



AS IT IS

Visitors Slowly Return to a Famous Thai Coastal Area

January 06, 2022

A coastal area in Thailand known as Maya Bay once had thousands of visitors each day after it appeared in the Hollywood movie *The Beach*.

The film with Leonardo DiCaprio came out in 2000. Since then, visitors to the Southeast Asian country have taken boats to see the **isolated** beach. It is on an island called Phi Phi Leh and is surrounded by 100-meter-high **cliffs**.

But the boats and **tourists** hurt the coral and chased away the fish. The water got dirty and the beach got polluted.

So, although it hurt the economy, Thailand closed the beach in 2018.

But this year, some visitors have been permitted back.

Only 375 visitors are permitted at one time. Boats are restricted to one area. People cannot swim.

But the corals and other life came back after three years of rest.

“The **sharks** have come back...and the water is clear again,” said Yuthasak Supasorn, the governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. “These things show that nature will heal if we give it time, and we have to work to keep it that way, too.”

Before COVID-19, tourism accounted for 12 percent of the Thai economy. About 40 million people came to visit in 2019.

The visitors brought in money but also hurt the environment. In Thailand and other beautiful parts of southeast Asia, beaches have become polluted as visitors left waste behind.

Manuele Panin, a visitor to Maya Bay, from Italy said: “It’s a **marvelous** place. I think it is fine that it has been closed all this time to protect the nature and **allow** it to restore and recover.”

I’m Dan Friedell

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on a report by Reuters.

Are there areas where you live that should be given a break from tourists? Tell us in the Comments Section and visit our Facebook page.

Words in This Story

isolated – *adj.* separated from others; far away

cliff – *n.* a high surface of rock, earth or ice

shark – *n.* a large, sometimes dangerous sea fish that has very sharp teeth

tourist – *n.* a person who travels for pleasure and not for business

marvelous – *adj.* extremely good or enjoyable

allow – *v.* to permit; to let happen
