

# A Case of Tourism vs Environment: Maya Bay

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# Maya Bay

- One of the most popular destinations
- Located in South-West Thailand, on Koh Phi Phi Leh Island
- Major activities are mostly water related activities:
  - Scuba diving
  - Snorkeling
  - Kayaking
- Tourist attractions
  - Sunset cruises
  - Beach bars
  - Cave tours







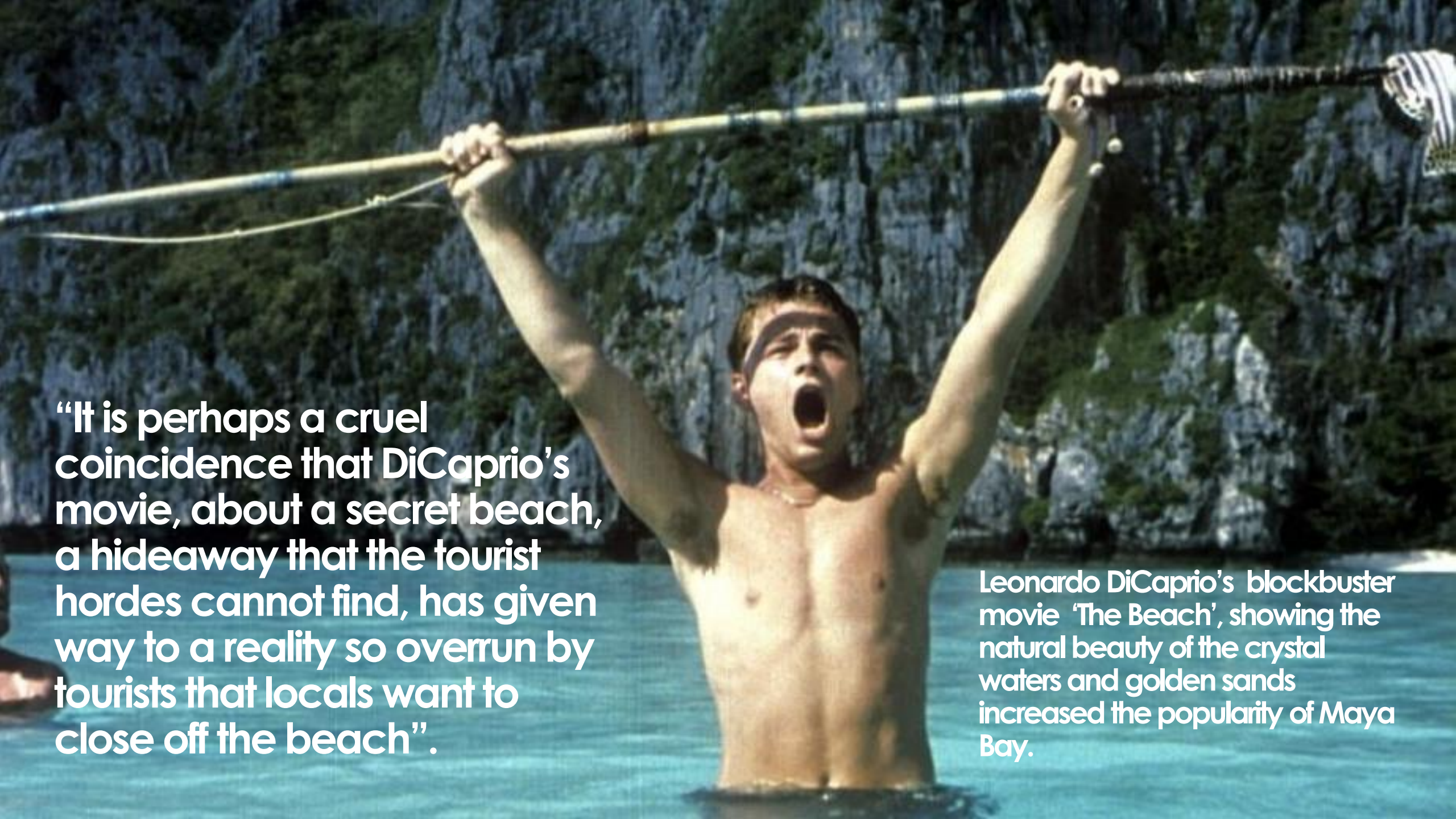
**‘A victim of its own success’  
Environmental and economic impacts of OVERTOURISM**





**How did Maya Bay become popular?**





“It is perhaps a cruel coincidence that DiCaprio’s movie, about a secret beach, a hideaway that the tourist hordes cannot find, has given way to a reality so overrun by tourists that locals want to close off the beach”.

Leonardo DiCaprio’s blockbuster movie ‘The Beach’, showing the natural beauty of the crystal waters and golden sands increased the popularity of Maya Bay.



## How was Maya Bay visited by tourists?

Speedboats, long tail boats and normal boats were used which are one of the main causes of environmental damage.



# Why was Maya Bay closed to tourism?

**Over tourism: happens when there are more visitors than the host destination can handle, and the quality of experience worsens.**

- Before its closure, Maya Bay was receiving 4000-6000 visitors, 2000 boats every day. The trash left behind was much more than these numbers which damaged the fragile marine life of Maya Bay.





# Environmental damage

- Over 80% percent of the coral reefs were destroyed because of the pollution caused from trash, boats and sunscreen.
- Certain chemicals used in sunscreen led to bleaching of the corals. Oxybenzone and octinoxate found in SPF grade sunscreens changed ocean's pH levels, which effected the growth of coral reefs.
- Sunlight is an important factor in coral reef's growth, however, the chemicals from motorboats caused the overgrowth of algae which then blocked reef's ability to absorb natural light.
- Since the coral reefs grow half a centimeter each year, it will take years to recover from this environmental and ecological damage caused by over tourism.







# Tourism explosion

## 'Instagram tourism' and Economical Aspect

"I think it makes sense to close islands. However, there are huge economic pressures on Thailand, especially during these difficult political times. Tourism has been key to Thailand's economic development so Thai businesses and officials are afraid any curtailment of tourism would imperil the Thai economy." Elizabeth Becker, author of *Overbooked*.

Annually 2.5 billion baht (\$78.66 million) were being generated by Thailand's 154 national parks.



An aerial photograph of Maya Bay, showing its iconic turquoise water and surrounding limestone cliffs. Several people are seen swimming and floating in the water, with a small raft visible on the right side. The scene is bright and clear, capturing the natural beauty of the bay.

# Saving Maya Bay



# Saving Maya Beach

- To rehabilitate and restore the health of coral reefs in Maya Bay, restoration projects are continued.
- A self developed method of Ocean Quest is used which is rescuing the damaged corals from the diving and snorkeling areas with the help of divers.





# Saving Maya Bay

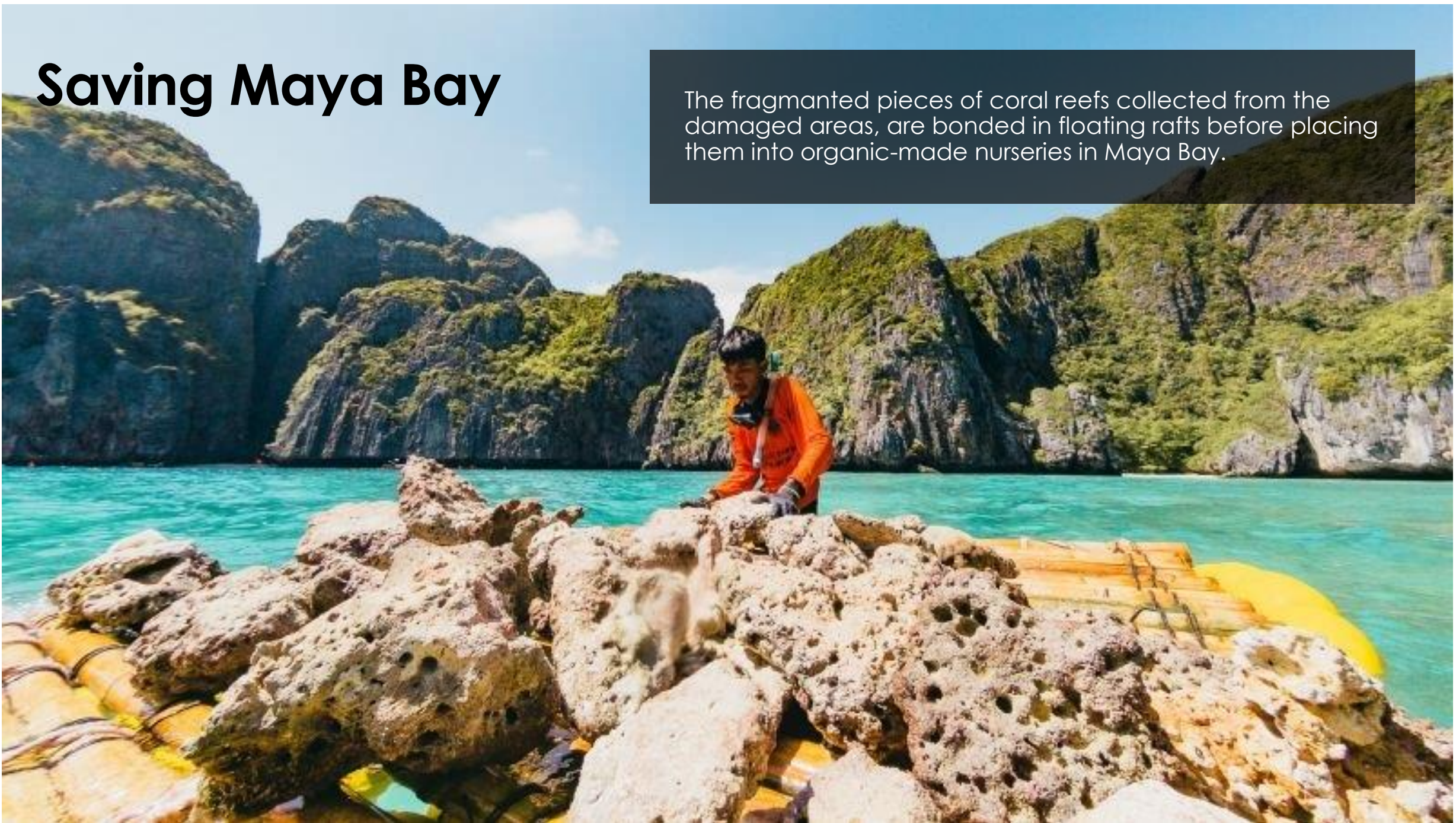
The fragmented pieces of coral reefs collected from the damaged areas, are bonded in floating rafts before placing them into organic-made nurseries in Maya Bay.





# Saving Maya Bay

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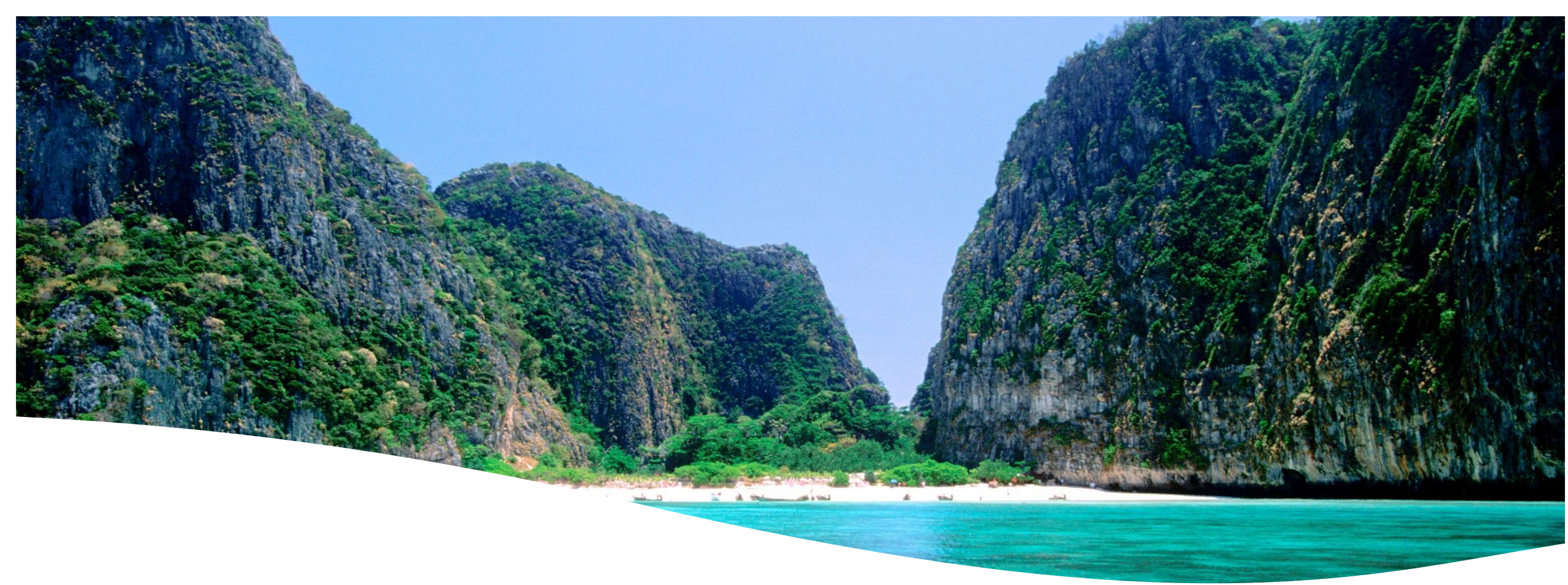


# Saving Maya Bay

Plans are made by Thai officials to control the state of Maya Bay.

- Establish an electronic ticketing system
- Install digital trackers on tour boat operators
- Adding infrastructure upgrades
- Limiting number of visitors (1,200)
- Ban boats from beaching or entering the bay so a pier will be built for boats to dock safely on a smaller beach which lead to the bay via a short walk.





**These objectives and rules will help to change Thailand's tourism sector into a more sustainable version for improved environmental and social sustainability so that it can be an example for islands in not only South East Asia but also around the World.**



# Recovery Process

## Current Results of Recovery Process

- The flora and fauna of Maya Bay have rapidly recovered .
- Coral cover's diversity increased.
- Black tip sharks returned to the bay and started to use the are as a feeding and breeding space.
- Chicken crabs have been spotted
- Dugong, a local marine animal, extremely sensitive to human interaction have seen significant population rises.







# SO WHAT?

We should be ensuring that the World lives on for future generations and we shouldn't take it for granted because if we don't act sooner, there won't be anything left to take for granted.

Since we are the guests in the countries, we should try to leave a place better than we found it.





**THANK YOU**



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