Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic

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2017 Report – Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic (BWRC) in numbers

Dear Friends of the BWRC

Once again we would like to provide you with an overview of the year and some of the most important numbers for 2017. BWRC provides free medical care, rescue, and rehabilitation as well as training to the Government of Belize and approved partners. We wont fudge: 2017 was a challenging year! BWRC moved, we lost our small animal veterinarian, we did not receive grant support, and I as the director and wildlife vet forewent 7 months of salary in order to maintain operations. BWRC's financial sustainability in it's 6th year was challenged with an expensive move and teaching services, minimal domestic referral services and fundraisers provided the only income. But, on the bright side: BWRC was able to move completely, add one more full-time staff to the current facility and to continue to employ the staff throughout the year while continuing to provide veterinary, rescue and rehabilitation services, education and outreach.

Thank you to our generous local and international supporters, event sponsors, students and interns as well as visiting veterinarians and medical supply donors! We could not do the job without your help! In fact 2017 was a very busy year with many different and several new activities. And once more I have to thank the most amazing team of BWRC staff, veterinary interns and volunteers including Giann Vasquez and Ashanti McKoy, for making it all possible. BWRC's most important activities are probably the outreach and training sessions conducted. Why? Because the majority of our patients come to us because of human intervention. Many times unknowingly (for example because of trash or debris in the yard; or holes in attick walls) and sadly often because of illegal trade and emphasizing the need for education to achieve our ultimate goal: coexistence between humans and our environment and sustainable development.

But as a veterinary facility we will start once again with the value of our charitable services provided for veterinary care and rehabilitation to our conservation partners. Then we will share our patients outcomes and finally share summaries of outreach and other events before ending with a few more words on finances. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

In Conservation

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BWRC's 2017 Team

2017 Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic (BWRC) charitable services in numbers

2017 marked BWRC's 6th year in operation. Each prior year there have been increases in wildlife intakes and activity. 2017 was the first year to not follow that trend and we suspect the late 2016 hurricane Earl as a cause for the decrease in patients. The total number of wildlife cared for in 2017 was 362 animals. In 2017 BWRC paid costs for veterinary services, rescue, rehabilitation, and/or training to the following partners.

Partner	Wildlife patients/Services Rendered	Value
Belize Forest Department	149 wildlife patients/1 training/rescue & relocation assistance	$27,102.27
Scarlet Macaw Program	11 wildlife patients (in field)	$2,544
Wildtracks	12 primates/2 manatees	$6,290.18
Green Iguana Project[1]	44 wildlife patients (4@BWRC/40 in field)	$5,370.45
Crocodile Research Coalition	5 wildlife patients	$939.58
BFREE Hickatee breeding	135 wildlife patients (in field)	$2,005
Tamandua Refuge	6 wildlife patients	$450
Total	362 wildlife patients/1 training	**$44,701.48**[2]

[1] San Ignacio Hotel.
[2] External audit not yet completed

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Aside from quarterly reports sent to the Forest Department, BWRC provides individual QuickBooks reports to its' partners and can provide detailed reports of animal or activity upon request.

Figure 1. Special patients: Baby monkey shot to the head. Thankfully he survived and is on the way to recovery!

Outcomes for our patients: In BWRC's field of wildlife medicine, rescue, and rehabilitation we see many sad cases since we receive debilitated, injured, and abused wild animals, which can no longer escape capture by humans. 2017 was no exception to this and BWRC saw:

- 28 DOA cases (dead on arrival, this included animals sent for necropsies)
- 37 animals died in our care despite our best efforts
- 10 had to be relieved of their suffering.
- But on the bright side, 48 wildlife patients were released after rehabilitation by BWRC, more than any prior year.
- 28 wildlife patients were transferred to partner rehabilitation organizations after treatment and
- 204 animals were seen in field or at partner organizations.

Figure 2a. Severe head trauma

Figure 2b. Release!

Figure 3. Coati release in Bocawina National Park

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Other Activities: Some of the bigger news first: after 5 years in Central Farm the Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic moved to a new and bigger location. BWRC is now at Mile 60 G. P. Highway. We had hoped to move to a permanent location after five years, but the search for land and finances proved to be difficult. So BWRC signed another 5-year contract (and the location search continues) but this time we have 6 Acres right on Barton Creek.

Outreach: BWRC conducted the second annual Continuing Education session for veterinarians and veterinary health assistants with the kind assistant of Dr. Corey Blake as well as a training session for the Forest Department on Zoonosis, wildlife emergency, rescue, capture and transport. Thanks to our latest full time staff member Godwin BWRC started engaging more with the issue of trash during outreach events and with 3 different cleanup campaigns (and more plans for the future). Our educator Gissell Rodriguez participated in 21 outreach events (from World Forest Day, Earth Day, Market, and school visits to the Cayo library). Thanks to our partner company the Wildlife Institute, BWRC helped facilitate 6 clinics in rural communities providing educational materials on common domestic animal diseases, welfare, and basic health care. Thanks to our visiting vets Drs. Lisa Schenkel and Becky DeBolt, as well as students and BWRC staff 68 spays and neuters, over 100 animal health checks were provided free of charge for low income households. Thanks also to CAWS and Lisa Rawlings for handling logistics and transportation for over 20 patients for which surgery was done in-house.

Figure 4. Clean up campaign on Western Highway

Figure 4. Cayo Market Outreach

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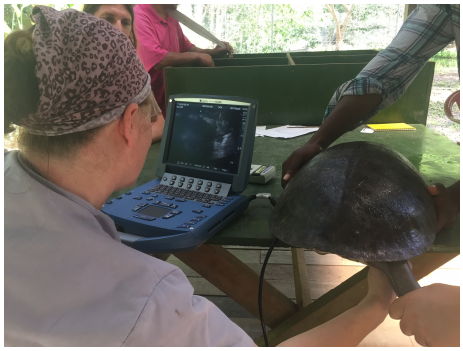

Figure 6 Learning about pregnancy via ultrasound in turtles at BFREE

Research: BWRC continued to collect health data in the field for Central American River Turtles as well as Scarlet macaws. Our veterinarians and students continued to collect data on the prevalent tick born disease Ehrlichia as well as on zoonotic parasites found in publically collected fecal samples.

Figure 5 DNA extraction from dropped feathers was established!

Furthermore, thanks to cooperation with the University of Minnesota and Dr. Chris Faulk as well as intern Samantha Ky BWRC established DNA extraction for non-invasive genetic analysis from dropped Scarlet macaw feathers. Results of genetic analysis are pending. BWRC staff and interns participated in croc population surveys conducted by our partners from the Crocodile Research Coalition (CRC) and continued to gather observational data on iguana populations in Cayo.

Finances

In 2017, BWRC successfully completed its first independent external audit. This audit was conducted voluntarily, as part of best practices in accounting for non-profit organizations. Fully audited was the fiscal year 2015 but all accounting files since 2012 had to be provided and after years of preparation we were elated to receive positive feedback from the auditor. We thank all our volunteer bookkeepers and accounting help, as well as Mr. Emil Pinelo for teaching us how to properly account for BWRC's finances.

BWRC's small animal services were limited this year. While we loved having Dr. Good, she quickly became very busy with her horse practice and had to focus on what she loves most (horses ☺). So we had to apologize to our domestic animal clients because Dr. Isabelle could not cover small animal services (next to wildlife work, teaching, directing clinic, and a few other Board positions there is not have enough time). BWRC has continued to provide x-ray diagnostics, orthopedic surgeries and some referral services and our search for a permanent small animal veterinarian continues.

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Figure 8. Over 70 runners participated in the first Chiquibul Challenge Marathon, ending at the Las Cuevas Research Station.

New event activities for BWRC in 2017 were 3 outdoor and fitness events: the Cayo Race for Conservation (5/10 km), Manikin Maya Mountain (10/20 km) and the Chiquibul Challenge Marathon (CCM) (20/40 km). While the first two were small races raising awareness, the CCM brought the largest number of Belizeans at one time out to the Las Cuevas Research Station (130). This event not only raised awareness about the Chiquibul but also raised funds for FCD and BWRC (as well as LCRS for hosting the guests!).

As always we have to thank our supporters, local businesses, international students and partners. BWRC's annual income was derived from teaching services, domestic animal veterinary services and 2 fundraisers: the CCM and the BWRC Gala. Thanks to all our guests, donors, auction winners and mainly the San Ignacio Resort Hotel and Miss Mariam Roberson for their amazingly generous support to our cause.

Summarizing finances, 2017 was a rough year! The move and remodeling of next clinic cost around $20.000 and we had no financial support other then our student groups and fundraisers. BWRC has started the next audit and we continue to work towards sustainability. In order to afford large purchases (land) and construction BWRC will depend on large grants.

Finally: BWRC celebrated its fifth birthday and was elated to have provided free veterinary care and rehabilitation to over 1300 wild animals, including 100 primates, 135 critically endangered

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Hickatee turtles, over 60 scarlet macaws and so many more.

And to end on a happy note please see below a picture of Spartacus. Who was he? He is the baby monkey who was turned into our clinic's logo. He survived thanks to intensive care, and received extensive orthopedic surgery to repair his severe injury to his hand and arm. Not only did he survive and keep his hand, but also and thanks to Wildtracks was he returned to the wild, where he has been living free for over 2 years now, and fathered multiple offspring. It doesn't get much better then that!

Figure 9. BWRC's logo monkey, Spartacus successful back in the wild!

Thanks to all our partners and supporters as well as our ever-growing amazing team of staff and volunteers!

How YOU can help? Check out our website www.belizewildlifeclinic.org, find our wish list or consider making a donation.

Contact us for more information: bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com