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UN IN ACTION

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GALAPAGOS: WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

VIDEO

AERIAL SHOT. GALAPAGOS
SEA AND ISLAND

IGUANA ON A ROCK.

YELLOW FISH UNDERWATER

BOAT FULL OF
ENVIRONMENTALISTS

AUDIO

NARRATION

Galapagos. Forty-eight islands of hardened lava in the Pacific Ocean, 1000 km from the South American continent. (8)

Among its rocks and under its waters ...there are plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. Animals like the giant tortoise... and the marine iguana. (11)

But keeping this precious ecosystem safe is proving a severe challenge. So much so that UNESCO – the UN agency in charge of safeguarding cultural heritage – says it's in danger of permanent ecological damage. (14)

Environmentalists like Godfrey Merlen, a long-time resident of Galapagos working for Wild Aid, say that action must be taken immediately. (7.5)

GODFREY MERLEN (in ENGLISH) **M**

GODFREY MERLEN OF WILD
AID, ENVIRONMENTALIST, ON
CAMERA

TUNA FISH BEING
BUTCHERED

SHARK'S BELLY BEING CUT.

TOURISTS TAKING SHOTS AT
TORTOISES AND LONGHORN
BIRDS

AIRPLANE TOUCHING DOWN

HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

DOG BARKING

TREE PLANT COVERED WITH
PLASTIC
SHARKS UNDERWATER

RAQUEL MOLINA, DIRECTOR,
GALAPAGOS NAT'L PARK ON
CAMERA

*"Galapagos is being pushed to the very limit of
its possibility to survive."* (4.5)

NARRATION

Until recently, fishing was seen as the biggest
human threat to the ecosystem. (4)

Especially illegal fishing for shark fins and for
sea cucumbers destined for the Asian market...
(5)

**But new research shows that well-
intentioned tourism appears to be the
number one threat. (5)**

From 10,000 visitors per year in the early 80's,
the number of tourists has grown 12-fold ...to
more than 120,000. (8)

And tourism has brought with it construction,
goods and services from the mainland...
immigration... as well as introduced species
like dogs...rats... and insects. (10.20)

All of which are threatening the unique, native
species of the islands, says Galapagos
National Park Director Raquel Molina. (7)

RAQUEL MOLINA (in SPANISH) **F**

*"The increase in tourism, the increase in
introduced species, and the increase in people
who want to live in Galapagos". (5.70)*

NARRATION

HELICOPTER TAKING OFF

Fixing these problems will not be easy.

AERIAL SHOT. GOATS

Controlling the spread of invasive species is a constant, and costly, battle. It has taken 18 million dollars so far just to cull the

RUNNING IN THE JUNGLE.

archipelago's goat population (*SOUNDUP*) – and keep it from destroying the native plants.

NIGHT SCENE. PATROL BOAT

But if Galapagos is to survive, experts say, these efforts must be kept up. (21)

CUSTOM POLICE INSPECTING
TOURISTS ARRIVING

And controlling tourism, which brings much needed revenue to Ecuador, may be even more difficult. (4.75)

BOATS AT WHARF.

One proposed solution is to cap tourism forever at around 100,000 people per year, with a huge hike in the prices to visit Galapagos. (7.5)

C/U. ROQUE SEVILLA

Raising prices drastically is the only way to limit growth, says Roque Sevilla, the largest tour operator in Ecuador, Galapagos included. (8)

OFFICE SHOT.

ROQUE SEVILLA: (SPANISH) **M**

ROQUE SEVILLA, PRESIDENT
OF METROPOLITAN TOURING
ON CAMERA

“Until we accept that there is no more room for growth, no new measures will work.” (4)

OFFICE CLERKS WORKING

NARRATION

But others say a price-hike will only create an elite club of visitors, one that shuts out regular Ecuadorians. (6.30)

CRAB CRAWLS ON A ROCK

And many of the islanders fear that a price hike will benefit only big tour operators -- not their small businesses. (6)

TOURIST TAKING
PHOTOGRAPH BELOW.

Whatever the outcome of the price-hike debate, many see Galapagos as the ultimate test... for balancing the human footprint with nature's most awesome, but fragile, ecosystems. (10.5)

MEN PLAYING VOLLEYBALL.

TORTOISE UNDERWATER

If it cannot be done here, in an archipelago of some 25,000 people – what hope is there, they wonder, for saving precious species in the rest of the planet? (9.5)

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by Michele Zaccheo for the United Nations. (4)