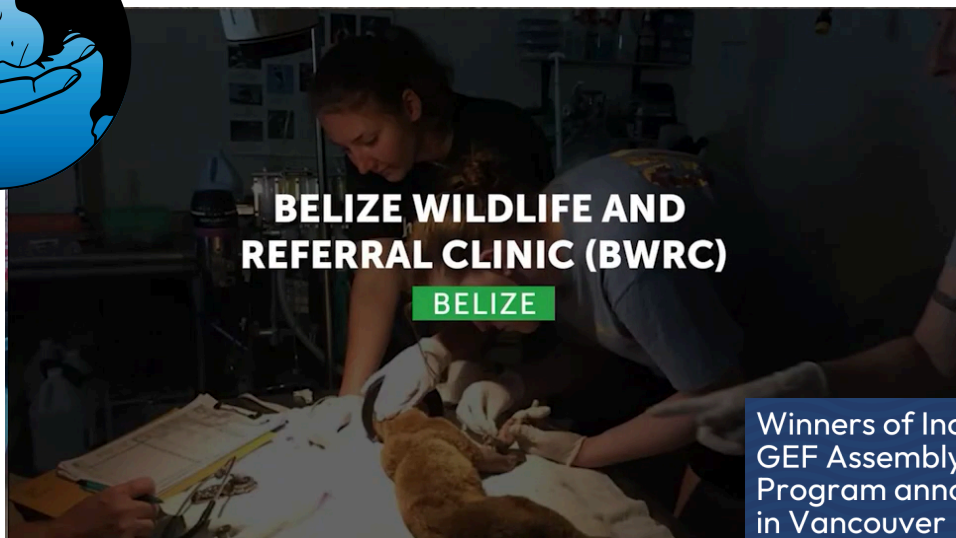


# Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic (BWRC ) Annual Report 2023



Winners of Inclusive  
GEF Assembly Challenge  
Program announced  
in Vancouver

#GEFassembly2023



[@belizewildlifeclinic](https://www.instagram.com/belizewildlifeclinic)



[@bzwildlifeclinic](https://www.facebook.com/bzwildlifeclinic)



[@bzwildlifeclinic](https://www.youtube.com/bzwildlifeclinic)



[belizewildlifeclinic.org](https://www.belizewildlifeclinic.org)



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## Director's note: 12th year of operation



What a roller coaster of a year! Once again I look back in gratitude to our supporters and the growing team, family and friends. 2023 was filled with challenges and also losses. But the BWRC team also got to celebrate many small victories and major milestones, and even received global recognition as a Winner of the Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program.

In 2023 BWRC provided free veterinary care and rehabilitation or health checks in the field for 516 animals of 65 different species, and hospitalized 180 patients. 56 releases were of course an absolute highlight for the team. 36 animals transferred, and many cooperative rescues highlighted the importance of our partnerships. Starting of course with the Forest Department, but also BFREE, FCD, Green Iguana Project, TBZ, Turtle Ecology Lab, CRC, Belize Bird Rescue and Belize Raptor Centre helped us work towards the conservation mission in 2023, aided by countless caring individuals, volunteers and certified wildlife ambassadors!.

The BWRC's Wildlife Ambassador Program hosted the first national conference and the team completed its first GEF-SGP grant as well as the GIZ Selva Maya One Health grant, touring the entire nation and leaving 396 trained individuals. Noteworthy was an increase in intakes of relinquished wildlife after training workshops. Some final phase I results are presented and the continuation is to roll out in March 2024! Our gratitude to the funders and the persons that helped along the way is endless.

How did we make ends meet for our team of 8? I can't say thank you enough to all the grantors, business sponsors as well as every individual supporter and volunteer! Thanks to your support and BWRC's amazing staff and last but not least our Board! Student groups and interns returned and the annual gala was an amazing gathering of friends and supporters and thanks to the San Ignacio Resort Hotel and a long list of business supporters an amazing success (see list in report). And we thank each and every one of you!

Most exciting accounting and end of the year news: Thanks to the Holtzman Foundation and NGO source BWRC was certified as equivalent to a US Non-profit in December 2023! And also in December BWRC received a 25,000\$ pledge towards the building of the clinic from Blancaneaux Lodge Community Fund! We hope to start the building of the BWRC Wildlife Classroom in its permanent site soon and grant search for the clinic itself continues.

No shortage of news from a year that felt like a rollercoaster, brought on many challenges and difficult tasks but also opportunities which ultimately saw BWRC grow to new levels.

I hope you enjoy the annual reports from the team and wish you only the best of Health, Happiness and Prosperity for 2024!

*I. Paquet Durand*

Isabelle Paquet Durand, DMV, PhD, CWR



## The year in numbers - 2023 at the Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic

### 1. Veterinary and Rehabilitation Program Activities

**Total number of wildlife patients seen: 516**

Number of species: **65**

Avian: **74**

Mammal: **53**

Reptile: **389**

Wildlife cases responded to through Hotline: **111**

Number of patients seen in field: **336**

Number of patients hospitalized: **180**



### Cause of injury and origin of patients:

IWT - Confiscated/relinquished: **48**      Orphans: **35**      Injured: **111**

HWC - Victims of human wildlife conflict: **54**

Dead on arrival: **12**

### Patient Outcomes:

**Rehabilitated and released by BWRC: 56**

**Died: 49** patients; 35(DIC) + 14 (EUTH)

**Transferred to partners: 36**

San Ignacio Hotel Iguana Project: 12 patients

Belize Bird Rescue: 10 patients

Wildtracks: 6 patients

The Belize Zoo: 3 unreleasable patients

Crocodile Research Coalition: 3 (2 unreleasable patients)

Belize Raptor Center: 1

Turtle Ecology Lab: 1 unreleasable patient



## 2. Values of charitable veterinary services in 2023\*

While most of our wildlife patients are accounted for under "GOB" for the Forest Department we accounted separately for wildlife patients and field support to the Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education - BFREE, Friends for Conservation and Development - FCD, San Ignacio Resort Hotel Green Iguana Project - SIRH, The Belize Zoo - TBZ, Crocodile Research Coalition - CRC, Turtle Ecology Lab - TEL and of course Government of Belize Forest Department and we have listed the value of **charitable veterinary services** for 2023 below:

*GOB (Forest Department Wildlife Program)	<b>\$BZD 62,842.40</b>
*BFREE (Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education) National Hickatee Conservation Program	<b>\$BZD 1,865</b>
*FCD (Friends for Conservation and Development) Scarlet Macaw Conservation Program and injured wildlife of Chiquibul	<b>\$BZD 8,722.71</b>
*SIRH (San Ignacio Resort Hotel Green Iguana Project )	<b>\$BZD 6,740.85</b>
*TBZ (The Belize Zoo)	<b>\$BZD 2,670.75</b>
*CRC (Crocodile Research Coalition)	<b>\$BZD 725</b>
*TEL (Turtle Ecology Lab)	<b>\$BZD 950</b>
*BRC (Belize Raptor Center)	<b>\$BZD 944.21</b>

**Total value** of charitable veterinary and animal care services provided in veterinary care, surgery, rescue, relocation and field assistance in 2023 was **\$BZD 85,460.92**

We did also look into the values provided for different animal groups and efforts and will soon share more lessons learned from our 2023 numbers.

*FAQ: Why do we write invoices for wildlife or "clients who don't pay"...? Our wildlife patients do not pay their bills and cooperation with conservation partners is part of BWRC's mission and vision. But we account for each patient seen and the value of services provided. Then we have our accountant "write off" these charitable service expenses once per year. This means BWRC provides service to the Government of Belize and approved conservation partners nationwide at no charge to them and we raised the funds to cover those costs thanks to You and our team.*

## 3. Outreach and Capacity building Program: Wildlife Ambassador Program - Phase I concluded in 2023 - to be continued in 2024!

Thanks to GEF-Small Grants Program Belize and One Health GIZ Selva Maya, BWRC was able to develop and roll out the nationwide outreach and capacity building under the Wildlife Ambassador Program for a total of 2 years, concluding in October of 2023. While many more activities were conducted by our team, we just wanted to share some of the impact highlights from our final presentation given in Cancun, MX in October 2023. Please do not hesitate to ask for further information. And if you are curious, please join the program [HERE](#) as we will continue this important effort.

## Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic - BWRC's Annual Report 2023

The team concluded with **17** monthly Facebook LIVE events, which were also recorded and uploaded to [BWRC's Youtube Channel](#).

The team posted 3-5 weekly social media posts with total views of **367,103**

**27** workshops completed, bringing us to a total of **396** certified ambassadors.

**2** snake training workshops for 32 persons.

**188** of Ambassadors were enforcement officers (Police officers and the Belize Defence Force).

**264** males and **121** females.

**1282** wildlife calls were received on the Hotline

**371** cases resolved via phone call

**217** Wildlife Traffic or conflict interventions

**1960** Miles tracked in the Wildlife Ambulance

**393** animals received at BWRC

**1063** animals seen in the field

**87** animals released

**16** Newsletters that were disseminated.



The first national conference was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2023, with the goal to bring together national and regional partners in Wildlife conservation and One Health, turned out to be a great success. Additionally, the educators were invited to the Morning Show on national television to discuss and inform about WAP. (see picture below).



And, the best news for last: as we were concluding our first phase of workshops, we had received many requests for further training and further initial workshops. In working towards continued funding for the WAP we were absolutely elated to be announced as a winner of the global Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program on August 23, 2023.

learn more at:

<https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/press-releases/winners-inclusive-gef-assembly-challenge-program-announced-vancouver>

This means that while we are in between grants at this time, we are anticipating receiving a medium sized GEF grant in Spring of 2024. After which, we will continue following up and resume efforts to prevent, reduce and mitigate Human Wildlife Conflict and Illegal Wildlife



Trade through Outreach, capacity building and wildlife emergency response using a One Health approach..

#### 4. Financial news, Income and Expenses

Financial Officer's numbers 2023: This year we have seen the organization's annual budget grow to **\$368,190.91 in 2023**. This would not be possible without the help of grants, and while it entails more work in office and on the grounds, thanks to Melissa, we have the certainty of BWRC's mission and our core value of transparency and best practices, in accounting, is being fulfilled every year. Accounting and auditing are a must for a growing organization, and in 2023 we were delighted to have on board L3G's Accounting services, with Mrs. Fatima Chi as our external accountant. She has been awesome in guiding us through new transitions and making sure our books are up to date. We have also appreciated the voluntary assistance at times by Glendy and of course we have been joined in 2023 by Miss Aisha Magana. Our office team has taken on significant effort and cost, as BWRC transitioned to a newer version of the software in 2023 and we continue this transition to the beginning of February. For this reason minor changes in number are still possible.

##### 4.1 Annual BWRC Income and sources:

**Income 2023:** \$368,190.91 - (GOB)85,460.92\*=**\$283,478.08**

\*Note that the value of our charitable service invoices appears as income, until we have our accountant remove it with a memo.

##### Income sources 2023:

Grants: **\$70,960.53**

Fundraisers: **\$61,053.00**

Student groups/Interns: **\$134,228.50**

Donations: **\$11,793.98**

##### 4.2 Annual Expense 2023: Total **\$311,757.34**

Major expenses 2023 itemized\*

Facilities rent: \$13,200

Salaries: \$123,270

Vehicle repair and maintenance: \$16,257

Maintenance: \$14,073

Medical supplies: \$11,926

Fuel: \$10,625

*\*this value includes charitable service value*

Office supplies: \$4,497

Animal feed: \$7,539

Electricity: \$6,620

Phone and Internet: \$3,388

Insurance: \$3,100

## 5. 2023 Highlights and News:

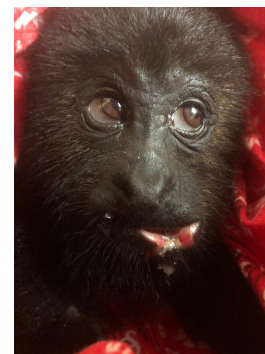
It is hard to pick favorites. In the past we have at times shared much of the hardship, mentioning lowlights and abuse cases. For 2023 we want to focus on the positives and share a just few favorites for you:

Dr. I: My personal vet activity favorites remain the field related efforts through our support to the Scarlet Macaw Program with Friends for Conservation and Development – FCD, which saw 13 macaws fledge into the Chiquibul in 2023. As well, the Hickatee Conservation Program by our friends at BFREE – Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education, where we did health checks for 208 Hickatees.

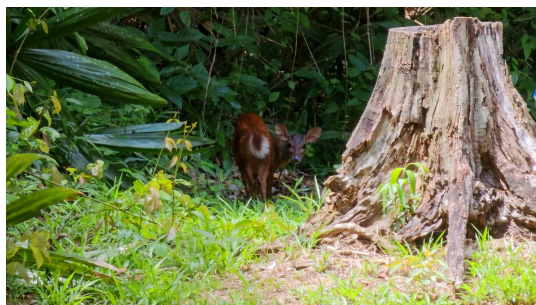
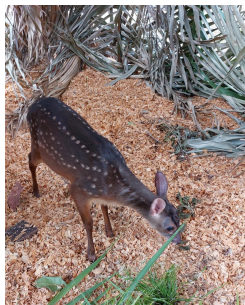


My favorite rescue of the year: Valentina the tapir, thanks to Corporal Ba for his compassion, and physical assistance of BDF, as well as Humberto Wohlers and the amazing The Belize Zoo (TBZ) team. Rescued from Augustine Pine Ridge BDF camp, the Sunday before Valentine's day, with the help from the Zoo and the BDF soldiers. Quite an effort and a rare case to be able to rescue an adult tapir and bring it into care. Sadly, she ultimately succumbed to underlying conditions 2 months later, but until then she enjoyed the amazing care and compassion of the TBZ team.

My favorite quick happy ending case of the year: rescuing, stabilizing and reuniting an electrocuted baby howler monkey with his troop and mom at Jaguar Paw, thanks to caring tour guides who stepped in and called for our help. While the injury was videoed and appeared almost surely fatal, this little guy showed incredible resilience and spirit and his return to his troop and mom and little over 24 h later was a very emotional moment.



My favorite long unusual and happy ending case involving all of the team members and our partners: a neonate red brocket deer, rescued by FCD by a hunters' camp in distress, reared and rehabilitated over 6 month at BWRC and then soft released in the Chiquibul and seen several times post release in good condition (and not approaching humans!)





Godwin here (Head of animal care): In a heartwarming moment, my eyes welled up with tears of joy as I spotted the resilient red brocket deer, released months earlier, alive and thriving in the release area. Despite bearing a few scars, she maintained a cautious distance, observing me with curiosity. Overwhelmed with happiness, I stood in awe, savoring the moment. Moments later she gracefully vanished into the nearby bushes, leaving me with a profound sense of gratitude for her resilience and the beauty of this shared connection with nature!



Another quick 2023 highlight from Godwin Castillo: Rescued from a dog mauling, a young nine banded armadillo endured severe injuries with about 2 to 3 inches of flesh torn on its side and a perforated back armor. After careful assessment, x-rays, and anesthesia, a dedicated team worked tirelessly for weeks to debride/clean, medicate, and nurture her wounds. Weeks later the armadillo not only improved but made a complete recovery, Ultimately returning to the wild. Gratitude goes to all of the heroes behind her remarkable journey to recovery!

## 5.1. New faces and New adventures

We are elated to have our team joined by Debora Olivarez in the Animal Care Program and Aisha Magana as an administrative assistant (and of course Jack of many trades as about every single team member of BWRC). As BWRC continues to grow in staff we continue to stay busy. And our newest staff members have fit in amazingly well! The only reason we can achieve what we hope for as an organization is because each of our team members come together as individuals with different strengths, but the same passion for the animals and environment joined under the same mission. Thank YOU TEAM!



Aisha Magana



Debora Olivarez



Last but not least we are excited for our educator Giann Vasquez, who has left to complete his Masters in Biodiversity under the Erasmus Mundus Tropimundo scholarship. This will take him to study in Belgium, Reunion (French territory in the Indian Ocean) and Italy before returning to Belize in 2025.

**Board of Directors Update:**

The Board held its annual meeting on December 28th 2023. After a brief annual summary all directors agreed to continue and one new member was elected. Our gratitude to Mr. Mark Wilkins, Dr. Boris Arevalo, Dr. Paquet-Durand and congratulations to Giann Vasquez for joining the Board of Directors of the Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic!

**6. 7th Annual Chiquibul Challenge Marathon - CCM 2023 - Fundraiser for Macaw Program**

The 2023 Chiquibul Challenge Marathon saw a total of 58 runners (7 full-marathon, 51 half-marathon). The total funds raised were \$20,355. The amazing Las Cuevas Research Station team once again provided excellent service to our challengers and earned \$6,201 for the intense 24h event. After the expenses of \$17,909 the profit of \$2,445 was then split between BWRC and FCD (with \$1,222.5 each) to support the Scarlet Macaw Monitoring Project. 2023 was, with the exception of the 2021 virtual run (COVID version), the smallest number of runners since inception in 2017. And while we were overjoyed to count on the incredible support of BWRC's business sponsors of many years, providing amazing prizes for our Challenge winners once again (please see list at the end of this report!) some larger sponsors could no longer participate.



Regardless of the fact that the fundraising was less successful, our equally important goals with this event: awareness of the Chiquibul's beauty and threats to conservation, encouraging fitness, coupled with a touch of education were accomplished. We can certainly confirm that participants enjoyed the Chiquibul and the Challenge to fitness. We believe that runners (and walkers..) appreciated the amazing nature and recognized the need for conservation and the crucial work done by Friends for Conservation - FCD.



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While this may come as sad news to many of you asking for the 2024 dates, we will take this opportunity to share that in our 8th year of "Racing for Conservation", we will not organize this conservation, fitness and fundraiser event in Spring 2024! We are envisioning Fall 2024 and we will change things up, including with a different location too! We want to improve some aspects of race logistics, which should also make the event less costly in the registration to runners. But we can guarantee a challenge in terrain and beautiful nature, as well as the use of any funds raised going to support species conservation in the field. And of course we also want to continue to highlight the work of our amazing partners in the field. Please stay in touch and follow us on Social Media where we will announce further details.

### WE COULD NOT DO WHAT WE DO WITHOUT YOUR HELP!

#### 7. Thank you to:

GIZ One Health Selva Maya Program  
GEF Small Grants Program  
Nature Trust of the Americas - NTOTA  
Holtzman Foundation  
Belize Diesel and Toyota  
San Ignacio Resort Hotel  
Blancaneaux Lodge

#### Chiquibul Challenge Partners and Sponsors:

Art Box  
Blancaneaux  
Ian Andersons Cavesbranch  
The Lodge at Chaa Creek  
Friends for Conservation & Development  
The End of the World Marathon  
The Guava Limb Cafe  
Gaia  
Mystic River Resort  
San Ignacio Resort Hotel  
Parrot Nest Lodge  
Pelican Beach Resort

#### Gala Donors:

San Ignacio Resort Hotel  
Catherine Major  
Ka'ana Resort  
Parrot Nest Lodge  
Jenny Gair  
The Lodge at Chaa Creek

Turtle Inn Resort  
Splash Dive Center  
All Challenge runners and support teams

#### BWRC Volunteers:

Debora Olivares  
Jen McKnight  
Simon Lotiff  
Reyna Choj  
Ymir Zuniga  
Katherine Plett  
Mario Silva  
Jaylani Cawich  
Destiny Humes  
Ishawn Mutlip  
Sangel Cal

ALL Gala participants  
Project Vets  
Orlando Jimenez  
Glendy Bautista  
BFREE  
Bambu Tea San Ignacio

The Guava Limb Cafe  
Caribbean Spice Belize  
Blancaneaux  
Turtle Inn  
Pelican Beach  
The Belize Raptor Center  
Chan Chich Lodge





## Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic - BWRC's Annual Report 2023

The Orchid Bay Resort  
Sunbreeze Suits  
Sun Creek Lodge  
Hot Mama's  
Jennifer Mcknight  
The Ellysian Boutique Hotel  
Hamanasi Resort  
Balance Point Wellness and Massage  
Calico Jacks Village Resort  
Linda Luna  
Reimer's Feed Mill  
Marguerite Bevis  
Kaileigh Gair

Bulridge Ltd.  
Alma del Rio  
Fernando Cruz  
Mystic River Resort  
Daniel Velasquez  
Ian Anderson's Caves Branch  
Ko-Ox-Han-Nah  
Miss Deb's  
Rainforest Remedies  
Rony Jovel  
Sol Belize  
Jamanji Wood work  
Helaman Arts Chi

### Special thanks to all students and faculty!

Last, but definitely not least, we have to thank our Interns and international student groups from University of Minnesota, Tennessee, Small Animal Veterinary Experience and Wildlife Medicine and Conservation course students for their enthusiastic participation, as well as financial support towards the BWRC's mission. Additionally, online courses for Purdue University and Mercy College provided vital support.

### It takes a Team!

With a small core team of full time staff and a small army of volunteers, students, wildlife ambassadors, supporters, funders, and donors we look forward to continue our services in 2024. We continue with the care of animals, nature, and humans, with a One Health Approach. Help us to thank the team when you see them next!



### Behind the scenes...3 years of support! We can't thank you enough

The impact and importance of the support from Mark and Rebecca from Nature Trust of the Americas is beyond good enough words! Starting at our worst (2020... shutdown of all income for BWRC, but essential workers caring for 40 patients in house) NTOTA stepped in to help in countless ways. From providing needed equipment, getting us on the road again, financial support to joining





and providing guidance as a member of the BWRC Board of Directors and purchasing the land for our permanent home, your help makes a world of a difference!

## 8. BIG Needs in 2024:

BWRC would benefit from the expertise of a **social media manager**, responsible for all our social media platforms. This would include keeping our followers up to date with activities occurring at the clinic, possible opportunities, outreach and awareness, services and classes available and liaising with our clinic manager, educator and hotline coordinator for materials to share and referring inquiries made through direct messages of all platforms.

Having acquired a permanent home site for the clinic and educational facilities, and having placed the first infrastructures in 2023 and acquired funding for an educational building, the BWRC will need further funding, as well as a **contractor**, to build an educational building in early 2024. And of course, we need to continue to **fundraise**. The clinic building cost estimate came out to **US\$340.000** and we have an extremely generous matching grant offer for US\$150,000. This means once we raise US\$ 150,000, this will be matched and we would be almost there to complete the building!

## 9. How YOU can help BWRC - 12+ ways to help wildlife and BWRC in working towards a vision of conservation and development in balance with One Health

There are countless ways that you can help!

-ZERO cost! You can follow us online on Instagram, Facebook and especially find and subscribe to our channel on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@bzwildlifeclinic> where we have uploaded 30+h of educational videos.

-Join the Wildlife Ambassador Program [HERE](#)

-Of course financial support always helps: BWRC can receive donations through Paypal using this QR Code, or through a fiscal sponsor in the US upon request.

**Just to give you an idea of our average cost and some examples of items needed:**

- o In 2023 the care for one wildlife patient on average cost 165\$ (with much variation depending on species and injury of course).
- o BWRC needs to purchase further caging at 5 x 300\$/carrier.
- o Special diets cost about 1,000\$ per year.

-Donating supplies also helps BWRC to carry out its daily tasks in wildlife conservation. We are always in need of wound care supplies, fluids, bandage materials, sheets, towels, pillow cases, syringes, needles, rubber gloves, cleaning supplies, animal feed and more.



## Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic - BWRC's Annual Report 2023



-Of course as a business sponsor you could also donate items towards our annual fundraising auctions (Art pieces, tourism services and more) and/or support our annual Chiquibul Challenge Marathon with prizes for the winners.

-You can also visit our website at <https://belizewildlifeclinic.org/support-us/bwrc-wishlist/> to find our wishlist.

-And if you like to shop online, BWRC also has a wishlist on Amazon:  
[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2I5JRZM0NS7T9?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2I5JRZM0NS7T9?ref_=wl_share)

-Since the clinic continues to grow and there continues to be a need for small animal referral services, BWRC will also need a **small animal veterinarian**. This veterinarian would be responsible for all domestic patients that come into the clinic on a daily basis and ideally has an interest in wildlife medicine.

### **-For the adventurous traveler: Take an onsite course or internship.**

Expand your knowledge and experience while supporting BWRC's efforts to care for injured/orphaned wildlife and return them back to the wild: BWRC will offer onsite courses during the summer and winter breaks and internships and clinical rotations year round.

-Check out our internship programs for international students and veterinarians here:  
<https://belizewildlifeclinic.org/veterinary-internship/>

-BWRC offers **online** courses in Wildlife Medicine and Conservation (WMC), contact us now [bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com](mailto:bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com) to request a date for this course.

-BWRC needs an additional cage for pre-release conditioning

-Or you could even host a birthday, BBQ or wedding fundraiser for BWRC. Just let us know your idea and we will gladly assist with support that we can provide.

-We understand that monetary donations are not possible for many. But you still want to offer your support, we also take Belizean animal care volunteers or interns year round. All you have to do is send us an email to [bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com](mailto:bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com) with your CV and letter of interest. Note that we can accept volunteer veterinarians, but we cannot offer paid employment for foreigners.

So, you see? There are more than a dozen ways you can help!

***Last but not least: If you see Wildlife in trouble or Wildlife is giving you trouble (in Belize) give us a call at 6155159 so that we can help you!***

Contact us: [bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com](mailto:bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com)

Thank you