

Parque Nacional Tikal, Fotografía Iván Castro



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

February 13 to 17, 2023

Petén, Guatemala

Red Fronted Parrots Rony Rodríguez



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OBJECTIVES

- Support regional coordination, led by regional representatives.
- Facilitate regional collaboration, allowing nodes to share updated information on their activities and receive feedback from their peers.
- Provide information to the Secretariat on regional challenges and priorities.
- Develop greater regional participation in GBIF by identifying dissemination strategies and actions, often also with the participation of observers.

Meeting language and modality

The meeting will be held in Spanish; however, interventions by participants from countries that speak other languages may be made in English, including presentations. It is recommended to send your presentations at least one week before the meeting to the email snib.guatemala@gmail.com. The modality of the meeting will be face-to-face only.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas, Nodo GBIF Guatemala.

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EVENT DATES AND GENERAL AGENDA

Monday February 13

Arrival of the participants in Guatemala City. Group 1 will be made up of those who arrive on time to take the last flight to Flores, Petén (4:40 pm) and will be transferred by air from La Aurora International Airport to Mundo Maya International Airport, located in Flores, Petén, in a flight of approximately 1 hour, upon arrival you will be accommodated at the hotel reserved by the organizers, which will be informed later.

The participants of Group 2, will be the ones who arrive in Guatemala City after 4:40 pm, and will be accommodated in a hotel near to the airport, to sleep there, and on Tuesday 14th they will leave on the first flight at 5:45 am to the Mundo Maya International Airport, they will be arriving in Flores at approximately 6:45.

All participants will be picked up at both airports by CONAP personnel, look for the CONAP and GBIF logos in the arrivals area.



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IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT FLIGHTS

All financed participants will have 2 flight itineraries, 1 international flight and 1 domestic flight, take into account that both flights ARE NOT CONNECTING. Upon arrival at La Aurora International Airport, you must go to Immigration and complete the process of entering the country and stamping your passport. Later, go to the baggage claim area, go through customs controls and exit through the "Arrivals" door, then go to the parking lot that is across the street, look for an elevator, steps or ramp to the second level of the airport and look for the "Departures" door, you must re-enter to the airport and look for the TAG AIRLINES airline counter, to check in to Flores, Petén. With your ticket in hand, head towards the departure of domestic flights. You do not need to go through immigration or customs control again.

International Flight:

This itinerary will be arranged between the participants and the GBIF Secretariat, from their city of origin to Guatemala City. It is considered very important to accept flight itineraries that allow them to arrive in Guatemala City, preferably on Monday the 13th. February before 4:40 p.m., if your arrival is after this time, you must spend the night in Guatemala City and leave on the first flight to Flores on the 14th at 5:45 a.m. (must be at the airport 2 hours before).

National Flight:

This flight will be coordinated between the participants and the local organizers of the event. The flight is local, it is from Guatemala City, La Aurora International Airport to Mundo Maya International Airport, in Flores Petén. This flight only allows 1 carry-on bag up to 10 pounds and 1 checked bag under 20 pounds, at no additional cost. It will not be possible to make refunds for excess baggage, so it is recommended to travel as light as possible to avoid setbacks and surcharges. The return flight from Flores to Guatemala City will be on Friday the 17th in the afternoon for all participants. It is expected that they will stay one night in a hotel near the airport in Guatemala City, to take their flight to their cities of origin on Saturday the 18th at the time established according to their itineraries. More Information will be provided during the meeting,

Tuesday February 14

Between 7 and 9 hours Group 2 arrives at Petén. They will be transferred from the airport to the meeting venue by CONAP personnel. The meeting venue is only 5 minutes from the airport.

From 8:30 to 9:00 there will be the registration of participants at the meeting venue, and at 9:00 it will start according to the agenda. It will end at 5:00 p.m.

From 7 to 9 p.m., Icebreaker –Welcome Dinner-, this activity will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. in a restaurant in the City of Flores, a 10-minute walk from the meeting place. This day it is customary to celebrate the "Día del Cariño" in Guatemala, and we will take the opportunity to exchange gifts among the participants, you can bring something typical of your country to exchange with another person, and we will do a secret friend dynamic.

Wednesday February 15

From 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., the meeting continues as established in the agenda.

Thursday February 16

Field Trip, Visit to Tikal National Park. We will leave at 9:00 am from the meeting point that will be informed one day before, everyone must have breakfast at the hotel. There will be a transfer in a private bus from Flores to Tikal, with a duration of approximately 1.5 hours. Upon arrival at the park, the entrance will be made and the instructions of the tourist guide will be followed. The tour will be on foot, a snack will be provided in the morning and another in the afternoon, and also a lunch in the middle of the day. If any of the participants have mobility problems, let us know in advance to arrange a suitable means of transportation. The tour in the park will last approximately 10 hours, several stops will be made in different areas of the park, breaks, including a last stop to watch the sunset in one of the magical Tikal temples.

It is recommended to wear sports shoes or tennis shoes or comfortable field boots for walking, fresh clothes, hat or cap, sunscreen, mosquito repellent, a comfortable back pack and enough water, it is important to carry a hand or head light, since we will leave the park at night after watching the sunset.

9th. REGIONAL MEETING OF LAC NODES

More information about the Tikal National Park is provided later.

Friday February 17

It continues according to the schedule from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At the end of lunch we will travel by boat on Lake Petén Itza, to see an emblematic place in the area where those who wish can swim. During lunch you must check out at the hotel.

It is expected that most of you will be able to travel on the last 2 flights (5:00 p.m. or 8:00 p.m.) from Mundo Maya International Airport to La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City, where you will be picked up and taken to a hotel near the airport to stay that night and on Saturday they will be transferred from the hotel to the airport to fly according to their itinerary. More details will be provided later.

Additionally, the meeting agenda is attached as an annex.

PLACE OF VENUE, ACOMODATION AND ALIMENTATION

- On days 14, 15 and 17 the meeting will be held at [Hotel Casona del Lago](#), located in Calle Litoral, 17029 Flores, Petén, Guatemala. The Hotel Casona del Lago is located on the shores of Lake Peten Itza, in front of the island of Flores. The Mundo Maya International Airport is a 5-minute drive away. Wireless internet will be available for the use of the participants, as well as air conditioning. Lunches and coffee breaks will be included during the meeting. Breakfasts are included in the hotel where you stay.
- **It is recommended to wear a casual and cool wardrobe, since it is a normally hot place and comfortable shoes to walk.**
- For the financed participants, the dinners on the 13th, 15th, 16th and 17th will be included in a daily stipend that will be delivered in cash in the local currency in Quetzales, to each participant at the beginning of the meeting. Participants will be able to choose from the wide variety of restaurants and gastronomic options on the Island of Flores.
- Accomodation for financed participants may be distributed in some of the corporation's lodgings [Hoteles de Petén](#), all located 5 minutes walk from the Hotel Casona del Lago, or in the same place of the meeting.
- Participants who are not financed are recommended to make their lodging reservations in some of the [Hoteles de Petén](#), which correspond to the following:
- [HOTEL CASONA DEL LAGO](#), Address: Calle litoral al Lago Petén Itzá, Santa Elena, Petén, Tels. (502) 7952-8700, <https://hotelesdepeten.com/wp/es/hotel-casona-del-lago/>,
- [HOTEL CASONA DE LA ISLA](#), Address: Calle 30 de Junio, Isla de Flores, Petén, Teléfono: (502) 7867-5200, E-mail: casonadelaisla@hotelesdepeten.com, WhatsApp: (502) 4338-2083
- [HOTEL PETÉN](#), Address Calle 30 de Junio, Isla de Flores, Petén, Teléfono: (502) 7867-5203, E-mail: hotelpeten@hotelesdepeten.com, WhatsApp: (502) 4324-3514
- [HOTEL CASAZUL](#), Address: Calle la Unión, Isa de Fores, Petén, Teléfono: (502) 7867-5451, E-mail: hotelpeten@hotelesdepeten.com, WhatsApp: (502) 4342-1430, <https://hotelesdepeten.com/wp/es/hotel-casazul/>
- [HOTEL PETEN EXPRESS](#), Address: Calle 30 de Junio, Isla de Flores, Petén Teléfono: (502) 7867-5203, E-mail: hotelpeten@hotelesdepeten.com, WhatsApp: (502) 4324-3514, <https://hotelesdepeten.com/wp/es/hotel-peten-express/>
- [CASA TURQUESA](#) <https://hotelesdepeten.com/wp/es/casa-turquesa/>, Address: Calle 30 de Junio, Ciudad Flores, Petén, Tels. (502) 7867-5164. casaturquesa@hotelesdepeten.com

VISA, ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO GUATEMALA AND BIOSECURITY

Visa

To find out if you need a visa, visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs https://www.minex.gob.gt/Visor_Pagina.aspx?PaginaID=21. Nationals of countries that require visa category B and have a valid United States or Canadian visa are exempt from the Guatemalan visa. Nationals of category A countries are exempt from the Guatemalan visa. Nationals of countries that require a Category B or C visa will be supported to obtain their visa. Please inform snib.guatemala@gmail.com as soon as possible, and send a copy of your passport to this email, and also locate and inform the Guatemalan consulate or embassy closest to your residence, in the following directory,

In South America https://www.minex.gob.gt/Visor_Pagina.aspx?PaginaID=1199,

In Central America <https://www.minex.gob.gt/Uploads/AmericaCentral03012023.pdf>,

In the Caribbean <https://www.minex.gob.gt/Uploads/ElCaribe01022022.pdf>.

Entry Requirements and Biosecurity

Sanitary requirements to enter the country as of August 13, 2022, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance has updated the biosafety guidelines for the prevention of COVID-19 at the points of entry into the national territory, as follow:

- It is recommended that everyone should continue with biosecurity measures such as hand washing with soap and water or alcohol, and maintain physical distancing.
- Proof of vaccination is not required.
- It is not necessary to present a test for the detection of COVID-19.
- Do not travel if you have any symptoms of acute respiratory disease or suspicion of COVID-19.
- The use of the mask is highly recommended for people over 2 years of age. The use of the mask is excepted for passengers who have certified medical contraindications for its use.

However, it is recommended to review the guidelines of the airlines in which you will travel prior to your flight. It is recommended to review the website of the Guatemalan Institute of Migration, to know the most updated Sanitary Protocol for Entry to Guatemala at the following link <https://igm.gob.gt/protocolo-sanitario-de-ingreso-a-guatemala/>.

When staying in Guatemalan territory, it is recommended to wear a mask in closed spaces and public places, especially if there is a high influx of people. Government measures are constantly changing according to the incidence of COVID in the population and by municipality, so it is recommended to review the government page <https://covid19.gob.gt/> to keep up to date with the measures. A system of Alert Level by Region is managed at the national level and can be consulted at <https://covid19.gob.gt/semaforo.html>.

INFORMATION ABOUT FLORES, PETÉN AND GUATEMALA CITY

Language: The main language spoken is Spanish. There are also 22 other Mayan languages spoken, as well as Garífuna and Xinca, which are only spoken in specific regions of the country, depending on the linguistic community or indigenous people that inhabit the area. In Guatemala City, Spanish is mainly spoken. In the department of Petén, Spanish and the Mayan Itza', Q'eqchi', and Mopan languages are spoken.

Petén

(Petén (from itzá: Noj Petén “Big Island”) It is one of the 22 departments of Guatemala, and it is the largest department in the Republic of Guatemala and the least inhabited. Located in the north of the country, and together with Chichén Itzá, it was the capital of the Mayan empire. It limits to the north with the Mexican states of Quintana Roo and Campeche; to the south with the departments of Izabal and Alta Verapaz; to the southeast with the Department of Quiché; to the east with Belize with the districts of Cayo and Toledo; and to the west with Mexico with the states of Tabasco and Chiapas. It has a territorial extension of 35,854 km², which makes it the largest department in Guatemala, as well as the largest sub-national entity in Central America.

The towns of Isla de Flores and Santa Elena de la Cruz make up the departmental capital, which is located approximately 488 km from the national capital. Approximately 60% of the population is mestizo or ladino, of the remaining 40% are Creoles and Itzá and Mopán indigenous people, and to a lesser extent the black or Garífuna population that inhabit the nearby municipalities to the south of Belize and north of Izabal.

Of the 14 plant life zones in Guatemala, according to Holdridge's classification, this department, due to the type of topography on its land, has two life zones. These are: Warm subtropical humid forest (bh-SC) and Warm subtropical very humid forest (bmh-SC).

Maya Biosphere Reserve: Located in Petén, being the largest protected natural space in Guatemala with an area of 21,602.04 km. The reserve occupies the northern half of the department of Petén and is bordered by Mexico (to the north and west) at the latter point, bordered by the Cañón del Usumacinta ecological reserve located in the Mexican state of Tabasco, and by Belize to the east. The San Pedro River runs through it.

The Reserve was created in 1990, during the presidency of Vinicio Cerezo, to protect the largest area of tropical forest that still exists in Central America. The biosphere reserve model, implemented by UNESCO, aims to promote a balance between human activities and the biosphere by including sustainable economic development in conservation policy. The reserve includes several national parks, protected biotopes and archaeological sites.

9th. REGIONAL MEETING OF LAC NODES

Tikal National Park, Located in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, it was created under a government decree of May 26, 1955, and covers 57,583 hectares. In 1979 it was declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco, both for its natural and cultural values. Since 1990 it has been part of the world network of biosphere reserves, within the Maya Biosphere Reserve.

The park's main tourist attraction is the ancient Mayan city of Tikal, surrounded by jungle. The archaeological site of Tikal occupies 1,600 hectares in the heart of the national park. It is the largest of the ancient cities of the Maya of the classical period. In the George Lucas movie Star Wars, the scenes of the fictional moon of Yavin IV were shot in this park.

The park is covered by primary shady forest, with a canopy that rises up to fifty meters, with abundant tree species of commercial importance and precious woods. There is also a wide diversity of birds, both migratory, resident and endemic, which are easy to observe with the naked eye and with binoculars. They have also recorded more than 20 species of amphibians, more than 65 species of reptiles and also several venomous snakes, including the coral snake (*Micrurus altirostris*), the central american rattlesnake (*Crotalus simus*), as well as stone hand vipers (*Atropoides nummifer*), chatilla de la selva (*Porthidium nasutum*), and and especially the barba amarilla or terciopelo (*Bothrops asper*).

La Isla de Flores It is an island located in Lake Peten Itzá, it belongs to the Department of Petén, Guatemala. The city of Flores is located on this island, which is part of the head of this department, next to the town of Santa Elena de la Cruz. Formerly, it was known by the natives as "Noj Petén" (also spelled "Noh Petén"), which means "Great Island". Spanish conquistadors destroyed Noj Petén in the 16th century, leaving it abandoned until the 18th century.

It received the name of Flores in honor of a prominent Guatemalan independence leader named Cirilo Flores. The Island is located 127 meters above sea level, and is connected by a bridge to Santa Elena de la Cruz by a causeway.

Weather: Flores and the Maya Biosphere Reserve have a tropical climate, it is located at 127 meters above sea level, February is the least rainy and coolest month of the year, but there may be occasional rains, daily temperatures range between 20 and 32 degrees Celsius, and an ambient humidity between 70 and 90%.

We recommend watching the following videos for a clearer illustration of the [Reserva de Biosfera Maya](#), [Aves de Tikal](#), [Parque Nacional Tikal](#), and [Isla de Flores](#).

Means of transportation, the most popular is the Tuc Tuc, a kind of adapted motorcycle with a 2-passenger body. Normally, they charge 10 quetzales (US\$1.5 or 2) per person for short journeys. It is an interesting experience, some also provide service to the Mundo Maya International Airport.

Guatemala City

Its official name is Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, it is the capital of the Republic of Guatemala and the most populous and cosmopolitan city in Central America. It is divided into 25 zones and is also the capital of the Department of Guatemala. It has been named as "Green Capital of the Americas" in the years 2019 and 2021. This city is located in the south-central area of Guatemala, at an altitude of 1,500 meters above sea level, and has a large number of green areas. It reaches an estimated 5,103,685 inhabitants in the metropolitan area, which makes it the most populous and extensive urban agglomeration in Central America.

The Historic Center and the Civic Center are located in Zone 1, where you can find the Palace of Culture, Guatemala City Cathedral, Central Park, Trade Portal, central and handicraft market, museums, historical neighborhoods and parks, several emblematic government buildings, among others. This area is about 30 minutes by car from La Aurora Airport.

The hotel and business zone is located mainly in zone 10, also known as "Zona Viva", as well as zones 14, 9 and 4. La Aurora International Airport is located in Zone 13, adjacent to the hotel zones, Very close to the airport, about 10 minutes walking, is the La Aurora Zoo, which is one of the largest gardens in the city, with representation of animals from all over the world, and various projects for the conservation of native fauna in the country, in 2014 it was recognized as one of the 15 best zoos in America.

Close to the zoo are the Handicrafts Market, Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Anthropology and History, and the "Jorge Ibarra" Natural History Museum, as well as the Children's Museum. These destinations are an interesting option to spend time during long layovers at La Aurora Airport.

Peak hours, it is very important to take into account that the peak hours are those with the highest vehicular traffic, they are from Monday to Friday between 6 and 9 a.m., and between 4 and 7:30 p.m. On Saturdays the traffic is repeated between 6 and 9 hours, and at noon between 12 and 14 hours. In these periods the availability of taxis, UBER and other means of transport are in high demand, and travel times by vehicle from one place to another tend to double.

Climate: It has a tropical savannah climate, it tends to have a very mild climate, almost similar to the spring season throughout the year. It does not usually rain in the month of February, and temperatures remain between 12 and 25 degrees Celsius. It is recommended to wear a light coat or sweater at night and in the morning.

Means of transportation, one of the most accepted and reliable means of transportation is the UBER service; If you take a taxi, make sure that it is fully identified and authorized by the traffic department, and agree on a rate per trip prior to boarding, because they do not have a meter and the rates vary from one driver to another. It is recommended to use the **Taxis Amarillo Express** <https://www.amarilloexpress.com/>, or request the taxi service at the hotel. The public transport service is provided by the Municipality of Guatemala, through articulated buses of the Transmetro Network with stops in the main areas of the city and exclusive roads, and also a metropolitan connection system called Transurbano. To access these services you need to have a SIGA preloaded card. <https://www.muniguate.com/tciudadana/noticias/estaciones-con-servicio-tm/>.

Other important details

Currency: The Guatemalan Quetzal is the legal currency in Guatemala.

- ISO code: GTQ
- Symbol: Q
- Fraction: 100 cents
- Bills: Q1, Q5, Q10, Q20, Q50, Q100, Q200; and Coins: 5, 10, 25, 50 cents and Q1

Exchange rate February 17, 2023 (in shops they usually receive 1 EU or USD at 7GTQ), 1 USD = 7.85 GTQ, 1 EU = 8.48 GTQ

Electricity: Guatemala operates on 120-volt electricity. The plugs are two parallel flat pins. The same ones that are used in the United States, for example. You can also find plugs with two parallel legs and a third that works as a ground connection, as in the images.



Drinking Water: The water from the taps and jets, **MUST NOT BE DRINKED**, is not suitable for direct human consumption. It is recommended to consume bottled, filtered, eco-filter, or bottled water of purified water.

