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ENVIRONMENT

El Eden Ecological Reserve, nature's best



Dr. Jose Maria Ramos, director of El Eden Ecological Reserve



The reserve's main facility

The main activity of the reserve is the research program in biodiversity conservation and management.

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Not all that far from Cancun, approximately 25 miles northwest, but more than three hours driving time due to road conditions, El Eden Ecological Reserve is nature at its best.

Created in 1990 to protect, manage and restore the ecosystems of the northeastern section of the Yucatan Peninsula, El Eden is the first privately owned and protected area dedicated to research in biological conservation in Mexico.

It was founded by Dr. Arturo Gomez Pompa who is a world authority on tropical forest ecology and botany professor at the University of California, Riverside. Gomez Pompa created the reserve with his own resources and additional funding from family, friends, and non-governmental agencies. He also donated a large portion of the \$75,000 he received in sharing the 1994 Tyler Prize, the world's premier award for conservation.

Measuring 2,000 hectares (approximately 5,000 acres), the reserve boasts various ecosystems including medium semi deciduous tropical forest, low deciduous secondary forests, swamp forests, savannas, wetlands, micro cenotes and cenotes.

It is the habitat of the spider monkey, jaguar, and many species of birds, crustaceans, fish, algae, insects, flowering plants, amphibians and reptiles.

The main activity of the reserve is the research program

in biodiversity conservation and management. It has been planned to respond to some basic information needs for the management and conservation of protected areas of the region.

El Eden is maintained by an on-site staff who live and work in the reserve's comfortable but somewhat rustic structures. There is a thatched station building with dormitories, baths, kitchen and dining room; two bungalows for visiting researchers or guests; some minimal staff housing; and a laboratory.

Though researchers in various fields have visited and studied at the reserve, El Eden is ideal for biodiversity assessment. Biologists, ecologists, botanists, entomologists, ornithologists, and even archaeologists literally have a "field day" at this reserve. It is every conservationist's dream come true.

Since 1995, the HabitatNet organization based in New Hampshire has been bringing students down to the Yucatan Peninsula to do field work in El Eden. Director Dan Bisaccio devised HabitatNet to provide students with an opportunity to collect data, conduct research and make a difference with regard to conserving biological diversity. His program has grown so much that this year El Eden is hosting 80 teenagers from 8 different countries in two weeklong sessions.

The goal of HabitatNet is to enable teachers and students to establish permanent biodiversity monitoring projects



A surprise visitor at the reserve, a puma

around the globe and use telecommunications, via e-mail and worldwide websites, to communicate investigations, findings, and questions regarding biodiversity issues and management.

Together with Dr. Jose Maria Ramos, the current director of El Eden Ecological Reserve from the Center for Tropical Research (CITRO) at the University of Veracruz, the Earth Summit for Youth on Global Biodiversity is being held this month at the reserve.

Also supported by Cancun's nonprofit conservationist group Amigos de Sian Ka'an, the event gives kids interested in biodiversity the chance to learn from experience.

According to HabitatNet, "today our global imperative is to understand the implications of our interdependence with nature." El Eden is the perfect backdrop to come to that greater understanding.

For more information on

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What's showing in Cancun

La Voz de Mexico

After the Sunset (Al Caer la Noche)

Pierce Brosnan stars as a successful thief who retires to a tropical island to enjoy the fruits of his last heist with his partner (Salma Hayek). His FBI nemesis (Woody Harrelson) shows up, however, to double-check that he's really retired, and a suspicion-filled game of intrigue begins.

Stars Pierce Brosnan, Salma Hayek, Woody Harrelson, Don Cheadle, Naomie Harris; Director(s) Brett Ratner; Rating: PG-13; Genre(s): Crime, Action; Running Time: 97 mins.

Crimson Rivers 2: Angels of the Apocalypse

Commissioner Neimans' day is going from bad to worse. The body he found in a monastery seems to point to a ritualistic sacrifice and a portent of something strange coming. At the same time, young police captain Reda finds a man in agony who's an exact DNA match for Christ. Reda quickly finds out his case is directly linked to Neimans'.

Stars Jean Reno, Benoît Magimel, Camille Natta, Johnny Hallyday, Gabrielle Lazure, Christopher Lee; Director(s) Olivier Dahan; Rating: NA; Genre: Crime, Drama, Mystery, Thriller; Running Time: 100 mins.

Elektra (Elektra)

Recently deceased assassin Elektra Natchios (Jennifer Garner) is revived by the Order of the Hand, the crew of killers who trained her. Their leader, Kirigi, sends Elektra on a mission to kill Mark Miller (Goran Visnjic) and his young daughter, Abby. Soon, however, Elektra has befriended her would-be victims and decides to stand up to the Order, which then sentences her to death.

Stars Jennifer Garner, Terence Stamp, Kristen Prout, Goran Visnjic, Cary-Hiroyuki; Director(s) Rob Bowman; Rating: PG; Genre(s): Comic Book, Action, Sequel; Running Time: 96 mins.

Meet the Fockers (Los Fockers: La Familia de Mi Esposo)

Ex-CIA man Jack Byrnes (Robert De Niro) has given permission for his daughter (Teri Polo) to wed male nurse Greg Focker (Ben Stiller), and now he's taking his wife (Blythe Danner) to Detroit to meet his future son-in-law's parents (Barbra Streisand, Dustin Hoffman).

Stars Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller, Dustin Hoffman, Barbra Streisand, Blythe Danner; Director(s) Jay Roach; Rating: PG-13; Genre(s): Comedy; Running Time: 113 mins.

National Treasure (La Leyenda del Tesoro Perdido)

Nic Cage stars as an archaeologist who believes that the Declaration of Independence holds the last clue to a treasure buried in the 1700s by the country's founding fathers.

Stars Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger, Justin Bartha, Sean Bean, Jon Voight; Director(s) Jon Turteltaub; Rating: PG; Genre(s): Adventure, Mystery, Historical; Running Time: 135 mins.

Ocean's 12 (La Nueva Gran Estafa)

Terry Benedict (Andy Garcia) saw Danny Ocean (George Clooney) and his gang (Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, and others) steal \$160 million from one of his casinos, and now he wants the money back, with interest. To avoid Benedict's wrath, Ocean rounds up his crew of thieves and jets to Europe with plans to score loot in Rome, Paris, and Amsterdam, including Rembrandt's "De Nachtwacht" painting.

Stars George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Bernie Mac, Don Cheadle; Director(s) Steven Soderbergh; Rating: PG-13; Genre(s): Crime, Romance, Comedy; Running Time: 125 mins.

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