

Caribbean Coral Reef Stewardship Best Practices Brief

ACCELERATING TOURISM-LED REEF RESTORATION

*A guide highlighting actionable coral reef stewardship
initiatives across the Caribbean tourism sector.*

CHTA



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION



CAST

Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
A CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION INITIATIVE



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Introduction

Coral reefs are a lifeline for coastal economies, a frontline defense against climate change, and a multi-billion-dollar asset for the tourism industry, estimated to generate over US\$7.9 billion annually¹. Coral restoration can boost the natural appeal of dive and snorkel tourism, which still remains a top reason travelers visit the Caribbean and coastal islands. Coral reef-related tourism and recreation account for over 70% of tourism activity in many Caribbean destinations². It enhances the guest experience, supports sustainable destination marketing, and positions resorts as leaders in environmental stewardship; a quality increasingly valued by high-end and eco-conscious travelers.

Studies have shown that Coral reefs also act as natural infrastructure, shielding coastlines from storm surges and erosion by reducing wave energy by up to 97%³ and preventing over \$1.8 billion in annual flood damage⁴ to coastal communities, all while supporting hundreds of marine species that nourish island economies and communities. Investing in reef resilience reduces long-term disaster costs and insurance liabilities for hotels, coastal developments, and governments. Restoration efforts open the door to green financing, blue carbon credits, and ESG-aligned investment, presenting a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving sustainability marketplace.

With Caribbean coral cover declining by nearly 60%⁵, tourism entities are working to reverse this decline and organizations are taking action to support. Building upon their 2022 framework publication, *Caribbean Coral Reef Restoration Guide*, Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) with its affiliate the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) and partner, the Nature Conservancy (TNC), launched the Caribbean Coral Reef Tourism Stewardship Awards. The awards recognize significant contributions of the region's tourism industry stakeholders which have contributed to the protection of coral reefs. The Caribbean Coral Reef Stewardship Best Practices Brief shares goals, challenges, impacts and measurements used to track and monitor progress for long-term success of replicable coral reef conservation programs. The economics behind the projects and community impact are detailed to inspire other entities to begin or scale their reef restoration projects while contributing to environmental conservation, knowledge building, and increased interest and satisfaction from guests.



A 2018 TNC-led study revealed that Reef-associated tourism generates over **US\$7.9 billion** of expenditures annually from more than 11 million visitors, totaling **23%** of all tourism expenditures.

Coral reefs act as natural infrastructure, reducing wave energy by up to **97%** preventing over **\$1.8 billion** in flood damage every year.



Caribbean coral cover has declined ~60% in recent decades.

About the Organizations

Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. Operating for more than 60 years, CHTA works with over 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 32 National Hotel Associations. CHTA helps its members to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence and business growth.

Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism

The Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) is committed to providing tourism businesses with the necessary resources to implement best practices in sustainability. CAST provides guidance, education, and support to help tourism entities and hotels in the Caribbean develop sustainable practices, which aim to enhance the economy, ecosystems, and communities throughout the region.

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, TNC creates innovative, on-the-ground solutions to the world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. Working in 72 countries and territories: 38 by direct conservation impact and 34 through partners, they use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

The CHTA, CAST and TNC Collaboration

Recognizing their shared commitment to the protection and restoration of marine resources, CHTA, CAST and TNC, formalized a partnership in 2019 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Guided by their mutual interests, together the organizations have undertaken a series of initiatives focused on research; education, training and public-awareness raising activities; knowledge sharing; strengthening regional and local public and private sector engagement; and identifying, recognizing and sharing best industry practices.

2025 Caribbean Coral Reef Stewardship Awardees



Aquanauts Grenada is an internationally recognized SSI dive center committed to sustainable marine tourism and environmental education. With a strong community presence, they combine diving experiences with marine conservation efforts to protect Grenada's reefs. Their innovative public events and partnerships have made them a leader in engaging both locals and visitors in reef stewardship.

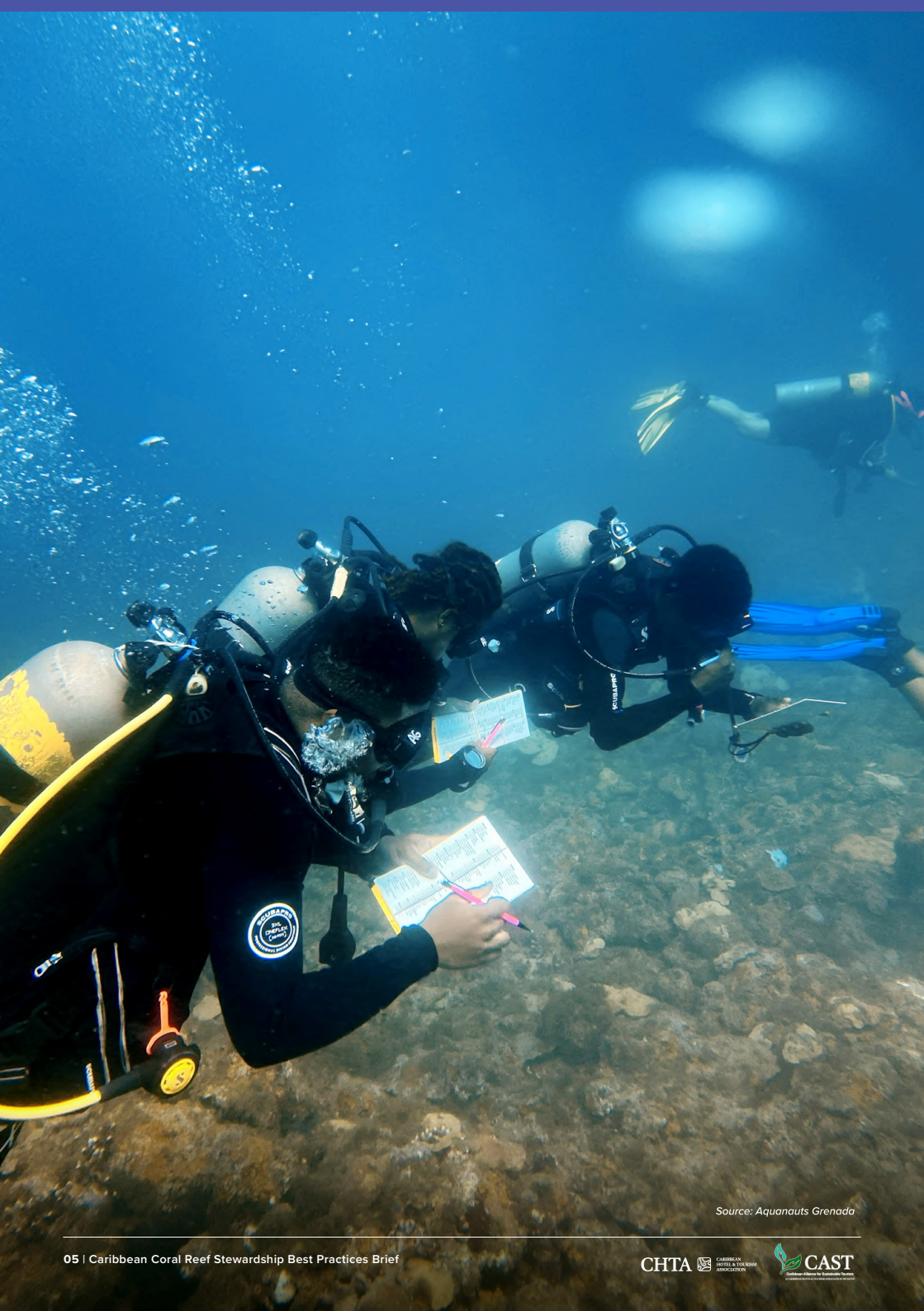


Jamaica Inn is a boutique resort in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, known for its timeless charm and deep environmental values. The property is home to a long-standing coral restoration initiative that engages guests, staff, and local stakeholders. The property's dedication to marine protection is central to its brand and contribution to sustainable tourism.



Round Hill Hotel & Villas is a luxury resort located on Jamaica's north coast, renowned for its commitment to sustainability and cultural heritage. Through partnerships and hands-on conservation, Round Hill blends guest experience with ecological impact.





Source: Aquanauts Grenada

Aquanauts Grenada St. George's, Grenada



Initial Overview and Goals

Aquanauts Grenada, a family-owned dive shop, launched a comprehensive marine conservation initiative in January 2021 under the leadership of the Geer family. The initiative is anchored in two flagship programs: Lionfish Bites & Beats/ Jam & Jewelry Nights and the Aqua Rangers Youth Development Scholarship Program. These programs aim to reduce invasive lionfish populations and empower Caribbean youth to pursue careers in the Blue Economy through SCUBA training, citizen science, and active reef stewardship.

The overarching goals include:

- ➡ Combating invasive species through community-involved lionfish removal and education
- ➡ Integrating conservation into tourism through engaging guest experiences
- ➡ Equipping CARICOM youth with dive certifications, marine science experience, and employment opportunities
- ➡ Building a holistic, sustainable tourism model that merges environmental action with entertainment and education



Species, Metrics & Impact

Aquanauts work so far has focused on the control of the invasive lionfish (*Pterois volitans*), a major threat to reef biodiversity within the Caribbean region. Divers and guests participate in removal dives, filleting demos, and lionfish cooking events.

The Lionfish Bites & Beats and Jam & Jewelry Nights events are standout examples of creative “edutainment” that engage both locals and visitors in the mission to protect Grenada’s reef ecosystems. Lionfish Bites & Beats combines live music, lionfish-themed meals, and marine education in an informal setting, where guests learn about the threat of invasive lionfish and witness a live demonstration on how to fillet them while enjoying sustainably sourced dishes. Jam & Jewelry Nights combine live music by their team with the creative experience of crafting handmade jewelry from lionfish fins, generating a revenue stream that supports marine conservation programs and raises awareness through art and design.

Metrics measured include weight of lionfish harvested, event attendance, amount of funds raised and community participation levels, including local chefs, musicians, students, and conservation partners. The events also track repeat visitor engagement, local buy-in for reef protection, and visibility of lionfish in restaurant menus and retail outlets to understand the growing consumer awareness. These culturally rich, educational experiences serve as powerful tools for impact-driven public engagement, transforming invasive species management into a community-driven movement that fosters youth development, promotes sustainable tourism, and contributes to the broader reef stewardship effort.

In August 2024, the Aqua Rangers Youth Development Scholarship Program, was established to bridge the gap between marine academic studies and practical, “in the water” conservation skills. Designed for St. George’s University (SGU) students from CARICOM countries, as well as local Grenadian youth, the program provides a four-year, hands-on training pathway in scuba diving, reef conservation, citizen science, and technical skills required for careers in the Blue Economy. Each year, the program tracks the number of students enrolled, academic performance with immersive marine fieldwork, employment and coral restoration supported.

Participants progress through Open Water, Advanced, and Rescue Diver certifications, as well as citizen science training through Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF), logging over 50 dives and completing at least 128 hours of supervised internships. In addition to scuba training, students assist with monitoring and maintaining local coral nurseries, marine protected areas (MPAs), and reef resilience projects. The program builds a skilled conservation workforce, with some alumni already entering related employment in Grenada and the Caribbean region. It also strengthens community awareness and eco-tourism capacity by fostering peer education and outreach.



Key impact indicators include:



Over \$13,400 USD raised through lionfish events and jewelry sales.



50–70 lbs of lionfish fillets served at each event, correlating with reduced sightings on frequented reefs.



Over 82 sponsored SCUBA certifications, many for students studying marine, wildlife, and conservation biology.



Supporting approximately 20–25 students through the Aqua Rangers Program.



Eight Aqua Rangers were employed in the Blue Economy within 18 months of the program's launch.



Recognition as SSI's #1 Certifying Training Facility across the Caribbean and Americas.



Collaboration & Investment

Aquanauts Grenada funds the majority of the initiative internally, covering 100% of staffing and resource costs for lionfish hunts, events, and youth mentoring. Key partners such as West Indies Brewery provide in-kind support: staffing events, sponsoring meals, and supplying raffle prizes. Other collaborators include Grenada Coral Reef Foundation (GCRF), Scuba Schools International (SSI), REEF.org, and clubs from St. George's University. This cross-sector approach makes the initiative financially lean, culturally resonant, and widely replicable.

The Aqua Rangers Program is primarily self-funded through community-driven events such as Lionfish Bites & Beats, organized by Aquanauts Grenada in partnership with local businesses. These events raise money via lionfish meals, eco-merchandise sales, and raffles. Instructors volunteer their time and operational costs are kept low through in-kind support from partners. CARICOM students receive full scholarships, while non-CARICOM students pay only a nominal fee for SCUBA certification, with all other program costs covered, making the program both financially sustainable and socially inclusive.

It is estimated that the total investment for the programs, including annual operational costs, are \$2,000 - \$5,000 USD with much of this overhead cost being offset by guests who join the lionfish hunting dive trips and sign up for their SSI Invasive Species Management Course to learn how to hunt lionfish. Over the past three years, this model has raised over \$13,400 USD to support the Aqua Ranger Youth Development Scholarship Program, directly funding training, dive certifications, conservation efforts, and leadership development for local youth.

If you're a dive shop looking to replicate this model, you can expect your initial investment to include certifying staff and instructors in the SSI Invasive Species Management course (or relevant course with your preferred SCUBA agency) and equipment for lionfish hunting including spears, containers, scissors, filet knives, and a scale.

Challenges, Successes and Lessons Learned

Challenges included the declining availability of lionfish near shore due to the program's success and balancing program growth with core dive operations. To address this, Aquanauts began offshore hunting trips and hired a dedicated marine conservation manager with advanced academic training.

Successes include:

-  High community turnout and engagement at events - 200+ attendees.
-  Repeat visitor enthusiasm and employee pride in contributing to a meaningful cause.
-  Launch of the SSI Invasive Species Management course tailored for Caribbean divers.
-  Tangible visibility of lionfish in local grocery stores and restaurant menus.
-  Heightened awareness by all stakeholders about the critical role of coral reefs in the ecosystem and the need to reduce threats to their viability.



Key lessons include:

Value of "fun-factor" conservation

Power of youth-driven solutions

Importance of integrating entertainment, education, and purpose

Aquanauts Grenada's programs are highly **replicable**, **culturally relevant models** with excellent local buy-in and creativity.



Monitoring and Measurement for Long-Term Impact

Although Aquanauts Grenada's formal coral restoration program is set to launch in November 2025, the organization has already built a strong foundation. The restoration efforts will focus on Grooved brain coral (*Diploria labyrinthiformis*) and Honeycomb coral (*Diploastrea heliophora*), two resilient, reef-building species that are well-suited to local environmental conditions. In preparation, the dive teams document reef health during every lionfish hunt and rotate hunting locations to prevent ecological imbalance. These consistent monitoring practices have enabled the team to informally track reef conditions and monitor fish diversity over time ahead of launching the program.

For on-going programs, Aquanauts tracks and monitors:



Lionfish population trends and marine diversity via diver observations.



Weight of lionfish removed per event.



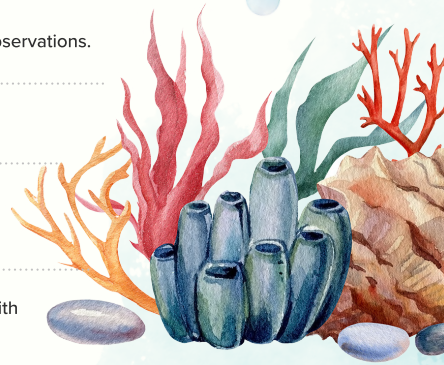
Event participation rates, meal and jewelry sales, and course completions.



Scholarship funds raised and distributed in collaboration with local partners.



Career progress and certifications achieved by Aqua Rangers.



At Aquanauts Grenada, reef protection is approached with joy, inclusivity, and a deep commitment to community. Through their Lionfish initiatives and Aqua Rangers Youth Development Program, they've created a replicable model that transforms invasive species into powerful conservation opportunities. Their long-term vision is to equip passionate CARICOM youth with the skills and experience to thrive in the Blue Economy, establishing a reputation so strong that employers actively seek out graduates of the program. Later this year, Aqua Rangers, trained in SCUBA, citizen science, and environmental leadership, will install Aquanauts Grenada's first coral nurseries and begin serving as guides for lionfish dives and reef restoration efforts. With plans to expand into coral restoration and pursue American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS) accreditation, Aquanauts Grenada is building a future where eating a lionfish taco, stringing a spine into a bracelet, or diving to save coral is more than just a moment, it's part of a movement.



Source: Jamaica Inn

Jamaica Inn - Ocho Rios, Jamaica

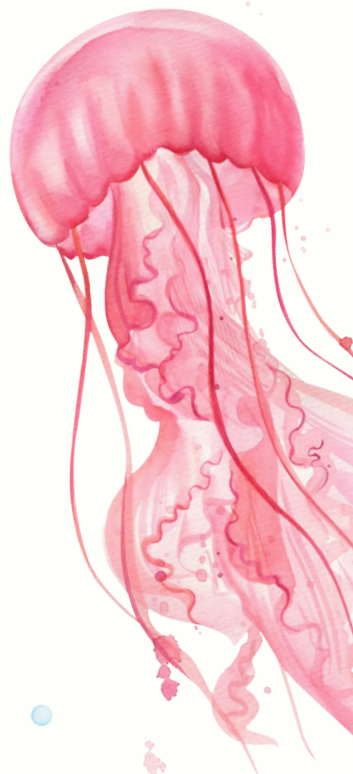


Initial Overview and Goals

Established in December 2012, the Jamaica Inn Foundation (JIF) serves as the philanthropic and sustainability arm of the Jamaica Inn resort in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. With an integrated focus on environmental stewardship, marine conservation, and community engagement, JIF has taken bold steps to protect and restore coral reefs. In 2017, JIF co-founded the White River Fish Sanctuary (WRFS), a 150-hectare (370-acre) marine protected area. The Foundation's initiative combines science-based reef monitoring, community education, and tourism engagement to achieve ecosystem restoration and economic revitalization.

The primary goals of the initiative include:

- ➡ Restoring coral reef and fish populations in the White River ecosystem.
- ➡ Enhancing marine biodiversity and reef resilience by protecting key species.
- ➡ Creating sustainable livelihoods for local fishers and eco-entrepreneurs.
- ➡ Providing meaningful guest, staff, and community experiences through reef-related education and activities.





Source: Jamaica Inn



Species, Metrics & Impact

In terms of species restoration and specific coral replanting, the property focused on *Acropora palmata* - Elkhorn Coral, *Acropora cervicornis* - Staghorn Coral and *Acropora prolifera* - Fused Staghorn Coral, as these species are critically important for reef structure and biodiversity and were selected based on their ecological value and potential for restoration success.

The WRFS initiative has yielded tangible, measurable results. Between 2018 and 2023, fish biomass increased by more than 500%, particularly in key species like parrotfish and snapper, essential to coral health. Coral monitoring also showed an increase in coral cover and a reduction in harmful macroalgae, attributed to reduced fishing pressure and improved reef conditions.

In addition to the increase in fish and coral abundance, the program has demonstrated other ecosystem service benefits. Shoreline protection has been realized; by restoring reef structure and live coral cover, this leads to an increase in wave energy dissipation and reduction in coastal erosion risks. Enhanced fish habitats have also been supported, as reefs are restored, they provide critical nursery habitat for commercially important fish species, supporting local fisheries.

Job creation and sustainable employment was realized as a notable impact, while enhancing stewardship of marine resources. The wardens, who are now employed, are local or former fishermen. They receive training in enforcement, monitoring, and reef protection. The fishermen were engaged through the management partnership between the White River Fishermen's Association and the White River Marine Association, which co-manage the WRFS.

Socially, the program has educated over 1,000 students and community members through snorkeling tours, school visits, and marine workshops. The initiative created 12 jobs for local fishers, who now work as sanctuary wardens conducting reef patrols, educational outreach, and conservation monitoring. Guests participate through the "Travel with a Purpose" program, with options including glass-bottom boat tours of the Sanctuary and conservation talks with experts, reinforcing a connection to the marine environment.

↑500%

Increase in Fish
Biomass (parrotfish,
snapper)

12 Jobs

Fishermen to
sanctuary wardens

1000+

community members
educated through
snorkeling tours,
school visits, and
marine workshops

**"Travel with
a Purpose"**

Glass-bottom boat
tours of the Sanctuary;
expert-led
conservation talks

Collaboration & Investment

The project's success is built on a strong collaborative framework. Partners and collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, local NGO, the Oracabessa Marine Trust, local fishers, government ministries, and the broader Ocho Rios fishing community.

The initial capital expenditure (including equipment, boat acquisition, and nursery installations) was estimated to be in the range of USD \$80,000 – \$100,000, with annual operating costs for restoration, monitoring, and staff at approximately USD \$60,000 – \$75,000.



Source: Jamaica Inn

Challenges, Successes and Lessons Learned

Establishing the program was not without its hurdles. Key lessons highlight the importance of:



Transparency and data tracking:
Regular scientific surveys enhanced trust and demonstrated success to stakeholders.



Consistency and creativity:
Integration of reef education into staff training and visitor programming sustained enthusiasm and participation.



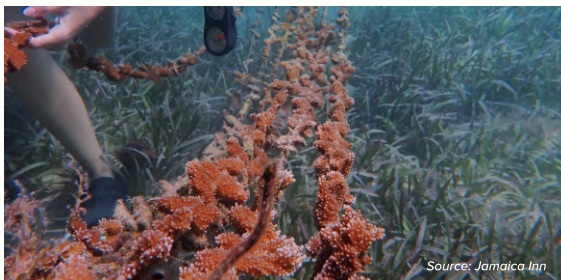
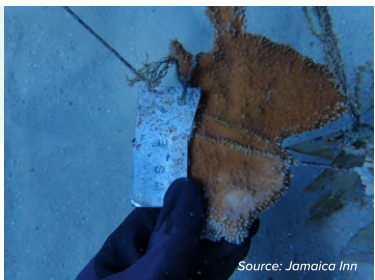
Sustainable financing is critical:
Most coral restoration work relies on short-term grant funding, which is not sustainable over the long term. Developing a reliable revenue stream (e.g., through ecotourism or aquaculture) is key.



Biodiversity is essential:
The bleaching events of 2023 and 2024 highlighted the risk of genetic monoculture. From this event, Jamaica Inn now recommends maintaining at least 10 genetically distinct genotypes of corals in any restoration programme to ensure resilience to future bleaching or disease events.

Other lessons include the importance of starting with a manageable size for the sanctuary, training local ambassadors, and ensuring regular data sharing to validate progress. As a result, the initiative has become a model of shared ownership and environmental responsibility.

Some of the initiative's most notable successes include improved fish stocks, coral health, job creation, and widespread positive feedback from guests, staff, and the surrounding community.



Monitoring & Measuring for Long Term Impact

Beyond biomass and macroalgae monitoring, through reef check surveys, comprehensive video surveys are conducted to assist with cataloguing coral colonies within the White River Fish Sanctuary (WRFS) boundaries. Although historical incidents of stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) were observed in the past, no incidents were recorded during 2024–2025.

The Foundation's role in securing funding and facilitating cross-sectoral cooperation has been central to the sanctuary's long-term sustainability. Between August 2024 - December 2025, the resort received two (2) grants to support their coral reef restoration activities to extend beyond the initial project and continue to monitor and restore the sanctuary:

- ➡ The Jamaica Tourism Enhancement Fund provided JMD \$14,000,000 (approx. USD\$87,187), which funded the purchase of a new dive boat with extended range and enhanced capabilities for restoration work. Funds were also used to support the surveying of Jamaica's North Coast for heat-resistant *Acropora* corals, following the bleaching events of 2023 and 2024.
- ➡ The UK Foreign Aid - Blue Social Challenge Fund provided GBP £43,000 (approx. USD \$58,180), which funded the expansion of the coral scouting effort—which covers over 350 km—as well as the propagation of 20,000 identified heat-resistant corals.

Looking ahead, Jamaica Inn is actively looking to establish a sea moss farming programme, as part of its long-term strategy. This form of restorative aquaculture not only provides sustainable income but also offers opportunities for blue carbon capture, which are planned to be pursued in future project phases.



Source: Round Hill Hotel & Villas

Round Hill Hotel & Villas - Montego Bay, Jamaica



Initial Overview and Goals

The Round Hill Reef Garden initiative was formally launched in late 2016, following over a decade of collaborative discussions between Round Hill Hotel & Villas and regional academic institutions, marine laboratories, environmental NGOs, and coral restoration scientists. The project officially began with the establishment of coral nurseries in early 2017 with the Government of Jamaica.

Originally envisioned as a three-year pilot, the project was extended through December 2021 due to its success and impact. It is recognized nationally and internationally as one of the first tourism-led efforts to directly invest in its “House Reef” corals and ecosystem services, highlighting the potential for coral restoration to drive economic as well as environmental values—from biodiversity enhancement to aesthetics, increased guest satisfaction and media coverage.

Core Goals of the Initiative Include:

- ➡ Enhancing “House Reef” live coral coverage, colour and interest
- ➡ Restoring fish and shellfish nursery habitats for biodiversity
- ➡ Establishing a small 3.2 hectare “fish nursery” to replenish no-fishing zones
- ➡ Improving the structural complexity of the reef ecosystem to reduce storm-waves at the beach
- ➡ Reviving marine biodiversity to support local fisheries and improve reefscape aesthetics for tourism
- ➡ Promoting guest education and experiential tourism through reef engagement and interpretation





Species, Metrics & Impact

The initiative focused on propagating and planting several coral species, with emphasis on the Caribbean ecosystem keystone species of the staghorn-elkhorn group (*genus Acropora*), a keystone reef-building species essential for fish nursery habitats and reef structural complexity. Additionally, the project contributed to monitoring and documenting coral resilience in response to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD), particularly affecting brain and pillar corals, and sought to curate temperature-resilient lineages for long-term viability.

To evaluate progress and ecological impact, Round Hill implemented a multi-tiered monitoring system that includes:



Number of corals
cultured and planted



Survivorship rates
of outplanted corals
and coral recovery
from damage



Drone imagery to track
coral cover changes,
reefscape color (restoring
from modern green-brown
to vibrant golden hues), and
temperature stress events



Fish biodiversity
assessments to
monitor increase in
abundance of
marine life presence
and biodiversity

The initiative has led to several significant outcomes with impact realized from:

4000+

corals outplanted, enhancing
structural complexity and
ecological function of the reef



Survivorship of planted corals
exceeding 50%, despite regional
bleaching events



Increased fish biodiversity, such as
black grouper, barracuda, and
moray eels of several species



Resilience, with ongoing
selection and propagation of
heat-tolerant coral lineages.

Utilizing more heat resilience genotypes of corals helps with long-term adaptation, including for elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*) and staghorn corals (*Acropora cervicornis*). These species were historically dominant on Caribbean reefs prior to the 1980s and are considered ecosystem keystone species due to their critical role in reef structure and biodiversity.



Knowledge Building, former
spear-fishers gained hands-on
experience through the project in:

- Coral predator control - identifying and removing threats to the reefs
- Reef maintenance – repurposing macroalgae for garden compost.
- Coral planting – assisting with coral restoration as methods evolve
- Seamount farming – trialing a small line farm of native Irish moss (*Eucheuma species*), with potential for use in the kitchen and spa treatments.



Collaboration & Investment

The initiative was built on a foundation of strong collaboration and sustained investment. Key technical partners included Dr. Andrew Ross, Ph.D. and Seascope Caribbean, alongside institutions such as the University of the West Indies, the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory, the Coral Restoration Consortium, AGRRA, and the Coral Restoration Foundation. Local community groups, particularly the Hopewell and Great River fishing communities, played a critical role, as did various Government of Jamaica agencies. These partnerships enabled the development of scientifically robust restoration techniques and ensured community buy-in through training and employment opportunities.

Round Hill Hotel & Villas made significant investments in infrastructure, including the establishment of coral nurseries, buoy-marked no-fishing zones, educational information and drone mapping systems for monitoring reef changes totaling approximately USD \$160,000 over a period of four (4) years.





Challenges, Successes and Lessons Learned

Throughout the process, the resort encountered a range of challenges typical of large-scale, tourism-led reef restoration projects, and its responses offer valuable lessons for other hospitality entities. One of the early obstacles was building trust with local fishers, particularly in convincing them to support a fish nursery and no-fishing zone. This was overcome through persistent community engagement, including direct, informal conversations at various fishing beaches and on-site interactions with project staff, eventually boosting engagement.

Ecologically, the project had to contend with coral predators, algae overgrowth, and damage from storms, turtles, and unguided guest activity. These issues were addressed through trained maintenance staff, manual interventions, and ongoing improvements in nursery and planting design. Hurricanes and winter storms necessitated rapid response plans, including seasonal relocation of nurseries to deeper waters and adaptive engineering of coral propagation systems. The project also suffered the regional epidemic of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) from 2017 through 2019, primarily affecting brain and pillar corals at this site. Although no SCTLD treatment was fully implemented or proven successful during the outbreak, the team did gain some primary approaches and takeaways:



Coral Restoration, Adapted Focus:

Support coral spawning for sexually produced recruitment to allow and promote resilience across reef systems.



Combat Allee Effects:

Grow coral from different parent colonies in nurseries and plant them near older, isolated corals on the reef to help them mix and reproduce during spawning.



Disease Mitigation Planning:

Applying lessons from past outbreaks to develop more informed mitigation strategies for future events.



Experimental Treatment:

Seek out new research. Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and Nova Southeastern University are developing innovative treatments to combat SCTLD⁶.

Lessons learned include:

The value of iterative restoration design.

The power of positive staff and guest presence as informal enforcement of a nature reserve.

Coral reef stewardship in the tourism sector requires flexibility, a solid grounding in science, and deep-rooted community integration.

Must be willing to think outside the box, if project goals are not being met.

Engage actively in partnership and knowledge sharing with other researchers, institutions and local communities.



Source: Round Hill Hotel & Villas

Monitoring and Measurement for Long-Term Impact

Long-term sustainability is supported through:



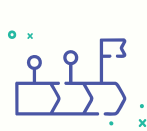
Active selection and propagation of temperature-resilient coral lineages



Ongoing reef maintenance by trained staff, local fishers and trained community members



Continued guest education to build awareness and support



Reefscape color mapping, biodiversity tracking, and photographic surveys to measure progress

Overall Conclusion & Call to Action

These diverse and impactful examples of reef stewardship showcased—whether through coral restoration, invasive species control, or youth-focused marine education—demonstrate that tourism can be a powerful force for environmental regeneration, community empowerment, and long-term business resilience. These initiatives have revived marine habitats, created job pathways in the blue economy, attracted conscious, curious and high-end travelers, attracted green finance mechanisms and inspired stronger local partnerships and collaborative community engagement.

As rising ocean temperatures accelerate reef degradation, the future of Caribbean tourism depends on bold action and broadening stewardships. Coral reefs protect billions in coastal infrastructure, support fisheries, and fuel the experiences that bring millions of travelers to our shores. Their survival creates a direct path to increased tourism revenue, sustained community livelihoods, protection against storms, natural and man made threats, and economic and educational growth for national economies.

The call to action is clear:

Caribbean hoteliers and tourism entities must treat coral reef conservation and restoration as strategic business development. By supporting conservation and restoration, tourism stakeholders can protect their assets, attract new visitors, while creating mechanisms to encourage repeat guests, and generate revenue while creatively educating and engaging locals and guests while contributing to long-term island resilience. Coral reefs are part of the Caribbean's life-blood and they are critical to the region's sustainable, resilient and economic future.

“Coral reef restoration isn't just conservation — it's strategic business development. By investing in reef recovery, Caribbean tourism leaders can protect assets, attract new visitors, boost guest loyalty, and build long-term island resilience.”

Acknowledgments

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association
The Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
The Nature Conservancy
The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
JustaTAAD, LLC



Resources

Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association
The Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism Resource Hub
The Reef Resilience Network
International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)
Global Coral Reef Alliance
Caribbean Community Group of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Coral Restoration Consortium
Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
MPAConnect
Atlantic Golf Rapid Reef Assessment
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF): Coral Reef Stewardship Fund
Development Bank of Latin America and The Caribbean (CAF)
Icons

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