

▣ Terrific Training with Cornell Vet School



For an exciting week at the zoo, we were privileged to have a training team of vet students from Cornell University, based in New York. Led by the head of that prestigious school, Dr. George Kolias, the students and the animal management staff at the zoo, explored various aspects of wildlife vet medicine.

Important medical checks were made on jaguars. To the dismay of Panama the harpy eagle, his beak received a much-needed trimming. And work was done in order to determine the sex of our three newly-obtained keel billed toucans.

With kind help from BWCN, we were able to have a boa- constrictor- in- distress x- rayed. Poor fellow! Seems that a blockage and a bit of broken rib was causing an unhappy time for this gentle “wow-la.” The good news is that with adequate rest and a bit of low profile “hide out”, our boa will recuperate and be a healthy member of the zoo squad once again.

Lectures about wildlife care and medicine were part of the week’s agenda, as was a journey north to the BioUniverZoo in Chetumal. TBZ has established a working relationship with BioUniverZoo, and our collaborations with them will continue on into the future. For this visit, the students enjoyed seeing the zoo and then assisted BioUniverZoo officials in sexing over fifteen flamingos. Determining the sex of birds in captivity is vital in order to see that they are properly managed and cared for. Other species the team examined were scarlet macaws and smaller species of parrots.

The training sessions left a strong impression on everyone. Knowledge was shared. Good professional linkages were reinforced, and the positive impact from this productive week will be long-lasting. The Belize Zoo looks forward to more similar vet student training sessions in the future, and heartily welcomes this activity as part of our growing professional profile.