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Hotel Packages, Renovations, & Awards

### **PUNTACANA Resort & Club Announces Launch of 'Voluntourism' Bird Watching Package**

*'Voluntourism' Package to launch this holiday season, celebrating 40 years of Sustainable Tourism For*

NEW YORK, NY, November 30, 2009 - PUNTACANA Resort & Club today announces the launch of their first 'voluntourism' package: participation in the island's annual bird count with renowned ornithologist Dr. André Dhondt. From December 28 through January 2, guests at both Tortuga Bay and The Puntacana Hotel will be invited to partake in this yearly census of the 27 indigenous bird species native only to the Dominican Republic. The count is a crucial method used to monitor and protect the health of the island's unique birdlife.

Dr. André Dhondt, from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, will be offering tours around the grounds of the resort, lectures on the island's birds in the Ecological Foundation, and exclusive access to the resort's beautiful Ecological Reserve. Each tour will be limited to 10 participants who will be provided with binoculars, field guides and refreshments. Participants will learn the basics of Caribbean ornithology, bird observation skills, and have the opportunity to participate in scientific research of native, migratory, and endemic bird species. Participants will also hope to see the highly rare Ridgeway Hawk, an endangered species that has been recently reintroduced by the PUNTACANA Ecological Foundation. PUNTACANA Ecological Foundation was founded by PCR&C in 1994 to maintain the health of the local ecosystem. Today the organization plays a key role in PCR&C's corporate and social responsibility efforts.

"This is a great opportunity for our guests to learn more about the wildlife here in Punta Cana, and help us to preserve and protect the natural environment that people come to enjoy. We are very proud to be able to offer our guests the chance to participate in one of our many ecological programs," said Jake Kheel, Environmental Director of PUNTACANA Resort & Club.

Executive Director of Hospitality Alberto Abreu said, "People think of eco-tourism as tents and backpacks. The launch of these voluntourism packages means that guests can relax and enjoy their vacation while also helping us take care of a beautiful natural environment. The Oscar de la Renta designed villas at Tortuga Bay, new rooms at the Puntacana Hotel, Six Senses Spa or our golf courses are the perfect locations to unwind after the day's activities. It really is a uniquely "Eco-Chic" pairing for our guests." Since its inception in 1969 PUNTACANA Resort & Club has been recognized as a pioneer of Sustainable Tourism practices. Frank Rainieri (President and CEO of PUNTACANA Resort & Club), has always emphasized the need to care for the natural and human resources that make the Dominican Republic one of Caribbean's most popular destinations. "I believe in sustainable development, sustainable tourism and sustainability. We are very proud to be able to offer our guests a way to help us care for the natural environment that we are lucky enough to call our home."

#### About PUNTACANA Resort & Club

The development of Grupo PUNTACANA dates back to 1969 when Dominican businessman and hotelier Frank R. Rainieri and Theodore W. Kheel, the prominent New York attorney and labor mediator, created a partnership to construct a resort and real estate community that respects the natural habitat of Punta Cana while offering a world-class vacation experience. Maintaining a dedication to sustainable tourism, PUNTACANA Resort & Club has since grown to encompass over 26 square miles and now includes Tortuga Bay; Six Senses Spa; the PUNTACANA Ecological Foundation; four residential communities (Corales, Hacienda, Marina and Arrecife); a full-service marina; nine restaurants; a shopping village; two 18-hole golf courses (La Cana, designed by P.B. Dye, and Corales, designed by Tom Fazio); and Punta Cana International Airport, a modern facility that incorporates innovative and eco-friendly design. In 1997, Julio Iglesias and Oscar de la Renta joined the Group as co-investors and have made PUNTACANA Resort & Club their home. Currently, Punta Cana is the most highly visited Caribbean destination and is easily accessible from all over the globe.

#### About The Ecological Foundation

GRUPO PUNTACANA, the owner of PUNTACANA Resort & Club, founded The Ecological Foundation in 1994 to protect the Dominican coral reefs, reduce pollutants, replant coastal mangroves, and maintain the health of the coastal ecosystem. The Foundation also developed the Center for Sustainability and Biodiversity of PUNTACANA, which brings together experts from Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and the University of Miami to develop and implement new ecological programs. These ventures work to strengthen and maintain PCR&C's deep commitment to environmental protection and sustainable tourism, while also aiming to serve as both inspiration and a working example to similar progress throughout the Caribbean and around the globe.

#### Awards and Affiliations

PUNTACANA Ecological Foundation maintains affiliations with a diverse group of institutions that confirm its commitment to sustainable development. The foundation is a founding member and of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) and has made a yearly commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative since its inception in 2005. PUNTACANA Resort & Club is a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative.

Previous awards include;

- In September 2007, the PUNTACANA Ecological Foundation received the annual prize for Corporate Social Responsibility from the American Chamber of Commerce in Dominican Republic
- In October 2007, the Prize for Excellence in Environmental Protection from the Brugal Foundation.
- In November 2007, Tortuga Bay, owned by PUNTACANA Resort & Club, received the "Leading Hotels of the World" prize for excellence in environmental practices, due in large part to the efforts of the Ecological Foundation.
- PUNTACANA Resort & Club was listed in May 2008 in Island Magazine in the list of the 100 most socially responsible resorts in the world.
- In November 2008, PUNTACANA Resort & Club was a nominee (second place) in the Best Initiative in Sustainable Development for the Hospitality Awards in Paris France.
- In January 2009, PUNTACANA Resort & Club won the prestigious World Tourism and Travel Council "Tourism for Tomorrow" award in the category of Destination Stewardship.
- In March 2009, PUNTACANA Resort & Club won the "Clean Development" prize for Central America and the Caribbean for its integrated solid waste management program by the Central Committee for Environment and Development (CCAD).
- In September 2009, PUNTACANA Resort & Club won the Condé Nast Traveler "World Saver's Award" for its education programs.

#### About Dr. André Dhondt

Dr. André Dhondt is the Edwin H. Mergens Professor of Ornithology at Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology. After he obtained his Ph.D. in his native Belgium, he has studied birds in Europe, Africa, North and South America and the Pacific. He has studied the birds of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic since 2000. André has published more than 250 scientific papers.