

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT PRINCIPLES

- Returning benefits to the local communities in conjunction with the park authority in order to guarantee the long-term preservation of the cultural and historical heritage as well as the marine resources of the natural area; while providing a humanitarian benefit to persist for generations.
- Guaranteeing an efficient, secure and effective management of the marine park operations including limiting the number of visitors, implementing a rotation system of utilization sites and diversifying the options of low impact scientific activities for visitors and researchers.
- Overall this will significantly reduce the ecological footprint of the visitor operations while providing resources to continue implementing the essential environmental projects and protections of the marine reserve.
- Supporting conservation and innovative environmental projects through an alliance of sound management, advocacy, efficient enforcement and systematic monitoring of the national park through a partnership between governmental, non governmental organizations, and humanitarian focused visitors.
- Supporting research, monitoring, conservation and sustainable use projects carried out by Cuban biologists, international scientists and conservationists developing a grassroots community based environmental humanitarian project.



## ITINERARY

### SATURDAY

- Travel to Cuba from International Locations
- Meet and greet with local representatives and transfer to your destination
- Introductory talk about marine park management, hosted by a team of marine specialists
- Dinner and overnight at your accommodation

### SUNDAY-FRIDAY

- 7am Wake up call and 7:30am breakfast
- During the day, your group will interact with your Cuban guide for a full day of activities on the reef and mangrove system and assist in the various marine park environmental projects
- The guides and marine specialists will teach you how to engage in sustainable sport activities and explore the interactions with flora and fauna within the marine park using stress free low impact techniques and you will also learn about the importance of the rotation system of the utilization areas within the protected marine park. This will ensure that the fish and coral species remain unchanged in their natural ecosystem preserving the natural and historical heritage of the area. You will engage in various environmental projects in multiple different protected zones. You will also learn about the areas where fish are able to reproduce, spawn and grow to their adult size and take a population survey with the Fish Counting Project and Fish Tagging Project.
- Breakfast, lunch, dinner and overnight on your boat or land based accommodation

### SATURDAY

- Morning transfer to port of departure or transfer within Cuba to next location to prepare for flight home. Return home in the following days depending on flight schedules and logistics.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT TOPICS

- After a full day of assisting in the environmental projects in the marine park, there will be discussions hosted by Cuban marine biologists, head Cuban guides, and your group. Here are some of the in-depth discussions and topics you will engage in to assist in the project development:
- Methods to maintain marine park biodiversity and how to provide refuge for endangered species inside the protected areas such as building and maintaining turtle nesting sites, restoring damaged coral reefs and mangrove systems, removing invasive species and more.
- Understand the importance of marine park boundaries and rotation system of the utilization sites to provide an area that supports a vulnerable ecosystem's environmental integrity.
- Unique ecological aspects of the marine park and why it is essential to the reef and mangrove system creating edge and spawning habitat for the entire spectrum of marine species in the Caribbean.
- Visitors will support conservation, humanitarian, scientific monitoring and patrolling through:
  - Species censuses: report estimates and counts of species abundance per site and zone to the marine biologists
  - Tagging re-sighting/recapture: report any species with a tag on to your guide, researchers, and biologists. If possible, take pictures and deliver them to the research and project directors.
  - Report of unusual events such as mangrove die off, seagrass die off, species diseases (fish, coral, turtles, etc): report species and location of the event to your guide, researchers, and biologists. If possible, take pictures and document the anomalies and deliver them to the research and project directors.
- Humanitarian visitors will receive briefings to know how to carry out these activities. Your contribution is highly appreciated and complements the research entities' efforts for conservation, scientific monitoring and patrolling that allow these natural ecosystems to flourish in their uninterrupted state
- The importance of how to help maintain the local culture, economy, and livelihood which are intricately linked to the marine environment. Understand the humanitarian impact of providing a vocational learning space for local communities further protecting the marine park and improving adult literacy through community and visitor interactions.
- The general results of the marine park protection system, implemented over 28 years ago in Cuba.
- You will understand why it is internationally recognized as an effective tool to manage resources and biodiversity, resulting in the improvements of ecosystems and habitats with healthy natural balances restored. This model can be utilized worldwide and it is through this humanitarian and environmental project that this grassroots model of formal and informal educational and scientific methods coalesces

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

- The success of the environmental project and sustainable management program depends on the full participation by each guest. The guest has a duty to actively engage in a full schedule of daily activities in order to foster cooperation while developing an environment of education surrounding the week's experience in the marine park. The personal initiative to organize and execute daily activities is essential in furthering the success and dynamics of the environmental project making it an enriching and successful venture towards sustainable management and active ongoing education.
- The collaborative nature of this multi-cultural experience in the marine park is in an effort to create a program that takes into account a multitude of perspectives pertaining to environmental management and sustainable preservation. Furthermore, the hope is to promote the marine park model as an option in other environmental and humanitarian projects around the world.
- The over-arching goal of this project is to strengthen the environmental protections within the marine park while positively benefiting the local communities that rely on it for their sustenance and vocational enhancement. Furthermore, the formal and informal educational scenarios that are fostered by bringing together conservationists, scientists, Cuban guides, biologists, staff and program participants provides a forum for the progress in adult literacy and community based projects.
- All of the profits after costs from this program are reapplied to non profit entities and environmental projects to further the research, conservation and patrolling efforts in the Cuban marine parks. These organizations are the cornerstone of making the marine park system possible and it is essential to continually support the sustainable management. This is strictly a non-commercial venture aimed at protecting and preserving the marine park while providing opportunities for humanitarian guests to experience and support this sustainable environmental project.
- This project is an endeavor to promote the interaction of Cuban marine biologists, Cuban guides, international travelers, and citizens of the United States. This is in an effort to further the collaborative and sustainable platform through the activities of the environmental and humanitarian projects in the marine parks leading to a well protected and preserved natural area that allows for these projects to not only exist but also flourish for successive generations.

# CUBA MARINE PARKS HUMANITARIAN & ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

## Certificate of Participation and Completion

I certify that I (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_ participated in and contributed to a humanitarian and environmental project program in Cuba during the week of (Date Range) \_\_\_\_\_. My signature below certifies my compliance with all rules and provisions set forth under CACR section 515.575 for the Humanitarian Projects general license:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Participant Signature)

The program is hosted together by marine biologists and Cuban guides with special focus on the following topics:

- Sustainable Conservation Strategies: How everyday human activities consume resources and produce waste ultimately affecting the marine environment and efforts to reduce this footprint to a sustainable level positively affecting conservation.
- Investigative Scientific Research: Fish tagging project, population survey, species preservation and natural area restoration. Active learning, researching, and contributing to scientific studies surrounding the marine park flora and fauna.
- Participatory Environmental Projects: Engaging in environmental projects in a protected marine park with positive impacts. How this innovative and collaborative model, with the assistance of Cuban entities, has beneficially impacted the marine life, environment, and local communities creating humanitarian and ecosystem benefits.

We are committed to the ideal that environmental sustainability is key to the well being of our future and hope that what will be accomplished can be a stepping stone to help broaden the horizon.

Cordially,



This program complies with all rules and provisions set forth under the general license for humanitarian and environmental projects Section 515.575 of the Cuban Assets and Control Regulations published by the Office of Foreign Assets and Control of the United States Department of the Treasury.

