

ECOTOURISM: Protecting Wildlife, Enhancing Income

LATIN AMERICA CONTAINS THE WORLD'S TWO highest concentrations of biodiversity, with well over 700 animal species found nowhere else in the world. With little access to infrastructure and markets, communities often engage in activities that are harmful to these animals and their habitats. Hunting animals for food, capturing them for sale in the international pet trade, cutting trees for sale, and clearing land for agriculture all have devastating effects on wildlife.



Ecotourism gives local communities a nonextractive method for capitalizing on their natural resources.

HSI is working with local partners in Latin America to develop community ecotourism programs that highlight local wildlife and culture. When increased income from ecotourism motivates communities to protect wildlife, everyone wins!

Ecotourism Projects in Latin America

Ongoing HSI ecotourism projects include the following initiatives in Latin America.

Costa Rica

In Corcovado National Park and the surrounding area, HSI works with Fundación Corcovado to protect critical sea turtle nesting habitat by offering local guides and small-business operators access to hospitality and English courses so they can capture a larger share of the booming Costa Rican tourism market. ➤

Dominican Republic

In the community of Bayahibe and Eastern National Park, HSI works with the Fundación Dominicana de Estudios Marinos (FUNDEMAR) to protect the resident



dolphin population. HSI staff help community members develop responsible dolphin-watching tourism by helping generate guidelines, providing guide courses, and performing

noninvasive scientific research on local dolphins. HSI also is helping create a community map for tourists, along with corresponding signposts for routes and trails.

Honduras

Cayos Cochinos is a marine protected area comprising 13 pristine cays and is home to the endemic pink boa constrictor. To discourage the capture of these endangered snakes for sale in the international pet trade, HSI is working with Fundación Cayos Cochinos and the community of East End to develop a small ecotourism complex. With partial funding from HSI, the plans include two cabins, a small restaurant, an oceanview patio, and an ecofriendly waste disposal system to protect the local environment.

READ MORE

about these and other HSI projects at

hsi.org/ecotourism



**HUMANE SOCIETY
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