vulture, the ornate hawk eagle, the black and white hawk-eagle, and the Moreletti crocodile.***

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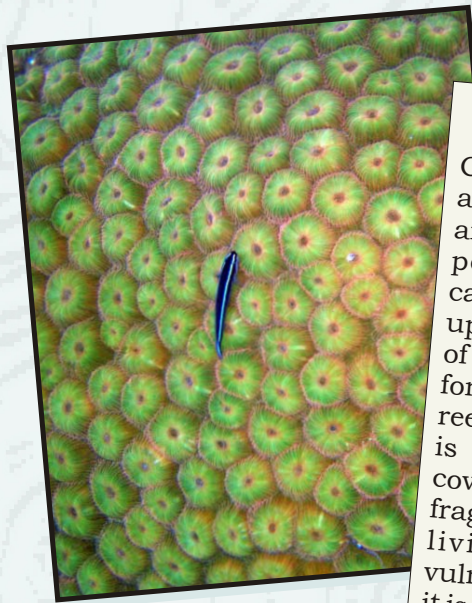
Raccoon!

Chit palms

# coral

Along the coast of the Mexican Caribbean lies a magnificent and complex reef system which extends from the Northern tip of the Yucatan peninsula to the Bay Islands in Honduras. This natural wonder is the second largest barrier reef in the world and is called the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System.

**CORAL REEFS ARE IMPORTANT.** Though they cover less than 1% of the Earth's surface, they shelter an incredible variety of life. Reefs are home to a higher density of species than any other marine environment.



## IT'S ALIVE!

Coral is made of numerous, tiny animals, coral polyps, related to anemones and jelly fish. Each polyp lives on a calcium carbonate skeleton, it builds upward at a slow, average rate of 6 cm/year. These skeletons form the solid part of a coral reef. So actually, a piece of coral is a hard, rock-like skeleton covered by a thin, living skin of fragile animals. This delicate living skin is the most vulnerable part of the coral, so it is important not to touch it.

They are often called the "Rainforests of the Sea", because they are second only to rainforests in the wealth and diversity of life they support.

For many coastal communities, healthy reefs are key to sustaining traditional fishing activities.

Coral reefs are also good for business: diving tours, fishing trips, hotels, restaurants, and other establishments based near reefs provide jobs and important income to local economies.

Reefs also act as coastal barriers, protecting coastal communities from storms, wave damage, and erosion.

# reefs

**CORAL REEFS ARE IN DANGER**  
As the Mexican Caribbean coastline develops into a popular tourist destination, unsustainable human activities are inflicting great strain on its fragile reefs.

***The corals of the Mexican Caribbean build reefs that are part of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, the second largest barrier reef system in the world.***

Destruction of mangroves and seagrass beds increases sedimentation in near shore waters, which can destroy coral reefs.

Over-harvesting of key marine species, and destructive fishing practices, upset the delicate balance of reef life.

Touching, finning into and standing on reefs can also damage corals.

The release of waste water as well as the run-off from agricultural lands and golf courses also harm corals. Fertilizers favor algal growth which can smother the coral, while pesticides may be directly toxic.

These activities further damage reefs already weakened by factors such as hurricanes and climate change.

—  
DON'T STEP ON, TOUCH, OR  
HARVEST CORAL.

—  
AVOID PICKING UP AND  
DISTURBING PIECES OF CORAL.

—  
DON'T STIR UP THE SANDY OCEAN  
FLOOR. SUSPENDED SAND AND  
SEDIMENT CAN SUFFOCATE THE  
TINY CORAL ANIMALS.

—  
DON'T DROP ANCHORS ONTO  
CORAL REEFS.

—  
DON'T BUY OR SELL CORAL,  
TURTLE OR CONCH JEWELRY.

—  
DON'T SPEAR FISH.

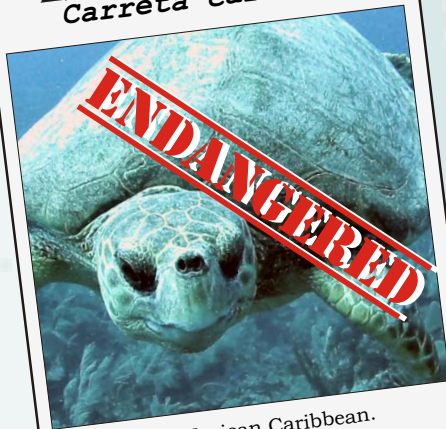
—  
USE BIODEGRADABLE SUN BLOCK  
OR WEAR A TEE-SHIRT INSTEAD  
OF WEARING SUN BLOCK.

—  
HELP US KEEP THE BEACH AND  
OCEAN CLEAN.

—  
DON'T EAT PROHIBITED, OR  
OUT-OF-SEASON, FISH OR  
SEA FOOD

# sea

## LOGGERHEAD *Caretta caretta*

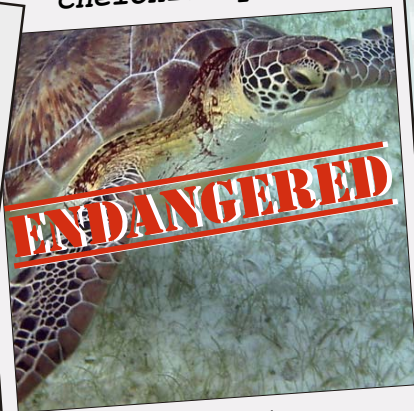


Nests in the Mexican Caribbean.  
Approx. 60,000 nesting females worldwide.  
Very large head and strong jaws used to crush shellfish.  
Length up to 1.1 m. / 3.5 ft.  
Weighs up to 180 kg. / 400 lbs.

Sea turtles thrived in the Earth's seas for millions of years, but human activities over the past 200 years have caused a rapid decline in their populations.

With nearby reefs and seagrass beds, as well as numerous nesting grounds for Green and Loggerhead sea turtles, the Mexican Caribbean offers several opportunities to witness these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat. Unfortunately, their numbers are not what they once were.

## GREEN TURTLE *Chelonia mydas*



Nest in the Mexican Caribbean.  
Approx. 203,000 nesting females worldwide.  
Feeds on seagrass.  
Head is small and blunt.  
Length up to 1.5 meters / 5 feet.  
Weighs up to 230 kg. / 500 lbs.

## HAWKSBILL *Eretmochelys imbricata*



Mates in the Mexican Caribbean.  
Approx. 8,000 nesting females worldwide.  
Pointed, narrow hawk-like beak used to pick its prey out of crevices in the reef.  
Length up to 1 meter / 3 feet.  
Weighs up to 80 kg. / 180 lbs.

# turtles

THE FISHING HOOK IMMOBILIZING THIS TURTLE'S LEFT FIN EXEMPLIFIES THE DANGER OF DISCARDED FISHING SUPPLIES.



Loss of nesting grounds to coastal development projects is a major threat. Artificial lighting, crowded night-time beaches, and obstructive beach furniture discourage turtles from nesting.

Sea turtles also drown in fishing nets, ingest marine debris, and entangle themselves in trash.

Pollution damages turtle habitats like reefs and seagrass and has been linked to a rise in turtle diseases.

Although it is not as much of a problem in the Mexican Caribbean as in other parts of Mexico, poaching does occur and is increasing in frequency along with local population growth.

- DO NOT CHASE, OR ATTEMPT TO TOUCH SEA TURTLES WHILE DIVING OR SNORKELING.
- NEVER PURCHASE TURTLE MEAT, EGGS OR SOUVENIRS MADE FROM TURTLES.
- DO NOT ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES REQUIRING YOU TO HANDLE A TURTLE, NO MATTER HOW TEMPTING; HUMAN CONTACT IS STRESSFUL AND CAN BE UNHEALTHY FOR THE ANIMAL.

### DURING NESTING SEASON (MAY-OCTOBER):

- REMOVE CHAIRS AND BEACH GAMES FROM THE BEACH AT NIGHT.
- DON'T APPROACH TURTLES ON BEACHES, OBSERVE THEM FROM AFAR.
  - DON'T TAKE FLASH PHOTOS OF TURTLES, IT DISORIENTS THEM.
- DON'T DISTURB TURTLE NESTS, MOST ARE MARKED TO KEEP THEM SAFE.
- DON'T SHINE FLASHLIGHTS OR OTHER LIGHTS ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT.
- REMEMBER, IT IS A FEDERAL CRIME TO HANDLE ANY ENDANGERED SPECIES WITHOUT PROPER AUTHORIZATION.
  - INFORM AUTHORITIES OF ANY SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR.

# mangroves &

***Mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs may appear to be very different ecosystems, yet they are all dependent upon each other.***

***They are linked by the water that flows through, and by the animals that move between, these habitats. While they do affect each other, each ecosystem also has it's own unique attributes that contribute to the well being of coastlines as a whole.***

MANGROVES are tropical evergreen shrubs that thrive in the salty water of coastal areas. These hearty plants have been called walking trees, as they almost appear to be tip-toeing on their roots over marshy areas. Their ability to cope with changing salinity allows them to flourish in this unusual environment, where they have several positive effects on surrounding ecosystems.

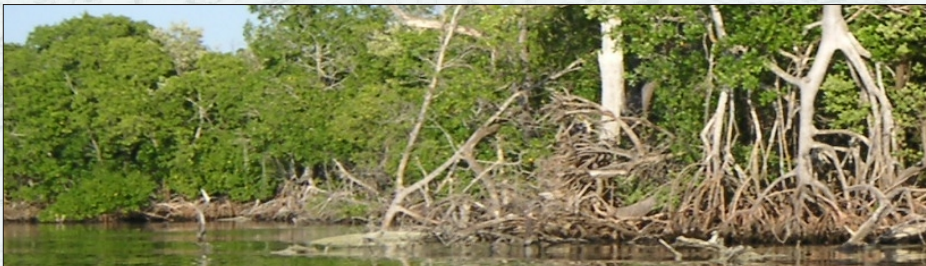
Mangroves provide habitat and shelter for juvenile fish that would otherwise be easy prey for predators in the open water. In fact, the majority of fish species caught commercially (approx. 75%), spend some time in mangroves or are dependent on food chains based in mangroves. Mangroves are important nursery grounds for

shrimp, lobsters, snappers, and many other species which eventually migrate to the open sea.

These coastal forests are an, ecologically and economically important buffer against storm surges, protecting coastlines and coastal communities from erosion.

Mangroves also protect downstream marine habitats by absorbing sediment and pollutants that would otherwise damage reefs and seagrasses.

Mangroves are resistant by nature and have withstood natural disasters for millions of years. Yet today, this ecosystem is among the most threatened habitats in the world.



# seagrasses

- IF BUILDING, REFRAIN FROM DESTROYING MANGROVE AND RESPECT NATIVE VEGETATION WHERE POSSIBLE.

- WHEN BOATING, AVOID ANCHORING OVER SEAGRASS BEDS OR CORAL REEFS.

- FREQUENTING GOLF COURSES ENCOURAGES HEAVY FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDE USE WHICH IS HARMFUL DOWNSTREAM. TRY ENJOYING THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE REGION INSTEAD.



SEAGRASS may not appear very interesting at first glance, but this often overlooked habitat is actually one of the most efficient ecosystems in the world, producing almost the maximum possible energy for a given area of vegetation on Earth.

Snorkelers and bathers are likely to encounter seagrass in the tranquil protected waters found landside of coral reefs and within bays.

Seagrass is the basis of many shallow water communities, much in the same way that grass and plants are the basis for land based ecosystems.

Marine animals consume seagrass, and are then eaten by other marine

creatures that cannot eat seagrass, which are then eaten by other animals in a complex food chain. In this way, seagrass indirectly provides food for many more species than may be readily apparent.

Seagrasses also stabilize coastal sediments and shorelines by decreasing erosion and increasing water clarity, which is essential for healthy reefs. Seagrass beds also provide reproductive, nursery, and feeding grounds for many species of fish and urchin as well as threatened and endangered species such as the green turtle, manatee, queen conch, and Caribbean spiny lobster.

The two main seagrass species found along this coast are Turtle Grass and Manatee Grass, named after creatures that primarily feed on them.

# cenotes, lagoons & beaches



## CENOTES

A trip to a cenote, or freshwater sinkhole, is an absolute must for anyone visiting this coast.

Rain water trickling through, and dissolving, the porous limestone bedrock of the Yucatan Peninsula has formed the largest underground cave and river system in the world.

Cenotes are entrances to this unique underground watershed, and appear as bedrock caves in, allowing access to the underground systems.

Unfortunately toxins, pathogens and pollutants from clandestine garbage dumps also trickle down into the system with rainwater.

Drawing excessive, unsustainable quantities of freshwater causes salt water to flow into the system from the sea. This phenomenon is known as saline intrusion, and is already occurring: high levels of salinity have been noted far inland.

Finally, the unique hydrology of the region means that popular waste water treatment and disposal systems such as septic tanks and deep injection wells are ineffective, and contribute heavily to the pollution of freshwater.

***There are over 3,000 cenotes in the Yucatan Peninsula, with more being discovered all the time, and only 1,400 have actually been studied and registered.***



## LAGOONS

Along the picturesque Mexican Caribbean coastline, visitors have the unique opportunity to observe the many lagoons dotting the landscape. These brackish water inlets are exceptionally fertile and productive, and support a stunning variety of plants, animals, and surrounding habitats. They are of special interest to visitors, as they serve as feeding, nesting, and nursery areas for many unusual birds and fishes.

## BEACHES

The soft white beaches and coastal dunes found up and down the Mexican Caribbean coast are understandably one of the main attractions of the area.

Yet, these stunning beaches are more than just a pretty tourist attraction.

Some of the most exciting creatures found along the coast are the Green and Loggerhead sea turtles, which nest in coastal dunes.

Beaches are also home to a vast array of other fascinating creatures including snails, crabs, and predators such as seabirds, reptiles, and mammals, all of which depend on the beaches as feeding grounds.

- CONSERVE WATER AND FAVOR HOTELS THAT HAVE SOUND WATER CONSERVATION POLICIES. FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE THAT REUSE GRAY WATER FOR GARDENING, OR WATER ONLY AT NIGHT.
- USE BIODEGRADABLE SUNSCREEN, OR WEAR A TEE-SHIRT INSTEAD OF SUNBLOCK.
- HELP KEEP OUR CENOTES, LAGOONS AND BEACHES CLEAN.



# sport fishing

If you feel you are catching fewer and smaller fish than you have in the past, there is a reason: a significant decline in fish populations in recent years.

This is unfortunate for fishermen, tourism ventures, the local economy and the environment alike.

Interestingly, fishermen themselves can have the greatest impact on this problem. Fishermen have the opportunity to increase their enjoyment and improve the sustainability of their sport by having a positive impact on the diversity and number of fish in the sea.

## BE AWARE OF LOCAL LAWS

- ONLY ONE LINE AND ROD ARE PERMITTED PER RECREATIONAL FISHERMAN.
- SPORT FISHING IS NOT ALLOWED WITHIN 250 METERS OF BATHING BEACHES OR COMMERCIAL FISHING BOATS.
  - EACH FISHERMAN IS ALLOWED UP TO TEN FISH
- ONLY 1 SWORDFISH, MARLIN, SAILFISH OR SHARK IS ALLOWED PER FISHERMAN, AND EACH COUNT AS 5 FISH TOWARD THE CATCH LIMIT.
  - ONLY 2 DOLPHINFISH ARE ALLOWED PER FISHERMAN, AND EVERY 2 OF THESE COUNT AS 5 TOWARD THE LIMIT OF 10.
  - SPEARFISHING WHILE SCUBA DIVING IS PROHIBITED.



Major issues include over harvesting of key species, selective fishing of only the largest individuals, and pollution from recreational fishing activities.

Over harvesting threatens not only the species that are over fished, but species that are ecologically linked to them. Wiping out one species will frequently cause a chain reaction, threatening species dependent upon it for food, shelter, or ecological viability. Avoid over harvesting by respecting fishing regulations such as catch limits and seasons.

Older fish produce many more eggs than their smaller, younger counterparts. Selective fishing of the largest individuals removes the oldest and most reproductively

viable members of fish populations, greatly decreasing a population's ability to sustain its numbers. Allowing these older individuals to survive can lead to more young fish, and a subsequent increase in fish populations.

Lost and discarded fishing gear can kill fish, coral, sea turtles, birds and any other wildlife that become entangled in it. Take care not to leave any debris behind, and clean up any that you find in your travels.

Plan your personal fishing strategies in accordance with local laws, and with this knowledge in mind. You will improve the health of fish populations and near shore environments, which will ultimately increase the number of fish available!

## OUT OF SEASON

*En veda*, or out-of-season, refers the period each year that it is illegal to fish or harvest certain animals. During these times, do not capture *en veda* species. Refrain from ordering them in restaurants: they may have been captured illegally, and ordering them will encourage an illegal and ecologically unsustainable practice. Some important *en veda* periods are listed on the right.

**CONCH**  
MAY 1- OCTOBER 31  
**OCTOPUS**  
DECEMBER 16 - JULY 31  
**LOBSTER**  
MARCH 1- JUNE 31  
**GROUPE**  
FEBRUARY 15 - MARCH 15

# recreational

Taking a boat into the turquoise coastal waters of Quintana Roo, can be one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences for visitors to this coast.

Whether a captain, or merely a passenger on someone else's vessel, insisting on standards of good practice will help ensure that this opportunity for adventure continues to exist.

## BOAT MAINTENANCE = BAY MAINTENANCE

REGULAR BOAT MAINTENANCE WILL NOT ONLY EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR BOAT, BUT WILL HELP TO KEEP OUR BAYS AND COASTS PRISTINE. IT'S EASY:

- REGULARLY INSPECT AREAS OF THE BOAT THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO LEAK TOXIC SUBSTANCES INTO THE WATER.
- HAVE REGULAR ENGINE SERVICE FROM A QUALIFIED TECHNICIAN. REPLACE OLDER, INEFFICIENT 2 STROKE ENGINES WITH 4 STROKE ENGINES IF POSSIBLE.
- REMOVE TOXIC ANTI-FOULING PAINTS FROM BOAT HULLS.
- AVOID PUMPING OUT TOXIC BILGE WATER NEAR CORAL REEFS.
- CLEAN BOATS USING BIODEGRADABLE, NON-TOXIC CLEANING AGENTS.

Anchoring on reefs or seagrass beds can destroy vast stretches of these habitats, and carelessly flung anchors can kill aquatic life. Large cruise ships can damage up to 200 square meters of ocean floor in a single anchoring. Even small vessels can seriously damage habitats, especially in high-traffic tourist destinations such as reefs frequented by divers and snorkelers.

Use mooring buoys whenever possible.

Anchor in rubble and sand instead of on reefs and seagrass beds.

Engage in alternative procedures such as drift diving when possible.

Obeys channel markers and speed regulations.

Release of human waste and chemical pollutants into coastal waters can upset the health and balance of life in fragile coastal ecosystems. Waste released into bays and other shoreline areas tends to linger and build up due to the quiet water's lack of cleansing currents.

Do not dump untreated waste into near shore waters, and properly treat any waste before releasing it.

# boating

If facilities do not exist in ports and marinas to correctly treat human waste, encourage marinas to install them.

Ask about your cruise ship's waste management policy and procedures.

Make sure that boat engines have been serviced and boats have been inspected to determine that pollutants like oil and chemical residues are not released into water.

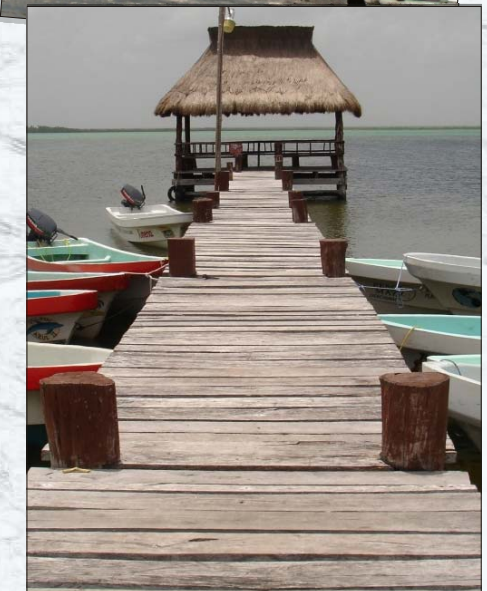
Make sure that chemical absorbent sponges are available in case of spills.

Use biodegradable detergents.

Jetski engines are most inefficient and highly polluting. Please avoid using them.

When chartering a vessel, favor those from authorized tour operators.

Educating boat operators and visitors as to these practices, and ensuring their adherence to these guidelines helps preserve the pristine beauty of the Mexican Caribbean coastline, and all the economic and aesthetic attributes that make it so valuable.



# hotels and

Visitors to the Mexican Caribbean are drawn to its hotels and restaurants overlooking idyllic beachfront scenery. Yet it is important to understand that the primary reasons these hotels and restaurants are so desirable, their sensational setting, can be damaged by these same enterprises.

Hotels and restaurants produce much waste which must be dealt with. Choose businesses that dispose of waste responsibly. Look for hotels and restaurants that encourage recycling, reuse supplies like towels and tablewear, and treat waste before releasing it.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW?

*Determine whether your favorite hotel or restaurant encourages sustainable practices, do they . . .*

### CONSERVE ENERGY

- USE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, SUCH AS WIND AND SOLAR?
- ASK GUESTS TO TURN OFF LIGHTS AND AC WHEN NOT IN USE?

### CONSERVE WATER

- REUSE GRAY WATER FOR IRRIGATION?
- WATER ONLY AT NIGHT?
- USE LOW FLOW SHOWERHEADS & FAUCETS & LOW FLUSH TOILETS?
- PROVIDE WATER CONSERVATION TIPS TO GUESTS/CLIENTS?
- CARRY OUT CHECKS ON PLUMBING TO AVOID LEAKS?

### REDUCE WASTE

- REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF PACKAGING ON MATERIALS?
- RECYCLE AND PROVIDE RECYCLING FACILITIES FOR GUESTS?
- ELIMINATE THE USE OF DISPOSABLE PLATES, UTENSILS, AND CUPS?
- USE LINENS INSTEAD OF PAPER NAPKINS AND HAND TOWELS?
- COMPOST ORGANIC WASTE?
- PURCHASE PRODUCTS THAT CAN BE RECYCLED?

### AND MOST IMPORTANTLY . . .

- DO THEY DEMONSTRATE A SENSE OF ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS, AND ENCOURAGE SUCH AWARENESS IN ITS CLIENTS AND STAFF.

# restaurants

Look for establishments that have minimized their physical effects on the coastal environment. Building on the dune, clear cutting of mangroves and removal of coastal vegetation, removal of sand, and installation of artificial coastal barriers increase coastal erosion. Erosion leads to sedimentation, which can smother coral reefs and other marine environments.

Landscaping with native vegetation supports native wildlife, and requires less watering.

Clean, fresh water is a limited resource in Mexican Caribbean. Choose hotels with efficient plumbing and sound water conservation policies.

Energy should also be conserved by using energy efficient appliances, and requesting that guests turn off lights and air conditioners when not in use. The use of solar panels or windmills to generate electricity is also a plus.

**The Mexican Caribbean is the fastest growing resort destination in the world, and is home to the fastest growing city in Latin America, Playa del Carmen.**

Check to see if your favorite hotels and restaurants are environmentally sustainable by viewing the checklist on the right. Or by consulting one of the directories listed in our appendix. If they are not, urge them to change. As paying guests of hotels and restaurants, visitors have a strong voice, and can help convince businesses to change.



# general

	<b>PROFEPA</b>	
	<i>Numbers to call to report an environmental offense</i>	
	<i>Cancun</i>	
	<i>01-998-892-7526</i>	
	<i>Playa del Carmen</i>	
	<i>01-984-803-4785</i>	
	<i>Chetumal</i>	
	<i>01-983-832-2865</i>	

You can help preserve the Mexican Caribbean's natural beauty by following the suggestions on this page and encouraging others to do so as well. By reducing the threats to the coast, you can help ensure it is just as nice when you return!

Please don't litter, and separate and recycle garbage when possible.

Do not purchase (or sell!) products made from coral, shells, turtles, seahorses, starfish, or shark.

Conserve water and electricity. Clean water is a precious and limited resource. And most electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels.

Conserve fuel by walking, biking or using public transportation when practical.

Ask your hotel or cruise ship about its waste management practices.

Support environmentally friendly ventures. But remember, just because a business says its "eco", doesn't make it so. Ask questions and favor establishments certified as environmentally friendly. Refer to the directories listed in our appendix.

Try to stay informed about these issues, follow these practices, and encourage others to do the same!

# suggestions

## ON THE BEACH

- DON'T LITTER. IN ADDITION TO BEING UNPLEASANT AND UNHEALTHY, TRASH CAN INJURE AND EVEN KILL ANIMALS THAT GET TANGLED OR CHOKED ON IT.
- FISHING IS PROHIBITED WITHIN 250 METERS OF BATHING BEACHES.
- AVOID CLEANING FISH ON THE BEACH AND THROWING REMAINS IN THE SEA. IT IS UNHYGIENIC AND DANGEROUS TO OTHERS.
- DON'T REMOVE SHELLS, CORAL OR SAND.

### DURING SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON (MAY TO SEPTEMBER):

- REMOVE BEACH CHAIRS AND OBSTACLES FROM THE BEACH AT NIGHT.
- AVOID BRINGING PETS TO THE BEACH, THEY MAY BOTHER THE TURTLES AND THEIR NESTS.
- DON'T CAMP ON THE BEACH OR LIGHT FIRES.
- DON'T GET CLOSE TO NESTING TURTLES. IF YOU WISH TO OBSERVE THEM, DO SO FROM A DISTANCE.
- AVOID SHINING LIGHTS ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT. THEY REQUIRE DARK QUIET

## IN THE WATER

- DON'T TOUCH TURTLES, CORAL, OR ANY WILDLIFE.
- AVOID STIRRING UP TOO MUCH SAND. IT CAN SMOTHER CORAL.
- DON'T WEAR GLOVES. THIS HELPS AVOID ACCIDENTALLY TOUCHING ANIMALS.
- DON'T SPEARFISH. SPEARING GENERALLY TARGETS KEY SPECIES AND CAN DAMAGE CORAL COLONIES.
- USE BIODEGRADABLE SUN BLOCK, OR WEAR A TEE-SHIRT INSTEAD.
- AVOID WATERSPORTS IN THE BAYS TO AVOID COLLISIONS WITH SNORKELERS, CORAL HEADS, OR SEA TURTLES.
- DON'T ANCHOR ON THE REEFS OR SEAGRASS.
- MINIMIZE THE USE OF MOTORS IN THE BAYS, AS MOTOR OIL POLLUTES.
- IF BOATING, MAINTAIN REASONABLE SPEEDS INSIDE THE BAYS, AND STAY ALERT TO THE PRESENCE OF SWIMMERS, TURTLES & CORAL HEADS.

# appendix

For further information on these topics, please consult the following resources:

## GUIDELINES FOR TOURISM:

- Tourism Guidelines, Coral Reef Alliance, [www.coral.org](http://www.coral.org)
- Tips for Divers, Project Aware, [www.projectaware.org](http://www.projectaware.org)
- 25 Eco-tips for Divers, Fishers, Boaters and More, Environmental Defense, [www.oceansalive.org](http://www.oceansalive.org)

## SUSTAINABLE FISHING AND SEAFOOD CHOICES

- 10 Things You Can Do to Help, Project Aware, [www.projectaware.org](http://www.projectaware.org)
- Seafood Choices, Environmental Defense, [www.oceansalive.org](http://www.oceansalive.org)
- Mini Seafood Guide, Blue Ocean Institute, [www.blueoceaninstitute.org](http://www.blueoceaninstitute.org)

## TOURISM CERTIFICATION AND STANDARDS

- Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, [www.cha-cast.com](http://www.cha-cast.com)
- The International Ecotourism Society, [www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)
- Responsible Travel, [www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)
- Coral Reef Alliance, [www.coral.org](http://www.coral.org)
- Blue Flag, [www.blueflag.org](http://www.blueflag.org)
- Green Globe, [www.greenglobe.org](http://www.greenglobe.org)

## OTHER

- Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System Project, [www.mbrs.org.bz](http://www.mbrs.org.bz)