

Our ocean and tourism

Did you know that one in every 12 jobs in the world was in the tourism industry in 2017?

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was growing faster than most other economic sectors.

There are two striking parts of that growth. Visitors from emerging economies now represent almost half of international arrivals, and ecotourism and sustainable tourism are the hottest draws.

A majority of experts expect international arrivals to return to 2019 levels in 2024 or later, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization. The pandemic gave us a chance to pause and consider the relationship between tourism and biodiversity.

Sustainable tourism seeks to do no harm. Ecotourism seeks to promote conservation and deliver economic benefits to communities.

Many people travel to see natural environments and species. When we make the right choices to support our ecosystems, we create positive growth for ourselves and our visitors.

Coral reefs bring in USD 36 billion each year in tourism revenue globally.

Diving with sharks and whales drives multi-million dollar Pacific industries. In Palau, a live shark brings an estimated USD 1.9 million over its lifetime. The shark dive tourism in Fiji is estimated to bring in USD 42.2 million annually.

We need to factor in the environmental impacts when overseeing development to accommodate the growing numbers of tourists. For example, studies show that each year, destroying coastal **wetlands** releases 0.15 to 1.02 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide – the same as burning 423 billion litres of petrol, more than the entire commercial airline industry uses in a year!

As a tourist or host, when you use eco-friendly products, buy local, and ensure a balance between development and conservation, you are saving the ocean—and saving us too.

Help give voice to this Pacific Conversation – learn more about **marine and coastal biodiversity** in the Pacific islands.

**Join in the Pacific Conversation: #SaveOurOcean
#ResilientPacific**



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