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# WHALE SHARK TRIP 2016

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# INFORMATION AND ITINERARY

# WELCOME TO ISLA MUJERES!

Welcome to the charming island of Isla Mujeres, Mexico. We are thrilled to have you on this once-in-a-lifetime trip to swim with the majestic whale sharks. We hope you enjoy a wonderful week of hospitality, fine dining and unrivaled ocean encounters.

## ABOUT ISLA MUJERES

A sliver of land fringed by white sand beaches amid the turquoise sea, Isla Mujeres is five miles long and no more than a quarter-mile wide. The island was formed by ocean currents depositing sediment, which provides its abundance of sand and flat topography. The island's population is just 15,000.

Isla Mujeres was one of the Mexican Caribbean's earliest destinations to boast hotels and other tourist developments, but attention quickly shifted to Isla Cozumel and Cancun mainland. As those areas exploded — rushing to build high-rise hotels and ports for cruise ships — Isla Mujeres has maintained a relaxed, low-key atmosphere of a quiet fishing community, attracting backpackers and bohemian visitors alike.

### HOW THE ISLAND GOT ITS NAME

A glimpse at the sunbathers on the beach will have you thinking the moniker "Island of Women" comes from bikini clad tourists. However, the name Isla Mujeres goes at least as far back as Spanish buccanners, who (legend has it) kept their lovers in safe seclusion here while they plundered galleons and pillaged ports on the mainland. An alternate theory suggests that in 1517, when Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba sailed from Cuba and arrived here to procure slaves, the expedition discovered a stone temple containing clay figures of Maya goddesses; it is thought that Cordoba named the island after the icons.

Many archaeologists believe the island was a stopover for the Maya en route to worship goddesses of the moon and fertility, Ixchel on Cozumel. The clay idols are thought to have represented the goddess. The land may also have figured in the extensive Maya salt trade, which extended for hundreds of miles along the coastline.

### ORIENTATION

The town of Isla Mujeres is located at the island's northwestern tip. At just eight blocks long and five blocks deep, it's quite walkable and home to most of the island's restaurants, shops and services. The east shore of Mujeres faces the Caribbean and consists of rough boulders and limestone.

#### AREAS OF INTEREST:

- *Avenida Matamoros is notable for its bohemian shops and atmosphere.*
- *Avenida Hidalgo intersects the town and the local Zocalo (central plaza). This area is pedestrian-friendly, and has many shops and restaurants.*
- *Avenida Rueda Median is the busy street that runs along the south side of the island near the ferry piers.*

### BEACHES

#### PLAYA NORTE (NORTH BEACH)

Playa Norte is the ideal beach for sipping margaritas, sunning and relaxing. Fine white sands descend gradually into a gorgeous turquoise sea — in fact, you can wade nearly 100 yards and still be only waist deep.

#### PLAYA SOL

For deeper water and a wider beach, visit Playa Sol, a short walk from Playa Norte. This beach is ideal for sunning and playing in the sand, but is not ideal for swimming due to stronger currents.

#### PLAYA LANCHERERO

Playa Lancheros is at the south of the island. While less manicured than North Beach, it offers great views of the Caribbean to Cancun.

### SHOPPING

Selected picks for unique shopping on the island:

#### ATZLAN

Specializes in Mexican masks and art. Located at Hidalgo street near Abasolo.

#### GALERIA DE ARTE MEXICANO

Selling fine pottery and silver jewelry — often better quality than some of the other tourist shops. Parque Central, Av. Guerrero 3.

#### CASA DEL ARTE MEXICA

Sells Maya replicas as well as beautiful Batik art made by islanders. Located at Hidalgo 6.

#### LA SIRENA

Textiles, skeleton art and masks can all be found in this tiny shop, filled with folk art curated from all over Mexico. Located at Av. Morelos at Av. Hidalgo.





*Richard Branson for WildAid*

## INTERNET

WiFi is also available in your room and all public areas of the hotel (see hotel information on next page).

## HOSPITAL

The hospitals in Cancun offer advanced medical facilities. Galenia Hospital, 998-891-5200; HOSPITEN, 998-881-3700; AmeriMed Hospital, 998-881-3400; Hospital Americano, 998-884-6133; and AMAT Hospital, 998-887-4422. Please let us know if you have an emergency situation so we can immediately assist.

## DOCTOR

Dr. Antonio Salas is an English speaking general medicine doctor on Isla Mujeres with a private practice at #18 Av. Hidalgo. Tel: 998-877-0021 / 24-hour emergency care: 998-877-0477. Feel free to write to Dr. Salas with any of your medical questions regarding your trip to Isla Mujeres. E-mail: drsalas@prodigy.net.mx.

## DENTIST

Dr. Rodrigo Tello Peón is an English-speaking dentist in Cancun. Located at #18 B Ave. Robalo, just a 10-minute taxi ride from Puerto Juarez. Tel: 998-884-1743

## POST OFFICE

The post office is open Monday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. It is located at Av. Guerrero and Av. Lopez Mateos. You may also drop stamped mail at the hotel lobby for mailing.

## BANKING

There is an HSBC bank and a CIBanco located in front of the ferry dock. An ATM and currency exchange is available there as well. (Currency exchange: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm and Sat 9am-3pm/ Bank: Mon-Sat 8am-7pm)

The best exchange rate on the island can be found at the hotel. Visit the front desk and they will exchange your currency for you.

## PHARMACY

Super Market Express, carries a limited selection of items. If you have forgotten anything check with WildAid staff; we have a small supply of items.

## CURRENCY

The peso is Mexico's Peso national currency, but vendors and restaurants in Cancun and Isla Mujeres will accept both U.S. dollars or Mexico pesos. The exchange rate fluctuates daily but is around 18.5 pesos to the dollar. If the amounts are in the hundreds of dollars, it pays to get the exchange rate converted precisely. Please note that U.S. coins are of no value to the locals and can even be considered offensive, so please do not leave them for locals.

## TRAFFIC AND DRIVING

Golf carts are the standard method of getting around Isla Mujeres. You will need to take a taxi downtown to pick up a golf cart. Just watch out for pedestrians in the town, as many people are on foot. Keep an eye out for the many speed bumps throughout the island.

# ABOUT THE VILLA ROLANDI

## SPA TREATMENTS

Use of the spa is not included in your package. You may contact the spa manager at [spa.zvrin@zoetryresorts.com](mailto:spa.zvrin@zoetryresorts.com) for spa appointments.

## INCIDENTALS

All meals, beverages/cocktails and room costs are included with exemplary service. Should you have any other incidentals, please make payment directly to the hotel upon check out.

## CHECK OUT

All of your airport transfers have been previously arranged. On the day of your departure, you will meet a WildAid staffmember in the hotel lobby to depart. Please return your room keys and take care of any incidentals; all other costs are covered. Be prepared to leave 3.5 hours before your flight's departure time. Expect 1.5 hours for transit to Cancun Airport and 2 hours for international check-in.

## ROOM AMENITIES

Amenities at this hotel are included with 24-hour room service. Minibar is restocked twice daily with soda, beer, sparkling wine and bottled water.

## FITNESS ROOM

A fitness room is available at the hotel, with machines and weights.

## HEALTH

To help avoid upset stomachs, wash your hands regularly and use hand sanitizer — especially after handling money. Avoid tap water. Use bottled water to brush your teeth. Be sure to use sunscreen and stay hydrated.

## TIPPING

Tipping is customary in Mexico. Your gratuity is already included for meals and boat guides.

## DRESS CODE

The island is relaxed and informal. Casual island clothing is suitable for dinner and events.

## TAXI INFORMATION

Island taxis are plentiful and will take you anywhere you want to go. Villa Rolandi will call a taxi for you.

## DINING

### BREAKFAST

Breakfast is provided daily at Casa Rolandi from 7:00-10:30am. On days when we swim with the whale sharks and manta rays, we'll provide a takeout breakfast on the boat consisting of an egg sandwich, fruit, pastries and drinks.

### LUNCH

Lunch is provided daily on the boats. For those staying back on the island, Casa Rolandi serves lunch beginning at 12pm.

### DINNER

Each evening, WildAid will host dinner. Check your itinerary for the time and location. Room service is available 24 hours a day.

## HOTEL BARS

Cozy Bar: Open from 5pm-1am.

The Bar in Casa Rolandi: Open from 7:30am-10:30pm.



## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### WHALE SHARK SWIMS

Each morning our group will meet in the hotel lobby at 8am. We'll then walk over to the Villa Rolandi docks, where our boat will be waiting and departing soon afterwards to meet up with the whale shark tour boats.

Once everyone is situated on the boats, we'll head out and marvel at the morning view of Isla Mujeres and breathtaking North Beach. Whale shark territory covers a seven-mile-wide circle, and you'll be within range in about an hour. You'll spend the morning scouting out groups of whale sharks and having a private encounter with the sharks. Just two people enter the water at any one time with your guide. We will swim with the sharks until about 2pm-4pm daily.

### TIPS FOR YOUR SWIM

Breakfast will be light. A heavy meal will be tough for swimming and boating, but a light meal will help fuel you for your swim. Additional snacks, drinks and lunch will be provided on the boat.

Your boat guide will provide snorkel gear, flippers and wetsuits or flotation devices. They will also take fantastic underwater photographs of your swim.

#### THINGS TO BRING ON YOUR SWIM:

- Towel (we provide)
- Hat (we provide)
- Sunscreen (we provide)
- Camera (optional, as our guides will take professional photos)

**WILDAID**

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

#### CENOTES DIVES

A *cenote* (pronounced say-NO-tay) is a natural sinkhole created where a cave ceiling has collapsed. Soar around stalactites through tunnels or just enjoy a refreshing swim in the fresh water. (Please note you must be scuba-certified to participate in dives and you will miss a swim with the sharks if you attend this excursion.)

#### CHICHEN ITZA

Located hours south of Cancun, Chichen Itza is one of the finest examples of ancient Mayan civilization and an unforgettable UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Please note that this is a full-day trip, so you will miss one whale shark excursion if you visit.)

#### GARAFON NATURAL REEF PARK

The best snorkeling on Isla Mujeres can be found at Garafon Natural Reef Park. Located at the base of a large bluff, the park is perfect for snorkeling and includes part of the magnificent Great Maya Reef. Parrot fish, manta rays and other reef fish are among the marine life that call this reef home. Garafon also offers an exciting over-the-water zip line as well relaxing lounge areas, kayak rentals, hammocks and a freshwater infinity pool overlooking the ocean.

#### TEMPLO DE IXCHEL AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

Located at the island's Punta Sur (south point, Templo de Ixchel is an ideal place to watch crashing waves amid the turquoise waters. Walking trails meander along the ledge of a bluff and through a

sculpture garden. The Mayan ruin of the goddess Ixchel is also found here.

#### TURTLE FARM

Turtle Farm is a sea turtle conservation facility. During nesting season from May to July, turtles lay their eggs at night along the rugged east shore. Volunteers at the turtle farm help spot nesting turtles, and their eggs are moved to a protected area away from predators (and humans) until they hatch. Upon hatching, the baby

turtles are released into the Caribbean. You can visit the park where the turtles are housed and raised, as well as a small aquarium.

#### RELAX!

The laid-back atmosphere and beautiful beaches of Isla Mujeres are the perfect place to catch rays, and enjoy a relaxed island lifestyle. We recommend cruising the island in a golf cart to enjoy the architecture, atmosphere and rustic charm of the island.

## PHOTOS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

### TWITTER

Tell your friends what you're up to and share stories with the group! Tweet using the hashtag #WhaleSharks16 and WildAid's handle, @WildAid. Here are some suggested tweets (and yes, we'll retweet you!):

*a) I was almost swallowed by a whale shark thanks to*

*@WildAid #WhaleSharks16*

*b) Whale sharks need our help. Join me and @WildAid*

*in saying no to shark fin soup finishedwithfins.org*

*#WhaleSharks16*

*c) Did you know a whale shark can be worth \$2M*

*in tourism revenue to a coastal community?*

*@WildAid #WhaleSharks16*

### FACEBOOK

Upload your photos and share your experiences with your friends on Facebook. Be sure to tag @WildAid in your photos and in your updates.

### INSTAGRAM

Whether you opt for filter or no-filter on your Instagram posts, tag @WildAid and let us know if you'd like us to share your photo with our global community on social media.

### SNAPCHAT

We're on SnapChat too! Find us at @WildAid and post your best 10-second video.



# ITINERARY

## JULY 17: WELCOME TO VILLA ROLANDI!

7pm

WildAid nightly presentation as well as a safety presentation on the south side of the Villa Rolandi Hotel pool deck. Refreshments and appetizers served.

8pm

Dinner at Casa Rolandi in The Villa Rolandi.

## JULY 18 - MEET THE WHALE SHARKS

7:00-8:00am

Group meets for breakfast.

8am

Group meets in hotel lobby and leaves for the boats (please eat breakfast at Casa Rolandi).

12pm

Lunch on the boat.

7pm

WildAid nightly presentation on the south side of The Villa Rolandi pool deck. Refreshments and appetizers served.

8pm

Le Mestissagel at The Villa Rolandi for dinner.

## JULY 19 - SECOND DAY OF SWIMMING WITH WHALE SHARKS

7:00am-7pm

Same itinerary as previous day.

7pm

WildAid nightly presentation on the south side of The Villa Rolandi pool deck. Refreshments and appetizers served.

8pm

Dinner at Casa Rolandi in The Villa Rolandi.

## JULY 20 - THIRD DAY OF SWIMMING WITH THE SHARKS

7:00am-7pm

Same itinerary as previous day.

7pm

WildAid nightly presentation on the south side of The Villa Rolandi pool deck. Refreshments and appetizers served.

8pm

Dinner at Casa Rolandi

## JULY 21 - FAREWELL

We will organize all guest travel so you can have a relaxing last day on Isla Mujeres!

## HOTEL RESTAURANTS

### Casa Rolandi

Casa Rolandi is synonymous with gourmet tradition in Cancun and Isla Mujeres.

- Swiss-Northern Italian cuisine cooked in a wood oven
- Bar with a sweeping view of the ocean
- Live music
- Breakfast is from 7:00am-10:30am
- Lunch and dinner are served from 12:00pm-10:30pm
- Dress Code: breakfast and lunch-casual; dinner-casual elegance
- Capacity: 110 seats

### Le Mestissagel

Enjoy a delectable fusion cuisine mixing Mexican and French flavors. Our Chef Daniele Muller will indulge your palate with dishes inspired and learned directly from Paul Bocuse, world-famous creator of Nouvelle Cuisine.

- Dress code: dinner-casual elegance
- Capacity: 35 seats



# WILDAID STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

## ON-SITE WILDAID CONTACTS

### VANESSA GREGSON

*Phone: Call the hotel's front desk and ask to be transferred*

*E-mail: [gregson@wildaid.org](mailto:gregson@wildaid.org)*

### CHRISTINA VALLIANOS

*Phone: Call the hotel's front desk and ask to be transferred*

*E-mail: [vallianos@wildaid.org](mailto:vallianos@wildaid.org)*

### CORIE KNIGHTS

*Cell: 415-254-3174*

*E-mail: [corie@wildaid.org](mailto:corie@wildaid.org)*

### PETER KNIGHTS

*Cell: 415-254-3174*

*E-mail: [knights@wildaid.org](mailto:knights@wildaid.org)*

## HOTEL

*Villa Rolandi: (52) 998-999-2000*

## POLICE

*Tel: 998-877-0082*

## DOCTOR

*Tel: 998-877-0021*

## EMERGENCY

*Tel: 998-845-2370*

## WHERE TO FIND US

*WildAid staff will be available in the lobby each morning before the swims.*

*Should you need anything during the day, please call a WildAid staff person. Every evening, staff will be available at each individual dining establishment.*

# ABOUT WILDAID

# ABOUT WILDAID



WildAid's mission is to end the illegal wildlife trade in our lifetimes. We envision a world where people no longer buy wildlife products such as shark fin, elephant ivory and rhino horn. With an unrivaled portfolio of celebrity ambassadors and global network of media partners, WildAid leverages nearly US\$200 million in annual pro bono media support with a simple yet powerful message:

## WHEN THE BUYING STOPS, THE KILLING CAN TOO.



Up to  
**1 BILLION PEOPLE**  
reached per week in China



**90+ COUNTRIES REPRESENTED**  
in our donor base



Over  
**\$197 MILLION OF DONATED**  
media space and  
air-time in 2013



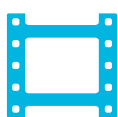
**450 MILLION SOCIAL  
MEDIA**  
users reached in 2015



**144,000 SQ KMS OF MARINE**  
life protected in Galapagos  
Marine Reserve



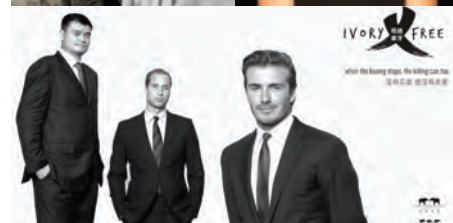
**30+ PRO BONO**  
media partners



**150+ PUBLIC SERVICE  
ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
produced in dozens of  
languages, versions,  
and formats



**40+ MEDIA PLATFORMS**  
including television,  
billboards, transit, internet,  
mobile, and print



### 100+ INTERNATIONAL AMBASSADORS

a who's who of leading Chinese and international political figures and celebrities including Prince William, Sir Richard Branson, Yao Ming, Lupita Nyong'o, David Beckham, Angelababy, Ian Somerhalder, Jeremy Renner, Bo Derek and Bear Grylls.

# BACKGROUND

The illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade is estimated to be worth over \$10 billion per year and has decimated many wildlife populations around the world.

Killed for trophies and ornaments, food, medicine and clothing, these animals are pushed to the brink of extinction as a result of consumer demand. Similar to the drug trade, law enforcement efforts alone have failed to curb growing consumer demand. Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent protecting animals in the wild, yet little is spent on addressing the underlying demand for wildlife parts and products. This is what makes WildAid unique in the conservation world.

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DEMAND.



Every year, fins from up to  
**73 MILLION SHARKS**  
are used for SHARK FIN SOUP



Every year, up to  
**33,000 ELEPHANTS**  
are killed for THEIR IVORY



Every year, approximately  
**150 TIGERS**  
are killed for their BODY PARTS



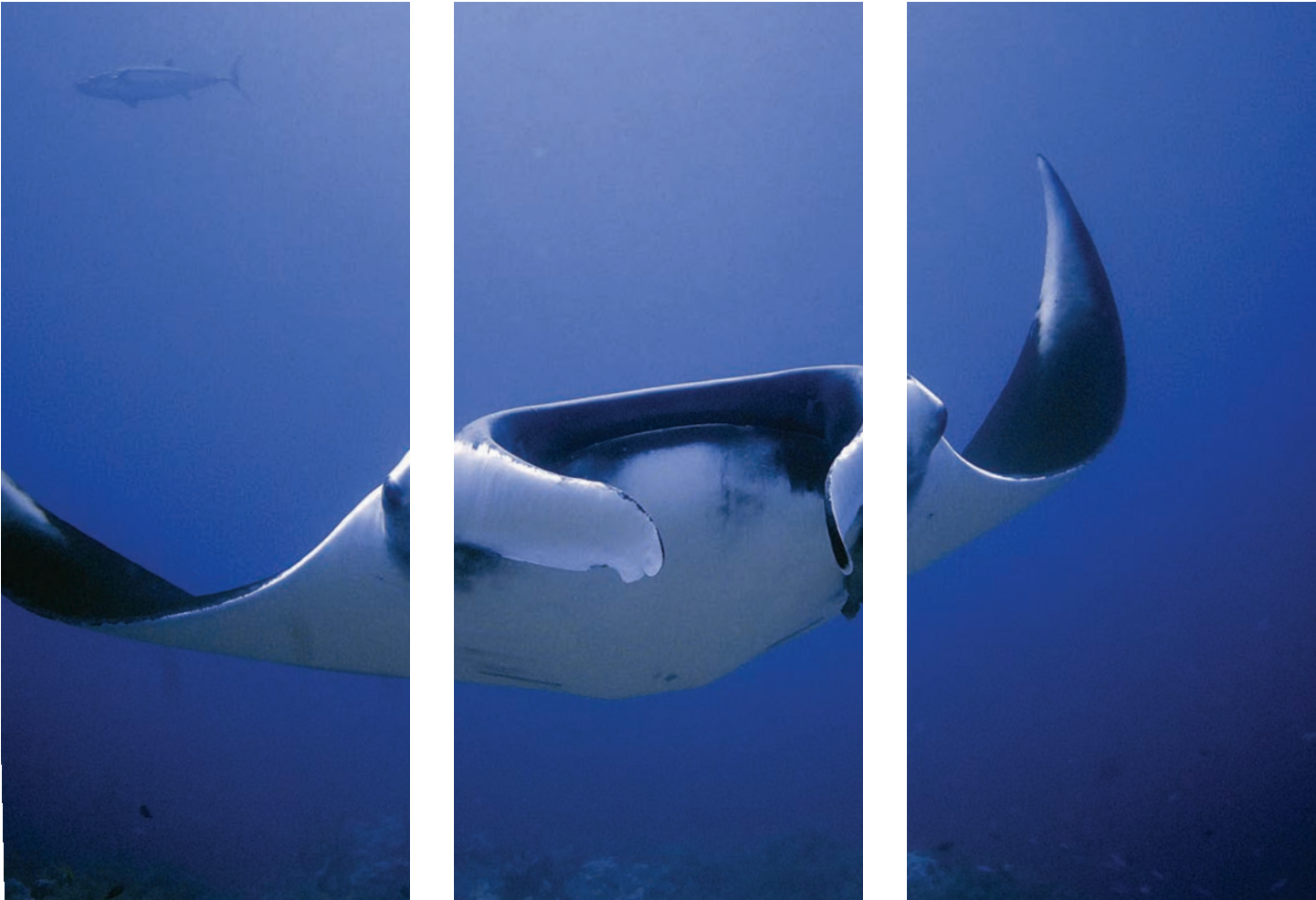
In 2015, at least  
**1,175 RHINOS**  
were killed for THEIR HORNS



# WHERE WE WORK



*WildAid saves wildlife around the world through consumer demand reduction, marine enforcement and building public and political will to ensure threatened species are fully protected.*



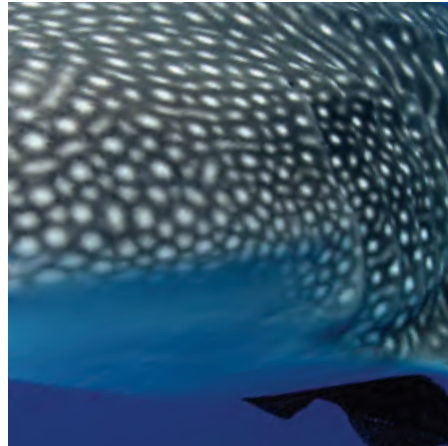
# SHARK FACTS



- There are around 500 known species of sharks.
- Sharks have inhabited our oceans for over 400 million years and have survived four mass extinction events including the Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event that brought an end to the dinosaurs.
- Sharks sit at the top of the food chain in most of the ecosystems in which they exist.
- Sharks help maintain a balance in marine ecosystems, controlling the abundance and influencing the behavior and feeding habits of prey species.
- Sharks are a major draw for tourism and in turn can be a major revenue generator. For some countries, sharks are worth thousands of times more alive swimming in the oceans than dead on a plate.
- Removing a species from an ecosystem has profound ecological consequences for the rest of the ecosystem. Declines in other commercially valuable species have been documented when sharks have been fished out, disrupting ecosystem balance and impacting economic benefits and food security for human populations.
- Litter, discarded fishing gear, chemical pollution, and habitat loss all have a damaging impact on shark populations. However, the greatest threat to sharks is commercial fishing.
- The commercial exploitation of sharks has risen dramatically in recent years, driven primarily by the explosion in demand for shark fin.
- Fins are the most valuable part of a shark, worth as much as US\$700/kg; considerably more than the meat. As a result, many fishermen choose to cut the fins from sharks whilst still at sea and throw the rest of the shark overboard rather than carrying the whole carcass back to port. Up to 95% of the shark can be wasted.
- Shark fishing is big business and the shark product trade now engages an estimated 145 countries. Hong Kong and mainland China continue to be the top importers of shark fin globally.
- As a result of the shark fin trade, shark populations have plummeted. An estimated 25% of all known shark and ray species are threatened with extinction. More than a third of pelagic shark and ray species are threatened with extinction. Only a handful of sharks are legally protected.

**THE GREATEST  
THREAT TO  
SHARKS IS  
COMMERCIAL  
FISHING.**

# WHALE SHARK FACTS



- Found in tropical and warm-temperate seas, the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is the largest fish on the planet, growing up to 20 meters long and weighing up to 34 tons.
- Satellite tracking has shown that whale sharks take long-distance migrations that can last over the course of many years, spanning thousands of miles.
- As one of only three species of shark that filter feed, they typically feed on microscopic plankton, crustaceans and small fish.
- Whale sharks reproduce slowly and are found in low abundance, thus making them highly vulnerable to overfishing.
- The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species lists the whale shark as Vulnerable. Whale sharks are listed on Appendix II of the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), also known as the Bonn Convention, and included as a highly migratory species in Annex I of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- Whale shark tourism is estimated to be worth over US\$47 million worldwide each year.

WHALE SHARK  
TOURISM IS  
WORTH OVER  
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WORLDWIDE  
EACH YEAR.



# SHARK FIN SOUP FACTS



- Shark fin is known as “yu chi” in China (or “fish wing” in English).
- Shark fin soup has been considered a delicacy in Chinese cuisine since the Sung Dynasty (AD 960–1279) and was established as a traditional component of formal banquets by the Ming Dynasty (AD 1368–1644).
- Chairman Mao shunned shark fin as a frivolous delicacy during the Cultural Revolution.
- A substantially renewed interest in shark fin in China began in the 1980s and continues to grow as urban wealth increases. Current projections suggest that around 250 million new Chinese “middle class” consumers will enter the market over the next 10 years. The combination of old customs and traditions with new money, conspicuous consumption and powerful new aspirations resulted in an explosion of shark fin soup consumption in China.
- Shark fin is favored for special occasions such as weddings, as a mark of respect at business and other important meetings; and increasingly as a commonplace display of wealth.
- WildAid surveys show that although China is the single-largest market for shark fins, many Chinese consumers don’t know that the dish they’ve ordered contains shark parts.
- Shark fin itself is virtually tasteless: The flavor is entirely in the broth. Many consumers also see it as a health tonic, yet shark fin is mainly composed of protein and contains no vitamins.
- Research is being conducted to determine possible detrimental health effects; some evidence suggests high levels of methyl mercury found in predatory fish, including sharks.
- Prices and sales of shark fin have fallen in China by 50-70%, thanks in part to demand reduction campaigns from WildAid and partner organizations..

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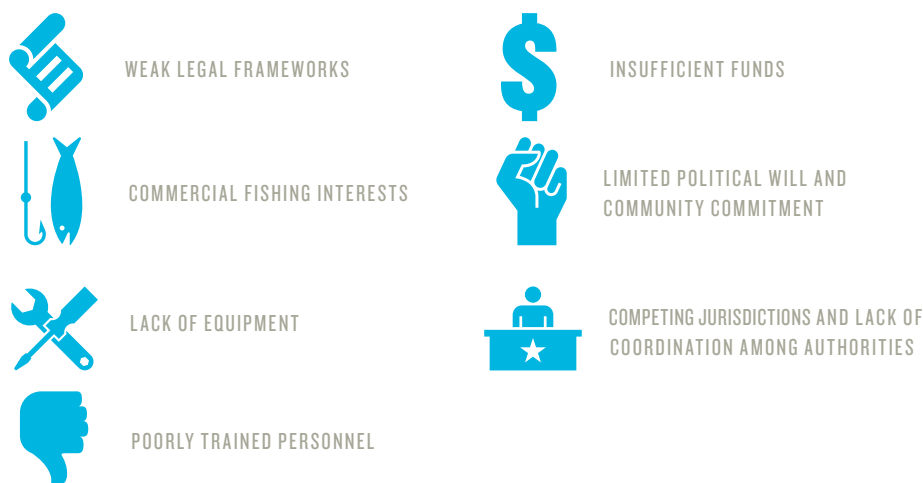
# THREATS TO MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

MPAs cover only 2% of the world's oceans yet are vital to protecting biodiversity and habitat. About one third of the world's population depends on fish for food and nutrition. That number is expected to double by 2050. The need to find innovative and pragmatic resource management strategies is critical. As fish stocks decline, more vessels target reserves, making enforcement even more important.

Marine reserves are costly to patrol, especially for developing nations. Common problems include:

- A lack of resources for equipment, personnel and/or training for enforcement officials;
- Little or no penalties for infractions due to outdated laws, corruption or nonexistent judicial follow-up; and
- Inadequate community support for conservation initiatives.

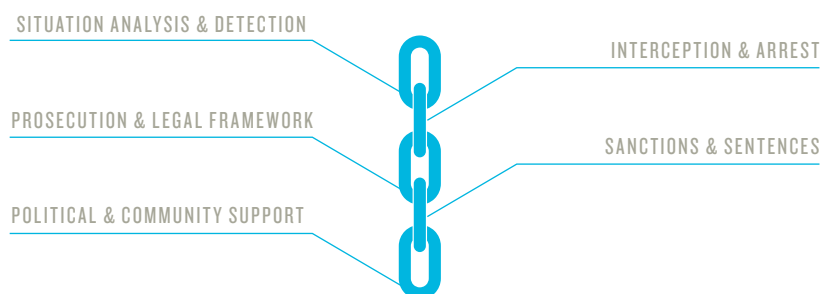
## COMMON IDENTIFIED MPA MANAGEMENT DIFFICULTIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:



## WILDAID'S LAW ENFORCEMENT MODEL

WildAid has defined a comprehensive law enforcement model that can be applied in almost any MPA context. Our model uses an extensive investigative methodology that highlights the critical factors required for the successful MPA management.

### WE FOCUS ON THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CHAIN, WHICH ENCOMPASSES:



*The law enforcement chain requires that each link function effectively and no one link is more important than the other. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link.*

Each piece of the chain works together to form a functional system. For example, if illegal fishers frequently target a protected area, little will stop those same fishers from continuing this practice if there are no consequences for their actions. Therefore, park rangers need to have proper surveillance to detect illegal activity, rapid patrol vessels to intercept the fishers and a functional legal system that will punish infractions. Likewise, if a country declares an MPA, they need to have the ability to enforce regulations, gain community support and stop illegal activity.

# WILDAID'S MARINE PROTECTION INITIATIVES

## GALAPAGOS MARINE RESERVE | ECUADOR

The Galapagos Islands are home to nearly 3,000 marine species, many of which are found nowhere else on earth. The area's nutrient-rich waters support the concentration and reproduction of migratory marine species including humpback whales, sea turtles, giant manta rays and hammerhead sharks.

### INITIATIVES

#### **Stopping Illegal Fishing in the Galapagos Marine Reserve:**

Together with the Galapagos National Park Service and other partners, WildAid is integrating electronic surveillance technology to monitor no-take zones in the reserve, delivering annual training for park rangers and streamlining operations. Recent successes include a high-profile arrest in April. Using technology provided by WildAid, park rangers seized seven illegal fishing vessels and arrested 21 shark finners holding 81 shark carcasses. WildAid worked with the government to enact stronger regulations against illegal fishing and developed a legal database that helped resolve a backlog of 203 environmental cases.

#### **Preventing the Introduction of Invasive Species:**

The greatest threat to biodiversity in the Galapagos Islands is the introduction of invasive species. Once a species is introduced, irreversible damage may occur to native or endemic species. WildAid currently supports the Galapagos Biosecurity Agency to prevent the introduction of invasive species and enact effective quarantine measures once identified. Recent successes include setting up rapid diagnosis labs to identify high-risk invasive species and launching a four-month, celebrity-led awareness campaign that reached 5 million people across Ecuador.

## COASTAL ECUADOR

Coastal Ecuador is home to the largest population of giant manta rays, five species of sea turtles, 20 kinds of whales and dolphins, hammerhead and whale sharks. Its waters are important for both marine biodiversity and coastal economies.

#### **Strengthening the National Network of Coastal MPAs in Ecuador:**

WildAid designed a national MPA enforcement strategy for coastal Ecuador. This plan is currently being implemented at six priority MPAs with activities including collaboration with artisanal fishers to promote sustainable extraction and community-led enforcement, assistance with sea turtle conservation initiatives to protect more than 15,000 endangered sea turtle hatchlings systematic ranger trainings, expanded communications networks and investments in surveillance and interception equipment.

**60% OF THE  
WORLD'S  
MAJOR  
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## NORTHERN REEF PROJECT | PALAU

The tiny Pacific island nation of Palau made history when they moved to protect 80% of their national waters. Palau's communities rely almost exclusively on fish for their diet and economy. Its numerous coral reefs, volcanic atolls, nesting beaches and mangroves offer spawning and aggregation sites for various migratory reef fish, sharks, rays, sea turtles, dugongs, crocodiles and giant clams.

### Stopping Illegal Fishing in Palau's Northern Reefs and Exclusive Economic Zone

Together with The Nature Conservancy, we designed a practical and feasible enforcement system for the Northern Reefs to be implemented over four years. The Northern Reefs are some of Palau's most productive fishing grounds and encompass 3,930 square kilometers. Our strategy, launched in 2015, combines electronic surveillance equipment with strategic patrols to provide a constant presence and rapid response capacity.



## MEXICO

The Midriff Islands are located in Mexico's Sea of Cortez. Often described as "the aquarium of the world," the islands are home to a tremendous array of marine life.

### Stopping Illegal Fishing in the Midriff Islands:

Together with partners, WildAid, carried out a binational initiative to improve MPA enforcement in Baja California Sur and the Galapagos through peer exchanges between Mexican and Ecuadorian officials. The pilot program includes an assessment and implementation plan of enforcement strategies in the Midriff Islands MPA. Expected to launch Fall 2016, it will feature innovative technology and multi-agency patrols that can be replicated throughout Mexico's MPAs.



## INDONESIA

### Supporting Local Conservation Superstar Baseftin in the Coral Triangle:

WildAid designed an enforcement plan for Southeast Misool, located in Indonesia's biodiverse Coral Triangle, and supports Baseftin, our local enforcement partner in its operations. Patrols of no-take zones have continually improved to ensure compliance of local regulations. Outreach to local communities has been critical in raising awareness and changing practices to better manage marine resources. The efforts of Baseftin, together with other conservation initiatives in the region have already succeeded in doubling the biomass around the Misool Eco Resort over a five-year period. Scientists reported a six-fold increase in some sites.









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