

~ 2020 Annual General Meeting ~
Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network
(WIDECAST)

Hilton Cartagena Hotel

Cartagena, Colombia

14-15 March 2020

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Dates:

The Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) will convene its annual general meeting (AGM) on 14-15 March 2020 in Cartagena, Colombia, at the same venue as the 2020 International Sea Turtle Symposium (ISTS). Participants will fly into Rafael Nuñez International Airport (CTG) on Friday, 13 March. The [Hilton Cartagena Hotel](#) is 10 km from the airport. It is located at the tip of El Laguito Peninsula, surrounded by the Caribbean Sea and just a few minutes from the historic walled city.

On Monday, 16 March, WIDECAST is co-sponsoring (with WWF's Latin America and the Caribbean Office: Dr. Diego Amoroch, Species Program Coordinator) a Bycatch Workshop hosted by Tony Nalovic, a fisheries engineer with Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages marins en Guyane (CRPMEM) in French Guiana (Tony is also a Regional Vice-Chair of the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group).



There will be a Welcome Social on Monday evening, 16 March, to launch the ISTS.

Objective:

The aim of the meeting is to share information on national and regional-level sea turtle research, management, and outreach programs; to learn from peer experiences; to facilitate networking and partnerships; and to strengthen science-based conservation programming. The agenda will include national reports, regional issue reviews, working groups, and technical presentations with related discussion. WIDECAST country coordinators, biologists, policy-makers, and educators from throughout the Wider Caribbean region are welcome to attend.

International Travel:

Fly into Rafael Nuñez International Airport (CTG) on Friday, 13 March. Delta, Avianca, and American Airlines fly direct from the USA; other major carriers in the region include Copa, LATAM Airlines Group, KLM, and United Airlines.

Travel grants are available from ISTS. Visit <https://internationalseaturtlesociety.org/travel-grant-guidelines/> for details and **don't miss the deadlines!!**

Be sure to plan your travel to stay on through the ISTS, which is an amazing international conference. The "early bird" discounted registration ends November 15, and is \$150 USD for low income (less than \$50,000 USD) countries. Visit [here](#) for details. If you stay for the conference, plan to depart on 21 March.

Airport Transport:

Rafael Núñez International Airport is a single-terminal airport situated approximately 2 miles northeast of the city centre. Typical taxi charge is COP\$ 23,000 (about USD\$ 7). It is recommended that you exchange money in the airport in order to pay in Colombian pesos (COP). The Hilton Cartagena Hotel is 6 miles from the airport, travel time is about 12 minutes. The street address of the hotel is: Avenida Almirante Brión, El Laguito, Cartagena, Colombia 130001.

Visas:

All passports must be valid for at least six (6) months from date of entry, so please check your passport and renew it if necessary. As far as I can tell, only travelers from Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua will need a visa to enter Colombia. See <https://www.visatraveler.com/visa-guides/colombia-visa-requirements/> for details. U.S. citizens do not need a Colombian visa for a tourist or business stay of 90 days or less. A complete list of Colombian Embassies [here](#).

Health:

As far as I can tell, it is not mandatory to have any specific vaccinations in order to enter Colombia. EXCEPTION: A yellow fever vaccine, documented on the WHO International Certificate of Vaccination, is required for travelers coming from Brazil, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda. The vaccine must have been administered at least 10 days before arrival in Colombia.

Meeting Expenses:

Registration Fee: **None** 😊

Hotel Cost: We have the same discounted room rate as for the 2020 International Sea Turtle Symposium, as follows: Single room \$129 USD. Double room \$140 USD, or \$70 USD per person. These are rates per room, per night. Check-in 3:00 pm, Check-out at noon. Buffet breakfast at Las Chivas Restaurant is included 😊

Please be advised that as per Colombia's regulations, a 19% VAT applies. HOWEVER, I understand from the hotel management that tourists are exempted if your passport is stamped with a code (PIP3, PIP5, PIP6, PIP10, TP7, TP11, or TP12) upon entry through Immigration. Please make sure that your passport gets stamped! At check-in, you must present the passport at the hotel to verify the stamp and make a copy for the document.

We have a block of rooms reserved, so at this point please just let me know whether you prefer a SINGLE (King bed) or DOUBLE (two Queen beds) room. Please do **not** make your own hotel reservation. (Curious? Hotel pictures [here!](#))

Luz Socorro Romero, Regional Manager of Sales, confirmed on Thursday, February 20, 2020, that "our guests can pay their hotel bill with credit cards, Colombian currency and US\$ cash (according to the hotel exchange rate on the day of check-out)."

Meals: Breakfast is complimentary (included in your room rate). Lunch and dinner are served buffet-style on site at Las Chivas restaurant. Price per person: US\$ 23, which includes 8% consumption tax and 10% suggested service. As I understand it, the buffet is available at all hours; it can be charged to your room or paid by cash or credit card. Non-alcoholic beverages (soft drinks, juices) are \$3, including 8% consumption tax and 10% service charge.

Conference Room: The Conference Room has a capacity 100+ persons and is fully equipped with amenities, including a screen, beamer, laptop, microphone, and a service staff member.

Currency:

The peso is the currency of Colombia. Plan to use only pesos throughout your stay. Credit cards are accepted in all major shops, hotels, and restaurants in Cartagena and Bogota. Foreign visitors should be prepared to provide ID to verify a credit card transaction. Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are the most commonly accepted credit cards in Colombia. For additional detail, visit <https://transferwise.com/gb/blog/money-and-banks-in-colombia>

Electrical and Internet:

Electrical: In Colombia, the power plugs and sockets are of type A and B. Type B is similar to type A, but with an extra prong for grounding. This socket also works with plug A.



If your equipment doesn't have one of these plugs, **please have a travel adapter with you.**

Internet: It's my understanding that free Wi-Fi Internet is available in all rooms, but WIDECASD will be charged \$3 USD per person, per day in the conference room.

Contact:

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