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**Save the Date: 8th Annual Whale Shark Festival Announced for Isla Mujeres
Swim with Whale Sharks, Traditional Dancing and More**

ISLA MUJERES, MEXICO – March 27, 2015 – Celebrating the beauty and culture of Isla Mujeres, Mexico, the [Isla Mujeres Department of Tourism](#), along with ecotourism company [Ceviche Tours](#), research and conservation organization Blue Realm Project and non-profit Amigos de Isla Contoy announce the dates for the 8th Annual [Whale Shark Festival](#), a cultural extravaganza that showcases the achievements, traditions and environmental splendor of Isla Mujeres.

The Festival will be held July 18-24, 2015 in Isla Mujeres, Quintana Roo, Mexico, a short trip from Cancun International Airport.

Last year 5,000 people attended the family-friendly Whale Shark Festival, where guests can swim with whale sharks, the largest fish in the ocean and an endangered species. They can also join in traditional dancing, enjoy local food and work by local artisans, visit the turtle farm, snorkel and dive the reefs surrounding the Island and more.

Proceeds from the Festival will go to [The Blue Realm Project](#), an organization dedicated to the monitoring, study and conservation of the pelagic organisms in the Mexican Atlantic; and [Amigos de Isla Contoy](#), a 501c3 non-profit working to advance education on sustainable marine conservation and ecotourism in the region.

Swim With Hundreds of Whale Sharks

Whale sharks swarm the waters of Isla Mujeres from May through September, providing guests with an opportunity to swim alongside these gentle giants. Isla Mujeres is the home to the largest aggregations of whale sharks in the world. Typically there are hundred of whale sharks in the waters – as many as 420 have been sighted in one day. Researchers estimate that as many as 1,400 whale sharks migrate through the waters surrounding Isla Mujeres annually.

“Isla Mujeres is home to countless marine species, and the whale shark is king among them. It is a magical experience to swim with the whale sharks,” said Lic. Agapito Magaña Sánchez, Presidente Municipal of Isla Mujeres. “We welcome the world to join us to celebrate the week-long Festival de Tiburón Ballena – the Whale Shark Festival -- enjoying this great show of nature and beautiful Isla Mujeres.”



Sustainable Ecotourism

The Whale Shark Festival is an effort to raise awareness of the need to preserve the area's marine ecosystem. Isla Mujeres is part of the second largest barrier reef on the planet, and serves as the nursery of the Caribbean and the migratory path of whale sharks, sea turtles, Manta Rays, waterfowl and game fishes.

"Whale Shark Season in the Cancun area of the Yucatan Peninsula runs from mid-May until mid-September with the largest groups of Whale Sharks arriving in mid-June and staying till mid-August, but there are many other species that join in on the aquatic feast such as manta rays, dolphins and sea turtles," said John Vater, co-founder Ceviche Tours. "Sustainable ecotourism engages guests in the effort to preserve the culture of Isla Mujeres and the marine environment. The continued success of the Whale Shark Festival is indicative of how ecotourism can truly impact a community. International events like these are essential in raising awareness and to help educate visitors on marine conservation efforts."

Fun for the Whole Family

The 8th Annual Whale Shark Festival kicks off with a parade on Saturday, July 18. Following will be activities for children such as sand sculpting events and crafting fun, to get kids excited about environmentalism. Exhibitions showcasing the beauty of the island will feature whale shark murals, photography and local handcrafted works of art.

The Festival continues with dancers presenting time-honored traditional dances. There will also be a contest to name "Miss Caribe Quintana Roo 2015." Guests can visit nearby attractions such as the Whale Shark Exhibition.

Travel arrangements and bookings to swim with whale sharks can be made through the Ceviche Tours Website (www.cevichetours.com).

For more information visit www.whalesharkfest.com.

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About Ceviche Tours

Ceviche Tours provides sustainable ecotourism and travel services to the Yucatan and Isla Mujeres, Mexico. For more information visit www.cevichetours.com.

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