

CORAL REEF COMMUNITIES

Coral Reef Monitoring
Coral Reef Restoration

PROJECT OVERVIEW FOR VOLUNTEERS
2020



Location

Akumal is situated on the eastern Caribbean coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, some ninety kilometers south of Cancun, between the towns of Playa del Carmen and Tulum. Akumal means the *Place of Turtles* in Maya.

What is CEA

Centro Ukana I Akumal A.C., better known as the Akumal Ecological Center (CEA), was founded in 1993 to provide environmental initiatives. It seeks to protect marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as biodiversity in Akumal.



Since its foundation, CEA has worked together with the Akumal community on the following topics:

- Protection and preservation of marine ecosystems
- Protection, conservation, and investigation of sea turtles
- Environmental education for locals and tourists
- Community outreach and volunteer work

In addition to its own independent research, CEA hosts visiting researchers and experts in various fields from around the world.

Volunteer with CEA

There are plenty of opportunities for adults of all ages who wish to donate their time and expertise to help Centro Ecológico Akumal meet its goals and carry out its mission.

General Information

- Participants are expected to be enthusiastic and adventurous, be able to work as part of a team, be respectful of the host country's environment and cultures, and have a good sense of humor.
- Volunteers should be at least 18 years old. Volunteers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.
- According to the number of applicants for the program, a strict selection of the applications will be made.
- Program fees, intake dates and time commitment vary according to program/project.
- Accommodation is included in the program fees.
- Volunteers should read **Terms and Conditions** before submitting the application form.



Coral Reef Monitoring

The main goal of CEA's Reef Monitoring project is to collect comprehensive data on the Mesoamerican Reef (commonly referred to as the MAR) in the region of Akumal.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Volunteers will monitor both fish and corals, and each of the volunteers is expected to specialize in either one of these. Before you can start the actual monitoring work, you must be able to identify 100% of the coral or fish species encountered here to make sure the data collected is accurate.

The first three weeks of this project will mostly be spent learning fishes or corals, becoming familiar with the monitoring methodology, and going snorkelling in the bay for some underwater identification practice. You will also be given general lectures (wildlife, reefs, oceanography, etc.) to give you a better perspective on your work.

By week four you should be ready to start monitoring. We will monitor the reef by use of SCUBA/snorkelling at least once a day, weather permitting.

FIELD WORK + HOURS

Volunteers will follow a scheme of assisted work or self-study, **Monday through Friday, approximately 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**. However, because the field research is weather dependent, we ask volunteers to be flexible and understand that the overall plans and schedule may need to be adjusted throughout the program.

REQUIREMENTS

- Open water dive certification with at least 10 dives.
- A Certificate of Health / Note from your physician clearing you to dive
- Dive insurance

Note

- *Volunteers are required to show copies of the above and bring the necessary documents to Mexico with them.*

PROGRAM FEE

\$2,595 USD

(entire 12-week program)

Time Commitment

12 Weeks

What's Included?

- Pre-arrival support
- Course materials + lectures
- Research support and guidance from supervisor
- Dive gear/use (Regulator, BCD + wetsuit—depending on size and/or availability)
- Boat, captain + divemaster for each dive
- Research tools + equipment
- Volunteer t-shirt

What's NOT Included?

- Accommodation
- Food/Meals
- Transportation + Transfers
- Medical / Travel / Dive Insurance
- Weekend excursions or activities

- *The dive centers in Akumal provide discounted rates to our volunteers for dive certification or refresher courses. This should be done before your program start date.*

Coral Communities: Coral Reef Monitoring

VOLUNTEER INTAKE DATES

This project happens in three phases. Each phase is 12-weeks in duration. The set intake dates for 2019 are as follows:

PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE
March 2 nd to May 18 th	June 8 th to August 24 th	September 14 th to November 30 th

Volunteers should arrive a few days prior to the start date to ensure they are acclimatized and adjusted to the time zone.

TIME COMMITMENT

Volunteers are required to make a **12-week** commitment to this program.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- Personal snorkel gear (mask, fins, snorkel)
- Wetsuit (2-3mm is best) / Rashguard
- Laptop or tablet that will allow for use of software - creating presentations, data etc.
- Dive computer (suggested).
- Dive gear

NOTE: Dive gear is available for CEA volunteers use, however, depending on sizing and/or availability, volunteers should be aware that if gear is not available, they may be required to rent their own gear at an additional cost.

NEXT STEPS

Volunteers who are interested in this program and wish to participate should take the next steps:

1. Read the **Terms + Conditions** for Volunteering
2. Complete the online application form for Coral Monitoring

Please allow up to 10 business days for our response to your application. Once it is received, we will be in contact—perhaps asking you for more details/info and/or informing you of your application status.

If your application is accepted, the next step is to start making arrangements for your arrival. The volunteer coordinator will work with you and provide support throughout the pre-arrival time to help you feel comfortable and confident in your new adventure.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact communications.ceakumal@gmail.com



Coral Reef Restoration

The main goal of CEA's Reef Restoration project is to restore the reef ecosystem functions in Akumal by focusing on rehabilitation and restoration to replenish the reef habitat.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Volunteers will help with the nursery work, outplanting the fragments back onto the reef or monitoring the health and status of previously outplanted corals.

Before volunteers start, you will be trained in coral reef ecology and coral restoration techniques so you can develop the skills you need.

FIELD WORK + HOURS

Volunteers will have activities depending on the requirements of the program, **Monday through Friday, from 10:30 to 3 pm** or depending on the capacity of the volunteers. However, because the field research is weather dependent, we ask volunteers to be flexible and understand that the overall plans and schedule may need to be adjusted throughout the program. Weekends are free to you to travel and get to know more about the area/region.

REQUIREMENTS

- Minimum OPEN WATER Certification with at least 20 dives within the last 6 months.
- If you do not have a total of 20 dives or your last dives are over 6 months, we recommend volunteers to do a few refresher dives in Akumal before starting the course--this will help you improve improving buoyancy control
- A Certificate of Health / Note from your physician clearing you to dive
- Dive insurance

Note: Volunteers are required to show copies of the above and bring the necessary documents to Mexico with them.

PROGRAM FEE

\$219 USD / WEEK

Time Commitment

1 Week

What's Included?

- Pre-arrival support
- Course materials + lectures
- Research support and guidance from supervisor
- Boat, captain + divemaster for each dive
- Research tools + equipment
- Volunteer t-shirt

What's NOT Included?

- Accommodation
- Food/Meals
- Transportation + Transfers
- Medical / Travel / Dive Insurance
- Weekend excursions or activities

TIME COMMITMENT

Volunteers are required to make a **1-week** commitment to this program.

VOLUNTEER INTAKE DATES

To know the availability of dates, it is requested to contact the Volunteer coordinator of CEA at least two weeks in advance.

- **START DATES JANUARY 20th**
- **OPEN DATES UNTIL NOVEMBER 30th**

Program starts on Mondays and ends on Fridays. We suggest volunteers arrive and depart on Sundays. Please be sure to allow enough time for surface intervals before your flight!

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- Personal snorkel gear (mask, fins, snorkel)
- Wetsuit (2-3mm is best) / Rashguard
- Dive computer (suggested).
- Personal Dive gear (suggested).

NOTE: Dive gear is available for CEA volunteers use, however, depending on sizing and/or availability, volunteers should be aware that if gear is not available, they may be required to rent their own gear at an additional cost.

NEXT STEPS

Volunteers who are interested in this program and wish to participate should take the next steps:

1. Read the **Terms + Conditions** for Volunteering
2. Complete the online application form for Coral Monitoring

Please allow up to 10 business days for our response to your application. Once it is received, we will be in contact—perhaps asking you for more details/info and/or informing you of your application status.

If your application is accepted, the next step is to start making arrangements for your arrival. The volunteer coordinator will work with you and provide support throughout the pre-arrival time to help you feel comfortable and confident in your new adventure.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact communications.ceakumal@gmail.com