



College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Biological Sciences
Dorothy Westerman Herrmann
Natural Science Center 204D
Nunn Drive
Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099

tel 859.572.5110

www.nku.edu

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Charles A. Acosta, PhD
phone: 859-572-5300
email: acostac@nku.edu

Endorsement for Marine Scientific Research in Belize

For over 20 years, I have worked on marine ecological issues in coastal Belize and the greater Caribbean region with my students, my colleagues, and various organizations including the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Smithsonian Institution, the Fisheries Department of the Government of Belize, and the Environmental Research Institute of the University of Belize. These collaborations have provided me with opportunities to work in many regions of the Belize Barrier Reef and offshore atoll reefs. In my experience, Lighthouse Reef Atoll remains one of the most pristine and best managed marine ecosystems, making it an ideal system for scientific research.

Lighthouse Reef Atoll has been well known among recreational divers over the years for the variety and quality of its dive sites along the reef wall. It also contains the Great Blue Hole and Half Moon Caye that are designated as National Monuments and are managed for conservation purposes. These areas are no-take zones where fishing and other harvesting activities are prohibited.

From a marine research and education perspective, Lighthouse Reef Atoll is also not extensively studied and offers many opportunities to study a relatively pristine coral reef ecosystem. Monitoring studies suggests that it is a highly productive system with a very high level of biodiversity.

My personal research initiatives have enabled me to work at Lighthouse Reef on fisheries impacts. Captain Norlan Lamb and Sharkology Research Belize provided professional service and logistical support for my research group. They are fully capable and equipped to deliver service excellence for research groups. This includes open ocean vessel operation with a trained crew and staff. In collaboration with Itza Lodge on Long Caye, accommodation facilities and support for research activities are arranged for a complete package to facilitate research programs. I write this testimonial to support and endorse these organizations for prospective research programs.

Dr. Charles Acosta
Professor of Biological Sciences