

Sanctuary offers rescued birds a second chance

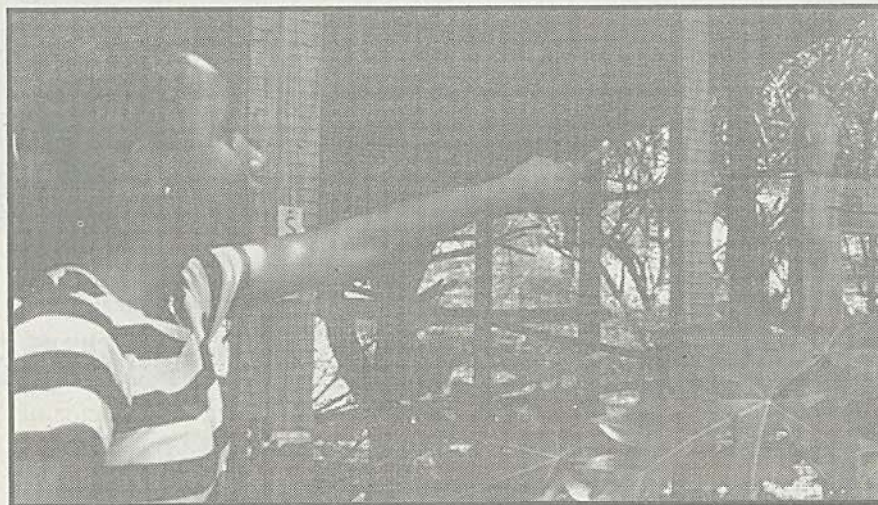
By Marlon V. Ali
Staff Reporter

Nestled discreetly in the Cayo district, the Belize Bird Rescue Wildlife Sanctuary is currently the temporary home to more than 125 birds of various species that have either been rescued from captors and residences, or have been surrendered by their owners who have had a change of heart

about keeping them in captivity.

Established in 2004 and officially recognized two years later, the facility is the only avian rescue and rehabilitation centre in Belize that is recognized by law.

Most of the birds that are rehabilitated are confiscated with the help of personnel from the Forestry Department. The most recent of these occurred a few weeks ago



Bird Rescue & Wildlife Sanctuary works to rehabilitate captive birds

during a bust of pine logs illegally cut and destined for Carmelita Village, Orange Walk.

According to Celeshia Guy, an assistant at the sanctuary, while the majority of the birds there are rescued from

captors, there are some which their owners voluntarily surrender for various reasons.

Guy explained that birds that are used to people have to go through an entire rehabilitation phase where they are placed first along with birds like themselves and slowly weaned off their contact with humans.

That contact is kept to a minimum and the only time that humans come in contact with them is feeding time. Eventually, based on observa-

to the environment and the rehabilitation, they are moved to separate locations at the same sanctuary where they are then expected to find their own food.

Depending on how well they do, a decision is made as to whether the birds would be able

to re-enter the wildlife or whether they would be kept there permanently. Throughout the different phases of the rehabilitation, talking to the birds is discouraged.

The Belize Bird Rescue Wildlife Sanctuary is run by Nikki Buxton and a small team of assistants who care for, feed and monitor the birds' progress.

The facility discourages keeping birds captive, especially the ones that are endangered. It also proclaims that it is illegal to have in one's possession any exotic bird without a permit from the Forest Department.

The department meanwhile has discontinued the practice of issuing permits to have exotic, or endangered birds in captivity.

