

Blue-Crowned Motmot

Such a beautiful and full-of-character bird we will soon display at the Zoo! They are five in our new Blue-crowned Motmot club, and how they came to the Zoo is a must-share story. Recent, harsh fires proved to be devastating to so much of our native plants and animals. People suffered, too, from these, sadly, often human-set infernos. And many animals could not escape the fury of the constant flames, smoke and the lack of food and water resources.

A nest of baby Motmots fell victim to these fires. Lucky for the birds, they were rescued and then given to two special guys named Gerald and Humberto Wohlers. Their Dad is The Zoo's Head of Animal Management, Humberto Wohlers Sr, and the knowledge he has about our country's wildlife, as well as a caring attitude towards these precious resources, has been passed down to his boys. Gerald and Berto Jr. took on the responsibility of nurturing the little birds, and when they were strong enough and able to begin eating fruits and other Motmot food, they were brought to the Zoo.

Motmots are known to be discreet birds in the forest. However, if one is aware of their unique call, a low-tone "hoot hoot", they can sometimes be located by their haunting vocalization. Serene in their nature, this gorgeous iridescent blue, green and tawny coloured bird, will be quietly sitting on a perch, awaiting the passing by of an insect to feast upon.

A unique behavior worth noting is their tendency to burrow tunnel-nests several feet into the ground during the rainy season! The most interesting feature of this pretty bird, is the "racket-like tail". The Blue-crowned Motmot has two blue feathered barbs at the very end of its tail. Sitting on a perch in the forest, this tail will be jerked back and forth, and perhaps it is a method of attracting prey, or drawing attention to a mate. It is impossible not to compare to this to human species behaviour! Why in the world do we "show off our tails"? Could it be the same method of "mate sampling and attraction" shown by one of the most gorgeous birds in Belize? Congratulations to Humberto and Gerald Wohlers, for this significant contribution to the Zoo. Having the Motmot gang greatly contributes to our continual efforts, aimed at bringing the special animals of Belize, close up and personal to the special people of our country.