



WILDCOAST  
COSTASALVAJE

PHOTO BY OCTAVIO ABURTO

**2017–2018** WILDCOAST is an international conservation team that conserves coastal and marine ecosystems and wildlife.

**CONSERVATION IN ACTION**

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERGE DEDINA

With the dramatic rise in destructive hurricanes, floods and wildfires worldwide, it is more important than ever to protect our coast and ocean. Mangroves, coral reefs, kelp forests, estuaries and beaches all serve critical functions in regulating our global climate, protecting communities and iconic wildlife, and driving fundamental life processes. Their protection is key to our ability as a planet to survive the very real impacts of climate change.

Fortunately, the same places that WILDCOAST has been working to conserve since 2000 are essential in safeguarding people and wildlife against this growing threat.

Laguna San Ignacio and Bahía Magdalena in Baja California Sur, where WILDCOAST is working to protect the world's last undeveloped gray whale breeding lagoons, are also home to expansive desert mangrove forests that sequester more carbon than most plant species on Earth. The coral reefs we are helping to manage in Cabo Pulmo, Huatulco and Cuba, provide a natural buffer for local communities against storm surge and sea level rise. California's marine protected areas preserve rocky reefs, kelp forests, beaches and estuaries that are key conservation features for adapting to sea level rise.

Our work over the last two decades has been successful at protecting these incredible places, and new resources are expanding our efforts to make major advancements in combating climate change. Support from the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation is launching us into a new era of mangrove conservation in Mexico where we are quantifying the amount of carbon stored by our protected forests and using that to fund, through carbon credits, mangrove management and additional protected forests. We also have new resources in California to engage citizen scientists in the monitoring of ecological and human uses along the state's coastline that will help guide coastal management decisions and build the new generation of coastal stewards.

The future of our planet relies on the health and well-being of our oceans. As the great ocean explorer, advocate and author Sylvia Earle said, "Without blue, there is no green." It is our job at WILDCOAST to protect blue and green, connect the people in-between and help make our planet a liveable one for generations to come.

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# WILD COAST IMPACT 2017

WILD COAST PROTECTED:

**322,451**  
ACRES OF  
MANGROVES  
AND TIDAL FLATS

**1,074**  
MILES OF SHORELINE  
AND PRISTINE COAST  
SEA TURTLE NESTING BEACHES  
AND CORAL REEFS IN MEXICO

**35.4**  
MILES OF PRIVATE  
COASTLINE

WILD COAST IS  
WORKING TO CONSERVE:

**31.6 MILLION**  
ACRES OF COASTAL  
AND MARINE  
ECOSYSTEMS

**80 MILLION**  
PEOPLE REACHED GLOBALLY  
THROUGH WILD COAST MEDIA

**903**

STUDENTS TRAINED AS  
MPA STEWARDS

**6,000**  
PEOPLE  
VOLUNTEERED



PLEASE JOIN US IN OUR  
CONSERVATION EFFORTS  
**DONATE TODAY**



Destruction caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria shows that climate change and its impacts are even more of a threat to cities and coastal regions.

Storms like these reiterate the increasing importance of preserving coastal and marine ecosystems. Natural barriers such as mangroves, kelp forests, beaches and coral reefs help reduce storm surge, while watersheds and coastal wetlands absorb storm-related flooding.

WILDCOAST is working with coastal communities and government agencies in the United States, Mexico and Cuba to conserve coastal and marine ecosystems that play an important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

In Mexico and Cuba, WILDCOAST is working closely with federal agencies to protect expansive mangrove forests and surrounding coastlines. These forests act as vital buffers against increasing storms and sea level rise, while sequestering tremendous amounts of carbon. In the United States and Mexico, we are protecting wetlands as a frontline defense against sea level rise and coastal flooding impacts in urban areas. In Oaxaca, we are identifying innovative ways to preserve watersheds and wetlands in one of Mexico's most climate-impacted regions. In California, our efforts to conserve and manage more than 500,000 acres of marine protected areas are protecting billions of dollars in coastal infrastructure, businesses and ecosystem services against the impacts of our changing climate.

WILDCOAST is committed to continuing our efforts to address climate change by protecting our coast and ocean's most vital and valuable natural places.

# CLIMATE CHANGE



WILDCOAST IS WORKING TO PROTECT MANGROVE FORESTS THAT ARE STORING  
**TENS OF MILLIONS OF TONS**  
OF CARBON DIOXIDE (CO<sub>2</sub>) FROM BEING RELEASED INTO THE ATMOSPHERE

PHOTO BY MIGUEL ANGEL DE LA CUEVA

## DID YOU KNOW?

Cities and regions that mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change experience far less destruction from natural disasters.



Across the globe, marine protected areas (MPAs) help ensure long-term conservation of our precious coastal and marine ecosystems and the diversity of wildlife found within them.

California's MPA network protects 16% of the state's coastal and ocean resources and is one of the largest MPA networks in the world. These MPAs, which span from the U.S.-Mexico to Oregon borders, offer refuge to some of the world's most iconic species. Gray, humpback and blue whales migrate through the network on their way between Alaska and Mexico. Pods of dolphins explore their nearshore coastal waters. Rafts of sea lions hunt and forage in the lush kelp forests and several species of sharks find nursery habitat in the sandy shallows. Many commercially valuable species such as abalone and the California spiny lobster find sanctuary within California's MPAs.

WILD COAST is leading efforts in California to conserve the state's 545,280 acres of MPAs. Through citizen science monitoring such as MPA Watch, and our Floating Laboratory program, we are helping to guide MPA adaptive management while building a new generation of coastal stewards. Our signage, materials and presentations are informing a broad and diverse public audience on the importance of MPAs and their locations, regulations and opportunities. Working with more than 600 partners, including local tribes, management agencies, researchers, fishermen and divers, we are helping make California's MPA network most effective at achieving its goals to recover fisheries, restore ecosystems and enhance the recreational value of important coastal areas.

WILD COAST  
IS HELPING  
TO CONSERVE:

545,280

ACRES OF MPAs  
IN CALIFORNIA

17,779

ACRES OF MPAs  
IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

# CALIFORNIA MARINE PROTECTED AREAS



PHOTO BY RALPH PACE

**DID YOU KNOW?**

There are 124 MPAs in California, including 11 in San Diego County.

**2,000** CITIZEN SCIENTISTS  
HELP MONITOR MPAs  
IN CALIFORNIA

**903** STUDENTS ARE  
MPA STEWARDS  
IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

# COASTAL WETLANDS

WILDCOAST IS HELPING TO CONSERVE MEXICO'S:

21.4 MILLION ACRES OF RAMSAR SITES

WHICH INCLUDE

109,715 ACRES OF WATERSHEDS, WETLANDS AND CORAL REEFS IN HUATULCO, OAXACA

36,624

ESTUARY AND OCEAN-BOUND WASTE TIRES HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE TIJUANA RIVER WATERSHED



In 1971, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance was signed as an international treaty for worldwide wetland conservation.

Although recognized for ecological importance on a global scale, wetlands face continuous anthropogenic pressures, particularly along the U.S.-Mexico border and in many parts of Mexico. WILDCOAST is working to add important layers of protection to wetlands in these areas.

The Tijuana River Estuary, home to an array of endemic and endangered wildlife, is the last major coastal wetland in Southern California not divided by a freeway or railway. WILDCOAST is working to address the issue of cross-border flows of trash and sewage that impact the estuary's sensitive ecosystems and wildlife. We are partnering with agencies on both sides of the border to improve sewage treatment, recycle waste tires and raise awareness of the incredible protected open spaces that exist in the region.

On Mexico's Pacific coast, we are taking watershed-wide approaches to protect the vibrant coral reefs and sea turtle nesting beaches of Oaxaca as well as estuaries on the Baja California peninsula. Our team is improving wetland management for Mexico's 142 Ramsar sites by applying innovative water catchment protection strategies to conserve these special places.



Mangroves are among the world's greatest carbon sequestering plants, absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it within their rich soils.

The unique and fragile coastal desert mangroves along the Baja California peninsula are "blue carbon" ecosystems that can store up to five times more carbon than their tropical counterparts. Bahía Magdalena – the largest wetland on the Baja California peninsula – features tens of thousands of acres of the most pristine and biologically important coastal desert mangroves found on Earth. These emerald green coastal forests provide refuge to gray whales and migratory birds and offer important nursery habitat for sharks and commercially valuable fish and shellfish species. The vast mangrove forests WILDCOAST is helping to conserve throughout Mexico and Cuba also protect against storm surge (increasingly important as hurricanes continue to intensify and strike more frequently), as well as sea level rise.

WILDCOAST is implementing new methodologies to measure the blue carbon stored within these coastal forests and is working on innovative ways to conserve mangroves as a means of combating climate change.

Through federal zone concessions in partnership with the Mexican government, we are setting aside tens of thousands of acres of mangrove forests for conservation. We are strengthening the management of protected areas that are home to these forests, improving land-use planning and advancing public policy for climate change adaptation. These strategies are all necessary steps to maintain a viable planet for future generations.

WILDCOAST HAS CONSERVED:

5,720

ACRES OF MANGROVE FORESTS

WILDCOAST IS WORKING TO CONSERVE:

74,689

ADDITIONAL ACRES OF MANGROVE FORESTS

IN BAHÍA MAGDALENA AND THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA

# MANGROVES



PHOTO BY DIANE CASTANEDA

YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US CONTINUE THIS WORK

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 26.7 million tons of carbon is being sequestered by the mangrove forests that WILDCOAST is protecting.

# WILDLANDS AND ISLANDS

WILDCOAST HAS PROTECTED:

50,795  
ACRES

ON THE VALLE DE LOS CIRIOS PACIFIC COAST



Spanning the Baja California peninsula are millions of acres of protected areas that include open ocean, rugged islands, mangrove lagoons and wilderness coastline.

WILDCOAST's private reserve on the Valle de los Cirios Pacific Coast is home to endemic Boojum trees, desert foxes and other unique desert wildlife. The largest wildlife refuge in Mexico, the Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve, features deserts and turquoise lagoons where gray whales come to seek refuge, birth and raise their young. The Pacific Islands Biosphere Reserve conserves 21 islands, 91 islets and the vast open waters off the Baja California peninsula's Pacific coast. The reserve is rich in biodiversity, with 50% more endemic vertebrates and plant species per unit area than the Galapagos Islands. Pacific harbor seals and northern elephant seals congregate in colonies along the rugged shores of the Coronados, endemic reptiles forage the lands and seabirds breed along the sheer cliffs and rolling hills of the islands.

Although these vast areas are officially protected, additional layers of conservation and management are needed. Mining concessions, unforeseen developments and climate change pose serious risks to the wildlife, ecosystem services, eco-tourism opportunities and commercial fisheries that these places provide.

WILDCOAST is working with local fishing communities, ranchers, researchers and Mexico's National Commission for Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) through a combination of direct land purchases, federal zone conservation concessions and improved protected area management to conserve the wildlands and islands of the Baja California peninsula. This work has resulted in the conservation of some of the world's most important desert coastlines.

PHOTO BY DANIEL CARTAMIL, PH.D.

WILDCOAST IS HELPING TO CONSERVE:

2.9 MILLION ACRES  
PACIFIC ISLANDS BIOSPHERE RESERVE

6.3 MILLION ACRES  
VIZCAINO BIOSPHERE RESERVE





Coral reefs, the rainforests of our oceans, are among the most productive and biodiverse ecosystems on the planet.

Coral reefs cover less than 1% of the ocean floor, but provide habitat to a quarter of the world's fish species. They intake tremendous amounts of atmospheric carbon, protect coastal communities from storm erosion and wave damage and provide nurseries for commercially important fisheries. With an estimated global value of \$1 trillion USD, coral reefs provide countless social, economic and cultural services and are a main source of livelihood for half a billion people around the world.

However, coral reefs are under threat from agricultural runoff, coastal development and overfishing. These pressures, paired with the global threat of climate change, warming sea temperatures and increased ocean acidification, are causing corals to die off at an alarming rate.

WILDCOAST has formed partnerships with Mexico's National Commission for Protected Natural Areas, Cuba's Center for Protected Natural Areas, local communities and tourism outfitters to conserve more than 714,134 acres of coral reefs and surrounding coastal and marine ecosystems. By improving visitation management, developing new coral legal protections, carrying out baseline monitoring, installing mooring buoys and conducting public outreach, WILDCOAST and our partners are protecting these ecological cornerstones that provide critical habitat to whale sharks, sea turtles, manta rays, sharks and hundreds of species of fish.



WILDCOAST EFFORTS INCLUDE:

**1.1 MILES**  
OF CONSERVATION  
& MOORING BUOYS  
INSTALLED

**14,000**  
WILDLIFE AND DIVE  
GUIDES DISTRIBUTED

# CORAL REEFS

PHOTO BY CLAUDIO CONTRERAS KOOB

WILDCOAST IS HELPING TO CONSERVE 8 PROTECTED AREAS IN MEXICO AND CUBA THAT INCLUDE:

**714,134 ACRES OF CORAL REEFS**  
AND SURROUNDING MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

**16% INCREASE** IN SEA TURTLE  
HATCHLING SURVIVAL  
IN MORRO AYUTO THANKS TO WILDCOAST'S EFFORTS

# SEA TURTLES



WILDCOAST  
HAS PROTECTED:

**54.5  
MILES**  
OF SEA TURTLE  
NESTING BEACHES

YOUR SUPPORT CAN  
CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS



Sea turtles are ancient marine reptiles that nest along the sandy beaches and forage within the lush seagrass beds of many areas that WILDCOAST is working to conserve.

Morro Ayuta on Mexico's Pacific coast is without question one of the most important olive ridley sea turtle nesting sites on the planet. Last year, on this nine mile stretch of sandy beach, more than one million sea turtles laid 90 million eggs, producing more than 30 million hatchlings – which equates to a 16% increase compared to the year before. Less than ten miles away, in Barra de la Cruz, the world's largest living sea turtles, the leatherback – which reaches over seven feet and 1,500 pounds – finds one of its favorite nesting sites in the world. The protection of these two beaches is critical for the survival of these species.

Coastal development, pollution, poaching, disasters such as oil spills, and climate change pose tremendous threats to sea turtle populations worldwide. To combat these pressures, WILDCOAST is coordinating and conducting trainings and workshops with park rangers, tourism outfitters and local communities, protecting shoreline through federal zone conservation concessions and working to establish new protected areas that are home to sea turtle nesting beaches.

WILDCOAST is expanding our efforts to preserve vulnerable sea turtle populations. We will continue to protect nesting beaches that are key for their survival, help monitor female nesting populations and explore new opportunities, such as developing an ecological zoning plan for the area around Huatulco National Park.

PHOTO BY RALPH PACE

IN MORRO  
AYUTA,  
OAXACA:

**1 MILLION**  
TURTLES LAID



**90 MILLION**  
EGGS THAT PRODUCED



**30 MILLION**  
HATCHLINGS



Gray whales connect California's marine protected areas to the mangroves and islands of the Baja California peninsula.

Every area that gray whales traverse during their 6,000-mile migration between their arctic feeding grounds in the Bering and Chukchi Seas to their Mexican birthing lagoons is critical for their survival. Although their numbers have rebounded significantly since near extinction (there are approximately 26,000 gray whales today), habitat destruction, human activity and climate change continue to threaten these gentle giants.

The virtually untouched coastal lagoons of the Baja California peninsula include four protected bays that provide some of the planet's most important nursery habitat for gray whales. The warm lagoons of Bahía Magdalena, Laguna San Ignacio, Guerrero Negro and Ojo de Liebre provide the perfect refuge for the whales to mate and bear their young. In a typical year, more than 4,000 gray whales visit these bays.

Our team continues to collaborate with local communities and the Mexican government to ensure the conservation and protection of this iconic wildlife and its habitat. WILDCOAST has helped protect more than 483 miles of coastline surrounding the gray whale lagoons of the Baja California peninsula through federal zone concessions and is leading marine mammal monitoring and other trainings with local students to build their capacity as gray whale stewards.

# WHALES

WILDCOAST  
HAS CONSERVED:

**483.6**  
**MILES OF**  
**COASTLINE**  
AROUND WHALE  
BREEDING GROUNDS

PHOTO BY CLAUDIO CONTRERAS KOOB

**4,000\*** GRAY WHALES BRED, BIRTHED AND RAISED YOUNG  
IN THE BAYS & LAGOONS OF THE BAJA CALIFORNIA PENINSULA THAT WILDCOAST IS WORKING TO CONSERVE

\*in a typical year

# CUBA



WILDCOAST is helping to protect the pristine marine ecosystems and rich wildlife of Cuba's stunningly beautiful and remote Guanahacabibes National Park.

The global significance of Guanahacabibes and diversity of life found within the park is like no other place on Earth.

The park's coral reefs and mangrove forests support incredible wildlife, while providing critical ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and buffers against storm surges and sea level rise. These ecosystems produce tremendous amounts of oxygen and tie together the ecological fabric of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and far reaches of the Atlantic Ocean.

Although virtually untouched, Guanahacabibes is not without threats. Sea level rise can quickly change the delicate shoreline habitat and visitors are often unaware of best practices when diving and snorkeling the reefs. Increasing numbers of visitors are coming to experience the country's amazing culture and coastline, which comes with many benefits. However, if not carefully managed, this can jeopardize significant biodiversity sites and natural resources.

WILDCOAST is supporting efforts for 39,413 acres of protected areas within Cuba's Guanahacabibes National Park to address these threats and explore ways to assist with the management and conservation of its coral reef and mangrove ecosystems.

We are working with park staff to expand the park's mooring buoy infrastructure to reduce damage to the reefs from anchoring boats and helping to develop strategies to combat climate change impacts on coral reefs, mangroves and beaches.



WILDCOAST  
DISTRIBUTED  
**4,000**  
WILDLIFE AND DIVE GUIDES  
AND TRAINED 15  
OUTFITTERS ON CORAL  
REEF PROTECTION

PHOTOS BY EDUARDO NAJERA

WILDCOAST BROUGHT INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION TO CUBA'S MARINE CONSERVATION WORK THROUGH A FIVE-PART TELEVISION SERIES THAT REACHED

**70 MILLION** HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS LATIN AMERICA

# WILDCOAST

## COSTASALVAJE

925 Seacoast Drive  
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WILDCOAST is the proud recipient of Charity Navigator's highest honor, a 4-star rating, recognizing our ability to efficiently manage and grow our finances.

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