



For Immediate Release

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Xcaret Named 2014 Sea TREK Operator of the Year

California based Sub Sea Systems, manufacturer and developer of the Sea TREK® helmet diving program and equipment, recognizes Xcaret as the **2014 Sea TREK Operator of the Year**. Sea TREK operations around the world were considered for this esteemed award. Criteria for recognition include: tour quality, guest satisfaction, staff professionalism, conservation efforts, innovation, and overall commitment to the Sea TREK program.



Sea TREK is a helmet diving program that allows people ages 8 to 80+ to experience the underwater world without needing to know how to dive or even swim. If you can walk and breathe, you can Sea TREK! Sea TREK guided tours are offered at travel destinations worldwide.

In 1999, Xcaret became the very first operation to offer Sea TREK. The program was comprised of 8 fiberglass constructed helmets and multi-piston air compressors. It was an exciting, innovative experience that was unlike anything else in the tourism market at that time. Although it was a risk, it was one that Xcaret Director Miguel Quintana Palí was willing to take— and with risk, came tremendous reward. In the first month of operation, Xcaret introduced over 5,000 non-divers, non-swimmers, kids, families, grandparents and couples to the incredible beauty of the underwater world. The success of the Xcaret program helped spark an unstoppable worldwide Sea TREK phenomenon— 16 years later, Sea TREK is now offered at over 40 sites, in 25 countries on 5 continents— and Xcaret maintains its position as the largest Sea TREK operation in the world. Last year alone, Xcaret welcomed 1.2 million guests to its park, and of those guests over 90,000 participated in Sea TREK!



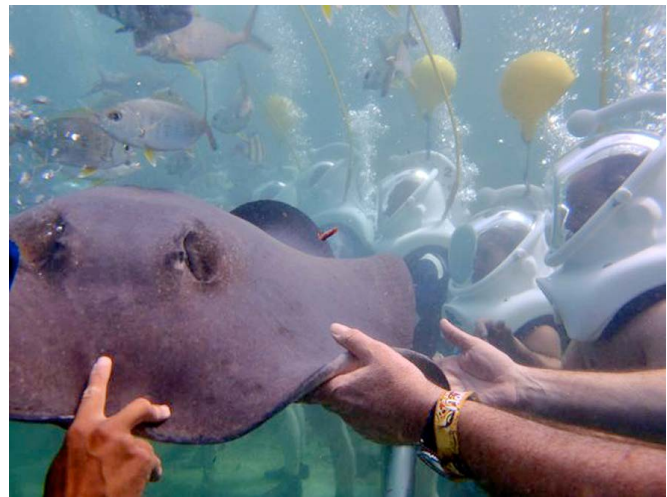
Xcaret operates two Sea TREK sites within its flagship park. The open water site of the original Sea TREK program has undergone numerous expansions, renovations and improvements— most notably is its sloped walkway entry. Unlike typical Sea TREK operations where guests enter

via a vertical ladder, participants at Xcaret's Sea *TREK* Caleta walk down a gently sloping path until the water is at shoulder level. A surface attendant then places the helmet and the guest continues to walk down the path until he or she reaches the sandy seafloor (23 ft. / 7 m. depth), which is the starting point for the 320 ft. / 98 m. trail. It is an incredible site to witness— almost a constant rotation of Sea *TREKKERS*! At any give point there can be 40 guests underwater.



Once underwater, the guests will marvel at the incredibly beautiful trail that Xcaret created and meticulously maintains. In an effort to take pressure off the natural reefs, Xcaret used its sculpture artists to create stunning statues, including ancient Mayan men ascending from the seabed, a large ship's wheel, and a massive bronze serpent, which are placed along the Sea *TREK* trail. These statues have become home to coral and thousands of schooling reef fish, while providing a unique photo backdrop.

A more recent addition to Xcaret is the Sea *TREK* stingray program, which is operated in a naturally enclosed lagoon, teeming with friendly, trained stingrays. From the minute guests enter the water they are greeted by the most curious, gentle rays that fly about the lagoon like a flock of graceful birds. Guests are likely to smile and laugh aloud as these inquisitive rays soar over the Sea *TREK* helmets and slide down the lenses; they love the feel of the air exiting the helmets and are eager to get their daily bubble massage! Trained stingray handlers walk with the rays at eye level down the line of *TREKKERS*, offering each guest a chance to pet the rays' gritty bodies and velvety stomachs, and see how they eat. It's a captivating, hands-on, educational experience.



During every step of the Sea *TREK* tour, guests are escorted by attentive, patient, and skilled Sea *TREK* Guides who have each successfully completed a rigorous training and certification program. Many online guest comments commend the staff for their professionalism, encouraging techniques, and knowledge.

“I was very impressed by how professional and helpful the crew was. 5 stars for this experience!” shares TripAdvisor user Science_Cat.



Staff are trained to expertly and compassionately manage Sea *TREK*'s extremely broad target market, whose demographic includes guests from around the world, children as young as 8, adults 80 and beyond, and individuals with physical challenges. It is a demanding job, however one that provides immense opportunities and invaluable work experience for Xcaret's staff.

Xcaret's sales and marketing staff also play an instrumental role in the success of the program. Not only is Sea *TREK* promoted through local tour agents and hotel desks, but it is also pre-sold onboard all of Xcaret's signature coaches that transport thousands of guests a day between hotels in the region and the park. Sea *TREK* is prominently advertised on social media platforms, the Xcaret website, and the home page of the Visit Mexico official tourism website.

As the demand for Sea *TREK* continues to rise, Xcaret and Sub Sea Systems are in collaboration to create new experiences for its clients. Jim Mayfield, president of Sub Sea Systems shares, "Xcaret is truly a partner in the development of unique experience and constant product innovation."



Xcaret offers daily Sea *TREK* and Stingray Sea *TREK* tours, with exciting new programs opening in the near future. For more information visit:
<http://www.xcaret.com>

Sea *TREK* is available at tourist destinations all over the world including the USA, Caribbean, Mexico, Asia, Australia and Europe. For a complete list of Sea *TREK* locations visit: www.sea-TREK.com

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