

BELIZE BIRD RESCUE



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

[BELIZEBIRDRESCUE.ORG](http://BELIZEBIRDRESCUE.ORG)

# CONTENTS



---

*02*

MESSAGE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR

---

*03*

ABOUT BELIZE BIRD RESCUE

---

*04*

WHAT WE DO

---

*06 - 10*

HOW YOU HELPED

---

*11 - 13*

STATISTICS AND FINANCIALS

---

*14*

STAY CONNECTED

---

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

2023 brought us 248 intakes, including 10 non-avian patients and 6 domestic or exotic bird cases. Nothing in need is turned away! We helped an additional 82 cases via the hotline with issues such as exhausted migrants, renesting, transfers to the vet, and illegal activity reports to the authorities. Almost three quarters of all calls came from our ever-vigilant members of public, which is a 25% increase on last year alone. Our rescue network continues to grow and we are forever grateful to our small army of volunteers who step up on a regular basis to help with our transport needs, saving BBR and other organizations precious resources.

We made 119 releases which included 29 songbirds, 25 raptors and 40 parrots. We received another 86 parrots for rehabilitation this year, 52 of which were babies needing hand-raising and the rest ex-captive adult birds confiscated by the Forest Department or surrendered by owners.

Our most rapid turn-around for parrot rehabilitation is just one year for the yellow-headed Amazon chicks that are extracted to prevent poaching or mortality through nest overcrowding or predation.

With the other parrots it gets a little more complicated as we battle issues such as wing-clipping, poor feather condition, habituation and naughty habits.



Our longest rehab to date was 9 years for a flock of ex-captive yellow-headed Amazons, but as an endangered species with a lifespan of around 60 years, it's worth the investment.

Before BBR there was nowhere for sick, injured or orphaned birds to receive the necessary care to return to the wild.

Before BBR there were parrots throughout the country living short lives in tiny cages.

Before BBR there was no future other than a lifetime of captivity for parrots removed from the wild: the provision of a rehab facility is a crucial element of enforcement and conservation success.

The organisation has evolved and grown and we've helped to change attitudes and legislation along the way. It has taken a small army of dedicated employees, volunteers, conservation partners, government officers and, of course, donors to make this all possible.

For your support and generosity, your kindness, your help and advice, thank you from the bottom of our heart.

*Nikki Buxton*

*Director*



## ABOUT BBR

---

Belize Bird Rescue is Belize's only multi-species avian rescue centre and accepts all indigenous and migratory species. Operating under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Belize Forest Department, the organizations' primary areas of focus are: rehabilitation for the release of wild-caught parrots liberated from the illegal pet trade; provision of a rehabilitation facility for birds confiscated under the Belize Forest Department's mandate; medical care and rehabilitation for orphaned, injured or otherwise imperiled birds; providing a wild-environment sanctuary for non-releasable parrots; education and awareness of Belize's wildlife laws; providing 24hr wildlife advice and rescue services; and supporting the Belize Forest Department with the Captive Wildlife Programme which will prevent any additional wild parrots entering the illegal pet trade in the future.

### *Saving Belize's Birds BBR in action!*

Belize's only multi-species avian centre for the rescue, rehabilitation and release of native wild birds, with a focus on rehab for release of wild-caught parrots liberated from the illegal pet trade.

*MISSION: To preserve and protect the wild birds of Belize, through rehabilitation, conservation and education*





# WHAT WE DO

## RESCUE

As Belize develops and population growth inevitably impacts the natural environment, the impact of human-caused threats upon wild birds increases. We deal with window and vehicle strikes, chopped nesting trees, domestic animal predation, rodenticide poisoning, conflict in urban areas or farms, displacement through habitat destruction, plus deliberate harm such as poaching and shooting, in addition to naturally orphaned, sick or injured birds.

## EDUCATION

Belize has a small population of around 400,000 people. With relatively few outlets for national media, and a strong reliance on social media, appropriate education and awareness programs can yield a high degree of success with a comparatively small outlay.

## MEDICAL CARE

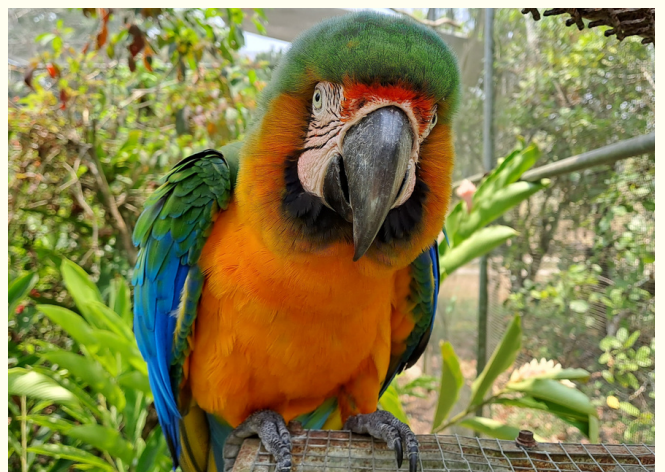
BBR's veterinary clinic facilitates health assessments and non-invasive medical care such as GI issues, minor wound dressing and fracture splinting. Surgeries and more complex needs are cared for at Animal Medical Centre in Belize City.

## PARROTS

Our primary focus continues to be the protection of wild parrots. Belize has 9 resident species of parrots, and all are hunted as chicks for the illegal domestic and international pet trade. The provision of a facility to rehabilitate and release confiscated and surrendered birds is crucial for effective enforcement and awareness.

## SANCTUARY

BBR is home to more than 50 non-releasable parrots. The majority have formed flocks and pair bonds in their natural environment enclosures. A few require individual care, whilst some of the special needs cases will periodically visit foster homes for extra love.



## Baby parrots

52 of the 86 parrot intakes were babies requiring hand-feeding or weaning. These birds came via the public or confiscated by the authorities. Their ages range from tiny featherless nestlings to almost flying. If we are lucky they haven't been in human hands too long and are in good physical condition, but sadly many are not. Wing-clipping and poor feather condition is a common problem.

## Ex-captive Parrots

Wild-caught parrots that have been in captivity for a while will come with many issues. They have usually endured poor diets and inappropriate husbandry leading to compromised physical development. They may have leg, foot or wing deformities, eye issues, poor feather condition or clipped wings, even old fractures that prevent them from flying. Some may be bonded to humans whilst others are scared of everything. Most have never encountered another parrot and find it difficult to establish their position within the flock. Rehabilitation for these damaged souls can be up to five years or more in some cases.

## Wild Breeding Success

Our released white-fronted and red-lored parrots had considerable breeding success around the centre this year with many babies appearing with their banded parents. They are finding their own nests somewhere on our 50-acre property and the surrounding forests. There are also utility poles along our access road which white-fronts use on a regular basis, expanding cavities made by nature's construction crew, the woodpeckers.



## Yellow-headed Amazon Project

2023 was the 9th year of the yellow headed Amazon at-risk chick program. We released the 6 chicks that we hand-raised in 2022, and the protected area Rangers extracted another 11 nestlings to save them from poaching, predation or mortality through nest overcrowding. Considerable care is taken to protect these pristine chicks from any interaction with the habituated parrots at BBR. They spend the majority of their rehab in a remote aviary until their return to the nesting grounds the following season. After a brief period in a pre-release enclosure they are released, and in less than 2 weeks are fully integrated into the wild flocks.



## Law Enforcement

It is illegal in Belize to have a wild-caught captive parrot, however The Belize Forest Department may license a parrot that has been in captivity for a considerable amount of time provided the owner provides the minimum standard of care required for permitting. If they fail to meet these standards the bird will be brought in for rehabilitation, which was the case for 19 of our parrot intakes this year.



## Releases & Waiting

We released 40 parrots that had been under rehabilitation for some time: 14 white-fronted, 9 red-loreds, 12 yellow-heads, 3 olive-throated parakeets and 2 white-crowned parrots. As of the end of 2023 we have 161 parrots undergoing long-term rehabilitation for release.



## Raptor Rehabilitation

We cared for 41 birds of prey. 30 of those were owls, including stygian, striped and mottled owls, plus 19 barn owls which are our most common raptor species by far. Sadly 6 of the raptors didn't make it, but as of the end of the year 31 have been released back into the wild, with 4 still undergoing rehabilitation.



The barn owls are almost always youngsters evicted from roof spaces in our towns and cities. The owls are attracted to these locations by the abundance of rodents living off human waste and activity and the availability of accessible loft spaces for nesting.



## Barn Rebuild

This year we finally managed to predator proof the raptor barn. We had been battling predator incursions and after several near misses we could no longer take risks with our patients.



We were extremely fortunate to have a sizable donation given in 2022 earmarked for exactly this purpose, but had been putting it off because of the sheer size of the task. It took six weeks and four men working solidly to pull down the old structure and replace it with a strong steel framed aviary of half inch wire mesh. Only then could we attach the visual screening of lumber essential for successful raptor rehabilitation.



The whole endeavor cost close to \$18,000US but it was worth every penny to know that we can provide safe and successful rehabilitation for all of the amazing raptor species that Belize Bird Rescue cares for.



## Waterbirds

This year we cared for 32 fresh and salt water birds of 17 different species with a variety of habitat needs including terrestrial water bodies, lagoons, sea front and open ocean. In addition to fish their diet includes lizards, invertebrates, insects, rodents, molluscs and other birds. We have a dedicated water bird enclosure but we lack a filtration system for the pond, which is high on the list for 2024.



## Songbirds & Forest Birds

Songbirds and forest birds are our biggest group of rehab patients and encompass the greatest number of species. They include pigeons and doves, woodpeckers, mockingbirds, tanagers, flycatchers, thrushes, orioles, trogons and mot-mots. Their rehab and husbandry needs are varied, with dietary needs including spiders, insects, worms, larvae, seeds, grasses, grains, nuts, fruits, berries and more!



## Toucans

We had 14 toucan species come through our doors. Most of those were the extremely charismatic little collared aracaris. We have quite the flock of these birds around BBR now, as it's our preference to soft-release them into an existing group, particularly if they are hand-raised babies. They can be territorial and aggressive so it's good to keep watch over their release.



## Enclosure refurbishment

In addition to the raptor barn rebuild, we finally completed the 2-year project of predator-proofing all of our enclosures. From our first aviary built in 2006 we favoured dirt floors with natural foliage with the wire around the base embedded in a concrete trench 3 feet into the ground to stop any critters tunneling inside. But over the years the many opportunistic predators in Belize had found ways to get inside. Now every single aviary has a secure wire floor and although we miss the natural plants, we do not miss the stress of worrying about who's getting inside with our precious rehab birds.



## Education, awareness & recognition

BBR took part and presented at the first 'International Parrot Release in the Americas Symposium', sharing ideas and protocols with over 200 individuals working in wild parrot conservation. We also featured in a 30-minute documentary aired on the Belize News Network and a 20-minute segment in the Belize Collection's Coffee with Conservationists series. Our Director Nikki Buxton was presented with an IFAW Animal Action Award in London. We gave presentations, on-site and off-site to special interest groups and other organizations. BBR participated in the Belize Forest Department summer camp and the Belmopan Independence Day Parade. We published multiple magazine and news articles and a wrote a segment on parrots for a Maya language curriculum text book published this year. We launched our new-look Newsletter on our website platform, and have started a blog which will be tackling many aspects of avian conservation in depth.

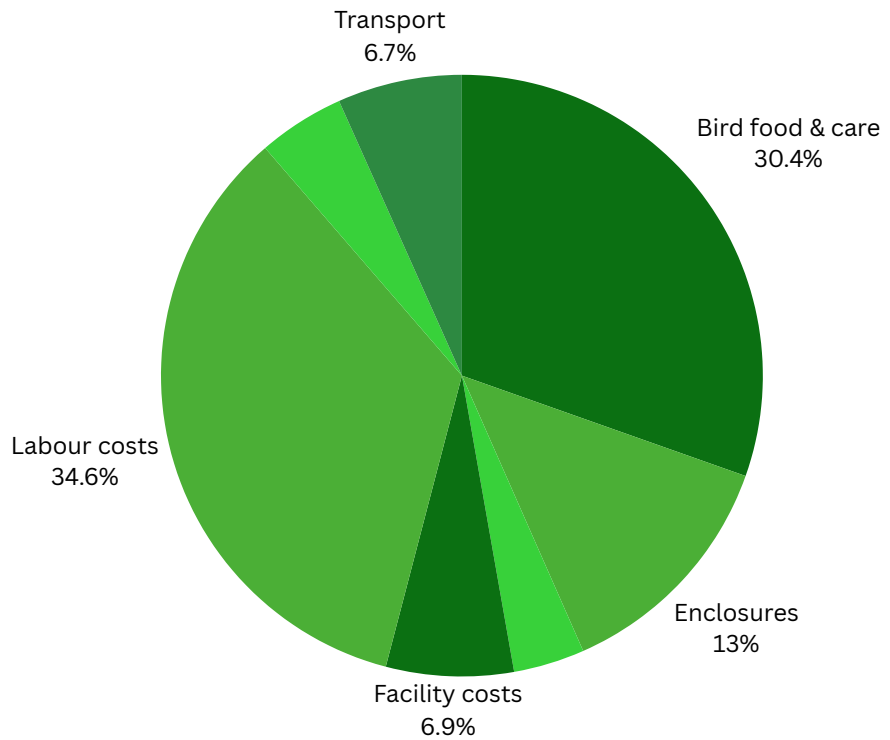


	TYPE	INTAKES	BBR RELEASES	IN CARE
Belize Bird Rescue 2023 intakes, releases from all intake years and patients still in care as of Dec 2023	Parrots	86	39	161
	Raptors	41	25	4
	Songbirds	57	29	0
	Waterbirds	32	10	0
	Toucans	14	11	3
	Non-avian	9	8	0
	Exotic	8	n/a	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>247</b>	<b>122</b>



## HOW THE MONEY WAS SPENT (\$US)

ITEM	AMOUNT
Bird food & colony costs	\$22,275
Veterinary & rehab	\$15,756
Enclosures & equipment	\$16,234
Education & Outreach	\$4,785
Travel and vehicle	\$8,370
Rental of facility	0.00
Utilities	\$8,566
Payroll & project labour	\$37,972
Staff/intern expenses	\$2,341
Social security	\$2,935
Admin & professional fees	\$2,168
Sales taxes	\$3,646
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$125,048</b>



## Income

Our 2023 Belize income total of \$92,960US provided funding for our conservation projects, facility improvements, staffing and operational support. The majority of this income came from private individuals, either through our Global Giving platform (\$24,668) or fiscal sponsors grants from Friends of Belize Bird Rescue (\$54,500)

Our biggest single donor wishes to remain anonymous and we have to respect those wishes, however we can say that he is a wonderful human being who simply loves birds, and without his additional support there is little doubt that we be struggling to remain afloat.

2023 saw a 15% increase in donations compared to 2022, which is testament to the confidence of our donors and our ever-increasing donor support.

Your generosity drives progress and growth for the organization creating greater awareness and better outcomes for birds in need.



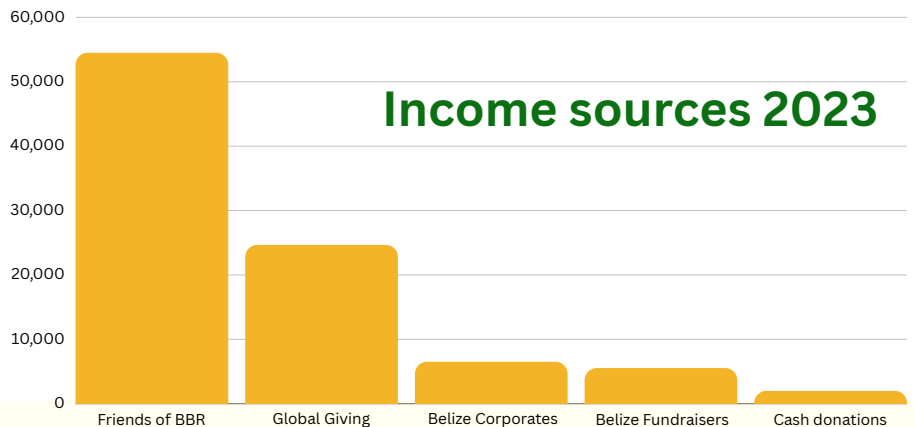
## Income by Quarter

1st quarter \$16,683

2nd quarter \$14,649

3rd quarter \$31,058

4th quarter \$30,570



## Friends of Belize Bird Rescue

This is a 501c3 registered in the USA supporting avian conservation in Belize. Where appropriate we direct contributors to their US tax-deductible donation portals (Direct deposits, Zelle, Paypal and Venmo). In 2023 81 individual donors took advantage of the Friends of Belize Bird Rescue platform to contribute \$63,205US: a 17 % increase on 2022. We want to thank the Directors of Friends of Belize Bird Rescue for their regular grant disbursements and their dedication to our cause!



## Belize Fundraisers

Our local donors are an impressive force too. Corporate support was up on 2023 with donations of \$6,520 from local companies. Fundraising efforts such as the Christmas Raffle & Silent Auction, local merchandise sales and donation boxes brought us a further \$7,543 to help reach our total annual funding needs.

## Thank you for our home

Thank you as always to Rock Farm for continuing to provide BBR with a beautiful facility and rehab/release site, saving the organization \$6,000 per year. 19 years and counting!



## Global Giving

The generosity of our Global Giving family contributed \$24,668 to Belize Bird Rescue, and in fact this amazing army of supporters were responsible for this year's record for the highest single-day donations. On Giving Tuesday 28th November just one day of their generosity brought us an incredible \$6,482.

## So much kindness

Donations come in many forms, and our in-kind contributions were fabulous this year. Donated transport by our rescue network contributed 4,982 miles which amounted to 21% of our rescue miles. Through 2023 the BBR truck travelled 25,000 miles for rescues, releases, vet trips and shopping. Donated time and expertise from vets, rehabbers, holdover managers and book-keepers amounted to a value to BBR of \$16,998 and your wish-list purchases totaled \$4,084US worth of donated food, equipment and tools.

**JOIN.  
STAY CONNECTED.  
TAKE ACTION.**



## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **BELIZE BIRD RESCUE**

Roaring Creek, Cayo District

[www.belizebirdrescue.org](http://www.belizebirdrescue.org)

[info@belizebirdrescue.org](mailto:info@belizebirdrescue.org)

+501-610-0400 (Phone, Text, WhatsApp)

Facebook/Instagram @belizebirdrescue

