



PEZ MAYA, MEXICO
MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENT REPORT
NOVEMBER 2016





OBJECTIVES

- Making long term, sustainable contributions towards key global and local issues
- Environmental sustainability
- Educate volunteers about Coral Bleaching to spread awareness and training them in additional surveying techniques

SUMMARY

Last October GVI staff and volunteers at Pez Maya collaborated with two other NGOs work-ing on the area with the annual assessment of bleaching: a ‘disease’ caused by the effects of Climate Change affecting hard corals and other organisms on the reef. Results of the sur-vey will be published on the 2017 Healthy Reefs Initiative Report that aims to inform about the condition of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS) to regional community and managers



REPORT

Along with our partner NGO, Amigos de Sian Ka'an, GVI staff and volunteers conducted the annual bleach watch assessment on a total of 11 sites along the Mexican Caribbean reefs. The results will be gathered by Healthy Reefs Initiative that launched their initiative to track the health of the Mesoamerican reef in 2004, creating an international movement. Yearly, Healthy Reefs Initiative publishes a report accessible to anyone online with the evaluation of the state of coral reefs in the region; it also includes suggestions for managers and community members in order to improve the conditions of the reefs and connected ecosystems.

Hard corals, the animals that function as reef builders, have a symbiotic relationship with a microscopic algae that lives in the animal (polyp) tissue, known as zooxanthellae algae. This algae, not only gives color to the corals, it also provides the animal with nutrients it depends on for living. Unusual warm sea surface temperatures, an effect of 'Climate Change' makes the polyp expel the microscopic algae leaving them not only white, but in a risk of dying. The last mass coral bleaching event that affected the Great Barrier Reef in Australia caused an overall coral mortality of 22% for the entire Great Barrier Reef.

In our region, Healthy Reefs Initiative gathers information of three diverse areas specific to our Mesoamerican Reef in order to provide an insight of our reefs based on location, amount of public use, pollution, etc. Within these three strategic locations, 3 - 5 different dive sites were monitored in order to assess bleaching in the area. Playa del Carmen is one of the locations monitored that is very beneficial to study due to the high amount of construction and population increase within the years. Puerto Aventuras, another developed location is also an important monitoring site in order to show an area that is not city-like, but does have development, and is southern to Playa del Carmen, which could potentially be affected by run-off. The last location, the Sian Ka'an Biosphere, is a protected zone where our Pez Maya Base is located.

In order to spread awareness through-out base at Pez Maya, everybody learned about the situation and some volunteers were taught the monitoring technique, and helped staff members collecting data. A total of 11 sites were surveyed along these three locations and the results will be included in the 2017 Report that will be accessible online on the Healthy Reefs Initiative website: www.healthyreefs.org

Bleaching disease is a condition mainly caused by Climate Change, and is dramatically and quickly affecting coral reef ecosystems globally. We hope that the information showing the severity of the situation will be considered by reef managers and community in general. For more information on the projects here in Mexico, visit <http://www.gvi.co.uk/location/yucatan/>





ABOUT GVI

We're a family-run organisation with an amazing culture and an awesome team of people across the world who are passionate experts in their chosen field and will make your experience a truly unforgettable one (in a good way).

Our award-winning projects receive over 2000 participants every year, and we're proud to say that the vast majority of them describe their experience with us as 'life changing'. Our approval rate from over 20 000 participants since 1997 is over 95%.

A key component of the success of our community development and conservation projects is the participants who join our programs. Opportunities include high impact volunteering from one week and up, internships for those looking for career development opportunities, Challenges that allow a one week adventure all for a good cause and a range of programs for school groups and younger volunteers.

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