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TECOMAN TURTLE CAMP CONSERVATION in Mexico

In conjunction with the Mexican Department for the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) Teaching & Projects Abroad operate and fund a Biological Research Station. The Station is based on the gorgeous Pacific coast of Mexico in the state of Colima. The mainstay of our work is centred around sea turtles although there is a rich variety of wildlife which we study and help to protect.



the problem

The local population have been poaching the endangered Olive Ridley turtle amongst others for as long as they can remember. It is simply a way of life and always has been. Teaching & Projects Abroad looks to work with the local community on conservational awareness issues as well as more hands-on ecological work with locals schools in the area. The sensitive turtles also suffer from pollution and beach degradation meaning numbers are seriously threatened.

We also work on preservation work for iguanas which have suffered heavily from habitat loss, over hunting and predation from other animals.

Campamento Tecoman

Located on the Pacific coast of Mexico the camp is situated on a beach surrounded by forests, coconut trees and banana plantations. The camp benefits from extensive development by Teaching & Projects Abroad. There is a toilet and shower block as well as a cylindrical building which acts as the camp's nerve centre. Other than that all of the accommodation is in tents with a well to supply water. Although there is no hot running water if you wait until the afternoon then the water heats up! Plenty of drinking water is provided in sealed containers from the local town.



Afternoon at the camp

'Life at the camp is the kind of experience that most people can only dream of having. Living on a beautiful, natural and untouched beach...life doesn't get much better. Surrounded by palm trees, a natural lagoon and an incredible selection of wildlife all around are other factors which add to the beauty of the area! How many people can honestly say that they watch shooting stars from a moonlit beach or are treated to beautiful sunrises and sunsets on a daily basis?'

Alexa Anderson, Turtle Camp, Mexico

Teaching & Projects Abroad



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How Campamento Tecoman works...

The studies and research undertaken at Campamento Tecoman reflect the biodiversity of the region.

- **Adult Turtle Patrols:** Obviously this takes priority even though we are a biological station. The bulk of the turtle related work is at night whereby our volunteers mount quad-bike patrols along the 30km beach. Going along, either turtle tracks are spotted (our volunteers are taught how to identify them) or the majestic creatures are seen themselves coming ashore. Once they have gone into labour, the turtles go into a kind of 'trance-like' state and are oblivious to their surroundings. This means that if we see them there we can collect their eggs whilst they are still laying. Whenever turtles are found then we are keen to measure them and build a database for our scientific records.
- **Hatchlings:** When we have found them, we take the eggs back to our safe area 'the corral' and rebury them. This area is monitored day and night by our volunteers in shifts. When the baby turtles are hatching they are all taken to the sea and released into the water having survived against all the odds just to make it this far. We also have nursery pools at the camp which are used to nurture hatchlings and for observational research.
- **Iguanas:** we are working on captive-breeding programmes as well as reintroducing creatures back into the wild as and when we can.
- **Birdlife:** the camp is in very close proximity to an area which is recognised as a nationally important area of bird breeding. We are working to monitor and identify their species, numbers, location, behaviour and interaction with the ecosystem.
- **And to have a break....** the beach is only a seconds walk away! Volunteers are always playing volleyball, football, cricket or other games on the beach. Of course if pure unadulterated relaxation is what you are after then going down to the lagoon is always popular around 4pm. One thing is for certain though, with such varied work to be done, every day (and night!) at the camp will be different for you.



Patrolling the beach

'I had a totally amazing time, it was rewarding, great fun and a great introduction to Mexico and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it in fact I already have!'

■ **Laura Chapman** Turtle Camp, Mexico

'I will also never forget seeing my first turtle, it was amazing. I now love and admire them and desperately want to see more. I love Mexico and their culture and all the locals were so welcoming'

■ **Rowena Thompson**, Turtle Camp, Mexico

* We also have a turtle project in Sri Lanka and Costa Rica.
Feel free to contact us for more details...

www.projects-abroad.co.uk



Teaching & Projects Abroad

Further information...

If you would like any information on this project, other conservation projects or other projects in Mexico please do not hesitate to get in contact with us. Our staff are always happy to help!



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