Keel-Billed Toucan

(Ramphastos sulfuratus)

The Keel-billed Toucan, known as the "bill bird" locally, is the national bird of Belize. The most obvious characteristic of the toucan is the huge yellow, orange, red, green and black bill. Toucans are one of the most iconic species of the Neotropics, as they only occur in this part of the world.

The Keel-billed toucan is a very social bird and can often be seen in foraging and playing in pairs or small groups. They are found throughout Belize's forests and nest in holes in tree trunks. They lay one to four eggs and the parent birds take turns incubating the eggs. This bird displays a rapid, heavy flapping of the wings when flying and calls with a creek creek sound, similar to a frog.

Even though they resemble hornbills of Asia, toucans are more closely related to woodpeckers and barbets. Its massive bill is believed to help facilitate heat loss, as it is made of spongy hollow bone and network of blood vessels covered by a layer of keratin.

Toucans are primarily fruit eaters, feeding on a wide variety of tropical fruits of the forest. It feeds by snipping off the fruit and flipping its head back to gulp the fruit whole. Toucans will also feed on insects, lizards, and even the eggs of smaller birds.

**Key Facts**

**Size**
20 inches

**Range:**
S. Mexico to N. Columbia
Habitat:
Lowland forests and riparian forest canopies

Food:
Fruits, insects, reptiles, bird eggs

Lifespan
15-20 years