



FIRST CIRCULAR

XIII CONGRESS OF THE MESOAMERICAN SOCIETY FOR BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION (MSBC)

Belize City, 26-30 October 2009

“Conservation Challenges in a Rapidly Shrinking Planet”

The MSBC and MSBC Belize Chapter, The University of Belize (UB) and the Belize Audubon Society (BAS) invite you to participate in the first ever MSBC Regional Congress to be held in Belize, Central America, and to explore the natural wonders of our beautiful country.



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What is the MSBC?

The Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation (MSBC) was established in January 1996, in Honduras, as a response to the lack of regional forums of communication for professionals in the areas of biology and conservation of natural resources and cultural areas in Central America and Mexico. The mission of the MSBC is *to promote the exchange of information and research to promote biological and cultural conservation in Mesoamerica.*

Since its establishment the MSBC has become a platform for new generations of Mesoamerican researchers, promoting their continual interaction with the professionals and academics of the region, therefore effecting positive change in the conservation of Mesoamerican biodiversity and culture. Through its various country chapters, the MSBC continues to work towards the following vision:

The Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation is an influential organization that is widely recognized for its quality and leadership in contributing to the generation, exchange, dissemination and application of scientific knowledge about biological and cultural conservation in Mesoamerica. It contributes to the professional and technical development of its wide and diverse membership with an organizational, legal, financial and efficient administrative structure that benefits the institutions and individuals who work for biological and cultural conservation in Mesoamerica.

What is the MSBC Congress?

The MSBC congress is an annual event that congregates between 300 and 1000 Mesoamericans and people from other regions and continents. These participants assemble during oral and poster presentations, special symposia, courses and workshops. Advancements in their research are discussed and experiences shared. The congress also serves to tighten collaborative links amongst institutions and researchers in different fields related to biology and conservation. By bringing together the experience, the scientific-technical knowledge, and the wide network of associates in the entire region at congresses, the MSBC works to support the management of the natural and cultural resources in the Mesoamerican region.

Since the creation of the MSBC, annual congresses have been its most important events and have increased in size and impact with the participation of representatives from all the Mesoamerican countries. After its first event in Honduras (1997), the congress was hosted by Nicaragua (1998), Guatemala (1999), Panamá (2000), El Salvador (2001), Costa Rica (2002), Mexico (2003), Nicaragua (2004), Honduras (2005), Guatemala (2006), México (2007) and El Salvador (2008). In 2009 the congress will take place for the first time in Belize.

The XIII MSBC Congress

In the history of the Society, the Belize Chapter and the country of Belize have never hosted the annual regional congress. The MSBC and the Belize MSBC Chapter have therefore entered into a partnership with the UB and the BAS to organize the XIII Congress of the MSBC to be held in Belize City on October 26-30, 2009 at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel.

The objectives of the Congress are to:

1. Successfully host the first ever MSBC Congress in Belize for the exchange of research and conservation project findings from the Mesoamerican region amongst institutions, professionals and students involved in conservation.
2. Promote regional integration and unified efforts in conservation through the sharing and exchange of information and establishment of regional collaborations and partnerships.
3. Allow the conservation and natural resources management community of Mesoamerica an opportunity to learn from successful conservation efforts in neighboring countries in order to better manage the natural resources of their countries.
4. Continue to promote awareness of and stimulate research in climate change as in the past two MSBC congresses.
5. Highlight findings in the area of coastal and marine conservation, a thematic area that has traditionally been under-represented at past congresses but which is well represented in conservation efforts in Belize.
6. Allow promising Mesoamerican students including Belizeans, the opportunity to present the results of their research and conservation projects and participate in a large international congress.
7. Promote Belize as a leader in the region in conservation and protected areas management through the sharing of research and conservation work findings in Belize with others in the region.

Venue



The XIII Congress will be held at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel* in Belize City, Belize. Below are the special rates that the Belize Biltmore Plaza is offering Congress participants. Please book your room by contacting Ms. Pamela Crawford at sales@belizebiltmore.com. She will provide you with the necessary forms to book your room. You can check out more information about the Biltmore at <http://www.belizebiltmore.com/> but please note that in order to get the special congress price you must book through the e-mail address provided above and mention that you will be booking for the MSBC Congress. Book your rooms as soon as possible as the hotel has limited space.

ROOM TYPE	GROUP RATE
1 Standard Room Single	US\$ 86.00
1 Standard Room Double	US\$96.00
1 Standard Room Triple	US\$106.00
1 Standard Room Quad	US\$116.00
DELUXE ROOMS	
1 Deluxe Room Single	US\$ 118.00
1 Deluxe Room Double	US\$128.00
1 Deluxe Room Triple	US\$138.00
1 Deluxe Room Quad	US\$148.00
PREMIER ROOMS	
1 Premier Room Single	US\$128.00
1 Premier Room Double	US\$138.00
1 Premier Room Triple	US\$148.00
1 Premier Room Quad	US\$158.00
Plus 9% hotel tax & 5% service charge	

*Note that some special symposia will be held at the Radisson Fort George Hotel and Marina. You can check out their website at <http://www.radisson.com/belizecitybz>. We will be providing a list of other available hotels with their prices in the second circular.

The Academic Program

The Academic Program will include pre/post-congress courses and workshops as well as the following activities within the congress:

- Invited Speaker Presentations
- Oral Presentations
- Poster Presentations
- Symposia
- Workshops
- Seventh Annual Poster Competition (for graduate and undergraduate students)
- Second Annual Oral Presentation Competition (for graduate and undergraduate students)

Non-academic Activities

Non-academic activities within the congress will include the Ninth Annual Photography Competition as well as exhibition stands. Tours to visit Belize's many protected areas including national parks, natural monuments, marine reserves and archaeological sites will be offered by MSBC Institutional Members in Belize post-congress.

Thematic Areas of the Congress

Climate Change: Monitoring climate change and its effects on ecosystems and biodiversity; carbon sequestration strategies, mitigation of the greenhouse effect, reducing vulnerability to climate change and adaptation strategies in coastal environments.

Conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems: Conservation of coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, estuarine and/or benthic communities, conservation and management of fisheries, monitoring and research, eco-regional management (MAR).

Community involvement and its impacts on conservation: Communities and protected areas, community based management of natural resources, co-management, conservation initiatives at the community level, sustainable alternative livelihoods.

Protected Areas Management: management effectiveness of protected areas, protected area systems, protected areas and community involvement, protected areas as tools for biodiversity conservation, regional approaches to protected areas management.

Sustainable Tourism: eco-certification in the tourism industry, eco-tourism impacts, adaptive approaches for more sustainable tourism, sustainable tourism strategies.

Biodiversity Conservation: Diversity, biology, ecology, management and conservation of species and ecosystems, biodiversity conservation approaches.

Environmental Services: types of environmental services, valuation of environmental services, payment for ecosystem services.

Instructions for submission of proposals for symposia, forums, courses or workshops and special invited speakers

Symposia, forums, courses and workshops proposals may be submitted to Leandra Cho-Ricketts, Ph.D., Chair of the Academic Committee for the XIII Congress (leandra.ricketts@gmail.com) by **April 20 2009** based on the instructions below. Space is limited and proposals will be considered based on whether they comply with instructions, have timely submission and available space. Proposals that do not follow instructions may be rejected without consideration.

Preference will be given to symposia, forums, courses or workshops proposals that are directly related to the theme of the congress and/or one or more of the thematic areas of the Congress. The Organizing Committee of the XIII Congress will offer logistic support to symposia, forums, courses or workshops. The exact level of support for such pre- or post-congress event can be negotiated with the Organizing Committee. You can contact Robin Coleman, Ph.D., Chair of the Logistic Committee for the XIII Congress (robin.coleman@gmail.com) for questions relating to logistic support for the above events.

What should proposals for the above include?

Proposals should include:

- Title of event (maximum 10 words)
- Type of event (indicate if event is a symposium, forum, course, workshop or special invited presentation).
- Thematic area
- Name of organizer (or presenter for special invited presentations)
- Include in an annex a summarized 'Curriculum Vitae' (maximum of 3 pages) of the organizer or presenter
- Summary or description of the event (up to 300 words)
- Objectives (does not apply for special invited presentations)
- Duration (number of sessions/presentations and hours required; does not apply for special invited presentations)
- Sponsors (indicate if finances have been obtained for the event or if there are plans to obtain financing; indicate the name of donor(s) and the amount of financing needed)
- Registration costs (applies only for pre- or post-congress events)
- Will proceedings or journal articles be prepared for the event?
- If so, would you like to publish the proceedings or articles in *Mesoamericana*? If not, where will they be published?
- Will simultaneous translation be required? (please note that a separate fee would apply for translation services and that you would have to contact congress organizers)
- Program for the event (does not apply to special invited presentations)
 - For every presentation in the event, include:
 - Title and/or theme
 - Presenter and their institution
 - Room capacity required (number of persons expected in the audience)

Costs of organizing a Symposium, Forum or Workshop within the Congress:

The events (symposium, forums, workshops) will be charged according to the quantity of time occupied. The costs are represented in the table below and encompass the hotel space costs, audio visual equipment rental and coffee break costs. The costs outlined below do not include the cost of simultaneous translation (which can be quoted by the Organizing Committee upon request). Charging an extra entrance fee for events during the Congress is not allowed, nor can symposium organizers exclude the participation of other Congress participants since the general registration to the congress includes the right to participate in all academic events.

Note: Thematic Interest Groups (GITs) of the MSBC can organize the above events at 50% of the costs listed in the table below. There are no costs for the special invited presentations selected by the Academic Committee.

Option	COST
Half-day session (8:00 am – noon; includes a mid-morning coffee break)	US\$1000
Full day session (8:00 am – 5:30 pm; includes a mid-morning & a mid-afternoon coffee break)	US\$2000
<i>If you need more than a day for your event you can add half-day sessions as necessary for the price indicated above.</i>	

Costs to organize a pre/post- Congress event:

The costs vary depending on the venue and the size of the event. The Organizing Committee can offer a promotion of the event (in the program, in future promotional material, and on our website for example) in which case the organizers of the pre/post congress event would have to pay a \$500 fee. This fee can be waived for events organized by the Thematic Interest Groups (GITs) of the MSBC.

If services for logistics and audiovisual equipment are required or if organizers need any other assistance, please indicate so in the proposal. Before acceptance of the proposal, the Organizing Committee will communicate with the event organizer to finalize the negotiation of the required service.

Please note that organizers of pre-congress events can charge a registration apart from the Congress registration. Organizers can also limit participation to invited individuals, a specific number of people or cancel the participation of a congress attendee who has not paid registration for the course. The payment for registration of a pre- or post-congress event can be dealt with by the Organizing Committee if solicited.

Presentation Guidelines

Oral Presentations

Speakers giving oral presentations will have 15 minutes for talks and 3 minutes for questions and answers and/or discussion. These presentations will be organized by thematic areas assigned in the respective rooms. The presenters will be provided with LCD projectors for power point presentations. All students with an undergraduate or graduate thesis are invited to participate in the Second Annual Oral Presentation Competition. The objective of the competition is to stimulate and promote quality of research by students in Mesoamerica.

Poster Presentations

Poster presentations will be organized by thematic areas in a dedicated space and a time will be assigned for presenters to stand by their posters. All students with an undergraduate or graduate thesis are invited to participate in the Seventh Annual Poster Competition. The objective of the competition is to stimulate and promote quality of research by students in Mesoamerica.

Invited Speaker Presentations

There will be a total of 8 invited speaker presentations during the congress from leading experts working in the various thematic areas in the region.

Please note that the official languages of the Congress are English and Spanish.

Registration for the XIII Congress

Payment for registration can be made through each of the MSBC local country chapters or by credit card at www.msbcbelize2009.com. The registration payments are in USD or its equivalent in local currency in each country in which payment is made as per the table below.

	UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS		PROFESSIONALS	
Category	Until Sept. 25	At the gate	Until Sept. 25	At the gate
MSBC Mesoamerican Member	\$40	\$50	\$80	\$100
MSBC non-Mesoamerican Member	\$75	\$100	\$120	\$150
Mesoamerican non-MSBC member	\$80	\$100	\$130	\$160
Non-Mesoamerican, non-MSBC member	\$125	\$150	\$200	\$250

Contact and bank account information to make XIII Congress registration or MSBC membership payments via your local chapter:

CHAPTER & PRESIDENT	E-MAIL	ACCOUNT TITLE	BANK AND ACCOUNT NUMBER
México: Jaime Bonilla Barbosa	andrea.bolongaro@anide.edu.mx , bonilla@uaem.mx	Soc. Mesoamericana Para La Biología Y La Conservación. Capítulo de México, A.C.	BBVA Bancomer Nº: 0155920094
Guatemala: Daniel Tenez Rivas	guatemala@sociedadmesoamericana.org tenes_guatemalensis@yahoo.es	José Octavio Cajas	Industrial Nº: 14900
Belize: Elma Kay	smbc.belize@gmail.com	MSBC, Belize Chapter	Scotia Bank 1901548
El Salvador: Luis Pineda Peraza	elsalvador@sociedadmesoamericana.org insayaman.begins@gmail.com	SalvaNatura	Banco Agrícola Nº: 549-035343-8
Honduras: Carlos Mondragón Pastrana	honduras@sociedadmesoamericana.org canp82@yahoo.es	Contactar al teléfono (504) 9959-6553 o por correo electrónico	
Nicaragua: Luis Hernández Santamaría	nicaragua@sociedadmesoamericana.org luigui_her74@hotmail.com	Luis Hernández	Banco de la Producción Nº:1002191396335 (en dólares)
Costa Rica: Zaida Piedra Cerdas	costarica@sociedadmesoamericana.org smbc_zaidapiedra@yahoo.es	Asociación Mesoamericana para la Biología y la Conservación	Citibank Nº: 11711301216325483
Panamá Karla Aparicio Ubillus	panama@sociedadmesoamericana.org k_aparicio@yahoo.com	Ricardo Pérez	Caja de Ahorros Nº:06-0000009831

*Once a direct bank deposit has been made for registration through your local chapter or having paid the registration fee to the treasury of the corresponding chapter, submit a copy of your payment receipt to the Chapter President of your country (via e-mail and copy us at msbcbelize2009@gmail.com)

Every person wishing to participate as a presenter and/or assistant for the XIII congress of the MSBC must fill a registration form in the online format at www.msbcbelize2009.com. Please note that you will be asked for registration payment date and method in the online form.

The Organizing Committee will send a confirmation of payment of registration by e-mail and participants must present the original payment receipt as well as proof of membership (if they paid congress registration as an MSBC member) at the XIII Congress venue in Belize.

The registration fee includes a congress program, book of abstracts, name tag, access to all oral, poster, symposium and special invited presentations, and coffee breaks. All participants are also invited to a welcome and closing reception/cultural event. Registration fees do not include tour packages and excursions or pre- and post-congress courses and workshops.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Presentations will only be included in the XIII Congress Program and abstracts will only be printed in the XIII Congress Book of Abstracts if the presenter has made his/her pre-registration or registration payment on time. Registration fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Important Dates

ACTIVITY	DEADLINES
Early registration	<i>September 25, 2009</i>
Submission of proposals for symposia, workshops, pre-congress courses, forums and invited speaker presentations	<i>April 20th 2009</i>
Confirmation of acceptance of the above proposals	<i>May 30th 2009</i>
Submission of abstracts for oral presentations and posters	<i>August 1st 2009</i>
Confirmation of acceptance of above abstracts	<i>September 30th 2009</i>

Organizing Committee Contact Information XIII Congress MSBC

To contact the Organizing Committee of the XIII Mesoamerican Congress for Biology and Conservation, please communicate with the following individuals:

RESPONSIBILITY	CONTACT	E-MAIL
General Coordinator	Elma Kay	msbcbelize2009@gmail.com
Academic Committee	Leandra Cho-Ricketts	leandra.ricketts@gmail.com
Logistics Coordinator	Robin Coleman	robin.coleman@gmail.com
Support and Follow-up	Marvin Vasquez	marvin.vasquez@gmail.com
MSBC Regional Executive Liaison	Olivier Chassot	presidencia@sociedadmesoamericana.org

Mesoamerican Society Membership

Membership payments should be made annually through one of the local country chapters. To make a payment please contact your chapter president (see table with chapter contacts and account information on page 10). All prices are in USD.

COUNTRY	UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT	PROFESSIONAL
North America / Europe	\$40.00	\$80.00
South America / Caribbean	\$20.00	\$40.00
Costa Rica	\$25.00	\$50.00
Mexico	\$25.00	\$50.00
Panamá	\$20.00	\$40.00
Belize	\$20.00	\$40.00
El Salvador	\$20.00	\$40.00
Guatemala	\$15.00	\$30.00
Nicaragua	\$15.00	\$30.00
Honduras	\$15.00	\$30.00
Cuba	\$1.00	\$1.00

Coming soon:
www.msbcbelize2009.com