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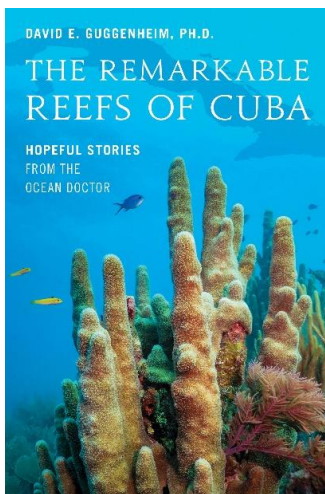
Please accept this note offering a review copy of our forthcoming title, *The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba: Hopeful Stories from the Ocean Doctor*, by **David E. Guggenheim, Ph.D.** (*60 Minutes*, *Good Morning America*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *PBS Newshour* and *NPR*). If interested, please kindly let me know if you prefer a physical or digital copy, or any further information. Talking points and Q&As are below. Thanks in advance for considering coverage!

Warmly,

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Watch Guggenheim's interview on **PBS NewsHour** [here](#).

Early Praise...



“Spanning decades of adventurous, sometimes exhausting, sometimes exhilarating, but always eye-opening experiences in science, politics, and ocean exploration, Guggenheim’s deeply personal journey into Cuba’s past and present lead him to see the inextricable links between humans and nature, and reasons for hope for an enduring future for both.”

– **Dr. Sylvia A. Earle, founder of Mission Blue and author of *Ocean, A Global Odyssey***

*“Cuba’s political difficulties had the silver lining of virtually untouched reefs. No one has spent more time diving those reefs than Guggenheim. They are a reminder of what God intended coral reefs to be, and of how badly coral reefs have been massacred by human pollution, overfishing, and climate change. These Cuban reefs offer a beacon of hope as well as a warning of danger, and *The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba* gives them voice.”* – **Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, founder and co-chair, Senate Oceans Caucus**

“In telling this important story, Guggenheim shares the little-known account of how my grandfather helped shape Cuba's environmental future and its strong laws protecting its coastal waters. I am grateful that his legacy continues and endures in Cuba and that his message of love and hope for our oceans continues to resonate.”

–Céline Cousteau, environmental activist, filmmaker, and author

“Filming Chasing Coral, my team was devastated as we witnessed the unimaginable destruction wrought by climate change upon the beloved Great Barrier Reef. Guggenheim's 20-year account brings hope as he shares the lessons of Cuba's remarkable coral reefs and how their secrets can help us rescue the planet's remaining reefs before it's too late.”– Jeff Orlowski, director and producer of the Emmy-winning documentaries, Chasing Ice and Chasing Coral

“If you want to know how corals connect with people, then you need to read this book. The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba is a truly inspirational story about our corals, how they live, and what we can do to protect them. Thanks, David, for showing us that there is still hope!” – Dr. Jorge A. Angulo Valdés, former director of University of Havana's Center for Marine Research, and visiting professor at Eckerd College

“Guggenheim is a first-rate scientist and story-teller. Eloquently weaving scientific knowledge with the history of Cuba's amazing corals, The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba is a must-read for anyone wishing to learn about the science and the story of coral reefs and the amazing humans who dedicated their lives to defend the beauty of coral reefs and their pivotal role in securing the promise of a living and thriving nature.” – Dr. Ralph Chami, Assistant Director, Western Hemisphere Division, Institute for Capacity Development at the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

“As an oceanographer, Guggenheim writes engrossingly on the imminent collapse of the world's reefs. But he holds a special hope that Cuba will be different, and explains what lessons of global application can be learned there. His story is one of good-humored perseverance in an inestimably good cause. It's our good luck that he has shared that story.” — Robert L Muse, Esq, attorney and leading authority on U.S. laws and sanctions relating to Cuba

From the Publisher

Prometheus Books is proud to announce the August 2022 release of **The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba** (978-1-63388-780-0 • Cloth • \$27.95 • 248 pages) by **David E. Guggenheim, Ph.D.** Since 1970, the Caribbean has lost half of its coral reefs, an ominous and accelerating phenomenon that extends around the world. Today's remaining coral reefs – still a source of endless discovery and mystery for scientists – are at risk of disappearing by century's end. Beyond the unfathomable heartbreak of the loss of such exquisite beauty from the earth's surface, coral's

loss represents the annual loss of billions of dollars from the global economy and the end of a way of life for billions that depend on these ecosystems. Marine scientist and conservation leader David E. Guggenheim has had a front-row seat to this disaster. But when he began a new chapter of his career in Cuba, he found something completely unexpected: hope.

After years and years of watching reefs deteriorate, Guggenheim was astonished to come face-to-face with Cuba's remarkably healthy coral reefs overflowing with fish and other life – ocean ecosystems that appear healthier than those he first encountered as a teenager more than four decades prior. *The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba* reveals the hidden potential that Cuba's reefs may contain for the reefs of the world.

Which begs the question: why are Cuba's ocean waters so healthy? The answer is deeply intertwined with the country's extraordinary and singularly unique history, from its dramatic political past to its world-class environmental protections influenced by an unlikely partner, Captain Jacques Cousteau. The result is that while the past 60 years have seen the worst decline in ocean health in human history, Cuba's oceans and coral reefs remain remarkably healthy, a living laboratory never-before-seen by this generation of scientists.

Guggenheim's account includes interviews with colleagues, scientists, policymakers, and his own decades-long experience as an American working in Cuba with local marine scientists to study and protect its coastal waters and coral reef ecosystems. This buoyant book tells the story of the demise of the world's ocean ecosystems, the hard work of those desperately trying to save it, and an unexpected beacon of hope from an island full of mystery and surprises.



David E. Guggenheim, PhD is a marine scientist, conservation policy specialist, ocean explorer, submarine pilot and educator. He is the founder and president of the Washington, DC-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, *Ocean Doctor*, dedicated to advancing the conservation of the world's oceans through research, education and community engagement. He was inducted into the *Explorers Club* as a National Fellow in 2008. Guggenheim makes frequent speaking and television and radio appearances, having appeared on *60 Minutes*, *Good Morning America*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *PBS Newshour* and *NPR*.

Guggenheim previously served as Vice President at *The Ocean Conservancy*, President & CEO of *The Conservancy of Southwest Florida*, co-chair of the *Everglades Coalition* and president of the *Friends of Channel Islands National Park*. From 2014 to 2020 he served as board chair of the *Great Whale Conservancy*. He is also an adjunct professor at *Johns-Hopkins University* where he teaches Ocean Sustainability.

Talking Points

- Since 1970, the Caribbean has lost half of its coral reefs, an ominous and accelerating phenomenon that extends around the world. Today's remaining coral reefs – still a source of endless discovery and mystery for scientists – are at risk of disappearing by century's end. Beyond the unfathomable heartbreak of the loss of such exquisite beauty from the earth's surface, coral's loss represents the annual loss of billions of dollars from the global economy and the end of a way of life for billions that depend on these ecosystems.
- Marine scientist and conservation leader David E. Guggenheim has had a front-row seat to this disaster. But when he began a new chapter of his career in Cuba, he found something completely unexpected: hope. After years and years of watching reefs deteriorate, Guggenheim was astonished to come face-to-face with Cuba's remarkably healthy coral reefs overflowing with marine life. Initially a complete stranger to Cuba and its culture, Guggenheim shares a first-person story spanning two decades as he partners with Cuban colleagues to study and unlock the mysteries of Cuba's remarkable coral reef ecosystems
- While the past 60 years have seen the worst decline in ocean health in human history, Cuba's oceans and coral reefs remain remarkably healthy, a living laboratory little seen by this generation of scientists. Which begs the question—Why are Cuba's ocean waters so healthy? The answer is deeply entwined with the country's extraordinary and singularly unique history, from its dramatic political past to its world-class environmental protections influenced by an unlikely partner, Jacques Cousteau. This book tells the story of the demise of the world's ocean ecosystems, the hard work of those trying desperately to save it, and an unexpected beacon of hope from an island full of mystery and surprise. It's also a story of our own history, in the U.S. where reefs have been devastated, and spanning the rest of the world.
- Guggenheim's account is rich with hope and inspiration, despite his personal heartbreak of witnessing the demise of the reefs he fell in love with as a teenager and set into motion his career in marine science, Cuba's healthy coral reef ecosystems changed everything. For the first time in years he had found hope. His story helps us understand the important lessons that Cuba has to offer, lessons can help guide our hand and help us rescue and restore reefs in the Caribbean and beyond.

Q&A with David Guggenheim

1. Who did you write this book for? Is there a particular audience you had in mind?

The book is a story, first-person account written for the general public, a story that unlocks many mysteries of coral reefs and Cuba itself. Together they tell the compelling account of why coral reefs are perishing around the world and why they're thriving in Cuba. It's also a first-person account of my experiences of more than 20 years, working in a country I knew nearly nothing about, making mistakes, enjoying successes, and finding myself entwined in the very politics I had hoped to avoid. I think many of those anecdotes would be an armchair traveler's delight – certainly fitting the “fish out of water” genre. This isn't a dry textbook meant only for scientists, nor is it a textbook of Cuba's history or a political treatise on Cuba-U.S. relations meant only for Cuban historians. It's a story about people from very different cultures, working together under extraordinary conditions that are helping us understand important mysteries of Cuba's remarkable reefs, it's unique history and equally, a story of our own history and why our reefs – just 100 miles to the north – are devastated.

2. So Why are Cuba's Coral Reefs So “Remarkable?”

Since 1970, the Caribbean has lost half its coral reefs, an ominous and accelerating phenomenon reflected around the world. So it was a shock to me to find Cuba's coral reefs so remarkably healthy. The reason why, of course, is the central story that unfolds over the pages of the book. It's impossible to understand why Cuba has some of the healthiest coral reefs left in the Caribbean — indeed the world — without understanding what has brought coral reefs to the brink of extinction in the rest of the world. On the surface, it may seem like a simple story — Cuba has a dramatically different history from the rest of the world and has developed differently. True enough. But the real answers lie in the myriad of details which, together, combine to either cause coral reefs to flourish or to die. It's a long list, deeply entwined not only in the history of Cuba, and our own as well. So the book is as much about Cuba as it is about a river on fire in Ohio, the dramatic restoration of the Everglades and the saga of Australia's Great Barrier Reef. It even involves the influence of the late Captain Jacques-Yves Cousteau. Only then do the reasons for the remarkable reefs of Cuba come into focus and their important lessons for the rest of us become clear and compelling.

3. The subtitle of *The Remarkable Reefs of Cuba* is *Stories of Hope from the Ocean Doctor*. Is there really reason for hope?

I wouldn't have written this book if I thought there were no hope for coral reefs. I must admit that there was a point when I had all but given up hope for Caribbean reefs. The reefs in the Florida Keys I fell so deeply in love with, exquisite ecosystems that led me to pursue my career as a marine scientist, are 80-90 percent dead today. It was profoundly heartbreaking to see that unfold. But just 100 miles south of the Keys in Cuba, I unexpectedly encountered vibrant, healthy coral reefs. It was a deeply emotional moment — reefs as I had remembered them from my teen years. And that changed everything — I realized there really was hope. I've since come to understand that we can learn important lessons from a country that didn't play "follow the leader," and pursued a very different path — in part because of an accident of history, in part though establishing strong environmental laws. Those lessons can help guide our hand and help us rescue and restore reefs in the Caribbean and beyond.

4. Isn't the fate of corals all about climate change? Does anything else really matter if we don't get climate change under control?

A warming ocean can be devastating to coral reefs. The brilliant film, *Chasing Coral*, directed by friend and colleague Jeff Orlowski, whom I interviewed in the book, vividly illustrates the destructive power of oceanic warming events. It's estimated that we may have lost half of Australia's Great Barrier Reef following unprecedented warming events occurring over successive years. In the end, if we don't control climate change, we won't be able to save coral reefs. But the fact is, places like Cuba have shown us that there is much we can do to help corals be more resilient to the impacts of a warming ocean. Dealing with local impacts — such as eliminating overfishing, reducing pollution and protecting large areas of the ocean — can buy us time...hopefully the time we need to get climate change under control. Coral reefs are remarkably resilient — we just have to do everything we can to give them a fighting chance.

5. You went to Cuba for the first time in 2000. You have no Latin heritage. You didn't speak the language. You didn't know much about the culture or history of the island. That doesn't exactly sound like a recipe for success. Yet you've returned to the island more than 100 times over two decades. How did you manage to get things done? What was your personal journey like?

The book contains quite a few self-deprecating anecdotes about my misadventures in Cuba over the years. Indeed, I made many mistakes. My goal was to bring the reader with me during my journey as I learned not only about coral reefs, but about the history, culture and people of this special island that has been shrouded in mystery for many and remains at times

maddeningly difficult to understand. Figuring out how to buy chicken, or how to navigate the city in 60-year-old Chevys converted into taxis seem trivial but were at times insurmountable.

The key to success was actually not complicated. We listened carefully to what the Cubans said and what they indicated that they needed. We added our ideas to theirs. We created a team of equals and learned from one another. Building trust takes time — as it turned out, decades. But in the end, we succeeded, though not without enormous challenges of bureaucratic barriers, both in Cuba and the U.S. In an instant we could go from euphoria to despair. But in the end, we found ways to make things work. I ended up forging lifelong friendships with some of the warmest, selfless individuals I've ever known. Today I regard many of these Cubans as I do my own family. And yes, I finally did learn Spanish — on the streets of Havana.

Excerpts & Imagery



The coral reefs I grew up with—ecosystems of indescribable beauty and sanctuary... are rubble today.

At its essence, this book is a story of unthinkable environmental tragedy—the loss of one of our planet’s most important and treasured ecosystems: coral reefs. But it is also the story of unexpected hope that offers a road map to guide our hand toward restoring the magic and beauty of an ecosystem so vital to the survival of our oceans, toward restoring the awe that has touched our hearts and sparked our imagination. Cuba’s remarkable reefs offer us real stories of genuine hope.

But it’s impossible to tell this story without the context of the history of how we have managed to lose half of our coral reefs in the Caribbean. It’s impossible to tell this story without telling the story of Cuba—its history, its culture, its people, and its struggles. It’s impossible to tell this story without telling the inspirational story of collaboration of dedicated scientists from Cuba and the United States, working against a relentless tide of politics to learn from the sea and work to protect it. And it’s impossible to tell this story without sharing my personal experiences, the victories and failures, from the perspective of an American with no Latin heritage, groping his way through unfamiliar territory for more than two decades, and the unanticipated reward of the profound warmth, welcoming, and friendship of the Cuban people.

Telling “stories of hope,” as the title promises, requires understanding why hope is needed in the first place. I therefore must drag my readers through stories that are much less hopeful—

some downright depressing—in order to set the stage of why Cuba’s coral reefs are truly remarkable and why they indeed offer hope. So when it seems that all hope may be lost, hang in there. I promise to leave you on a high note.



Brain Coral

A stand of healthy brain coral in shallow waters off southern Cuba. This stand is disease-free; Cuba has been spared of many diseases that affect this species elsewhere in the Caribbean.

Trunkfish, Moon Jellyfish, & Elkhorn Coral

A trunkfish approaches a moon jellyfish above a stand of elkhorn coral in the Punta Francés marine reserve on Cuba’s Isle of Youth.

Giant Barrel Sponge

The giant barrel sponge, like this one off southern Cuba, is the largest species of sponge in the Caribbean and can reach a diameter of six feet. It has a life span of hundreds to a thousand or more years.



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