

NATURALLY,
BERMUDA



Above all else, it's surely Bermuda's natural beauty that makes it such an enticing getaway. There are many ways to experience the island's unspoilt environment, and Bermudians go to great lengths to protect that which makes the destination so special.

GOING BACK TO THE 1600S,

long before the concept of environmental conservation came to the forefront, Bermudians recognised the importance of the sea turtles that call the island's waters home. Five of the world's seven known species of sea turtles frequent the island's seagrass beds and coral reefs. From studies to conservation efforts to educational courses to the care of sick and injured sea turtles at the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum & Zoo (BAMZ), Bermudians pursue a variety of methods to preserve local sea turtle populations. To interact with these gentle creatures, head to BAMZ, where green sea turtle are kept in an outdoor pool area. If you'd prefer to observe turtles in their natural habitat, try the protected inlets around St. David's Island.

Modern conservation efforts include the implementation of Seabins, floating trash cans that filter seawater to capture litter and debris. The devices are now in place at the Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club and the Hamilton Princess & Beach Club's Princess Marina. Another modern conservation effort involves the attempted eradication of a single fish species – the invasive lionfish, whose venomous spines and incredible appetite for native juvenile fish make it a serious threat to the health of Bermuda's marine life. Bermuda was the first island to initiate a culling programme, and today many countries use it as a template for combatting their own lionfish invasions.

"The problem is that the lionfish population hasn't levelled out yet, so it's hard to say how much of an impact culling has as far as a long-term benefit," said Chris Flook of the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Services. Chris is credited with first urging the Bermuda government to implement the lionfish culling programme in the early 2000s, finally gaining traction by bringing a live lionfish in a bucket into the office of then-Minister of the Environment,



El James. "If the problem was left alone, we would probably lose certain species forever, because the lionfish eat them."

Land-based conservation efforts, like Dr. David B. Wingate's 1960s initiative to bring the island's national emblem, the cahow, back from near-extinction, have led to a thriving bird population. Nearly 400 bird species have been recorded on the island's tiny 21 square miles. Fall is the best time to see a wide range of species, and birds can be spotted from numerous locations across Bermuda.

You'll encounter beautiful views and varied flora and fauna along the Bermuda Railway Trail.

ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Check out a variety of wildfowl and herons at the mangrove-fringed ponds at Somerset Long Bay Nature Reserve East and West, or warblers and bluebirds at Fort Scaur, which offers bonus panoramic views of Ely's Harbour and the Great Sound.

One of the most versatile eco-friendly experiences in Bermuda is the Railway Trail. Bike, jog or meander by foot along 18 of the railway's original 22 miles. The railway once spanned the island, taking passengers between St. George's and Somerset, operating for less than two decades in the 1930s and 1940s. Reopened in 1986 by the Bermuda Parks Department, the trail is divided into sections ranging in length, allowing you to drop in or leave the path at your leisure. You'll encounter beautiful views and varied flora and fauna along the way, and the trail provides easy access to popular attractions like Elbow Beach, the Crystal Caves and the Gibbs Hill Lighthouse.

Numerous nature reserves round out the eco-offerings in Bermuda, like Cooper's Island, where visitors can

explore 12 acres of unspoilt wilderness that's home to seabirds and the island's iconic cedar trees, and Tom Moore's Jungle, with enchanting caves and winding, shaded hiking trails.

The uniquely varied species that have found a home in Bermuda make this island a treasure trove of ecotourism experiences. Bermuda's wildlife offers captivating experiences for everyone, whether nature novice or experienced environmentalist.



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From top: Gavin Howarth, Hidden Gems of Bermuda