

Sea of Cortez Expedition 2026.

The Sea of Cortez Expedition 2026, is a pioneer effort to investigate life along the intertidal shores of the Gulf of California. We are retracing the historic route described by Nobel Laureate John Steinbeck aboard the historic *Western Flyer* along with his biologist friend Ed Ricketts in 1940. Green Flash Conservation Science [Fig1] is a multidisciplinary, multicultural, and binational team of scientists and philosophers focusing on larger organisms and microbes. We study the interactions, genetics, and ecological dynamics. The group established international partnerships with initiatives such as Marine Biodiversity Observation Network (MBON), NASA Astrobiology, Blue Marble, Conserva Loreto AC, Ecologists Without Borders (ECOWB), WINGS Women of Discovery, Sonoran Desert Next Generation of Researchers, the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) and the University of Arizona Astrobiology Center to strengthen scientific collaboration, education, and research efforts.



Figure 1. The Green Flash Conservation Science crew on board of the *Ninnin*.



Figure 2. Lithified microbial-mat from Concepcion Bay, Baja California Sur, Mexico.

Collaborative activity.

The main objective of my participation with Green Flash Conservation Science was to obtain subsoil samples from intertidal microbial habitats [Fig2]. I collected a total of 100 samples from three different environments: (1) mangrove sediments, (2) biocrusts, and (3) clay deposits. Over the course of twenty days, we navigated from La Paz across

Espiritu Santo Island, San Jose Island, and Cayo Island. We later visited Loreto and Isla Coronado, moving north to the sampling station located at Bahia Concepcion in Santispac. The expedition concluded in Los Cabos by land.

In Loreto, we collaborated with the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur and hosted a field class for junior students majoring in management and alternative tourism [Fig 3]. The class was led by Dr. Sula Vanderplank, a well-established botanist in the region. Our meeting with students and personnel from Conserva Loreto took place at the Puerto Escondido field site, where we



Figure 3. Students from Baja Sur University (right hand) learning how to do science at the intertidal zone, with Green Flash Conservation crew members (left hand).

