



The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba: Hopeful Stories from the Ocean Doctor

David E. Guggenheim

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In *The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba*, David E. Guggenheim details the global loss of coral reefs, showing how Cuba, with its astounding contrasts and unrelenting hardships, is home to the healthiest coral reefs remaining.

As compelling as an adventure story, the book reveals Cuba as an isolated amalgamation of old and new: horse-drawn buggies share the streets with new cars, and the island's communication technology ranges from sixty-year-old rotary phones to shiny iPhones. But Guggenheim writes that what most characterizes Cuba and its coral reefs is resilience. Thus, his book is filled with the stories of real people facing real challenges as they work to save what could be a linchpin to the survival of life on Earth.

Beginning with stories that don't seem hopeful, the book works toward a high note, showing, in words and pictures, what makes Cuba's coral reefs so remarkable and why they are such strong indicators that hope is alive and well. Working together, scientists from Cuba and the United States have learned lessons from the sea that prove that their hope is not in vain, despite the brutal politics that divide the two countries.

Perhaps because it has been forced to do so much on its own with limited resources, Cuba has done much that's right. Unable to afford expensive fertilizers, Cubans turned to organic farming, minimizing one of coral's deadliest enemies—nutrient pollution. By eschewing mass tourism, enacting strong environmental laws, phasing out bottom-trawling, and respecting natural predators, Cuba also protected its coastal ecosystems and made its reefs resilient to climate change, providing an example for other nations.

The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba brings hope that some of the world's coral reefs can be saved through cross-cultural, borderless, and politics-free partnerships between nations.

KRISTINE MORRIS (September / October 2022)

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