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## **CHTA NAMES CORAL REEF STEWARDSHIP AWARD WINNERS AND LAUNCHES BEST PRACTICES GUIDE**

**MIAMI, Fla. – July 3, 2025** – With Caribbean coral reefs under increasing threat from climate change, overfishing, and coastal development, the region’s tourism industry is stepping up. The [Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association](#) (CHTA), through its [Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism](#) (CAST) and in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, recently hosted a webinar launching the new [Caribbean Coral Reef Stewardship Best Practices Brief](#), featuring the winners of its inaugural *Caribbean Coral Reef Tourism Stewardship Awards*.

During the [virtual event](#), the winning organizations presented their projects and shared best practices for reef conservation that are also showcased in the [Brief](#). Together, these efforts spotlight how tourism stakeholders can help protect one of the Caribbean’s most vital natural assets.

### **New Best Practices Guide to Inspire Reef-Focused Tourism**

The *Best Practices Brief* profiles three successful, uniquely different models of reef stewardship led by tourism operators. It offers actionable guidance on how hotels, resorts, dive operators and tourism businesses can collaborate with communities, NGOs, and government agencies to protect and restore coral ecosystems. From innovative coral gardening and habitat mapping to creative community engagement and education, the Brief demonstrates how environmental protection can also create economic and social benefits.

### **Recognizing Leadership in Coral Conservation**

Building on the Brief’s recommendations, CHTA honored organizations setting new standards for coral protection through education, innovation, and collaboration.

“This is not only about preserving coral reefs; it’s about honoring the deep connection between nature and the people of the Caribbean,” said Karolin Troubetzkoy, Acting Chair for CAST.

“When hotels and tourism-related businesses, communities, and conservationists come together, we’re protecting our heritage, safeguarding our investments, sustaining livelihoods, and ensuring that future generations can experience the beauty of these ecosystems. These awardees show what’s possible when sustainability is a shared commitment.”

### **2025 Caribbean Coral Reef Tourism Stewardship Awards Winners:**

#### **1st Place – Aquanauts Grenada**

This Scuba Schools International (SSI) dive center has transformed invasive reef-damaging lionfish into an opportunity for conservation and community building. Through *Lionfish Bites & Beats*—a vibrant event combining live music, culinary experiences, and education—and the *Aqua Rangers Youth Development Scholarship*, Aquanauts has removed thousands of lionfish,

funded marine conservation training for local youth, and created a replicable model blending education and public awareness-building, economic resilience and reef stewardship.

### **1st Runner-Up – Jamaica Inn Foundation, Ocho Rios**

Jamaica Inn's longstanding commitment to reef protection is embodied in the White River Fish Sanctuary, a 370-acre marine protected area which they helped to create and is co-managed with local stakeholders. Combining coral restoration, habitat mapping, and community education, with the unique engagement of local fishers, the Sanctuary has increased fish biomass by 500 percent while fostering sustainable livelihoods and scientific research.

### **2nd Runner-Up – Round Hill Hotel & Villas, Jamaica**

Through its *Reef Garden Initiative*, Round Hill has become a pioneer in tourism-led reef restoration. In partnership with Seascope Caribbean and the Government of Jamaica, the resort has applied silvicultural coral propagation techniques, engaged local fishers as reef gardeners, and integrated guest experiences that connect travelers directly with conservation. The initiative shows how ecological impact and elevated guest engagement can go hand in hand.

These winning projects demonstrate how tourism, guided by strong partnerships and science-backed strategies, can drive both environmental restoration and sustainable economic growth across the Caribbean.

Tourism stakeholders are encouraged to explore the *Best Practices Brief*, share it across their networks, and draw inspiration from these leading examples. To access the full recording of the webinar and presentation decks, visit:

<https://caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/commitment-initiatives>.

The Brief, webinar and supporting research undertaken by CHTA/CAST to identify best practices by tourism industry stakeholders were made possible in part by support from The Nature Conservancy and the United Nations Environment Programme.

For more information about CHTA and CAST, visit: <https://caribbeanhotelandtourism.com>. Additional research and support information is available at The Nature Conservancy's site: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/caribbean>.

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### **About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)**

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 60 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

### **About CAST**

The Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), an initiative of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), provides tourism businesses across the region with resources, expertise, and best practices to support environmental and social sustainability. Founded in 1997 and recently reconvened, CAST plays a key role in raising awareness, promoting

responsible tourism, and advancing sustainable development within the Caribbean hospitality industry.

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