

Gulf of California

Securing Livelihoods
While Protecting
Biodiversity

The Nature
Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.



The seas surrounding the Baja California Peninsula are among the richest on Earth. Its abundant fisheries constitute over 70 percent of the country's annual catch, making it Mexico's most important fisheries region and contributing \$900 million to Mexico's economy each year. While critical to Mexico's national economy, destructive fishing practices, overharvesting and unsustainable coastal development threaten the very ecosystems that produce fish, generate ecosystem services, and buffer the coast from storms.

Since 1996, The Nature Conservancy has been working in the Gulf of California to protect and restore its natural resources. In 2012, we launched the Baja Marine Initiative, a 10-year endeavor to mobilize political will and large-scale funding to transform ocean management and help bring 10 million hectares under protection in the next decade, doubling the existing conservation and fisheries management areas.

Our Approach

Protect

ocean habitats at an unprecedented scale by pioneering innovative strategies that can be taken to scale.

Transform

how our oceans are managed by working with stakeholders, including the fishing and tourism industries, and helping them transition to sustainable practices.

Inspire

those who drive ocean and coastal development to better manage fisheries, as well as value and invest in natural infrastructure.



Our Work

With over 20 years in the region, The Nature Conservancy is leveraging public and private funds, applying cutting-edge technology and sound science, building capacity, and promoting collaboration and communication for innovative solutions at scale. We are developing financing mechanisms aimed at securing long-term funding for coastal protection and sustainable fisheries management. We focus our efforts primarily on the following strategies:

Natural Climate Solutions

In the Gulf of California we are working with multiple stakeholders to reduce the risk and vulnerability to people, infrastructure and economy to climate events and climate change, implementing cost-effective natural climate solutions to restore and protect marine and coastal ecosystems.

The Conservancy is forming alliances with governments, local universities and the private sector (construction, tourism, risk modelers and reinsurance) to prove that natural systems protect communities and infrastructure. We are promoting the development of guidelines for better coastal zone planning and management and the restoration of natural systems, to minimize the risk of people and infrastructure. We are also protecting and restoring coastal wetlands with an integrated management approach contributing to climate change adaptation as well as enhancing carbon sequestration. This will contribute to Mexico's commitments to international climate change mitigation agreements.

Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Conservancy is working with local conservation partners, fishing communities and fisheries agencies to transform ocean management in the region. We are doing this by establishing a network of science-driven and locally-supported fish replenishment zones (no-take areas designed to promote the recovery of marine species), strengthening fisheries and aquaculture policies, and implementing innovative fishery management tools. The Conservancy is increasing the effectiveness of fisheries management through capacity building in fisheries institutions and other marine resource practitioners.

We are revolutionizing how fisheries information is collected and used, in support of more adaptive and effective resource management, as well as to transition poorly managed fisheries to sustainable management through the application of technology and innovative tools, such as FishPath.

While there is still time, while large areas remain pristine, and while there is still a chance to rebuild fish stocks and protect key habitats, it is critical to act to assure that the region's bounty and livelihoods will be sustained. Working with local communities, conservation partners and government, we can create solutions that work not only in this part of Mexico, but can be replicated in the rest of the country, and around the world.

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