

From the Zoo Director

Spring sprang forward with one important event following another here at the zoo. This summary will bring to you the latest updates which are all involved in positive change!

Fallet Young, with the initial help received from Dr. Rob Horwich back in the 1980's, was the fuel behind one of Belize's most important conservation engines: The Community Baboon Sanctuary. Located in Burrell Boom, Fallet and Horwich worked with the community to see that the forests under private land ownership remained standing, in order to support the local populations of Black Howler Monkeys. The Community Baboon Sanctuary, CBS, grew to be an important conservation role-model, and has proven to be successful in seeing that these special primates have a place, forever, to call home. Thousands, from both in Belize and outside our borders, have visited the CBS, taking away a memorable experience. Those of us who knew and worked with Fallet, mourn his passing. He left us on 9 April, after a valiant battle with cancer.

Fallet's wife Jessie, and son, Colin, are establishing a Memorial Scholarship Fund in Fallet's name. This will be used to provide school assistance to young Belizeans living in the Belize River Valley, encouraging future "Protectors of Nature" in honor and memory of Fallet Young. Here is the Tribute to a man who was a gift to us all...

The White Howler Singers - [Fallet Young Howler Monkeys](#)

In Early April, Alan Rabinowitz, the first person to study Jaguar ecology in Belize, and author of the popular book, JAGUAR, returned. Alan now heads up a "cat-focused" conservation organization called Panthera, and they put extreme effort in trying to save the world's remaining big cats from extinction. His visit included two important events. First, Alan gave a presentation in the nearby village of La Democracia. Located in the heart of the Central Jaguar Corridor, the folks in this village play a key role in seeing that Jaguars, still remaining in the area, are given their "rights to roam" minus persecution...an imperative concept! Hon. Minister Michael Hutchinson was the Guest of Honour, and many turned out to hear Alan and to meet Omar Figueroa, a Belizean researcher currently studying Jaguars

The conservation organization LIGHTHAWK was present that day, and flew University of Belize professor, Dr. Elma Kay, La Democracia Village's Arita Wiltshire, and Belize Zoo Education Director, Celso Poot, over the Jaguar Corridor. And of course, in honor of the day's events, the LA DEMOCRACIA GIBNUTS sang a special JAGUAR SONG for the Minister and for Alan!!

As part of his exciting week, Alan, along with Panthera's Howard Quigley, Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources, Gaspar Vega, Minister of State, Michael Hutchinson, Wildlife Officer, George Hanson, his often-times jaguar-consultant, Humberto Wohlers, and Jaguar researcher, Omar Figueroa, flew over the Central Jaguar Corridor and then around Victoria Peak in the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary. Following that, their helicopter, provided by conservation heroes, British Forces Belize landed on the established HLS G219...This site is just over a half-day's walk south of Victoria Peak and all received an "on-ground" Jaguar Jungle perspective from Alan, Omar, and Howard. A lot was learned! The Ministers were proud of the efforts being made by researchers who study the cats and the organizations (Belize Audubon Society, The Belize Zoo, Friends of Conservation and Development, Programme for Belize) who direct their time and energies into Jaguar protection. Happy moods captivated the day's dynamic events! Humberto Wohlers gathered interviews from everyone which I later edited for worldwide broadcast on the BBC "UP ALL NIGHT" program.

Maya naturalist and Guide, Greg Sho, presented Minister Vega with a photograph of a Jaguar, taken by Carol Foster, and then gave a slate carving of a Jaguar to Alan.

Thanks to Anne Kok, who hails from Denmark, landmark progress has been made in the bringing of important messages about wildlife conservation into the Mennonite community of Blue Creek. Anne lived in Blue Creek years ago, writing about their interesting history and social structure for a Master's degree thesis based out of the University of Amsterdam. Returning, she focused her education work around the Jaguar and the Harpy Eagle. Early April saw Blue Creek community members, and Anne, visit the zoo to "meet and greet" our Jaguars and of course!! PANAMA the Harpy Eagle!

[Click to download PDF file](#)