

A lifeline for jaguars and other endangered wildlife: TUI Care Foundation launches conservation project in Mexico's Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve

- *TUI Wildlife Mexico protects over 10 endangered and protected species and restores 70 hectares of mangroves in UNESCO World Heritage Site*
- *Programme trains over 400 local people in ecological monitoring and environmental conservation*
- *Initiative strengthens nature-based tourism for 90,000 annual visitors to the Maya Ka'an region*

Berlin, 24 September 2026. *The Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula is a treasure trove of biodiversity and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, attracting over 90,000 visitors annually for wildlife watching and nature-based experiences. However, as tourism grows and infrastructure expands through projects such as the Mayan Train, Tulum Airport and major highways, this rich natural heritage faces increasing pressure. According to research conducted by the National Alliance for Jaguar Conservation (ANCIJ), the Cancun-Tulum highway records Mexico's highest jaguar mortality rate, with 13 deaths between 2019 and 2024. To protect endangered and threatened species whilst creating sustainable livelihoods, the TUI Care Foundation, in partnership with Amigos de Sian Ka'an and Pro Conservación Peninsular, is launching a two-year conservation project that empowers local communities to safeguard their natural environment. TUI Wildlife Mexico will establish ecosystem restoration, wildlife monitoring and environmental education programmes across six communities in the Maya Ka'an region.*

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With tourism contributing significantly to the regional economy, the state of Quintana Roo recognises the sector's importance whilst balancing conservation needs. The Maya Ka'an region offers nature-based experiences that connect visitors with wildlife, Mayan culture, and ecosystems. However, infrastructure development is fragmenting habitats and putting pressure on species such as jaguars, ocelots, manatees, sea turtles and crocodiles.

Illegal hunting and fishing persist due to limited enforcement capacity, low environmental awareness and a lack of sustainable livelihood alternatives for marginalised local communities. Mangrove ecosystems have also been heavily impacted, with over 500 hectares lost at El Playón following poorly planned road construction, whilst damaged sites such as Vigía Chico now require urgent restoration. Local communities possess valuable traditional knowledge about wildlife and ecosystems, but often lack the skills, capacity and resources to participate in conservation efforts and benefit from nature-based tourism. TUI Wildlife Mexico addresses these challenges by building local conservation capacity, restoring critical habitats and integrating wildlife protection into tourism experiences.

Implemented in partnership with Amigos de Sian Ka'an and Pro Conservación Peninsular, TUI Wildlife Mexico will restore 70 hectares of mangroves through hydrological rehabilitation and the planting of 10,000 red mangrove seedlings. This work

will be led by a trained community brigade from the local Mayan community of Xhazil-Sur.

The project will establish 19 camera-trap stations at strategic locations to monitor over 10 priority species including jaguars, ocelots, manatees, sea turtles, crocodiles and migratory birds. Five community cooperatives will receive training in monitoring techniques and species identification, with data shared with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas. Environmental education activities will reach 250 students through workshops using virtual reality technology. The programme will also train 150 members of tourism and fishing cooperatives across six communities in sustainable tourism practices based on a Wildlife Care in Tourism Activities Manual.

Overall, the initiative will benefit more than 400 community members, create and sustain 10 local jobs, and raise awareness among more than 90,000 visitors, positioning Maya Ka'an as a model for replicable conservation-led development.

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TUI Wildlife Mexico is part of the global TUI Wildlife Programme, which protects endangered animals and their natural habitats and supports conservation communities in tourism destinations around the world.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands.

About Amigos de Sian Ka'an and Pro Conservación Peninsular

Amigos de Sian Ka'an (ASK) is a civil society organization founded in response to the need to protect and conserve the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve. From its beginnings, the organization was conceived as a bridge between science, civil society, the private sector, government, and local communities, with the aim of generating comprehensive solutions to the region's environmental challenges. ASK's mission is to conserve the integrity and functionality of the ecosystems of the Yucatán Peninsula, while promoting the socioeconomic development of its communities and influencing environmental culture and policies through science.

Pro Conservación Peninsular (PCP) is a civil society organization that collaborates with Amigos de Sian Ka'an under an agreement for the use of a trademark.

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