



CUBA

SEA TURTLE EXPEDITION WITH SEA TURTLE CONSERVANCY

June 25 – July 3, 2016



Formerly known as the Caribbean Conservation Corporation, the Sea Turtle Conservancy is the world's oldest sea turtle research and conservation group. Founded in 1959 by Dr. Archie Carr — the world's leading authority on sea turtles — the Florida-based STC continues to study and protect sea turtles in the United States and around the world.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel with experts from the Sea Turtle Conservancy to observe the nesting process of green sea turtles and collect data with biologists.
- Snorkel the clear waters of the coral reef at María la Gorda (optional scuba diving may also be available at an additional charge).
- Meet with local conservationists and marine researchers.
- Visit the picturesque Viñales Valley, known for its unusual limestone formations.
- Stop at Ernest Hemingway's home, Finca La Vigía.

ITINERARY

JUNE 25 - MIAMI OR TAMPA

Check in at the airport hotel for the night. Hotel this night is not included and will be booked on a per person basis upon request.

JUNE 26 - HAVANA

Very early this morning, take the hotel shuttle to the airport to check in for the charter flight to Havana. You will need to begin the check-in process four hours prior to departure. Upon arrival at the José Martí International Airport in Havana, you will be transferred by bus to the Hotel Presidente. It may still be too early for check-in, in which case you can make use of the lobby to get acquainted with your program and exchange money. In the evening enjoy a group welcome dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Presidente or similar. (D)*

JUNE 27 - HAVANA

Today you will be given a guided walking tour of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover the four “plazas” in Old Havana: Plaza de la Catedral, Plaza Vieja, Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, and Plaza de Armas. Included in your visit, tour the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of the Revolution. Have lunch during your tour. You will also learn about the restoration projects going on throughout Havana, and see the giant model of the city. This evening enjoy dinner at a privately owned restaurant with Dr. Julia Ananza from the Guanahacabibes Marine Turtle Conservation Program. *Overnight at Hotel Presidente or similar. (BLD)*

JUNE 28 - GUANAHACABIBES PENINSULA

Travel today to María La Gorda, located in the westernmost part of Cuba in the Guanahacabibes Natural Park. En route visit Las Terrazas. Founded in 1971, its residents were encouraged to play an active role in the preservation and care of the local environment. They formed the backbone of the workforce, whose first task was a massive government-funded reforestation project. As well as building the village itself, this project entailed planting trees along terraces dug into the hillside, thus guarding against erosion and giving the place its name. This was all part of a grander scheme by the government to promote self sufficiency and education in rural areas. Today a large proportion of the community works in tourism, some as employees at the hotel and others as owners of the small businesses that have been set up in response to the growing numbers of visitors. After exploring the area have lunch at Cafetal Buenavista, a restaurant built on the ruins of a French coffee plantation. After checking in at Hotel María La Gorda you will have some time to freshen up. After dinner meet local researchers and park rangers and learn about this diverse park, which is home to the second largest breeding population of green turtles in the country, with an average of more than 300 nests per season (and

a record 900 nests in 2013). Later in the evening head over to the beach to look for turtles coming ashore and to observe the nesting process as the researchers collect data. Through the efforts of the University of Havana's Center for Marine Investigations and Cuba Marine Research and Conservation, an estimated 14,000 hatchlings were saved. *Overnight at Hotel María La Gorda. (BLD)*

JUNE 29 - GUANAHACABIBES PENINSULA

After breakfast, visit a turtle nesting beach in the park to document any tracks from the previous night. Next experience the park's impressive coral reefs via a guided snorkeling excursion by boat. (Snorkel equipment is not included; the option for scuba diving is also available with an added charge.) Experts consider the seabed at María la Gorda to be among the best for marine photography because of the water clarity and the abundant marine life such as sharks, stingrays, barracuda, grouper, lobsters, eels, angelfish, crabs and more. Before dusk, head to the turtle beach, where you will have opportunities to help the researchers measure the turtles, record data, and other tasks. Spend the night helping biologists with research or return to your room. *Overnight at Hotel María La Gorda. (BLD)*

JUNE 30 - GUANAHACABIBES PENINSULA

This morning go birding in Guanahacabibes Peninsula. The area is inhabited by 172 species of birds belonging to 42 families, 11 of which are endemic and 84 are migratory. This afternoon you will have time to relax and explore on your own or you can participate in a sunset snorkeling excursion. Tonight return to the beach and continue helping biologists with turtle research. *Overnight at Hotel María La Gorda. (BLD)*

JULY 01 - VIÑALES

Today you will travel to the incredibly picturesque town of Viñales, located in the western province of Pinar del Río. This small town is located amid a verdant valley where farmers cultivate tobacco, fruits, and vegetables. This province is a rural heartland of Cuba and is home to the best tobacco growing farms in the world. After lunch visit a local cigar and guarabita rum factory. This evening enjoy dinner at Finca Agroecology where you will enjoy a delicious farm-to-table organic meal. *Overnight at Hotel Los Jazmines. (BLD)*

JULY 02 - HAVANA

This morning will be at leisure to enjoy the area. After lunch return to Havana, with a visit en route to Ernest Hemingway's former home, Finca La Vigía, in the modest town of San Francisco de Paula. The remainder of the day will be free for independent exploration. In the evening gather for a farewell dinner at Atelier. *Overnight at Hotel Presidente or similar. (BLD)*

JULY 03 - DEPARTURE

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to Miami or Tampa. *(B)*

ABOUT YOUR LEADERS



David Godfrey Mr. Godfrey is CEO of the non-profit Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC). David has been involved professionally in environmental conservation for over 25 years. Since 1993, he has been focused on sea turtle and coastal habitat issues. David has authored numerous

articles and papers on environmental matters, with an emphasis on coastal protection and sea turtles. He has participated in numerous sea turtle research projects, and he has written and/or narrated numerous documentaries and videos pertaining to sea turtle and coastal conservation issues. During his tenure with STC, he led the effort to establish Florida's sea turtle specialty license plate, which is now the main funding source for sea turtle protection in Florida. He is Chairman of the Florida Sea Turtle Grants Program, which awards annual financial support for sea turtle research and education projects benefiting Florida sea turtles. He is also a member of the World Conservation Union's Marine Turtle Specialist Group.



Daniel Evans is a technology and research specialist at the Sea Turtle Conservancy. He oversees several critical aspects of STC's sea turtle research, conservation and educational programs. He is a world leader in the use of satellite telemetry to track sea turtle migration

and habitat usage, and he oversees the highly popular Tour de Turtles education program, which uses satellite tracking as the foundation for an Internet-based education program used by millions of people around the world. Dan also manages STC's extensive educational programming, including the popular Distance Learning Program, which provides remote field trips for schools around the United States. He is an accomplished field biologist and has published numerous papers on his satellite-tracking research, which also is the focus of his ongoing Ph.D. work at the University of Florida. Dan received his B.S. in Wildlife Biology and Management at the University of Massachusetts, and his M.S. in Ecology and Conservation Biology at the University of Maryland, where he used GPS and GIS to map bird habitat use. He expects to complete his Ph.D. studies in 2017. Dan has given numerous presentations on issues affecting sea turtles in the state of Florida, organized and conducted guided sea turtle walks for the general public and for educators, written popular journal articles on conservation issues and appeared in numerous documentaries about sea turtles. He also provides administrative oversight of the Florida Sea Turtle Grants Program; funded by the Florida Sea Turtle Specialty License Plate, the grants program has awarded millions of dollars in funding to support sea turtle research, conservation, and education in Florida.

LAND COST

\$3,285 (based on 20 participants)

Includes all meals, accommodations, and activities as mentioned in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide, and gratuities for guide and driver.

Does not include international airfare, snorkel equipment, Tampa or Miami hotel, or items of a personal nature.

AIR COST

Charter flights from Tampa or Miami are estimated at \$575-\$600 and include Cuban visa, departure tax, and mandatory Cuban health insurance. Holbrook can assist with flights from your home city to Tampa or Miami if desired.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; single rooms may be available at an additional cost. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to hold your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable until April 26, 2016 minus a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payment is due April 26, 2016. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit www.travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.



Photo by James Cornwell



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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL

Visit holbrook.travel/stccuba16 or contact Lisa Palmese-Graubard at 352-377-7111 x339 or lisa@holbrooktravel.com

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