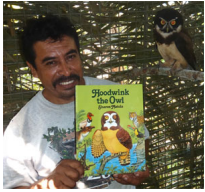


### What a hoot! Hoodwink is back!



When Hurricane Richard tore through The Belize Zoo on the 24th of October of last year, we sadly acknowledged that our windy visitor caused the disappearance of our very beloved Spectacled Owl, "Hoodwink", also known as "Hoodie". Along with other exhibits, Hoodwink's home had been ripped apart. Most likely very frightened, our "Hoodie" flew off. We could only hope that this beautiful owl was somewhere close by on Zoo premises, and would return.

"Hoodie" was never seen or heard from after that tragic windy event. This owl was a Zoo favourite. Hoodwink the Owl added much charm to our night tours, always giving his unique spectacled owl call when visitors came to see him. And "Hoodie" was super-tame. Hatched from an egg in a Texas zoo, "Hoodie" was given to us as a gift, to acknowledge the children's book series, HOODWINK THE OWL. The three books are about the animals of Belize, and conservation efforts aimed at protecting their species. When the young owl arrived, he was immediately given "VIP status". Hoodwink was visited frequently, hand fed, and received ample scratches to his pretty brown-feathered head, which he loved.

A bird so tame, and never having had to search for food on his own, we sadly believed, could not survive very long in the wild. Much effort goes into the training of captive bred birds of prey, so that they can become independent hunters. This type of training is a long and complicated process. Hoodwink lacked any of this important training, and only knew the comforts of his happy zoo life.

To our shock and delight, Hoodwink the Owl returned to our zoo realm in mid-March!! In excellent condition, "Hoodie" showed us all that the instincts within a bird of prey, are strong, much stronger than we realized. We do not know what our "Hoodie" preyed upon during those 5 months of absence. Rodents? Snakes? He just won't tell us his survival secrets! We only know one thing: We are so happy that Hoodwink the Owl is back. Deluxe quarters are now being built for our "Hoodie", and he will be back in the zoo in the upcoming weeks.