



Mexican Marine Expedition in the Caribbean Sea - Learn how to dive and contribute towards crucial coral reef research in the Caribbean

Översikt

This ambitious coral reef research and community education expedition takes participants to learn scuba diving and earn an internationally recognised PADI diving qualification. In the turquoise Caribbean waters of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, you can take part in important marine conservation work on the world's second largest barrier reef by helping with coral reef and fish monitoring, turtle nesting and conducting crocodile surveys. On land you will help community education and sustainable tourism development programmes.

On top of the dive training, volunteers will have the chance to vastly expand their knowledge of this tropical marine environment, learn Spanish and partake in expeditions to the almost innumerable places of interest.

Expeditionen

Global Vision International's ambitious and unique coral reef research expedition supports and assists the work of local NGO's and government groups, international NGO's and universities on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef Survey – a programme funded, in part, by the World Bank. The reef, the second largest barrier reef in the world and the largest coral system within the Atlantic Ocean, stretches from the northern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, down south through Belize and Guatemala, to the Bay Islands off the coast of Honduras.

The Mexican State of Quintana Roo has approximately 650km of coral reef that represents the Mexican portion of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System. The reef has an important value for fisheries and tourism, activities that at the same time represent a high environmental risk. GVI's expedition is based within and around the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Mexico's first biosphere reserve. Sian Ka'an is recognised as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO under criteria III and IV, and a member of the 'Man and the Biosphere' programme, which promotes the integration of human activities and natural resource conservation. At present, scuba diving is not allowed within Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve for recreational purposes. However, GVI and Amigos de Sian Ka'an have been granted a research license by Sian Ka'an Biosfera Reserva. As a volunteer, you will be assisting in a range of community-led environmental research and awareness projects, including:

* The collection of coral reef characterisation and monitoring data in the northern part of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, which will help form a comprehensive picture of the ecological health of the northern region of reef.

* Seasonal crocodile nesting surveys (when available) to determine crocodile populations and breeding success in the northern part of the reserve.

* The crocodile dietary study (when available), determining the population dynamics of the two species of crocodile, and the prey species and quantity in the northern part of the reserve.

* The seasonal sea turtle nesting survey, determining the species and breeding success of sea turtles nesting in the northern part of the reserve. (Nesting survey is seasonal, but turtles can be seen in water at all times of year).

* Training local fishermen to survey multi-species spawning aggregations and develop sustainable fisheries policies.

* Developing the expedition base as an 'Ecological Research and Awareness Centre'.

* Education and awareness programmes at local schools, hotels, the expedition base and in the open environment.

Mera om expeditionen

Volunteers can expect to do one-two dives per day, six days a week (weather depending). On these dives you will be assessing the health of the Meso-American Barrier Reef system and collecting data on fish, coral and other benthos. The first three weeks are the hardest, as volunteers have to push themselves to learn both the diving skills and the marine survey skills that they will need to assist in the collection of data to a quantifiable level. It is extremely beneficial and important for expedition participants to learn as many of the area's marine species as possible before starting the project, as this will save you numerous hours of basic learning and prepared to start the ID process when you arrive. It is important to note that the community work programme does not begin until week three of a ten week expedition to allow for all the dive and science training, which takes up a lot of time. In addition to the underwater work, volunteers will rotate between projects, thus taking some time away from the hard diving work. You can also spend some of your time participating in additional projects, such as those listed in the initial expedition section.

Days are long and hard, beginning early to make the most of daylight hours. A typical day might consist of the following: travelling to the survey sites, conducting survey work, returning from the sites, washing down the equipment, filling air tanks ready for the next day and finishing late once all the data collected has been reviewed and then input in the database. At the end of the day, the whole team gathers in the evening to debrief, eat and socialise over a few cold beers as the sun goes down. At weekends (Saturday afternoon to Sunday evening), you have free time to spend however you see fit. Expedition staff may run optional fun dives and can help volunteers organise dive and snorkelling trips to hidden cenotes, excursions into the jungle, to the untouched local Mayan ruins and the famous Mayan sites of Coba and Tulum, and to the infamous Saturday Night Fiesta!

Besök vid Chichen Itza



Annat att göra under expeditionen

The expedition offers numerous incredibly exciting opportunities to volunteers. As volunteer, you will have the opportunity to:

- * Immerse yourself in a remote tropical paradise that is one of the world's few remaining truly pristine environments, living within the biosphere reserve, working with our two local partners and experiencing a new culture, food and way of life.
- * Increase your personal knowledge of the tropical marine environment, its importance and the threats to it, whilst you help to increase both local and global knowledge and awareness.
- * Learn a variety of marine survey skills within the tropical environment.
- * Learn to dive to a certified, internationally recognised level, up to PADI Advanced Diver.
- * [As a diver] be trained specifically for research purposes and have the chance to increase your dive qualifications, depending on conditions.
- * Experience warm, crystal-clear water diving upon one of the most immaculate and spectacular examples of the coral reef environment in the world and, if you are lucky, see turtles, dolphins, manatees and sting rays up close in their natural environment.
- * Assist in both the child and adult marine education and awareness programmes; visiting and teaching within the local schools, restaurants, the expedition base and the open marine environment.
- * Assist in the development of the Ecological Research and Awareness Centre.
- * Take optional locally taught Spanish lessons.
- * Relax and party with your new friends at the well-deserved Saturday night fiesta!

You may also have the opportunity (during optional excursions) to:

- * Take a trip to experience lowland tropical forests and have an opportunity to try and seek out threatened species, such as jaguar, puma, tapir, white-tailed deer, howler monkey, spider monkey, anteater, ocellated turkey, great curassow, toucan and king vulture and over 300 species of birds.
- * Dive or snorkel within the unique cenotes – the underwater river systems within the reserve.
- * Visit prime breeding areas for the hawksbill, loggerhead, leatherback, and green turtle.
- * Immerse yourself in the surviving Mayan culture of the area and visit remote and untouched Mayan archaeological sites, as well as the more famous sites like Tulum and Coba.

Tidigare volontärer berättar

"My five weeks at Pez Maya feel like they've gone by in two, although we've done so much that it could have been ten weeks. After a week of diving, studying coral and fish, settling into base, and getting to know everyone, we unfortunately had to evacuate as Hurricane Dean approached. That was interesting – an inconvenience, but it was handled really well, we all felt safe and interesting in a funny way to experience the realities of life in a tropical region.

It was really satisfying to get the base running after the hurricane, and actually be monitoring again after only six days. In the past few weeks we've monitored the state of the reef after Dean; I've visited Turtle Camp, where I saw turtles laying eggs and tortugas hatching; done the PADI Rescue Diver qualification; and dived in the amazing local cenotes. On weekends off we've been to Cobá (a massive Mayan ruin overgrown by jungle), gone diving in Playa del Carmen, and still managed to fit in the Saturday night Thank You Parties, when the staff cook us fabulous gourmet meals.

My time here has been challenging, interesting, and just heaps of fun – five weeks has been too short!"

Alicia Fong

"My time here in Pez Maya has been more amazing than I can describe. In only five weeks I've seen and done more than I ever thought could be done in that amount of time. It's so hard to pick just one great thing about being here in Pez, but I think my favorite thing is the diving.

I came to Pez Maya as a new diver so I didn't really know what to expect. Over the 5 weeks I've moved all the way up to Rescue Diver, which I never anticipated to do. Diving here isn't just about the skills that you learn it's also about the things you get to see as well. The reefs that are just off the beach are amazing, and the deep dive instantly became my favorite one that I had done.

If you're coming to Pez Maya to learn how to dive, you will learn more than you were expecting. If you are coming here to see and do incredible things, you are in for the most amazing time of your life."



Beth Basinski

*Två volontärer tar hand om
nykläckta sköldpaddsungar*

Vilken skillnad gör denna expedition?

GVI's base lies within the Sian Kaán Biosphere Reserve. The data GVI obtains here provides an invaluable baseline to assess the health of reefs found in a pristine location. Since the beginning, and with the assistance of our partners, GVI have amassed one of the largest databases in existence on the condition, health and changes of any section of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef. This data is now being used by GVI and its partners to promote the management of the reserve's resources in a more sustainable manner. As a result of GVI's work, a variety of changes have been implemented in the area, including educating local fishermen, increasing development controls and creating signs to educate visitors about the fragile ecosystem.

Höjdpunkter

Living and working on a remote jungle base with incredible wildlife; waking up to the deserted white-sand beach and turquoise Caribbean sea; learning about the reef and how to identify the fish or coral you see; participating in monitoring dives to explore different sites along the coast; being the only people diving in the biosphere reserve surveying the deserted reefs under GVI's special research permit; chancing upon mega-fauna such as dolphins, sharks and manatees; searching the beach at night for turtles laying eggs; learning some Spanish; joining sea and cenote fun-dives and enjoy cultural visits to Mayan ruins.

Plats

Located about an hour from Tulum on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, the expedition base is situated in the heart of the Sian Ka'an (Mayan for 'Where the Sky is Born') Biosphere Reserve at Boca Paila. The fishing village of Punta Allen, founded by the infamous pirate Blackbeard in the 18th century, is two hours drive away. The Mayan ruins of Tulum, Coba and Chichen Itza can also be visited in the area. To reach the remote GVI marine base you travel on a dirt track through dense jungle from Tulum into the biosphere reserve, meandering south along this beautiful peninsula past Caribbean beaches until you reach your very own.

Ute i fält

This base is set in the jungle on a narrow peninsula, with the open Caribbean Sea and coral reef on one side and a sheltered lagoon on the other. It supplies very basic cabana accommodation, with bunk beds (approximately six volunteers per room) or tents. Conditions are basic and all freshwater comes from a well and is restricted, so volunteers take bucket showers. The base has views of the ocean, a main socialising area and an abundance of hammocks.

Kvalifikationer du får

PADI Open Water and Advanced Open Water, PADI Coral Reef Research Diver Distinctive Specialty, Optional PADI courses (Rescue Diver, Dive Master), First Aid & CPR training, Coral reef ecology, Turtle ecology and monitoring protocol (seasonal), Intro to TEFL, Use of O2 equipment workshop, Diving compressor training workshop with practical experience, Environmental Education, Interpersonal skills.

2-week option participants will only receive PADI Open Water and Advance Open Water, First Aid and CPR training, Introduction to Coral reef ecology, Fish and Coral Species Identification and monitoring protocol, Introduction to Turtle ecology and monitoring protocol (seasonal), Diving compressor training workshop with practical experience, Interpersonal skills.

Utbildning och kvalifikationer

Expedition training is continuous and provides a thorough understanding of marine environments and conservation on which to build throughout your stay. Topics covered include: scuba dive training, with an option to become qualified up to PADI Dive Master (subject to weather conditions and time available); marine conservation; oceanography; First Aid; basic Spanish; research diving skills; marine survey skills, fish and coral identification; and an introduction to the TEFL training necessary to assist in the various community programmes run in the area.

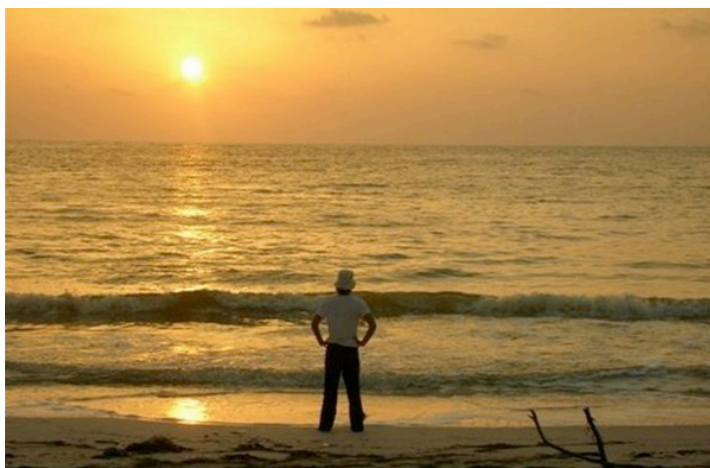
Förkunskaper

No previous diving experience, marine survey or foreign language skills are required, as GVI run a comprehensive training programme designed to give volunteers all the skills necessary for expedition life. Volunteers must be able to pass a medical examination to prove they are physically fit to dive, although there are also limited opportunities for volunteers to attend as non-diving volunteers if circumstances dictate. All volunteers will be swim-tested on arrival at the expedition base, which consists of an unaided 200m surface swim followed by a 10 minute float, or a 300m swim with snorkel, mask and fins followed by a 10 minute float, both in the open sea environment. Everyone must be able to work as part of a team and have a strong interest in wildlife and conservation. Participants must also be very enthusiastic, adventurous, have a good sense of humour and be respectful of the host country's environment and cultures. It is also advantageous for participants to learn as many of the area's marine species as possible before starting the project, as this will save you numerous hours of basic learning and prepared to start the ID process when you arrive.



En del av Mexikos färgsprakande kultur

Foton från expeditionen



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bokning, se
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