



Laying the foundation for future mangrove restoration

Mexico's National Technological Institute came to Ducks Unlimited de México's training center seeking expertise in mangrove conservation



Students of Mexico's National Technological Institute learn about mangrove restoration from staff of the Ria Celestun Biosphere Reserve near Celestún, Mexico.

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CELESTUN, Yucatan, MX – Dec. ??, 2017 – A group of 17 biology and engineering students from Mexico's National Technological Institute in Conkal, Yucatan, recently came to Ducks Unlimited de México's (DUMAC) John E. Walker Research and Training Center in Celestun to learn about mangrove restoration and conservation.

Staff from DUMAC and the National Commission of Protected Area's (CONANP) Ria Celestún Biosphere Reserve (RBRC) provided the students with in-depth information about the diverse ecosystems and complex environmental challenges facing managers of the world class, quarter-million-acre biosphere reserve. This large wetland complex is winter home to significant numbers of North America's waterfowl and large populations of charismatic waterbirds such as flamingos and magnificent frigatebirds.

The conservation challenges and ongoing activities at this internationally recognized reserve were used to help the students understand the central importance of involving local citizens in

conservation efforts if they are to see value to their lives and community from investments in conservation.

After touring DUMAC's facility and learning about its conservation mission and role in research and continuing education, the students took a trip into the heart of the reserve. There they heard about DUMAC's role in initiating research in mangrove restoration of areas in the reserve where mangroves had been killed by changes to the local hydrology, and saw the dramatic improvements that resulted from DUMAC's conservation projects conducted in cooperation with the local community and the CONANP and reserve leadership.

The students visited a natural mangrove forest as well as restored sites, and were clearly impressed with the degree and rate of successful restoration. It was impressed upon them how important it is to carefully consider factors such as soil and water salinity, water depth, and hydrologic patterns for restoration work to be successful. They learned how the experience gained with the Ria Celestun projects is being replicated at mangrove restoration sites in other areas of Mexico and Central America.

“Building and maintaining connections with undergraduate student groups is an important investment,” said Eduardo Carrera, National Executive Director and CEO of DUMAC. “This modest investment of time and effort is helping train future professionals who have an understanding of wetlands and their importance that can be integrated into whatever form their daily work takes.”

Established in 1974, Ducks Unlimited de México (DUMAC) has restored and enhanced more than 1.5 million acres that are important for wintering waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species. DUMAC has classified 27 million acres of wetlands and uplands as part of the Wetlands Inventory Program that guides their conservation efforts. DUMAC's RESERVA program is the first internationally focused, hands-on training program for natural resources professionals in Latin America. With the help of Ducks Unlimited Inc. and several other important partners, RESERVA has trained 561 professionals from 20 Latin American countries and one from Africa.

Ducks Unlimited Inc. is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 14 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. For more information on our work, visit www.ducks.org.

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