



THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION OF
THE CARIBBEAN HOTEL ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UPCOMING PUBLICATION CALLS FOR ACTION
FROM TOURISM INDUSTRY TO PROTECT SEA TURTLES**

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (June 9, 2004) – All six species of sea turtles that live in the wider Caribbean are classified by the IUCN–The World Conservation Union as “endangered” or “critically endangered”. High-density coastal development, partly due to tourism installations, and an increase in ocean-based tourism are but a few of the factors that have affected the once very numerous sea turtles. For instance, artificial light of hotels and streets fatally divert young turtles from the sea, to which they are ordinarily attracted by the moonlight reflected on the shore’s foam.

However grim the sea turtles’ future might seem, the situation can nonetheless be controlled and even improved, if the full support and understanding of coastal stakeholders is garnered. To this end, Ms. Ga-Young Choi, an intern from Duke University, sponsored by the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), in conjunction with the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), is developing a best practices manual targeted for Caribbean hoteliers and aimed at promoting sustainable tourism in regards to sea turtles.

This comprehensive manual will facilitate the creation of individual Environmental Management Systems for hotels by offering guidelines for procedures, such as proper hotel lighting schemes, guest education programs, marketing of sea turtle-themed products, as well as use of pesticides and waste management. Training materials for hotel staff will also be available. The guidelines will be illustrated by testimonies and examples from hotels that have successfully implemented sea turtle programs. Based on “Standard Guidelines for Solving Problems Caused to Nesting and Hatching Sea Turtles by Artificial Beachfront Lighting,” which was adopted at the “Sea Turtles and Beachfront Lighting” workshop in Barbados in 2000, the manual should make a substantial contribution to the conservation and protection of sea turtles in the wider Caribbean region. It will be launched in January 2005.

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About Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) – www.widecast.org
WIDECAST is an established Partner Organization for the UN Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP). As an international scientific network, WIDECAST is comprised of Country Coordinators and partner organizations in almost 40 territories and states throughout the



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Caribbean. WIDECASST supports stakeholders, which include governmental and nongovernmental entities, by providing recommendations for sea turtle management and recovery, updated information on the status of sea turtles, and a framework for meeting the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW Protocol) developed by UNEP.

About the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) – www.cha-cast.com

CAST, the environmental subsidiary of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), was chartered in 1997 to undertake collaborative environmental efforts within the hotel industry, enhance the practices of the region's hotel and tourism operators by providing high quality education and training related to sustainable tourism; promote the industry's efforts and successes to the traveling public and other stakeholders; and serve as a vital link to all stakeholders with sustainable tourism interests in the Caribbean region. CAST has consolidated its strategic focus within the following four program areas: sustainable tourism certification and standards development, development of environmental management tools, advocacy and fundraising.

About the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) – www.caribbeanhotels.org

The Caribbean Hotel Association is dedicated to excellence in hospitality, leadership in marketing, and sustainable growth in tourism, to the benefit of its membership and that of the wider Caribbean community. It aims to be a regional forum that will advance the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry. The members of CHA represent the entire spectrum of hospitality industry's private sector, from 835 member hotels representing some 127,000 hotel rooms in 36 national hotel associations to allied members – airlines, tour operators, travel agents, trade and consumer press, hotel and restaurant suppliers, among many others – which account for 520 members. CHA is headquartered in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and maintains a promotion and marketing office in Miami, Florida.

