

April the Tapir is 26!

It was 26 years ago when the baby tapir was brought to the original zoo. She was barely alive! The culprit; the still striped-and-spotted young mountain cow was severely infested with screw worms.

Back in 1983, Belize was weakened by these "wicked worms". Voracious parasites, they would find their way into the bodies of animals, both domestic and our Belizeans wildlife. The result was usually death!

"April" was brought to Sharon Matola, nearly dead, 26 Aprils ago! The Belize Zoo was just getting started, but Sharon put all things aside and concentrated on saving the little Mountain Cow's life. The key to her "revival" was a steady diet of banana milkshakes, full of vitamins and medications. "April" happily became a member of the new zoo! During those early days, she lived and roamed in the backyard, coming eagerly up to any visitor for a pet under the chin and a banana.

Because of her friendly nature, Sharon saw the potential of having "April" get people excited about our National Animal. "April" the Tapir's first birthday party was the zoo's very first big event, in April 1984. Due to the newness of it all, only a handful of people showed up. However, all had a fun day, and it was the beginning of an annual event that has brought a spotlight upon "April", as all tapirs!!

The Central American Tapir is an endangered species. Making people feel happy about these gentle beasts, works to see that their future is more secure. Today, "April" the tapir's birthday party is attended by hundreds! One year, the "Tapir-Bash" was filmed for CNN news! And this year, Belize's favorite Mountain Cow turns 26 and like always, kids from different primary schools came out to sing her birthday song and offer well wishes. The Democracia Gibnuts rock n rolled "April" with "The Mountain Cow Song" as she munched on her special made birthday cake.