

# BELIZE BIRD RESCUE



## ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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## About Us

Established in 2004, Belize Bird Rescue NGO works in close collaboration with the Belize Forest Department to rescue, rehabilitate, and release wild birds, while providing permanent sanctuary for those that cannot return to the wild.

Our work spans emergency response, long-term rehabilitation, and conservation-focused field efforts, with a strong emphasis on parrots affected by the illegal pet trade



Our mission is to rescue, rehabilitate, and release Belize's wild birds; provide sanctuary for those that cannot return to the wild; combat wildlife trafficking; and promote harmony between people and wildlife through outreach and community engagement.

# REFLECTIONS OF 2025

## *from the director*

2025 marked Belize Bird Rescue's 21st year of continuous operation, and it was one of our busiest and most demanding years to date. Over the course of the year, we admitted 346 birds representing 75 different species, made 160 releases, and ended the year with 229 birds still in our care. A year is a long time in wildlife rescue – and this one felt especially full.

As always, parrots liberated from the illegal pet trade made up the largest portion of our work. Through confiscations, surrenders, escaped pets, and the extraction of at-risk chicks to prevent poaching, 143 parrots entered our rehabilitation programmes in 2025.

Many of these birds face long journeys, requiring at least 18 months, and often many years of care before they may be ready for release - if release is possible at all.

What continues to strengthen and sustain this work is the extraordinary level of community involvement behind it. Sixty-three percent of our rescues began with a simple phone call or message from a concerned member of the public. This shared responsibility of people choosing to act when they see a bird in trouble is one of the most powerful forces protecting wildlife in Belize.

While parrots remain our primary focus, more than half of our admissions were other species, including raptors, waterbirds, forest birds and songbirds. Each group presents unique challenges and requires specialised care, reinforcing the importance of having a skilled, experienced team and facilities capable of supporting such diversity.



None of this work would be possible without the unwavering support of our donors. Your generosity allows us to respond when the phone rings, to provide long-term rehabilitation and sanctuary care, to expand facilities when demand increases, and to plan responsibly for the future. You are not simply supporting this work - you are enabling it.

After 21 years, Belize Bird Rescue remains committed to ethical wildlife care, responsible release, and the belief that people and wildlife can coexist in harmony. I am deeply grateful to everyone who stood with us throughout 2025, and I look forward to what we will continue to accomplish together in the year ahead.

*Nikki Buxton*

*Director*



# Our Philosophy



## Working together for Belize's wild birds

Wildlife rescue is never a solo effort. At Belize Bird Rescue, our work is built on collaboration between staff, experts, partners, donors, and members of the public.

By combining ethical wildlife care with community engagement and conservation action, we work toward lasting solutions that allow birds and people to coexist in harmony.

## Our Vision

A Belize where wild birds thrive in healthy habitats, safe from exploitation and wildlife trafficking, and where people and wildlife coexist as part of a shared natural heritage.

## Our Core Goals

To rescue, rehabilitate, and release wild birds in need, and provide permanent sanctuary for those that cannot return to the wild. Our efforts include emergency response, long-term rehabilitation, sanctuary care, and targeted conservation work, with a strong focus on parrots affected by the illegal pet trade.

## Our Approach

Guided by strong ethics and species-specific best practice, we prioritise minimal human interaction, natural behaviours, and responsible release. Outreach and awareness are grounded in inspiration through observation, encouraging respect for wildlife without exploitation or direct contact.

## PARROTS - OUR CORE WORK

Parrots liberated from the illegal pet trade remain at the heart of our work. In 2025, 143 parrots entered rehabilitation through confiscations, surrenders, escaped pets, and proactive extraction of birds at risk of poaching.



### Former-Captive Parrots

We received 43 surrenders and 21 Forest Department confiscations of former-captive parrots. An additional 16 were escaped pets that were captured and brought to us for rehabilitation.

Many arrived physically compromised or behaviourally conditioned to captivity, requiring long-term rehabilitation focused on socialisation, flight strength, and natural foraging skills.

Thanks to donor support, these birds are receiving specialised diets, veterinary care, enrichment, and the lengthy periods of time they need to prepare for life back in the wild. This ultimate goal of release for a former-captive pet bird can take many years to reach.

### Sanctuary Parrots

For those unable to be released, permanent sanctuary care ensures a life lived with dignity and welfare at the forefront.

We currently have 81 parrots in permanent sanctuary care. It was never our intention to build non-releasable flocks, but the inevitable has happened over time.

Unless the natural behaviour of a bird is severely compromised, they are given space to coexist in bonded pairs or small flocks in as near-natural conditions as we can possibly provide given their multiple disabilities and physical restrictions.

One of our 2026 goals is to clearly define and reshape the sanctuary work at BBR, which has now become a major part of our activities.



## Baby Parrots

Baby season once again tested every part of our operation. Orphaned and displaced chicks required intensive, hands-on care, including frequent feeding, careful temperature regulation, and gradual transition to independence. This work is demanding and resource-intensive, but essential for giving these birds the best possible chance of survival.

Your support ensured that formulas, equipment, staffing, and facilities were in place to respond when these vulnerable birds arrived during those frantic months of breeding season..

## Parrot Outcomes

**57** parrots released in 2025

**215** are in care at the end of 2025

**142** are undergoing long-term rehabilitation for release

**73** are in permanent sanctuary



**The yellow-headed Amazon parrot** (*Amazona oratrix belizensis*) is an endangered subspecies found only in Belize.

The chicks are highly sought-after for the pet trade and our conservation efforts include assisting protected area managers with nest monitoring and protection, hand-rearing of chicks, rehabilitation of former-captive adults and targeted outreach and awareness programs.

## AT-RISK CHICK PROJECT

**Preventing poaching before it happens is one of the most effective conservation tools available for protecting endangered parrots.**

Through Belize Bird Rescue's collaborative At-Risk Chick Project - now in its 11th year - vulnerable yellow-headed amazon nestlings are identified and carefully extracted to prevent poaching, or loss due to predation, nest overcrowding, wildfires and other environmental disasters. Chicks are hand-raised at BBR and released back into their nesting grounds the following season.

In 2025, with support from donors and a grant from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), our field team spent four weeks in the savannah of southern Belize monitoring the successful release of 16 fledglings hand-raised in 2024. Working alongside the TIDE Protected Area Rangers, the team also assisted with nest protection during peak fire and poaching season.

During the same period, 12 additional at-risk nestlings were safely extracted and transferred to BBR for care. These chicks are scheduled for release in April 2026, continuing a conservation effort that directly contributes to the survival of one of Belize's most threatened parrot species.

**By the end of 2025, BBR has returned 208 endangered Yellow-headed Amazons to the wild - 157 hand-raised chicks and 51 rehabilitated former-captive parrots.**

**47 yellow-heads remain at BBR undergoing rehabilitation for release or are in permanent sanctuary.**

**Looking ahead,** we are delighted to share that Burgers' Zoo in the Netherlands will be sponsoring the 2026 Yellow-headed Amazon Field Team.





## RAPTOR REHABILITATION

In 2025 we admitted 62 raptors, including 33 barn owls evicted from roof spaces – by far our most frequent raptor intake. Raptors often arrive with severe injuries caused by vehicle strikes, habitat conflict, or persecution.

Thanks to donor support, 44 raptors were successfully released, including a stygian owl that recovered from extensive feather damage, and a grey hawk that arrived having lost an eye but ultimately proved capable of hunting and thriving in the wild.

For raptors requiring extended rehabilitation or permanent care, the launch of the Raptor Sanctuary initiative in 2025 laid the groundwork for ethical, long-term solutions focused on welfare, dignity, and interaction-free education.



## **WATERBIRD REHABILITATION**

Waterbirds present unique challenges, often arriving with fishing line injuries, impact trauma, or life-threatening illnesses. Rehabilitation requires diagnostic and medical expertise, specialised enclosures, careful conditioning, and species-appropriate diets to prepare each bird for a safe return to the wild.

In 2025, we admitted 33 waterbird patients representing 15 species. Many arrived in critical condition, as waterbirds typically remain offshore until they are severely compromised, making early intervention difficult. Despite these challenges, 8 birds were successfully rehabilitated and released, and we are currently caring for three hand-raised red-footed boobies scheduled for release in early 2026.

Donor support ensured that each of these birds received the specialised care, facilities, and time needed to give them the very best chance of recovery.



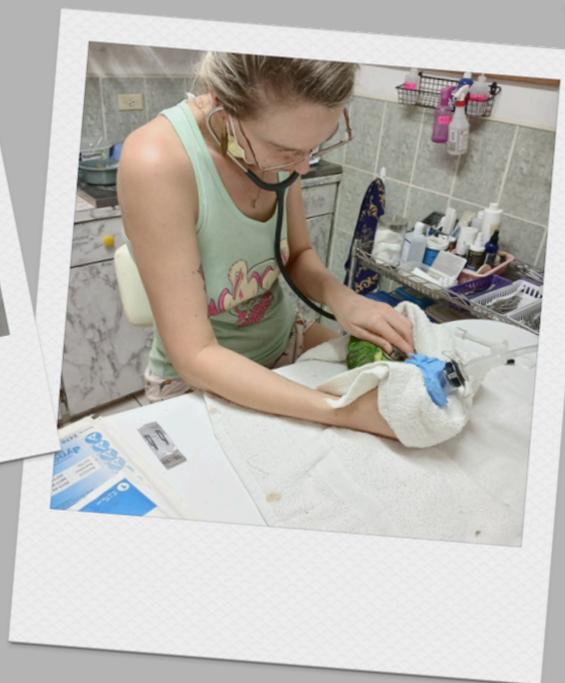
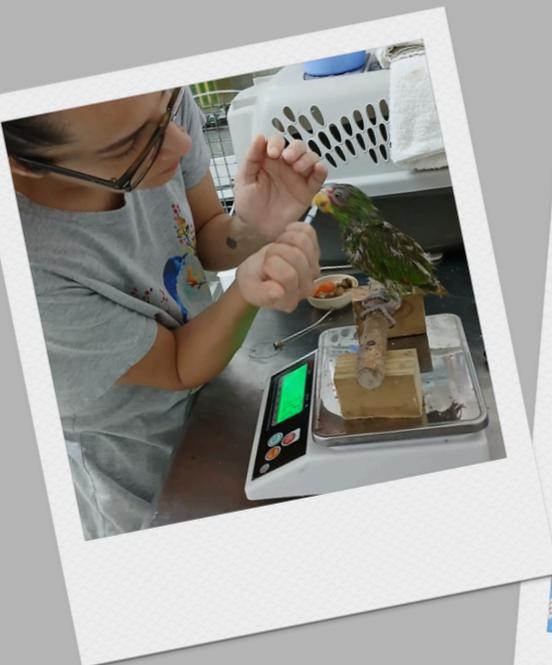
## **SONGBIRDS & FOREST BIRDS**

Songbirds and forest species are among our most delicate patients.

In 2025 we cared for 49 songbirds, 32 doves, and 4 toucans. The majority of these birds were orphaned juveniles requiring hand-rearing.

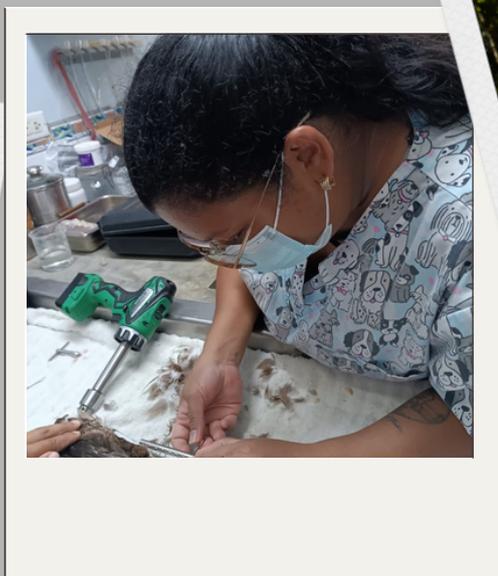
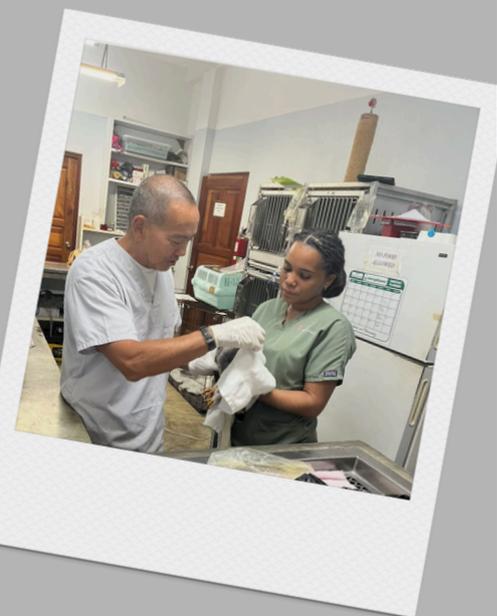
With a wide range of dietary and husbandry needs, these birds demand precision, patience, and experience. Your support allowed us to meet these challenges and guide each bird toward independence and release.

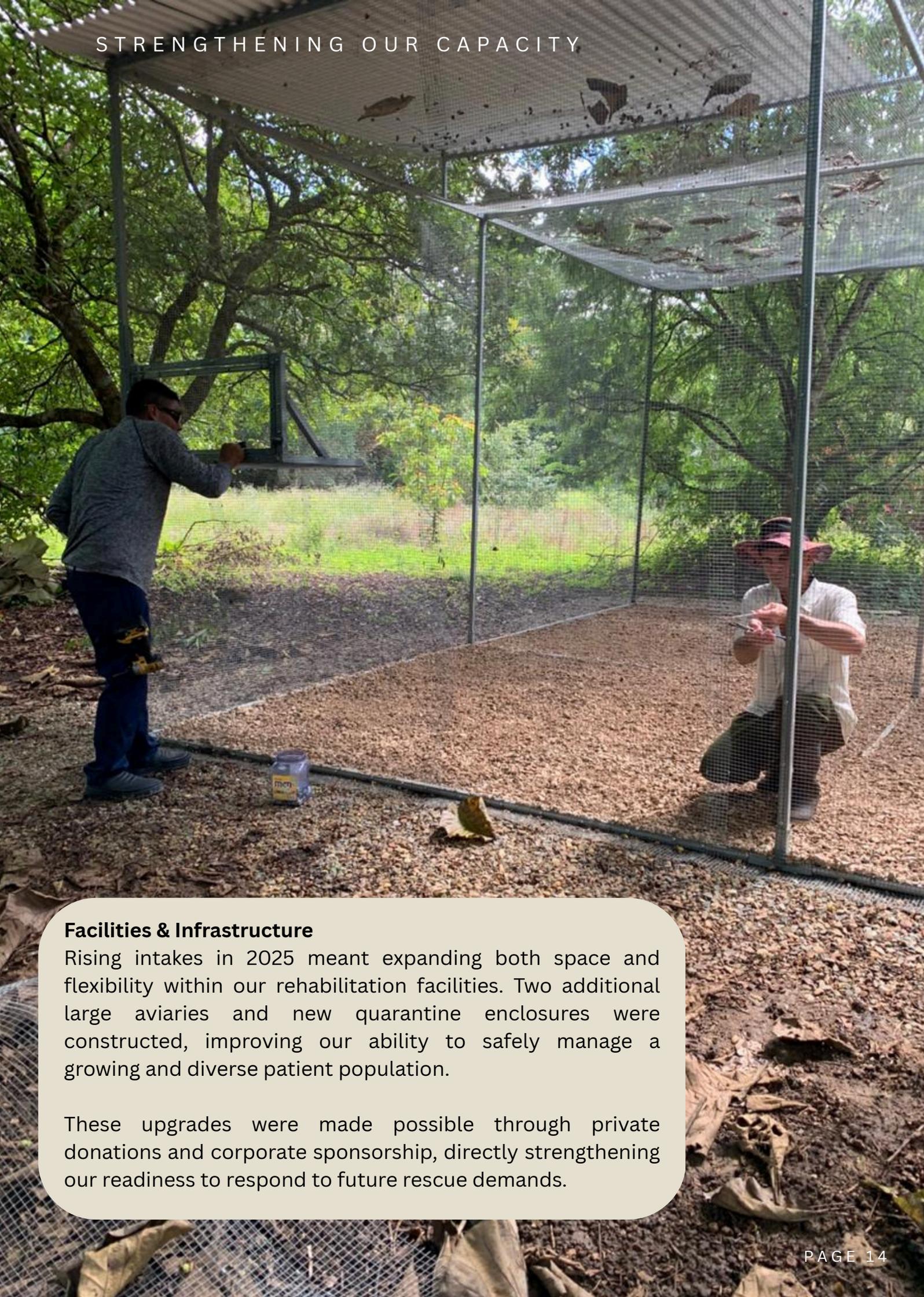
## STRENGTHENING OUR CAPACITY



### **Veterinary Expertise & Training**

Access to specialist veterinary knowledge remains essential to high-quality wildlife care. In 2025, visiting avian veterinarians provided comprehensive health checks, advanced treatments, and hands-on training that strengthened local veterinary capacity and improved outcomes for the birds in our care. These collaborations ensure that expertise continues to grow both within Belize Bird Rescue and within the wider veterinary community.





### **Facilities & Infrastructure**

Rising intakes in 2025 meant expanding both space and flexibility within our rehabilitation facilities. Two additional large aviaries and new quarantine enclosures were constructed, improving our ability to safely manage a growing and diverse patient population.

These upgrades were made possible through private donations and corporate sponsorship, directly strengthening our readiness to respond to future rescue demands.

# STRENGTHENING OUR CAPACITY



Behind every rescue is a dedicated and skilled team. In November, two new staff members joined Belize Bird Rescue, bringing our core team to five full-time caregivers. Their commitment, and that of interns and visiting experts ensures that every bird receives knowledgeable, compassionate, & consistent care throughout their rehabilitation journey.



The people behind the work



# 2025 STATISTICS



148 REHAB FOR RELEASE



81 PERMANENT SANCTUARY



346 RESCUES



67 BABY PARROTS



160 RELEASED



129 HOTLINE CASES



75 SPECIES RESCUED



16,300 RESCUE MILES

## Looking Ahead, Together

Every rescue shared in these pages represents time, skill, and unwavering commitment – but also something just as important: stability. Wildlife rehabilitation is not only about responding in the moment; it is about maintaining the facilities, expertise, and readiness to answer the next call for help.

As Belize Bird Rescue enters its 22nd year, the need for our work continues to grow. Rising intakes, long-term rehabilitation cases, and expanded conservation efforts mean planning not just for today's birds, but for those we have yet to meet.

That continuity is only possible because of you. Your support allows us to maintain high standards of care, invest in staff and infrastructure, and respond without hesitation when a bird's life depends on it.

The following pages show how your generosity was stewarded in 2025, and how it continues to sustain this work into the year ahead.



## Income total \$105,000 USD

A significant portion of individual donor support is received through our U.S. fiscal partner, Friends of Belize Bird Rescue (FoBBR), a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organisation. Funds raised on behalf of BBR are granted to Belize Bird Rescue to support our programmes.

These income figure represent donations made to Belize Bird Rescue in Belize.

Income Source (USD)	Amount (USD)	Percentage
Friend of Belize Bird Rescue grants	\$75,250	71%
Global Giving	\$16,465	16%
Cash donations	\$6,030	6%
World Parrot Trust	\$5,000	5%
Fundraisers	\$2,318	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$105,062</b>	

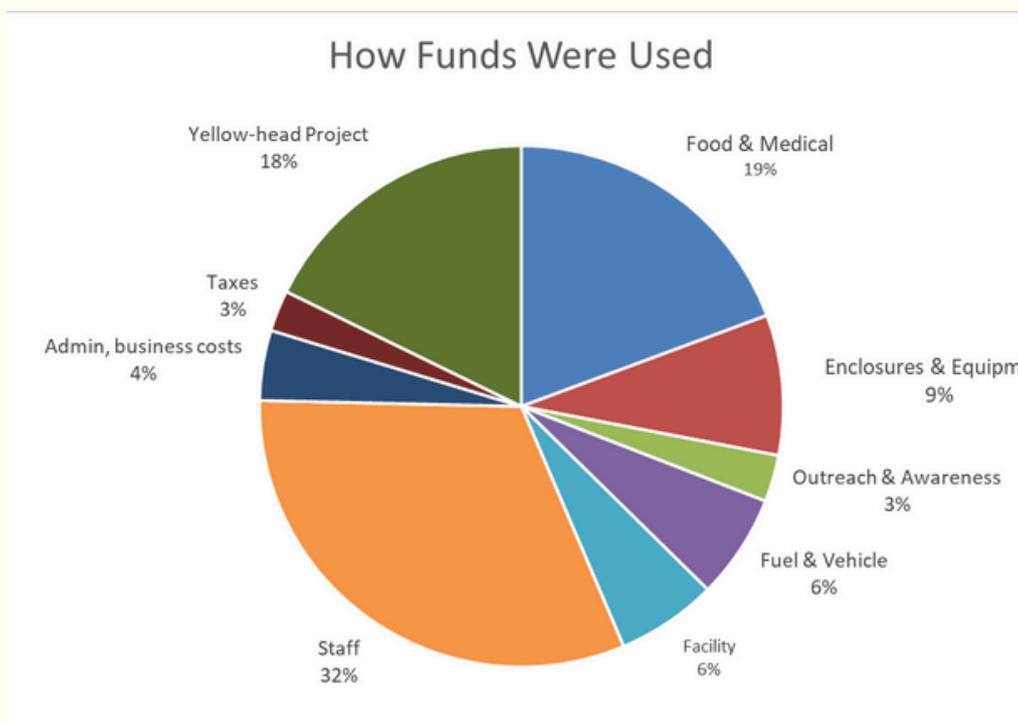


Individual donors remain the foundation of our work, providing the steady support that allows us to respond whenever a bird is in need

## HOW YOUR GENEROSITY WAS PUT TO WORK

ITEM	TOTAL (USD)
Bird food & veterinary	28,000
Enclosures & equipment	12,600
Outreach & awareness	4,200
Fuel & Vehicle	9,400
Yellow-head Project	25,700
Utilities & facility	9,000
Staff & training	46,000
Admin, banking, fees & taxes	6,300
Sales Tax	3,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$144,900</b>

These investments made it possible to care for 346 birds, support long-term rehabilitation, expand facilities, and continue critical conservation work.



## SUPPORT BEYOND FUNDING

Not all support comes in the form of financial donations. In 2025, Belize Bird Rescue benefited from an extraordinary range of in-kind contributions and professional expertise that strengthened our work and facilities, expanding our rehabilitation capacity.



### **Equipment & Essential Resources**

Practical donations play a vital role in keeping Belize Bird Rescue running day to day. Supporters provided specialised diets, tools, equipment, and veterinary supplies that directly support the health, care, and rehabilitation of the birds we receive.

Our partnership with Direct Nature Aid made an especially meaningful difference this year. Their in-kind support included two freezers for food storage, a microwave, precision weighing scales, microchips for bird identification, rainwater catchment systems for laundry use, and the sponsored travel of Dr. Sophie to Belize. These contributions improved both our daily operations and our long-term capacity to provide safe, professional care.

### **A Place to Heal**

We remain thankful to Rock Farm for providing BBR with a beautiful facility and rehabilitation and release site – a partnership now spanning more than 20 years and representing substantial annual savings that allow more resources to go directly to bird care.

### **Friends of Belize Bird Rescue**

We are deeply grateful to our U.S. partner organisation, Friends of Belize Bird Rescue (FoBBR), a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit that enables tax-deductible donations in support of our work in Belize. The commitment of FoBBR's directors and their regular grant disbursements provide essential financial stability and continuity for our programmes. We wish to extend particular recognition to our primary grant funders, Table Rock Jungle Lodge and the Patrick E. Ryan Foundation, whose sustained and generous support has been instrumental in strengthening BBR's long-term capacity and ensuring the continued delivery of our conservation, rehabilitation, and outreach work.

### **Community & Local Support**

Our Rescue Network donated thousands of miles of transport, helping us respond rapidly to calls across the country. Local businesses and sponsors supported fundraising events, hosted donation boxes and provided practical help in countless ways. This strong local network remains an essential part of Belize Bird Rescue's success.

These contributions of skills, equipment, time, and partnership extend the impact of every donation and remind us that wildlife rescue is a shared effort built on generosity and collaboration.

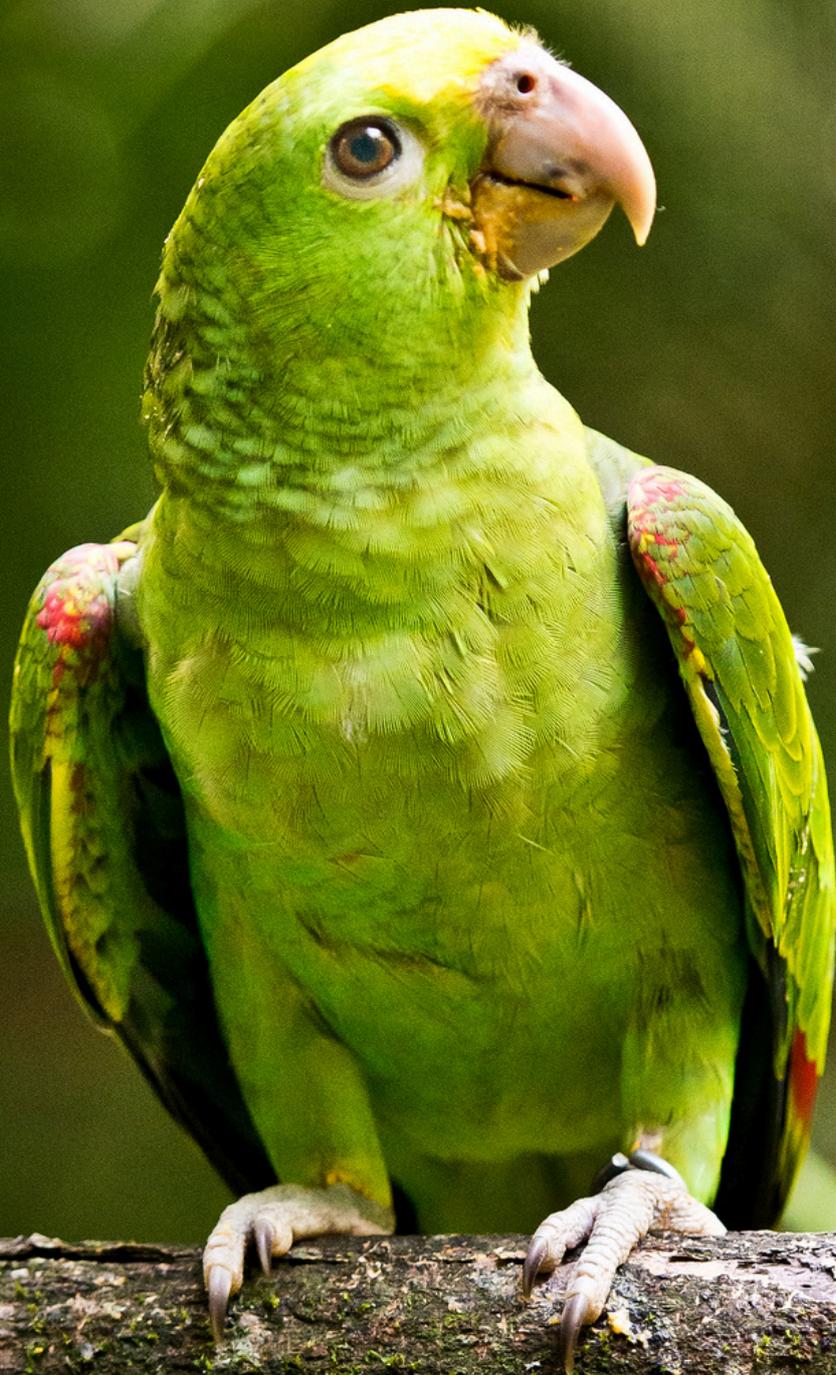
## THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH US

Every rescue, every recovery, and every release was made possible by people who chose to care. Because of you, injured birds found safety, orphaned chicks were given a second chance, and wild parrots once destined for a lifetime of captivity now fly free.

Your support does more than fund daily care — it makes long-term conservation possible. It allows us to respond when the call comes, to invest in better facilities and training, and to keep working toward a future where fewer birds need rescue at all.



From all of us here at Belize Bird Rescue — the staff, volunteers, partners, and the birds themselves — thank you for being part of this work. We are deeply grateful to have you beside us, and we look forward to all we will accomplish together in the year ahead.



**BELIZE BIRD RESCUE**

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