

Indy the Tapir New at home on the Zoo grounds!

What fun for zoo visitors! “Indy” is just a “mini-Mountain Cow”, not even six months old, and such a star he is at The Belize Zoo. The baby Mt. Cow was being kept illegally as a pet in southern Belize. The Forest Department, with the directed guidance of Andre Lopez and Rasheda Sampson, confiscated the little fellow in June, and brought him to The Belize Zoo for proper care and a healthy upbringing.



Kept off-site at the zoo for the first 3 months, zoo staff made certain that his diet was the best it could be, kept him in a roomy and private enclosure, and spent hours with him, so that “Indy” would be a “people-friendly” National Animal.

Due to “Indy’s” 3 months of TLC, he is now happy in his new home at the front of the zoo, and doesn’t mind at all if a visitor scratches him on his head, or even joins in with a zookeeper to feed him his much-welcomed “ba-ba”.

“Indy” brings sparkle to the zoo, and has an important role to play. His species, the Central American Tapir, is considered to be endangered. Viewing “Indy” at the zoo, alongside his short and sweet sign, quickly brings into perspective two important things. First, Belize is so fortunate to still have this rare and special animal roaming through our forests. And as “Indy’s sign reminds us: “MY SPECIES IS ENDANGERED! THAT MEANS WE’LL DISAPPEAR! UNLESS OUR FORESTS ARE PROTECTED! YEAR AFTER YEAR!!

Tapirs play an important role in the ecology of our nation. A healthy forest needs to have its plants spread throughout, as the vegetation supports and maintains a tropical mosaic of wild species. Butterflies require special plant species, not just one type, Frogs will use plants to hide during the day hours, and a healthy, plant-filled forest provides shady sanctuary for Ocelots, Jaguars, and Tayras, as well as many other species of jungle critters. Tapirs will eat various plants and then, long distances away from their dining site, will defecate.. Often, seeds

that were not digested, emerge from tapir-poop, and begin to grow, adding to the vegetation profile of the forest landscape..

“Indy” is a very happy Mountain Cow in his new home. He enjoys people, and they sure enjoy him! Most important, everyone leaves The Belize Zoo with a better understanding about Tapirs, and what we can do to see that they are forever wild and free in Beautiful Belize!