

Our Fine Friend

A few years ago, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) graciously adopted "Jaguar Ambassador" Junior Buddy, providing funds for exhibit upgrades and also for his upkeep. This help was much appreciated.



The Belize Zoo, with our important Jaguar Rehabilitation and Research program, maintains, at this time, 12 of these magnificent cats. The program is a costly one. Enclosures, large enough to allow them to express their natural behavior traits, must be built and maintained. Sturdy hurricane-proof management shelters are always incorporated into their homes, and then there is meal time to consider! Junior Buddy's mom arrived to The Belize Zoo, becoming part of our rehabilitation program, in 2006. We had no idea that she was also pregnant! And 3 months after her arrival, she gave birth to Junior Buddy. Look what followed! The little cub grew into a jaguar who never fails to create a bond of compassion and understanding between his species and our zoo visitors. Two books have been written about Junior Buddy. One, JUNIOR BUDDY: A JAGUAR'S TALE is on the international book market, and draws considerable attention to the remarkable jaguar and their endangered status in the wild.



Junior the Jaguar enjoying his new "furniture"

It also brings attention to the wonderful nation of Belize, and the efforts being made here to preserve the species for future generations. Junior Buddy truly is an "Ambassador". After Hurricane Richard visited the Zoo, late in the night of 24 October, Junior Buddy's life suddenly changed. His enclosure was damaged from fallen trees and high winds. Much to his dismay, he could no longer go out and play in his roomy backyard. For days, Junior Buddy sadly stayed put in his management den. But then, fortunately, Junior B's supporting organization, the BTB, stepped back into his hurricane-hurled world and softened the blow. Providing much-needed funds, the BTB made it possible for us to put a rapid work force together and get his home back into shape. Thank you, BTB, from all of us at the zoo, but especially from Jaguar Ambassador Junior Buddy, for such kind and caring help.

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