

 **amigos** 
de Sian Ka'an

Conserving The Natural Heritage
of Quintana Roo

Amigos de Sian Ka'an

A non-profit, non-governmental organization established in June of 1986 by a group of scientists and conservationists concerned about preserving the biodiversity of the state of Quintana Roo, México.

Mission

The conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecological processes for the well being of present and future generations.

Geographic Scope Of Work

Amigos de Sian Ka'an focuses its efforts within the state of Quintana Roo, in particular the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, and collaborates with regional and international partners throughout the Mesoamerican region.

Objectives

1. Identify, protect and manage areas of high biodiversity value, as well as those essential for the maintenance of ecological processes, or critical for the maintenance of the life cycles of endangered, threatened and migratory species.
2. Generate tools and models, both science and policy based, to implement alternative resource and site conservation management options compatible with sustainable development.
3. Provide training and environmental education, and develop commercialization opportunities, to encourage the different sectors of our society to embrace the sustainable use of natural resources.
4. Collaborate with international organizations, federal, state and municipal governments, the private sector, local communities, other NGO's, research and educational institutions and individuals to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.
5. Develop an efficient and modern organization capable of successfully carrying out its mission and objectives.

Guiding Principles

The members of our organization are guided by the principles of moral integrity, social responsibility and equity.



Operational Policy

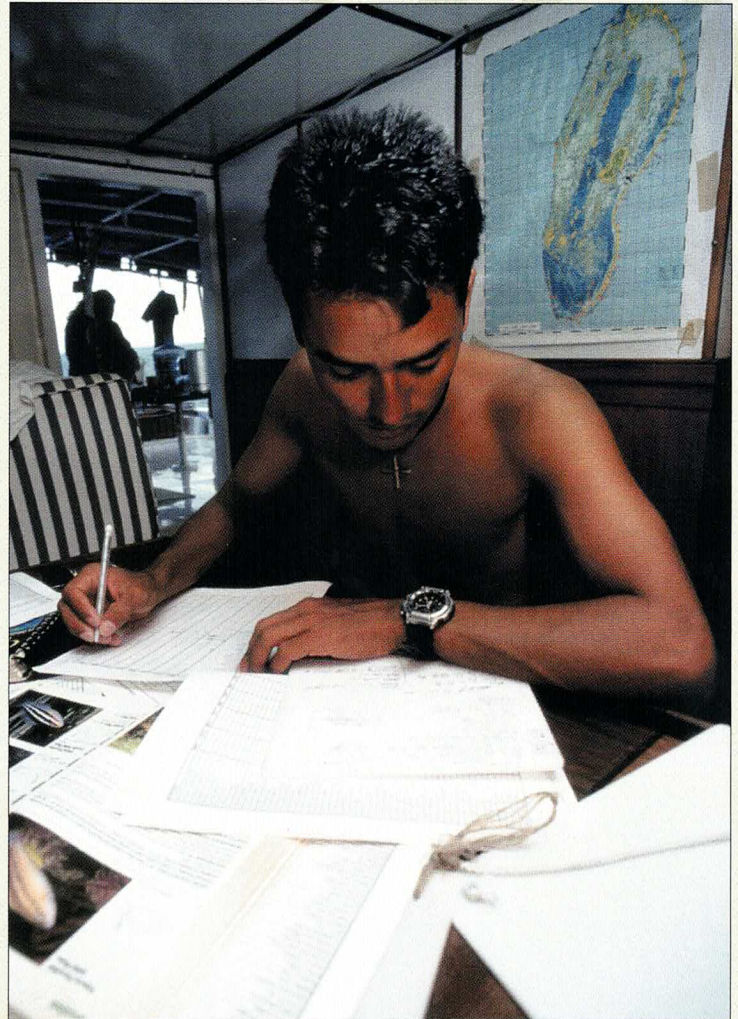
Amigos bases its conservation actions on scientific and technical information, on the planning and development of environmental policies and on the promotion of viable solutions for sustainable development.

Amigos does not employ public confrontation as a working tool and is not associated with any political party, religious organization or activist group.

Achievements

Over the course of 16 years of intensive work, Amigos has implemented over 80 projects on which participated more than 260 scientists, technicians, students, fishermen, farmers, rural promoters and administrators. Some of the noteworthy achievements include:

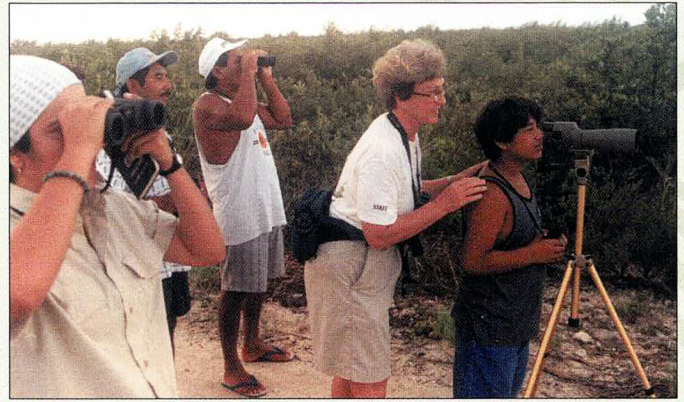
- Generated baseline studies and promoted the establishment of seven protected areas: the reefs of Banco Chinchorro, Cancun, Cozumel, Xcalak and Sian Ka'an; the Island of Contoy and the wetlands of Uaymil, totaling more than 780,000 acres.
- Participated in the elaboration of five management programs for these protected areas.
- Prepared baseline studies and proposals for the establishment of seven additional legally protected areas of endangered reefs, wetlands and forests.
- Participated in the environmental zoning process for the Mayan Riviera and Costa Maya.
- Promoted the international initiative for the Conservation of the Mesoamerican Reef, signed by the governments of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras.
- Together with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), developed the environmental zoning program for the coast of Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve;
- Participated in the environmental zoning process for the Mayan Riviera and Costa Maya;
- Published over 40 educational books, journals, manuals and pamphlets on conservation for students, researchers, developers, and tourists.



- Provided technical assistance and training for dozens of Mayan communities and other communities working in fisheries, ecotourism, bird watching, handcrafts, wildlife use, English language courses, and traditional medicine.
- Supported research on biodiversity conservation by providing information, and technical and logistic support to students and scientists pursuing their Bachelors, Masters and Ph. D. degrees in the region. Researchers have come from over 30 academic institutions from México and abroad.

Programs

To achieve its mission, Amigos' staff of 28 works on over 20 projects from its offices located in Cancun, Felipe Carrillo Puerto, and Chetumal. The projects fall within the following Programs:



1 Community Based Natural Resource Management: Collaborates with local Mayan communities to preserve their culture, promote the sustainable use of their natural resources, and provide social and economic benefits for current and future generations.

2 Bird Conservation of the Yucatan Peninsula: Promotes a culture of bird appreciation and conservation throughout the region, provides alternative economic income through habitat preservation, and defines research strategies for the conservation of over 500 bird species, a third of which are migratory and 15 are unique to the Peninsula.

3 Integrated Coastal Resource Management: Develops coastal management models and policies based on research and, implements low impact practices in tourism and fisheries, involving all sectors of society.

4 Characterization, Conservation, and Monitoring of Coral Reefs: Conduct studies to monitor and protect the health of the 400 miles of reefs off the coast of Quintana Roo. This vast system represents the Mexican portion of the Meso American Reef, the second largest in the world.

5 Environmental Policy: Designs and promotes policy tools such as decrees for the establishment of protected areas, management programs, and environmental zoning programs for the conservation and proper use of natural resources.

6 Private Land Conservation: Preserves sites unique for their biodiversity and strategic location through acquisition or the establishment of easements on private and communal lands.

7 Wildlife Management: Develops sustainable use practices among resource users who generate revenue through the harvest of species such as lobster, parrots and crocodiles, contributing to the maintenance of the existing reefs, forests and wetlands.

8 Support for the Management, Operation, and Consolidation of the System of Parks and Reserves of the State of Quintana Roo: Assists managers in the administration of funds for an array of activities including the prevention and control of forest fires, ecosystem restoration, research, and monitoring to ensure adequate policies for eco - tourism, fisheries, coastal development and resource use.

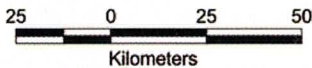
Departments

Amigos has three departments in support of its programs:

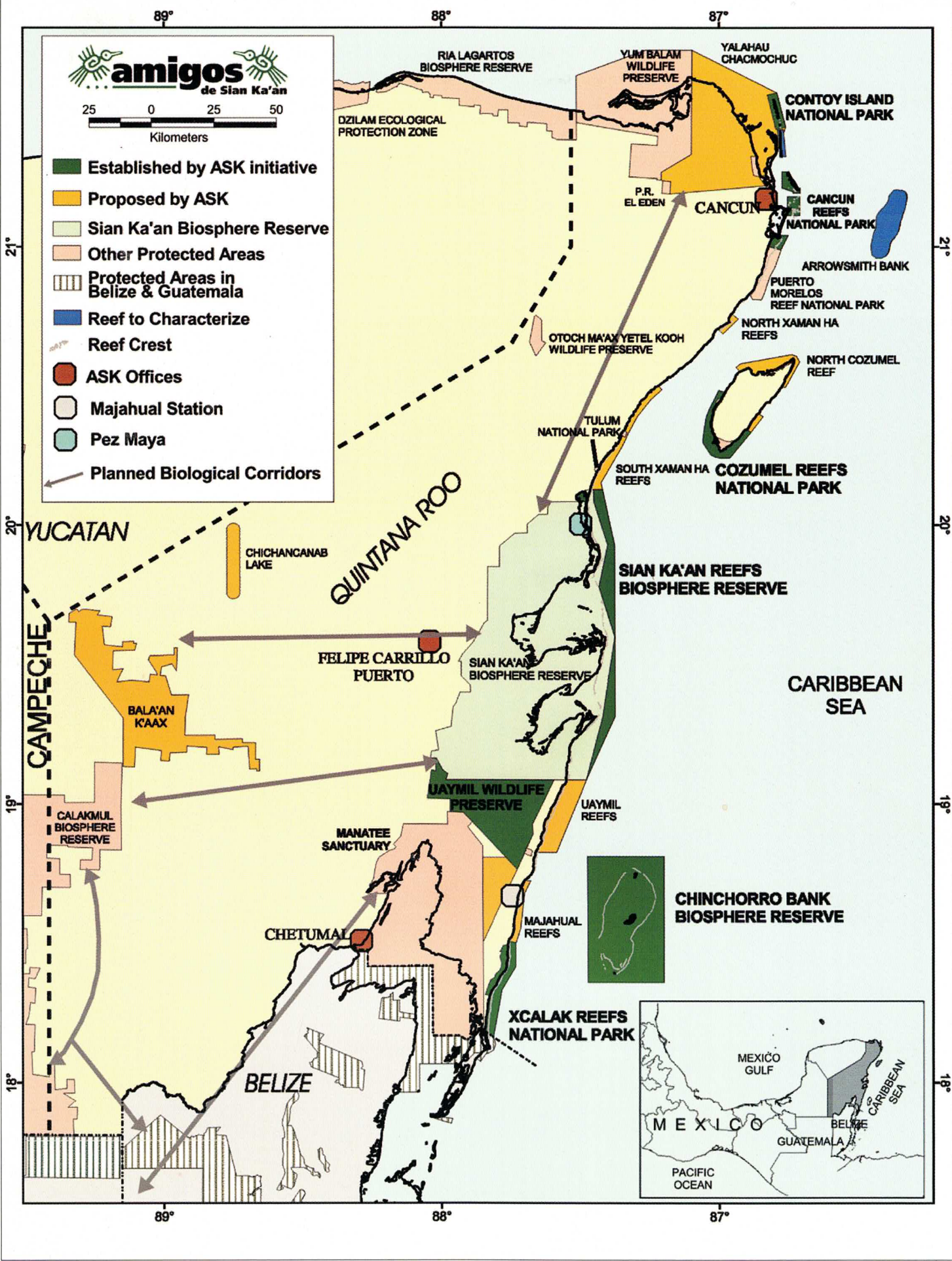
- Geographic Information System (GIS) Laboratory: Amigos' GIS laboratory has the region's largest and most complete geographic information database for conservation and planning.

- Environmental Library: Actively used by students, researchers and consultants, the Amigos' library contains over 4,500 titles on water, soil and biodiversity conservation, wildlife ecology, planning and management of protected areas, legislation, and environmental policy and education. The printed materials include journals, theses, unpublished reports, as well as federal and state decrees.

- Environmental Education: Through this program, Amigos disseminates environmental information and promotes a culture of conservation throughout Quintana Roo's society.



- Established by ASK initiative
- Proposed by ASK
- Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve
- Other Protected Areas
- Protected Areas in Belize & Guatemala
- Reef to Characterize
- Reef Crest
- ASK Offices
- Majahual Station
- Pez Maya
- Planned Biological Corridors



Alliances and Partnerships

Amigos has been very successful in establishing partnerships and collaborative links with different sectors, amplifying the participation of society in conservation.

- Bird Conservation in the Yucatan Peninsula (CAPY): A joint venture with Pronatura Península de Yucatán, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Houston Audubon Society, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Canadian Nature Federation, and several local communities.
- Belize – Mexico Alliance for the Management of Common Coastal Resources (BEMAMCCOR): A consortium of NGO's, research institutions and marine parks from both nations, headed by Amigos and seeking joint solutions to common problems. Both governments recognize the Alliance as a coordination mechanism for several conservation efforts.
- The Coastal Resource Center of the University of Rhode Island (CRC-URI) and Amigos have a fruitful 8 year relationship that has resulted in the creation and promotion of coastal management tools and development guidelines; the establishment of the 17,000 hectare Xcalak Reefs National Park, and the empowerment of local coastal communities in southern Quintana Roo.
- The University of Quintana Roo and Amigos have signed a 30 year agreement for the joint construction, operation and management of the Coastal Resource Management Station of Costa Maya in Majahual. The establishment of the station, in November 2002 was made possible by the valuable support from the State Government of Quintana Roo, the Japan Embassy in Mexico, the United States Agency for International Development, and the CRC-URI.
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has, for over 14 years, been Amigo's most long-lasting partner. The two organizations, working together through the international Parks in Peril Program, have promoted the consolidation of Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve as one of the best-managed and most important protected areas in México. Amigos and The Nature Conservancy are now pioneering a private land conservation strategy in México.
- Environmental Guards Network in Southern Quintana Roo: Amigos is leading a unique association of NGO's, local communities, and private sector entities that, together, watch over the proper application of the environmental laws and regulations governing the coastal development of southern Quintana Roo. The network acts as a watchdog, ensuring the law application and enforcement by government agencies. The network is supported by the World Wildlife Fund and the Mexican Center for Environmental Law (CEMDA).



- Committee for the Conservation, Management, and Sustainable Use of Crocodilians in Mexico (COMACROM): Comprising experts from research institutions, the private sector and NGO's, COMACROM acts as an advisor to the Federal Government on issues related to research, protection, control and rational use of crocodiles and caimans in Mexico.
- Private and Social Land Conservation Organizations Network: A national platform for organizations that protect private and social lands, enabling its members to work together to increase their capacities, create a common voice, and exchange information and experiences.
- National Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP): Amigos works closely and effectively with this federal agency in the establishment, management, administration, conservation and funding of the major protected areas in Quintana Roo.
- The Calakmul Conservation Initiative. Amigos has been recently invited to participate in this joint effort, headed by Pronatura Península de Yucatán, Conservation International, the Institute of Ecology, and The Nature Conservancy, to consolidate a strategy for the conservation of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve.
- Social Leaders Training Program Through an agreement with, and support from, the Technological Institute of Superior Studies of Monterrey (Tec) and The Nature Conservancy, Amigos hosts an international live satellite TV training program to strengthen the operational and technical skills of NGO's and park managers in Quintana Roo.

Awards and Recognitions

During its productive trajectory, Amigos has received various awards and recognitions for its efforts in the conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources:

- 1994 - First Place, the "Ricardo Mimenza Castillo" literature prize for the book "Introduction to the Ecosystems of the Yucatán Peninsula" by Juan José Morales. Bestowed by the State of Yucatán through the Culture Institute.
- 1996 - Condé Nast Traveler Award. In honor of its commitment to sound ecological planning and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- 1997 - Henry Prize, awarded jointly to Amigos de Sian Ka'an and The Nature Conservancy for the "International initiative for the conservation of the Coral Reefs".
- 2000 - Recognition, to Amigos de Sian Ka'an for its valuable collaboration in the development of the Natural Protected Areas Program 1995-2000. Awarded by the Secretary of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (SEMARNAP).
- 2001- Recognition, for its participation in the conservation of the coral reefs. Awarded by Cozumel Reefs National Park Secretariat for the Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries (SEMARNAP).
- 2002 - Recognition, for conservation efforts in Quintana Roo, "Cancuníssimo" Magazine.
- 2002 - Recognition "for its dedication and commitment to successful management of our coastal environment." Awarded by The University of Rhode Island Coastal Resource Center.
- 2002 - Recognition, "in appreciation for your efforts to protect the lands and waters of Sian Ka'an for Maine's migratory birds and for future generations." Awarded by The Nature Conservancy - Maine Chapter.

Publications

Amigos de Sian Ka'an has produced over 40 scientific and educational publications on regional themes.

Some examples include:

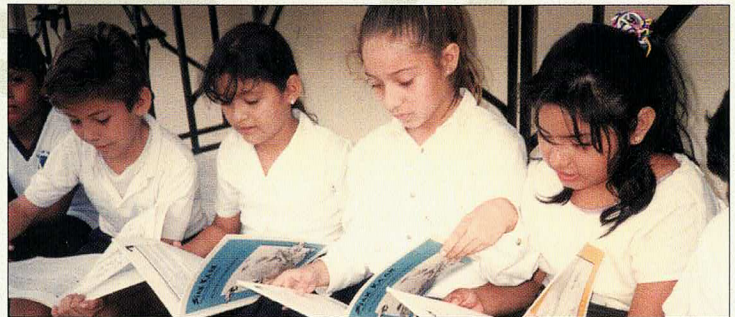
The Series "Introduction to the Ecosystems of the Yucatán Peninsula", consisting of three modules: 1) The Wetlands, a Forgotten World; 2) The Sea and its Resources; and 3) The Great Mayan Forest

Amigos Bulletin, an occasional publication for disseminating information related to the projects and activities of Amigos:

Series Sian Ka'an Documents, a journal that collects and disseminates research related to the management and conservation of the natural resources of the Yucatan Peninsula and the Mesoamerican region.

Sian Ka'an Booklets, provide technical information to the users of natural resources.

Birds of the Yucatan Peninsula, this series, by Barbara MacKinnon, includes a checklist, a field guide and a compilation of the scientific literature on the bird species found on the peninsula.



Integrated Coastal Resource Management, a two-part publication containing the "Manual on Guidelines for Coastal Development in Quintana Roo" and the "Community Strategy for Coastal Management in Xcalak."

Books for Children include a coloring book about the wildlife of Sian Ka'an and a comic book on the importance of biodiversity.

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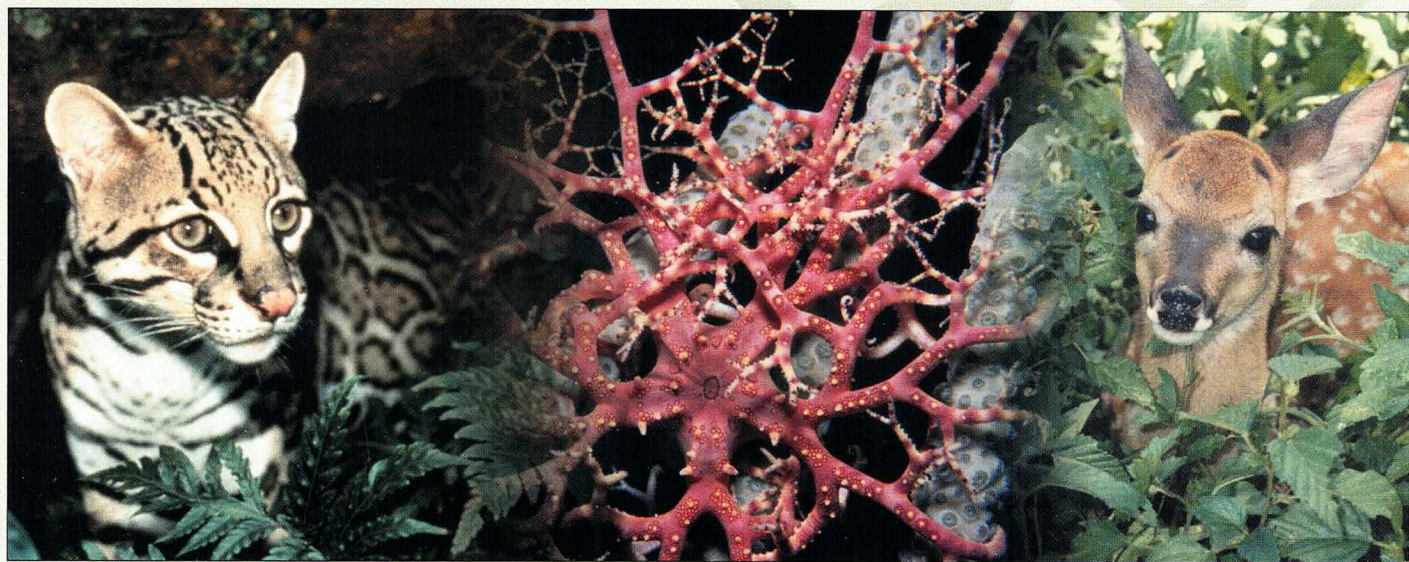
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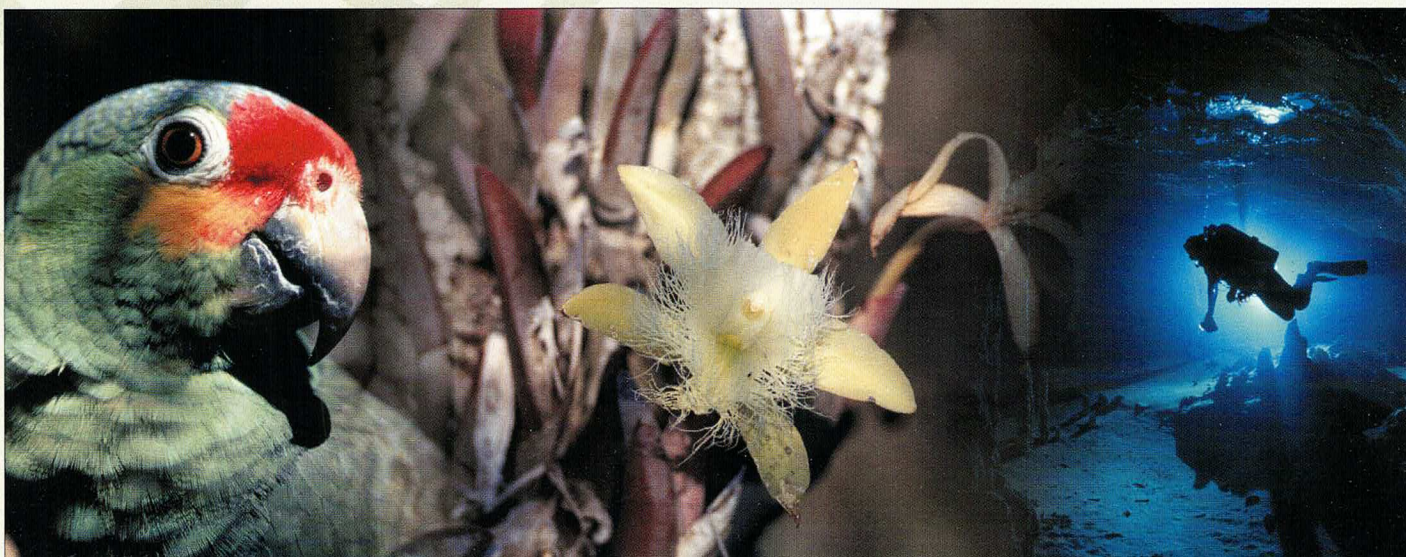


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PHOTOGRAPHS:

Claudio Contreras Koob • Willie Gibson
Marco A. Lazcano-Barrero • Barbara MacKinnon
Carlos Navarro • Sam Meacham
ASK Archives

CARTOGRAPHY:

Angel Loreto Viruel

OFFICES OF AMIGOS DE SIAN KA'AN

CANCUN

Crepúsculo #18 esq. Amanecer,
SM 44, Mz 13, Fracc. Residencial Alborada
Cancún, Quintana Roo
C.P. 77506, México
Tels. & Fax: 52 + (998)
8 80 60 24 • 8 48 16 18
8 48 21 36 • 8 48 15 93

POST OFFICE BOX

Apartado Postal 770
Cancún, Quintana Roo
C.P. 77500
México

E MAIL:

sian@cancun.com.mx

FELIPE CARRILLO PUERTO

Calle 72 No. 832, entre 73 y 75,
Col. Martínez Ross,
Felipe Carrillo Puerto, C.P. 77220
Quintana Roo
Tel. & Fax:
52 + (983) 8 34 08 13

E MAIL:

askfcp@cancun.com.mx

CHETUMAL

Av. 4 de Marzo No. 383
Entre Isla Cancún e Isla de Capri
Col. Gonzalo Guerrero
Chetumal, Quintana Roo
Tel. 52 + (983) 8 37 16 37

E MAIL:

as5@prodigy.net.mx