

Barn Owls Rock Love FM



The Love FM Morning Show, part of Belize's leading newscast, hosted two special visitors recently. Little Guy and Jolley, young Barn Owls who call The Belize Zoo their home, were guests on this nationwide broadcast. Zoo officials were just a tiny bit nervous about a "reality TV appearance". True, LG and Jolley have done their fair share of travels. Meeting and greeting kids in schools in Placencia and Maya Center in Southern Belize seemed to please both curious birds. But a TV studio? With bright lights and cool temperatures, strange noises and big cameras? How would the two owls react?

Environmental Education Officer Jamal Andrewin began the program by noting that Little Guy and Jolley were wild animals, and therefore, their TV appearance behaviour would be unpredictable. With that introduction "under wing", in came Little Guy and Jolley, safely stowed away in their official BARN OWLS ROCK "Bye Bye Box". The Love FM hosts, Ms Ava Diaz-Sosa and Ms. Carmen Barrow, were all smiles as the owls hopped from their travel box, and then quickly flew upon an awaiting perch.

Let the show begin! It was impossible to hold onto the old time myth that Belize Barn Owls are the "Bird of Evil" and the "Bird of Death", when Little Guy gladly accepted a kiss on the head from his "alpha owl buddy", Sharon Matola. Then, he peacefully sat alongside female barn owl Jolley, as questions filled the air. Jamal was most eager to answer, WHAT DO THEY EAT? The Barn Owl, has a range everywhere in the world except for arctic and desert regions, and everywhere in the world, they hunt and eat rats with zest. RATS!! Jamal pointed out that there is no other animal on the entire planet that eats more rats than a Barn Owl.

In Belize, Barn Owls live in secluded areas within urban zones, and this makes sense, as this type of Owl territory always includes plenty rodents to feast upon. In Belmopan City, there is a colony of Barn Owls who call the high palm trees behind the main market square, their home sweet home. How sensible of them! Nearby is the market and within the market, certainly live and breed our not-so-welcome rodent citizen, the "Charlie Price".

In some parts of the barn owl's range, the situation is far different. Due to loss of habitat, and reduction of nesting sites, Barn Owls are on a strong decrease in many areas throughout the world. The Owl Pal program, starring Little Guy and Jolley, is working to ensure that their species is seen as beloved members of our society. Forget this "Bird of Evil" myth! BARN OWLS ROCK!!

Many Barn Owl facts were shared that morning on Love FM, and Little Guy and Jolley seemed quite at ease, well, nearly! Jolley, just as the show ended, showed off her flying abilities and did a quick flight in front of Ms Ava and Ms Carmen. Thanks to the Love FM Morning Show, hundreds of people throughout Belize learned that Barn Owls are invaluable to have living in Belize, and deserve to be protected. Little Guy and Jolley are supreme Ambassadors for their species, and they welcome "up close and personal visits" at their home in the Best Little Zoo in the World.