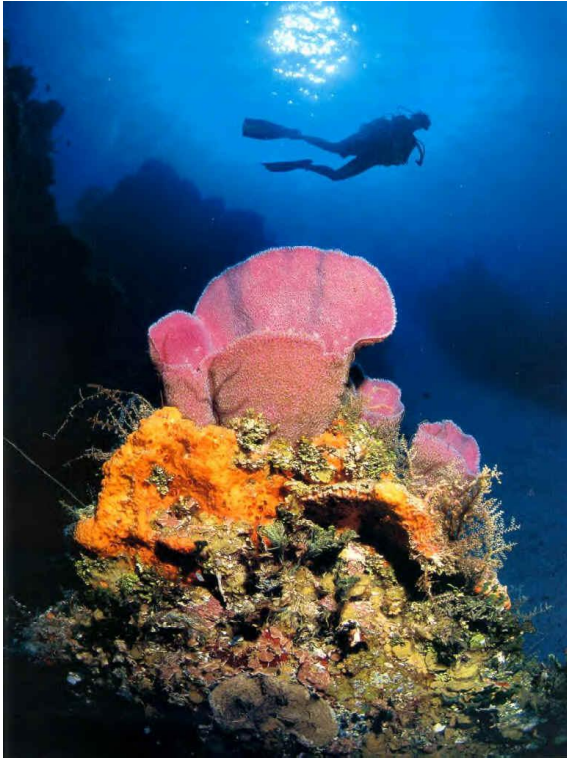


Insights on Tourism & the Environment



Economic Benefits

Tourism has become the most important economic activity and fastest growing sector for many Caribbean islands, especially generating significant foreign exchange.



Did you know that globally Tourism generates 11% of Gross Domestic Profit and employs 200 million people but produces 4.8 million tonnes of waste yearly?

Within the Caribbean, the sector also generates one fifth (1/5) of all jobs and accounts for one quarter (1/4) of all foreign exchange earnings.

Tourist Activities

Tourists enjoy beach lounging, scuba diving, snorkeling, water sports and fishing. Such benefits may be reduced due to coral degradation by an estimated US\$350-\$870 million/yr.³



Tourism can increase pressure on biodiversity & natural resources & the **Environment** if not properly managed. These impacts range from transport, land development, water consumption, excessive energy demand and increased waste generation.



In Numbers

- Tourist arrivals to the Caribbean increased by 4.2% in 2016, better than the 3.9% overall internationally.¹¹
- In the last 20 years, cruise ship tourism has quadrupled worldwide; with 58% of the world's cruise ship passengers occupying the Caribbean cruise industry



- **Impacts on the Environment**

Globally cruise ships bring with them between 3 to 10 billion tons of ballast water.⁵ This water is harmful to the marine environment as it contains more than 7,000 invasive species that destroy native animals and plants.

- Resorts sometimes dump waste into the sea. Currently only 1/4 of hotel and resort wastewater treatment plants are in good operating condition. This introduces toxins (nutrient, pathogens and viruses) into the water that are deadly for marine life.⁷

- Cruise ships leak or spill oil an estimated 250 times yearly in the Caribbean Sea. This oil poisons the sensitive marine and coastal organic substrate, interrupting the food chain that marine creatures depend on.⁸



Overfishing is the most pervasive direct human threat to reefs and threatens 60% of them. Overfishing poses the greatest threat to the Eastern Caribbean reefs followed by coastal development, sedimentation and pollution.⁹

- In many tourist areas there is overharvesting of marine resources for seafood or as souvenirs, this reduces the biodiversity of the region, throwing off the natural balance of marine life and the food chain.¹⁰





Sustainable Tourism

Ecotourism is a form of sustainable tourism that promotes responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustain the well-being of the local people.

The Cartagena Convention and the Pollution (AMEP) and Marine Biodiversity (SPAW) Sub-Programmes of UN Environment's Caribbean Programmes support activities for the protection and management of sensitive and highly valuable natural marine resources and promotes sustainable tourism practices. For more information, check out our website www.cep.unep.org.

What Can You Do?

- Support ecologically sustainable fisheries practices. If you eat seafood cuisine, do not choose fish that are threatened or endangered, instead, choose non threatened or non-endangered fish.
- The level of wildlife disturbance caused by snorkelers and divers can be significantly reduced with a voluntary policy of: "take only pictures leave only memories".
- Monofilament lines, lead weight nets and other fishing tools tangle and kill corals and other types of marine life. Ensure that nothing is left behind from Fishing.
- Find out the facts about the place that you are visiting. Ask key questions about their environmental policy- waste disposal, recycling and energy use- to see if you are supporting an eco-friendly establishment.

Footnotes

- ¹ Globallast." 18 Dec 2006 Web.26 Aug 2009. <<http://globallast.imo.org>
- ² Tourism Expansion: increasing threats or conservation opportunities? *Environment Alert Bulletin. UNEP. Web.26 Aug 2009.* http://www.grid.unep.ch/product/publication/download/ew_tourism.en.pdf
- ³ Tourism Expansion: increasing threats or conservation opportunities? ." *Environment Alert Bulletin. UNEP. Web.26 Aug 2009.* <http://www.grid.unep.ch/product/publication/download/ew_tourism.en.pdf
- ⁴ Tourism Expansion: increasing threats or conservation opportunities? ." *Environment Alert Bulletin. UNEP. Web.26 Aug 2009.* <http://www.grid.unep.ch/product/publication/download/ew_tourism.en.pdf
- ⁵ Gardner, Lloyd . "PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS AND DESTRUCTION OF HABITATS (PADH) IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION." 2003. UNEP, GPA.
- ⁶ Gardner, Lloyd . "PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS AND DESTRUCTION OF HABITATS (PADH) IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION." 2003. UNEP, GPA.
- ⁷ Gardner, Lloyd . "PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS AND DESTRUCTION OF HABITATS (PADH) IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION." 2003. UNEP, GPA.
- ⁸ Vanzella-Khoury, Alessandra. "CARIBBEAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ISSUES: Our Natural Environment: Importance, Symbiotic and Conflicting Relationships." 2006. CEP UNEP. Web.24 Aug 2009.
- ⁹ Mark Spalding, Philip Kramer, Edmund Green, Suzie Greenhalgh, Hillary Nobles, Johnathan Kool World Resources Institute WAS, "Reefs at Risk." 2004. World Resources Institute. Web.26 Aug 2009.
- ¹⁰ A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE ." *Managing Environmental Impacts In The Marine Recreation Sector. The Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB).*
- ¹¹ Tourism Expansion: increasing threats or conservation opportunities? ." *Environment Alert Bulletin. UNEP. Web.26 Aug 2009.* <http://www.grid.unep.ch/product/publication/download/ew_tourism.en.pdf