



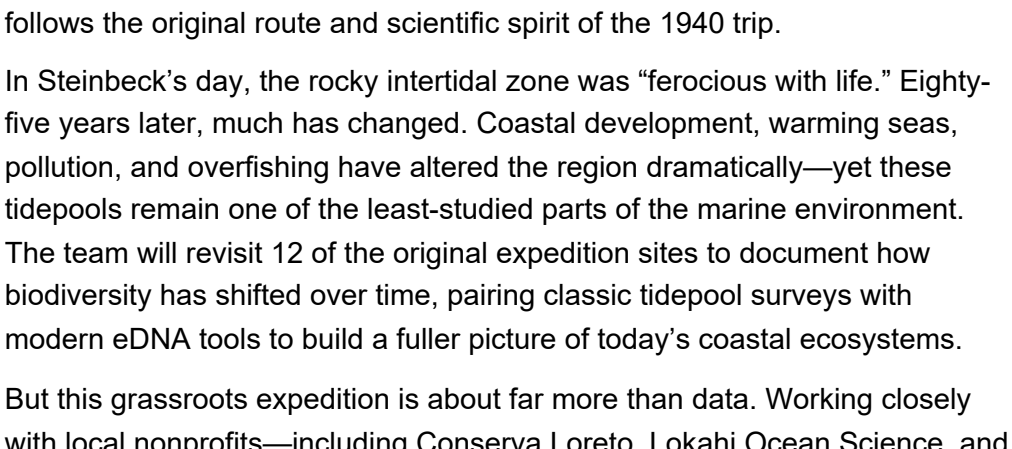
A New Year of Impact Begins!

As we step into a new year, we're reflecting with gratitude on everything this community made possible in 2025. Thanks to you, EcoWB is supporting more communities, launching new projects, and building partnerships that strengthen ecosystems from Costa Rica to Cameroon.

Your skills, generosity, and belief in this work fuel every step forward. Volunteers share their expertise across continents, supporters help ensure we can respond when communities call. Thank you for being part of this growing global movement. We can't wait to see what we'll accomplish together in 2026.



EcoWB in Action: New Project Update



Retracing History to Protect the Future of the Sea of Cortez.

Late last year, EcoWB partnered with Green Flash Conservation Science a team of young ecologists with a remarkable vision: to retrace John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts' legendary 1940 expedition through the Sea of Cortez and use that voyage to understand how its coastal ecosystems have changed and how best to protect them today.

The team will set sail at the end of March for a 20-day journey that follows the original route and scientific spirit of the 1940 trip. In Steinbeck's day, the rocky intertidal zone was "ferocious with life." Eighty-five years later, much has changed. Coastal development, warming seas, pollution, and overfishing have altered the region dramatically—yet these islands remain one of the least-studied parts of the marine environment.

The team will revisit 12 of the original expedition sites to document how biodiversity has shifted over time, pairing classic tidepool surveys with modern eDNA tools to build a fuller picture of today's coastal ecosystems.

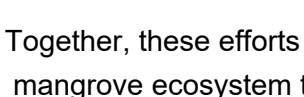
But this grassroots expedition is about far more than data. Working closely with local nonprofits—including Conserva Loreto, Lokahi Ocean Science, and Niparaja, with additional data-analysis support from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California—they plan to establish long-term citizen science programs in two coastal communities, training students, fishers, and youth groups to monitor biodiversity using simple, non-destructive methods. These are ecosystems that local people depend on for food, livelihoods, identity, and connection, and this project creates an entry point for communities to steward the coast long after the expedition ends.

The team will also document the journey through film, photography, and writing, weaving science with storytelling to spotlight how these coastal ecosystems are changing and why they matter.

EcoWB volunteers and education experts, Catherine González and Allene Orr, will guide the design and development of training materials, educational resources, and data-collection tools—such as species identification guides—that local partners can continue using independently. These materials will help train and empower multiple local communities to participate in citizen science, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to collect vital data and play an active role in monitoring and preserving the Sea of Cortez's biodiversity.

This collaboration builds on EcoWB's existing sustainable fisheries work in this region, strengthening our support for coastal ecosystems and the communities connected to them.

About the Original Expedition



In the spring of 1940, author John Steinbeck and marine biologist Ed Ricketts set out on a six-week scientific voyage through the Sea of Cortez aboard the fishing boat Western Flyer. Their goal was to document the extraordinary biodiversity of the region's tidepools and rocky shores—the first ecological survey of its kind.

Over the course of the expedition, they visited 21 sites, made 24 biological collections, and catalogued more than 500 species of marine invertebrates, many of them newly described at the time.

Their journey became the basis for *Sea of Cortez: A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research* and later *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*—works that blended science, exploration, and philosophy and helped shape modern understanding of coastal ecology.

Exciting Next Steps for EcoWB's Jiquilisco Bay Mangrove Project



Thanks to generous grant funding from The Butler Foundation, EcoWB is advancing to the next phase of our work to protect and restore the mangroves of Jiquilisco Bay, El Salvador—one of the largest and most ecologically significant mangrove systems in Central America.

A major focus of this phase is a comprehensive hydrological analysis of the bay and its watersheds. Hydrology is the single greatest driver of mangrove health, influencing everything from seedling survival to forest recovery. By understanding how water moves through the landscape—where it flows, where it's blocked, and how climate and land-use changes are altering those patterns—we can identify the areas most in need of restoration and the interventions most likely to succeed.

Building on that foundation, EcoWB volunteers will develop an interactive Google Earth Engine platform that brings these insights together into an accessible planning tool. Local organizations and government agencies will then be able to visualize mangrove condition, track changes, and make informed decisions about where—and what—action is most urgently needed.

Together, these efforts will strengthen conservation planning across a mangrove ecosystem that supports wildlife, protects coastal communities, and anchors regional biodiversity.

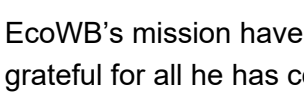
Did you know...



- Mangroves can store up to four times more carbon per hectare than tropical rainforests.
- Their root systems protect coastlines by absorbing wave energy and reducing storm-surge impacts.
- Mangroves provide critical habitat and breeding grounds that sustain coastal food webs for a variety of marine and bird species, as well as other wildlife.

- The IUCN estimates that 50% of the world's mangrove ecosystems are now considered at risk of collapse.

Fewer than 100 days left to Raise \$23k for Cameroon

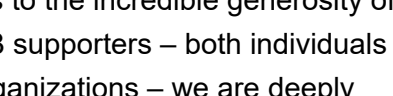


We have a narrow, urgent window to protect one of the most important forest habitats in northern Cameroon—and we need your help to make it happen.

A 5,000-hectare forest in Somié shelters several family groups of the critically endangered Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee and remains one of the last corridors that keeps their fragile populations connected. It is also deeply significant to local Indigenous communities, whose lives, culture, and futures are closely tied to this forest. Each year, slash-and-burn farming and expanding commercial plantations push further into the landscape. Without action, this forest—and everything it supports—could be lost.

Together with our Cameroonian partners, CBBM, EcoWB are working to establish a secure a long-term Community Forest lease at a cost of \$66,000. A generous funder has pledged half if we can raise the remaining \$33,000 by March 31. This is our chance—but we must act now!

Visit our campaign page to see our progress in real time, make a donation and help us protect this forest while there is still time! One crucial way you may be able to help: If you or someone in your network works for an organization that might be able to support this effort with a larger donation please let us know, we would be incredibly grateful for an introduction.



Stu Buchanan President 2024-2025

Rebekah Padgett President 2026-Present

Chris Matlack Vice-President 2026-Present

Welcoming New Board Leadership in 2026

As we look ahead to another important year for EcoWB, we are pleased to share updates to our Board leadership and extend our heartfelt gratitude to those who have guided us to this point.

After two years of exceptional service, Stu Buchanan is concluding his term as Board President. Stu has been central to EcoWB's evolution—helping steer the organization from a fully volunteer-led model to one supported by dedicated staff. His steady leadership, generosity of time, and belief in EcoWB's mission have helped shape who we are today and we are deeply grateful for all he has contributed. Stu will continue to serve as a member of the Board through his current term.

With Stu's transition, we are delighted to welcome Rebekah Padgett as Board President for 2026. Rebekah, who previously served as Vice President, has been on the Board since 2023 and has been an active member of the Fundraising Committee, where she played a key role in strengthening our fundraising efforts and broadening our community of supporters. Her commitment, energy, and vision make her an outstanding leader for our next chapter.

We are also pleased to announce Chris Matlack as our new Vice President, bringing valuable experience and thoughtful leadership to the Board in this new role. Chris previously served as Secretary.

As part of this moment of transition, we also extend our sincere thanks to Jen Schlegel and Shubha Panell as they conclude their board service. We are deeply grateful for the time, care, and perspective they brought to EcoWB, and for the contributions they made in support of our work and our community.

With this new leadership team in place, we look forward to the year ahead and the meaningful progress it will help EcoWB achieve.

A Strong Start to 2026, Thanks to YOU!

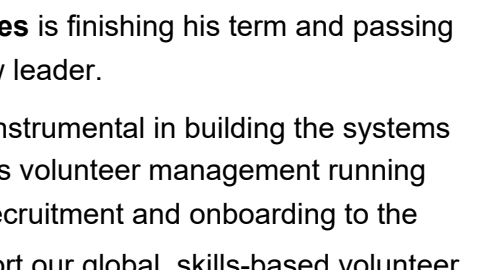


Thanks to the incredible generosity of EcoWB supporters – both individuals and organizations – we are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to our end-of-year campaign, which raised \$45,211 and gave EcoWB a strong start to the new year. This support strengthens our readiness to respond to communities waiting for volunteer expertise and resources.

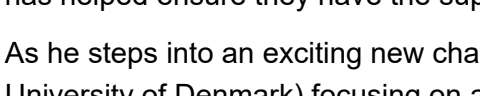
It's not too late to contribute, and every donation counts in helping EcoWB step in when communities reach out for support. Thank you.

Patch-Perfect Style!

Here's a snap of Stu Buchanan, EcoWB's past President, looking gourd-geous in his EcoWB sweater down on the pumpkin patch—proving our apparel looks great in any season. Every tee, hat, and hoodie from our Bonfire store helps fuel EcoWB's work, and we love to see you in yours. Snap a photo wearing your EcoWB gear and tag us on social media or email it for us to feature online! It's a great way to show support for EcoWB and spark conversations about our work. Visit our store HERE

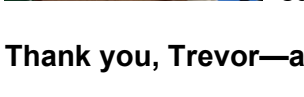


Micro-Volunteering

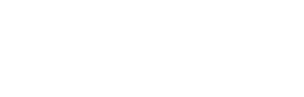


In October, Microsoft's Industry Solutions Delivery team supported EcoWB through skilled micro-volunteering during the company's Month of Giving. Employees contributed more than 30 hours, helping improve our fundraising systems, project workflows, and the organizational Sharepoint tools.

Their volunteer match also raised over \$700 for EcoWB. We're deeply grateful for their generosity and proud to partner with Microsoft employees in strengthening our work.



A Heartfelt Thanks... and a Warm Welcome



As the new year begins, we're celebrating one of the behind-the-scenes champions who has shaped EcoWB's ability to serve communities around the world. After serving as our Volunteer Manager since 2023, Trevor Eakes is finishing his term and passing the baton to a new leader.

Trevor has been instrumental in building the systems that keep EcoWB's volunteer management running smoothly—from recruitment and onboarding to the technical guides and training that support our global, skills-based volunteer community. He has given hundreds of hours of his time while also serving on our Board and completing his Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's in Aquaculture, Environment and Society. Volunteers are the heart of our work, and Trevor has helped ensure they have the support and structure they need to thrive.

As he steps into an exciting new chapter in his role at DTU Food (Technical University of Denmark) focusing on aquatic food value chains in vulnerable populations, we're delighted that Trevor will continue to serve on the EcoWB Board.



We're equally thrilled to welcome Miro Osório as our new Volunteer Manager for 2026. Originally from Germany and now living in Portugal, Miro brings extensive experience in strategy and project design in natural resource management, including landscape and biodiversity conservation, with international organizations and NGOs along with a deep commitment to EcoWB's model of collaborative, community-driven support.

Thank you, Trevor—and welcome, Miro!

Volunteer Opportunities

Explore our current volunteer opportunities and see how your expertise can help protect ecosystems and uplift communities worldwide.

Support the Engine Behind Every Project!

Our volunteers give their time and talent freely—but connecting the right expertise to the communities that need it most takes coordination, tools, and steady behind-the-scenes support. From recruiting and onboarding specialists, to reviewing project proposals, matching skills, a managing worklists, and keeping our global systems running, there's a whole infrastructure that makes volunteer-powered impact possible.

If you believe in EcoWB's work, we'd be grateful for your support in funding the essential systems that keep this engine moving and ensure every community request gets the help it needs. Thank you.

Ecologists Without Borders (EcoWB) is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit — EIN 45-3628233. For more information, visit our website: www.ecowb.org or contact giving@ecowb.org. EcoWB, P.O. Box 51194 Seattle, WA 98115

