

TOURISM IMPACT STUDIES

PROJECT OVERVIEW FOR VOLUNTEERS

2020



Location

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

What is CEA

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

CEA, since its foundation, has developed within the Akumal community on the following matters:

- Protection and preservation of the marine ecosystems
- Sea turtle protection, conservation and research
- Water quality issues
- Environmental education for locals and tourists
- Community outreach and volunteer engagement

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 21 years of age. 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 candidates will be made, based on the opening dates for the different programs.
- Program fees, intake dates and time commitment vary according to program/project.
- Accommodation is included in the program fees.
- Applications must be submitted at least one month before the start date of the program. Note some programs have specific start dates while others are open.
- Volunteers should read **Terms and Conditions** before submitting the application form.





Tourism Impact Studies

The main goal of Tourism Impact on Akumal bays project is to monitor sea turtles in their natural environment, collect data on their behavior in relation to the tourism, as well as to photographically identify the sea turtles and the environmental conditions of Akumal Bay.

WHAT TO EXPECT

By a theoretical and practical training, volunteers will learn how to precisely collect the technical data to describe the behavior of sea turtles in their natural environment and the impact that tourism has on them. With this information, we will be able to build advices for a good practice of activities.

We will monitor on the early morning, between 7.30 a.m. and 6 p.m., two to three times per day. After this, volunteer will do a primary and secondary process of the data and they will input them into the database of the CEA. Volunteers who stay longer than 2 weeks will become involved in community outreach activities.

On the first day of the project, volunteers will undergo a training on the monitoring protocols required and presentation of a detailed work schedule. Volunteers will become proficient in these skills before monitoring by themselves. For safety measures, volunteers must work in pairs or in groups of three.

FIELD WORK + HOURS

- 5 days/week (Monday - Friday), from 7.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Saturdays and Sundays are free days. We encourage volunteers to explore areas and activities, both in Akumal and in the surrounding, like the Mayan Ruins and cultures, cenotes, swim with whale sharks, get SCUBA Dive certifications, visit other towns/cities, etc. In case you need information, do not hesitate to ask us.
- We ask volunteers to be flexible as the activities depend on the good marine weather and may require adjustments in scheduling.

PROGRAM FEE

\$250 USD (2 weeks)

Time Commitment

2 Weeks minimum

What's Included?

- Pre-arrival support
- Training + orientation session
- Research support and guidance from supervisor
- Equipment + tools
- Volunteer T-shirt

What's NOT Included?

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

REQUIRED SKILLS

- ✓ Mandatory
 - Must be able to swim 200m unaided
 - Have good physical condition (as volunteers will be spending several hours a day in the water)
 - Have strong interest in wildlife, conservation, sea turtles and their environment.
 - Have basic computer skills for data entry.
- ✓ A plus:
 - Experience in snorkeling
 - Experience in scientific data collection
 - Fluency in Spanish and English
 - Photography skills and experience with using a GPS is a plus
 - Graphic design skills
 - Dive certificate and first aid
 - Bring your own underwater camera
 - Be flexible, curious to learn, outgoing and a team-player

START DATES

We are currently accepting volunteers for a minimum of 2 weeks

- START DATES: Volunteers must arrive one or two days in advance.
- Especially, international volunteers should consider this period, to ensure they are acclimated and adjusted to the time zone.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25	MONDAY, APRIL 13	MONDAY, JUNE 1	MONDAY, JUNE 1	MONDAY, JULY 6
MONDAY, JULY 6	MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7	MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7	MONDAY, OCTOBER 5	MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

WHAT TO BRING

Besides your personal belongings, those volunteering in this project must bring or buy once here:

- Personal snorkel equipment (mask, short fins, snorkel, and vest)
- Laptop or tablet to input and process data (Office Programs)
- Eco-safe sunscreen
- Dive watch / Water resistant watch

Recommended, but not required

- Underwater camera / Go-pro
- Wetsuit (1-2mm shorty) will be perfect for protecting you against the sun

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 Tourism Impact Studies.

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

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