



The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

FALL/WINTER-2014

YEAR 8, ISSUE 1

FREE

Lionfish Threatens Reef

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What is all this fuss about Lionfish?

Most people know by now that Lionfish (*Pterois Volitans*) are an invasive species in the Caribbean. They are a beautiful fish and do not cause a problem in their native environment where they have natural predators. They are native to the Indo-pacific oceans and the Red sea.

Introducing the Lionfish to the Atlantic and Caribbean has turned out to be one of the cruelest and potentially catastrophic tricks ever played on an ecosystem.

Invasive lionfish are out-breeding, out-competing and out-living native fish stocks and other marine species. The consequences impact the food security and economies affecting over a hundred million people.

Experts speculate that the Lionfish got into the SE coast of the USA, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean from people dumping their unwanted Lionfish from home aquariums into the Atlantic Ocean for up to 25 years.

Their average lifespan is 15 years. Female Lionfish reach sexual maturity and will release eggs when they reach 7 to 8 inches in length, or approximately one year old.

A female Lionfish can release between 10,000 and 30,000 unfertilized eggs every 4 days year around, approximately 2 million eggs per year. The egg

sac contains a chemical deterrent that discourages other fish from eating the eggs.

A single Lionfish may reduce the number of juvenile native fish by approximately 79% in just 5 weeks.

Data collected is showing that Lionfish will eat anything that they can fit into their mouths.

Their stomach can expand up to 30 times the normal volume and a Lionfish will fill it up to capacity as soon as it is able! Scientists have catalogued over 70 different species that lionfish will eat through stomach content analysis.

In addition to the fish they eat, they also eat invertebrates and molluscs – shrimp, crabs, juvenile octopus, squid, juvenile lobster, etc.

Coral and algae fight for photosynthesis to survive. The grazer fish, such as Parrotfish, will feed on the algae. This helps keep coral reefs alive. Now we



have Lionfish feeding on juvenile Parrotfish, fish stocks are reduced AND the health of the coral reefs are in jeopardy.

Studies have shown that a Lionfish can go without food for 3 months or longer and only lose 10% of their body mass.

Lionfish have 18 venomous spines that can easily penetrate human skin and give a very painful sting. Tough Fishermen have been seen crying from the pain. Recommended first aid for a Lionfish sting is to remove any broken spines, disinfect the wound and apply

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The Way We Lived Then

In this issue of the Toledo Howler we present the first of an occasional series focused on the memories of some of our most senior citizens. Don Owen-Lewis came to Toledo in 1953 and in his own words describes a world that has all but disappeared in just a few short decades.

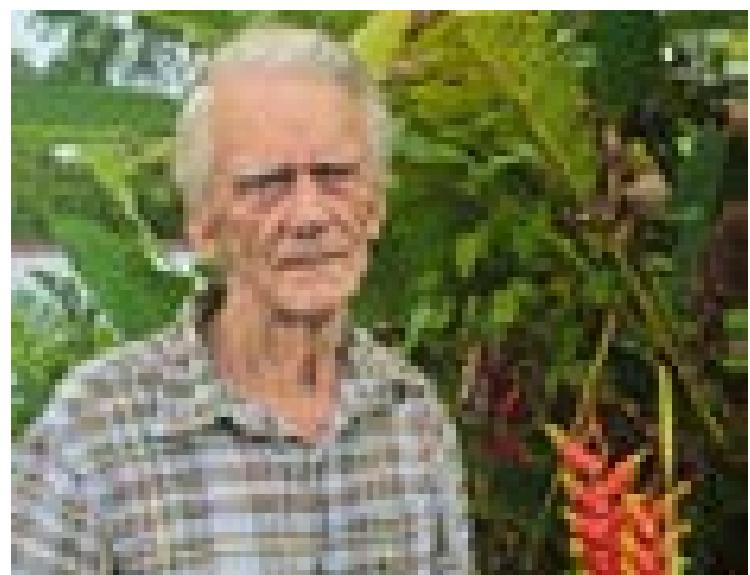
"I was given this job as Maya Liaison Officer. I got to Belize via a West Indies plane and a banana boat from Jamaica... after two days in Belize they shuttled me down to Toledo. I passed by Punta Gorda and met Alec Frankson who was the District Commissioner. Then they took me up the Temash river and dropped me off in Crique Sarco. I was left there standing on the riverside with my bags at just about dusk..."

"Eventually I built a wooden house in Crique Sarco, and had one in Otoxha

and another in Aguatecate but my headquarters was Crique Sarco. Crique Sarco was about thirty families, Otoxha about forty families and Dolores about thirty. If a village got too big they would migrate to another area... they were doing slash and burn farming and when it took too long to walk to the plantation they would relocate somewhere closer...it just happened spontaneously with no government involvement."

Subsistence Living

"Going to Punta Gorda was an expedition. Probably the majority of people



would go to Punta Gorda once a year.

the alcaldes would go there when they changed...there was no reason to go there, they didn't have much money...the only things they bought were things like shotgun shells, fish hooks, soap, kerosene; virtually

Continue on page 15

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Toledo Cave & Adventure Tours



Life Leaf (Kalanchoe) “Bush Medicine”

Life Leaf (Kalanchoe) is a succulent perennial plant that grows 3-5 feet tall. It has tall hollow stems, fleshy dark green edible leaves that are distinctively scalloped and trimmed in red. It has bell-like pendulous flowers. Kalanchoe is botanically classified with two main Latin names which refer to the same plant: Bryophyllum pinnatum and Kalanchoe pinnatum (as well as various synonyms of both just to confuse you).

Kalanchoe is sometimes called “air plant” because of its ability to grow from leaf to air without any soil. Its acquired names of ‘miracle leaf’ and ‘life leaf’ are due to the plants remarkable healing properties. It is a panacea to indigenous healers and is employed for many different purposes. Herbalists use it as a sedative, wound-healer, diuretic, and anti-inflammatory. Healers utilize it in wound healing, to relieve pain, for kidney stones, gastric ulcers, skin disorders and edema of the legs.

Life Leaf contains antihistamines that serve to suppresses cough, and alleviate allergic reactions. It is commonly taken as a tea for all sorts of respiratory conditions-from asthma, flu, fevers, and coughs to bronchitis.



In Belize, we eat Life Leaf leaves because they are delicious, and also to prevent ulcers, lower cholesterol, calm the nerves, and flush out the urinary tract. You can make juice from the leaves and use it topically to treat headaches, toothaches, earaches, eye infections, burns and insect bites. The Creoles roast the leaves and use them to treat skin cancer and to alleviate swelling. Garifuna people mix Life Leaf juice with coconut oil into a liniment to rub on the forehead for migraines and headaches.

If you are looking to ripen a boil, this is your plant. Life Leaf is traditionally known as ‘boil medicine’. Application is easy and uncomplicated. Just heat the leaves over the stove or direct fire (NOT microwave) and apply topically to any boils and skin ulcers and leave overnight. Do this until condition clears, which will be amazingly fast. The mashed leaves can be prepared into a poultice and used to bandage and set broken bones. Midwives prepare Life Leaf juice and use it to help promote menstruation and assist in childbirth. We are still learning the many amazing things this plant can do. This plant is decorative, edible, medicinal, amazing, and self-propagating. What else do you want?



WAYS OF USING:

- 1 Tea (Infusion) – Pour boiling water over leaves and steep for 5-10 minutes.
- 2 Cough Syrup – Cook leaves in sugar, water. Great for children.
- 3 Food – Eat the plant as a food preferably raw.
- 4 Apply juice or infusion externally and take internally for all types of pain and inflammation.
- 5 Apply juice or infusion externally and take internally for bacterial, viral, and fungal infections.
- 6 A poultice is the herbal material made into a paste or soft mushy preparation and applied to the afflicted surface.
- 7 For earaches: drop leaf juice into ear.

Unique Mayan Paddle Discovered in Toledo

Let me take you on a journey in search of salt works in the remote coastal waters of the Toledo District, Belize. Salt is a basic biological necessity, and also useful for preserving fish and meat, as a flavor enhancer, and for many other uses. Today many Westerners worry about having too much salt in their diet, but the ancient Maya worried about getting enough salt. The Classic Maya (A.D. 300-900) at Lubaantun, Nim li punit, and other sites open to the public, needed salt. From where did they get salt?

With a permit from the Belize Institute of Archaeology and a grant from the National Science Foundation, I lead a team searching for sites in Paynes Creek National Park, where salt was produced by evaporating brine in pots over fires. During the search for sites, we did find salt works, as indicated by the broken pots. The Paynes Creek salt works were a massive industry supplying the inland Maya with this scarce and tasty resource.

We used 3D scanners to record accurate 3D digital images of our finds. That means as archaeologists we can study the 3D image instead of the fragile object. Back at the Digital Imaging and Visualization in Archaeology (DIVA) lab at Louisiana State University, we make 3D printed replicas of artifacts for exhibits in Belize. That means, we can share accurate replicas of the objects with the

brought attention to Belize, was our discovery of the only known ancient Maya canoe paddle at one of the salt works, K’ak’ Naab’ (meaning “Fiery Water Place” in the ancient Mayan language). The paddle was made from Sapodilla wood, 4’ 7” long, and waterlogged. The Belize Institute of Archaeology gave me a permit to have it conserved in the US. We made a 3D digital image of the canoe paddle in the LSU DIVA lab. We made a life-size 3D printed replica of the canoe paddle, which is



on permanent exhibit in the Tourism Information Center on Front Street in Punta Gorda.

The opening of the canoe paddle exhibit in May 2013 was well-attended and covered by local and national media, including Emcee Paul Mahung from LoveFm as well as PG TV, and town dignitaries, including BTIA president Dennis Garbutt, TIDE Director Celia Mahung, Gomier who catered the event, and BTIA who hosted the opening.

Before the K’ak’ Naab’ canoe paddle was returned to the Belize Institute of Archaeology, there was an one-day world premier viewing in Punta Gorda at the Tourism Information Center, with a ceremony featuring the National Anthem, a prayer, and speeches, in June 2013. Everyone in attendance had the opportunity to have

their photo taken with the Maya paddle. The K’ak’ Naab’ canoe paddle is at the Museum of Belize in Belize City.

The Benefits of Using 3D Printed Replicas of Maya Artifacts for Exhibits

Why exhibit 3D prints instead of the actual artifacts? Exhibiting actual artifacts would require permission from the Belize Institute of Archaeology, a loan, and various documents, if in fact the permission was given. The 3D prints do not have monetary value on the illegal Antiquities market, which is rampant in Central America. In fact, we imprint “DIVA Lab” on our 3D prints so there is no question that the objects are replicas! Exhibiting 3D prints of artifacts brings the past to the people, out of museums, and to local communities. Tourists have something more to see and visiting the Paynes Creek Ranger station also provides employment to local marine tour guides, since access is by boat to the park.

Further Reading:

McKillop, Heather. 2002. *Salt: White Gold of the Ancient Maya*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

McKillop, Heather. 2005. *In Search of Maya Sea Traders*. Texas A & M Press, College Station, TX.



interested public. You can see exhibits at the Tourism Information Center on Front St in Punta Gorda and at the Ranger Station in Paynes Creek National Park.

What rocked the scientific community and



Garifuna History and Culture

November in the coastal towns and villages of southern Belize means one thing: the sound of Garifuna drums. But what do the rhythms of the drums mean, and who are the people behind them?

The Garifuna people are believed to be descendants of west African slaves who were shipwrecked from European slave ships in the Caribbean in the 17th century, and found their way to the nearby island of St. Vincent. There they mixed with the native Amerindians, known as the Island Caribs, who were actually descendants of Arawak and Carib Indians from South America. And so over the decades the Garifuna people came to be – a blend of cultures with the dark skin, drumming and singing of Africa, a language dominated by Arawak, and a tradition of fishing and cassava farming mastered over the centuries by the Island Caribs.

Over a hundred years after the first arrival of their African ancestors, the Garifuna people's time on St. Vincent was cut short by the intrusion of colonial European powers. Throughout much of the 18th century the French and the British fought over the island. Without sufficient numbers or fire-power to deter the colonialists, the Garifuna chose to side with their trading partners, the French. Ultimately this cost them their homeland, as in 1795 the British won the war and expelled over 4000 Garifuna people from St. Vincent to the small

island of Baliceaux and then onward to Roatan, Honduras. Those that survived the canoe journey, the disease, hunger and other hardships ultimately settled coastal towns and villages along the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and of course Belize.

On 19th November every year in Belize, the rising of the sun from the east, represented in the yellow stripe on the Garifuna flag, warms those waiting on the seaside ready to welcome those paddling to shore in their traditional dugout canoes with their drums, cassava, plantain, banana and coconut fronds and flags flown high. This is Garifuna Settlement Day – celebrated as the anniversary of the arrival of one of the largest groups of Garifuna settlers in Belize – and the day begins with the Re-Enactment of their arrival on Belizean shores.

You can hear drums throughout November, but throughout the night on 18th November until daybreak and beyond, the passion and excitement increases. As the crowds waiting on land watch their comrades paddling to shore, only to be turned back several times by a stern actor playing



the part of the British Governor General, there is a sense of solemnity mixed with the excitement as those watching are

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Lionfish Threatens Reef



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non-scalding hot water for 30-90 minutes. Monitor for signs of allergic reaction. Give the patient

anti-histamine and a strong painkiller. There are no known cases of human fatality from a Lionfish sting.

Lionfish is venomous not poisonous. The meat is extremely tasty and restaurants are now featuring delicious Lionfish recipes on their menus.

Here in Southern Belize, Reef Conservation International Ltd (ReefCI) found the first Lionfish in November 2009.

Fast-forward to 2014, ReefCI are removing Lionfish using a spear and a Safesppear® bag. This method is extremely effective.

One diver, one bag, one spear and as many as 50-100 Lionfish are now being removed in the Sapodilla cayes.

Look out for Lionfish earrings. In Southern Belize,

ReefCI staff are carefully removing the fins and spines and drying them out in the sun. Local women are empowered and employed to make beautiful earrings out of them.

Are we making a difference? There are some dive sites where it seems that it is working and the numbers are down. However, in general, because we are located on a barrier reef, it seems like a losing battle. It's a bit like picking up garbage from the shore, one can pick it up everyday and it is always the same amount. But, it has to be done.

Here is the bottom line:

If left unchecked lionfish will ultimately cause the destruction of the reefs, native fish stocks and the livelihoods of everyone that depend upon them.

How can you help?

Order Lionfish from restaurants buy Lionfish products such as the earrings and if you are a Scuba diver, make your next trip a Lionfish culling trip.

Polly Alford

Founder & Director ReefCI

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Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Venue/Time	Other Info
October 10th	Seafood Gala - first day of TIDE Fish Fest	Father Ring Parish Hall, Punta Gorda Town 7pm	Tide Tours - info@tidetours.org or call 722-2129
October 11th	Youth Conservation Competition - second day of TIDE Fish Fest	Father Ring Parish Hall, Punta Gorda 6pm	Tide Tours - info@tidetours.org or call 722-2129
October 12th	Fish Fest - last day of TIDE Fish Fest	TIDE Headquaters, Cattle Landing Village	Tide Tours - info@tidetours.org or call 722-2129
October 13th	Bank Holiday - Pan American Day		
November 7th	High Schools Battle of the Drums	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Julian Cho Technical High School, Dump Area	Beya Suites - 722-2188
November 8th	Ms. Yurumein Contest	7:00 p.m. Fr. Francis Ring Parish Hall, Punta Gorda	Beya Suites - 722-2188
November 12th	Children's Garifuna Talent Show	7:00 p.m. Fr. Francis Ring Parish Hall, Punta	Beya Suites - 722-2188
November 13th	Primary Schools Garifuna Translation Contest	9:00 a.m. Fr. Francis Ring Parish Hall, Punta Gorda Town	Beya Suites - 722-2188
November 14th	Battle of the Drums Food and Fete	8:00 p.m. – 1:a.m. at the Social Security Building	Beya Suites - 722-2188
November 15th	BATTLE OF THE DRUMS 2014	Commences at 7:30 p.m., SportsComplex	Beya Suites - 722-2188
November 19th	Bank Holiday—Garifuna Settlement Day	Various activities around PG Town	
December 25th–26th	Bank Holiday—Christmas Day and Boxing Day	Various activities around PG Town	
January 1st	Bank Holiday—New Years Day	Various activities around PG Town	

Garifuna History and Culture

Continue from page 3

reminded of the struggles of their ancestors. But as soon as permission is granted to come ashore, all sadness evaporates into a joyous

celebration and the settlers are welcomed with an explosion of drumming, dancing and singing which follows them on parade around town and culminates with a celebration and thanksgiving in the Catholic Church. While drumming

and music is the most well-known aspect of Garifuna culture, it would be a mistake to assume there is nothing else worthwhile learning about it. The language is an intriguing mixture of Arawak, Carib, English, French and Spanish – ask a Garifuna person to count to ten or ask them to say cheese in Garifuna for a photo and you will hear the French influence! Garifuna

food can also be a real treat, with most dishes featuring some combination of fresh fish, plantain, green banana, cassava and coconut.

While few short-term visitors will directly experience it, the traditional spiritual beliefs of the Garifuna people also holds much interest. These beliefs revolve around a deeply-held respect for the ancestors, which is reflected through ceremonies such as the Dugu, a week or more long traditional family healing ceremony, and other events such as Masses to celebrate the lives of those who have passed away.

The Toledo district boasts two Garifuna communities – the town of Punta Gorda, which was founded by Garifuna settlers, but of course is now a delightful mixture of all of Belize's ethnic groups, and the village of Barranco. In both communities there are many opportunities to learn more about Garifuna culture, including Warasa Garifuna Drum School in Punta Gorda, and the House of Culture in Barranco.



Big Falls Cottages

Big Falls Cottages is the newest addition to affordable accommodation in central Toledo. The cottages can be found on the right as you pass through Big Falls village in the direction of Punta Gorda. As you climb towards the saddle of Lindo Hill take the first road on the right after you pass Aleman's grocery store. This is called the Esperanza Road and leads down towards the Rio Grande river in the valley below. After a couple of hundred yards take the first turn on the right and you can see Big Falls Cottages straight ahead surrounded by a profusion of bougainvillea and mussaenda; a most welcoming sight.

The cottages are run by Francisca Bardalez who lives on the property along with her father Don Owen-Lewis and two sons Brian and Edward. Don



(see article on page ...) came to Belize in 1953 and moved to Big Falls village ten years later. Brian and Edward get involved in the business by cleaning and mowing the yard and pruning the profusion of shrubs and flowers that adorn the property. They also make sure that everything is working and in good order in the cottages themselves.

You might say that Don has been in the hospitality

business since he arrived in Big Falls because in the days when there was no other accommodation available visiting researchers, ornithologists and archaeologists would often stay at Don's home. He has hosted Richard Leventhal from the University of Pennsylvania and his students and his students' students including Keith Prufer who now leads archaeological digs in the area himself.

When Hurricane Iris struck Big Falls in October

2001 they lost the roof of the main house and decided to build a hurricane proof building to protect against any future storms. That building became their first cottage. They now have two self-catering cottages each equipped with a refrigerator, stove and kitchenette and a queen and single bed and have been open for about two years. They have hot and cold water, free wireless internet and a verandah with hammocks.

The cottages are ideal for a small family with their own transport who want to be free of the restrictions of restaurant opening hours and close to the many attractions in central Toledo. For people who are looking for peace and quiet in a beautiful tropical garden setting Big Falls Cottages is the ideal base to spend a few days exploring the Heart of Toledo Adventure Trail (see last edition of the Howler) and one where they will receive a warm welcome. When in season guests may have fresh limes and oranges delivered to their room or go into the garden and pick their own.



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Sketch map of PG Town



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Punta Gorda Town
Toledo District
Belize C. A.

Craft Focus: Prudencio Cucul

Prudencio Cucul hails from the remote village of San Vicente that lies on the Guatemalan border just north of Jalacte. He attended primary school in San Vicente and then moved on the Julian Cho Technical High School (TolTech) at Dump area where he majored in Business Studies.

He is married to Dominga Cucul from Indian Creek village where they now live with their two



This carving is from Stela 2, known as the Jaguar Stela which can now be seen inside the visitor centre at Nim Li Punit. It depicts the ruler of the time who is tossing copal onto the flames as an offering. The feathered headdress would have used feathers from the quetzal a kind of trogon found most commonly in the cloud forests of Guatemala.

young sons Henry and Heather. Dominga weaves the familiar jippi jappa baskets and cuxtals. A cuxtal is a shoulder bag that the Mayan farmers will use to carry their lunch with them to their plantations. She also does fine embroidery work and calabash carvings.

They both carve using yellow sandstone found in

the Bladen area about fifteen miles north of Indian Creek and grey limestone found locally.

Their house is on the corner where vehicles turn off the Southern Highway to climb the hill towards Nim Li Punit Mayan site about half a mile in from the highway. This is where Prudencio's carvings are different from others who carve more generic images of forest animals or Mayan gods. His Unique Selling Point is that all his carvings are replicas of actual carvings from Nim Li Punit on the hill above his home.

He has also been learning more about the glyphs and their meaning as part of his development. In April this year he attended a two-day introduction to Maya hieroglyphics taught by the anthropologist Dr Bruce Love which itself had a particular focus on the glyphs and stelae at Nuim Li Punit Mayan site. Prudencio is now able to interpret the glyphs on Stela #1 also known as the Mat Stela because of the knotted border. He now incorporates this design into the borders of his own carving.



This is the only generic carving made by Prudencio. It depicts Ixchel the goddess of healing. The serpent above her head signifies power and protection for the sick. In her hands she is holding a healing herb. The carving is bordered with the



This carving shows the emblem glyph of the site of Nim Li Punit and depicts K'uhul Ahaw Tiw the Divine Lord of the Harpy Eagle. He was the ruler of Nim Li Punit and is depicted on the mat stela located still outside in the stela plaza and is dated 26 June 741 AD.



This ruler's headdress depicted on Stela 14 inside the Visitor Centre is the very same headdress that gives the site its modern name of Nim Li Punit or Big Hat. Once again the ruler can be seen scattering pieces of copal onto the fire as an offering to the gods.

Registered Tour Operators in Toledo District 2014

Tour Operator	Local Phone Number	Location
Belcampo Lodge	722-0050	Punta Gorda
Big Falls Extreme Adventures	634-6979	Big Falls
Blue Creek Rainforest Lodge	663-4665	Blue Creek
Cotton Tree Lodge	670-0557	San Felipe
The Farm Inn	732-4781	San Antonio
Garbutt's Marine Investment Co.	722-0070	Punta Gorda
The Lodge at Big Falls	732-4444	Big Falls
Natural Adventure Tours	533-3028	Monkey River
Reef Conservation International	702-0229	Punta Gorda
TIDE Tours	722-2129	Punta Gorda

TOLEDO VILLAGE BUSES

Service	Depart PG	Destination	Calling at...	Days	Return to PG
Kan	11:30	Aguacate	Dump, Mafredi, Blue Creek	Mon /Wed/Fri/Sat	05:20
J 'n' L	12:00	Barranco	San Felipe (for Ixcacao), Santa Ana, Midway	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	06:00
Garcia	11:00	Big Falls	Dump, Jacintoville,	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	08:00
Chub	11:30	Crique Sarco	San Felipe, Santa Ana, Midway, Conejo, Sunday Wood	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	05:15
Ack	12:00	Dolores	Dump, Mafredi, Jordon, Santa Teresa, Mabilha, San Lucas,	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	03:00
Pop	10:30	Golden Stream	Dump, Big Falls, Indian Creek	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	06:45
Pop	13:00	Golden Stream	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee, Indian Creek (for Nim Li Punit)	Mon to Sat	07:30
Pop	17:00	Indian Creek	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee	Mon to Sat	12:00
Pop	21:00	Indian Creek	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee	Mon to Thurs	15:30
Bol	06:00	Jalacte	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz, Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo	Mon to Sun	05:00
Chunny	11:30	Jalacte	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz (for Rio Blanco),	Mon to Sat	03:00
Bol	16:00	Jalacte	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz (for Rio Blanco),	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	15:00
Shol	12:00	Laguna	Elridgeville	Wed/Fri/Sat	
Pop	11:30	Medina Bank	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee, Indian Creek (for Nim Li Punit)	Mon to Sat	05:30
Chunny	11:30	San Antonio	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	06:00
Coc	12:00	San Antonio	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	06:30
Coc	12:00	San Antonio	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	13:30
Teck	12:00	San Benito Poite	Dump, Mafredi, Blue Creek (for Hokeb Ha), Santa Teresa	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	04:30
Sho	11:30	San Jose	Jacintoville, Dump, Mafredi, Crique Jute, Nah Lum Ca	Wed/Sat	04:00
Choc	12:00	San Jose	Dump, Mafredi, Crique Jute, Nah Lum Cah	Mon/Fri	05:00
Chen	11:30	San Vicente	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz (for Rio Blanco),	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	02:00
Chen	05:30	San Vicente	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz, Santa Elena,	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	14:00
Bobby	11:00	Santa Ana	San Felipe (for Ixcacao)	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	07:15
Cal	04:30	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Sat	13:00
Cal	11:00	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia (for Lubaantun), San Miguel	Mon to Sat	06:00
Cucul	11:30	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia (for Lubaantun), San Miguel	Mon to Sat	07:00
Cucul	16:00	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Sat	12:30
Cucul	21:00	Silver Creek	San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Thurs	16:00

Emergency Numbers

PG Police station: 722-2022

PG Hospital: 722-2026 / 722-2161 / 722-2145

PG Fire Department: 722-2032

National Emergencies (NEMO): 822-0153

Belize Tourism Board: 227-2420 / 227-2417

BTIA Main Office Belize City: 227-1144



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TRANSPORT SCHEDULES

Flights

Depart Punta Gorda	Arrives Belize City	Service Provider	Depart Belize Intl.	Arrive In Punta Gorda	Service Provider
06:45	07:55	Maya Island Air	08:10	09:15	Maya Island Air
06:30	07:30	Tropic Air	07:50	09:00	Tropic Air
09:30	10:35	Maya Island Air	10:10	11:15	Maya Island Air
09:20	10:20	Tropic Air	10:20	11:30	Tropic Air
11:30	12:35	Maya Island Air	12:20	13:30	Tropic Air
11:35	12:35	Tropic Air	14:20	15:30	Tropic Air
13:35	14:35	Tropic Air	14:40	15:45	Maya Island Air
16:00	17:05	Maya Island Air	16:40	17:45	Maya Island Air
16:00	17:10	Tropic Air	16:40	17:40	Tropic Air

James Bus Line Schedule

Departs P.G.	Arrives Belize City	Departs Belize City	Arrives P.G.
03:50am	10:30am	05:15am Express (except Sun)	10:30am
04:50am	11:30am	06:15am	12:45pm
06:00am (express)	10:45am	07:15am	01:45pm
05:50am	12:30pm	08:15am	02:45pm
07:50am	02:30pm	09:15am	03:45pm
09:50am	04:30pm	10:15am	04:45pm
11:50am	06:30pm	12:15pm	06:45pm
01:50pm	08:00pm	01:45pm	07:45pm
02:50pm	08:30pm	03:15pm	09:45pm
03:50pm	09:30pm	03:45pm Express	08:45pm

Boats To & From Puerto Barrios , Guatemala

Service Provider	Dep Punta Gorda	Arrive Puerto Barrios	Depart Puerto Barrios	Arrive Punta Gorda
Requena's Charter Service	09:30	10:30	14:00	15:00
Tek-Dat	01:00	14:00	03:00	04:00
Pichilingo	14:00	15:00	10:00	11:00
Sharkboy	16:00	17:00	13:00	14:00

Boats to Livingston depart on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m.

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Pusil Ha: Kingdom of the Avocado

KINGDOM OF THE AVOCADO

Pusil Ha is one of Toledo's more remote Maya sites, located near the village of San Benito Poite close to the Guatemalan border. The site was originally re-discovered in the 1920s when some preliminary excavation work was carried out, but the no further investigations took place until 2001 with the Pusil Ha Archaeological Project. The Project discovered the tomb of an important ruler and analyses suggests that Pusil Ha was never under the political or economic sway of its more important neighbors.

The Gateway Hill Acropolis is described as one of the most imposing architectural complexes in the Maya world, where a hillside was modified to form eight distinct terraces rising to a height of 79 m – that's taller than Tikal, folks!

Recent visitors to Toledo, Cathleen and Jan Goss, decided to head off the beaten track to see more. Here's their report



A mini Mayan Expedition to Pusil Ha

Who wouldn't want to play a bit of Indiana Jones

by visiting a site that is still relatively unexplored, where you need a guide in front with a machete to penetrate the jungle undergrowth of the steep and rocky climb, and you don't mind driving for a few hours down heavily rutted dirt roads?

Much of the enjoyment of the expedition was getting to the site. The journey took us through Maya villages that are not tourist destinations but which show, unvarnished, how the Maya currently live: people walking everywhere (there are virtually no cars and only one bus a day into the hinterland), thatched roof houses (we were lucky enough to see a collective house raising), no electricity, and lots of piglets and chicks running around. There are no road signs, so getting around is definitely a challenge, but head towards Blue Creek, and continue south-west from there, stopping to check with people that you are on the right road!

The payoff is a nearly pristine Maya site nestled remotely in the foothills of the southwestern Maya Mountains with expansive vistas across southern Belize and Guatemala – views that the Pusil Ha dynastic rulers called "lord of avocado" would have enjoyed when they occupied the site from about AD 571-798.

The more impressive ruins were the remains of the Mayan bridge that was ingeniously constructed to ford the river on the way to the Pusil Ha acropolis. The Mayans diverted the river to construct a massive stone bridge to



gain access to the acropolis. This linked the Sacred Way with its Ball Courts and Stela Court to the acropolis. Today a relatively rickety wooden footbridge is used to cross the river – definitely part of the adventure!

While there is not much to see at the upper reaches of the site – some corner stones of terraces, and the large rough boulders that protected the entrance to the acropolis – the spirit of place is compelling with beautiful views and some thoughtful ideas about preservation. Our guide showed us the facings of the stone terraces that were once covered with limestone plaster and painted with colorful frescoes which are all gone now. The paintings were buried for hundreds of years but once the protective rubble is removed, the rain washes away the plaster. Just goes to show you that the ruins can preserve themselves and we must be mindful of how we protect the past...

We left sopping wet from the heat and tired from the challenging climb. But we were thrilled with our mini Maya expedition.

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Advanced Skills Training for Toledo Guides

A one-year project began in June of this year as a collaborative programme between COMPACT (Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation) and the Toledo Tour Guide Association.

The project is snappily titled “Building the Capacity of Local Tour Guides for Responsible Tourism in Punta Gorda, a Coastal Community of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Site.”

It aims to strengthen the capacity of the Toledo Tour Guide Association to promote responsible tourism practices among its members who utilize the marine resources for their livelihoods. This project builds on the success of previous projects funded with the main objective of providing an environment for the development of sustainable, environmentally-aware tourism in Punta Gorda and building tourism products in which community members can be employed in tourism as an alternative to traditional fishing.

The project is based on the thematic area of sustainable livelihoods. The project will empower local tour guides who need continuous training and support. The project supports the following objectives of the COMPACT Thematic: (1) Improving

The results of this intervention will be evident in the increased incomes of local tour guides through collective building :Strengthening of safety skills of local tour guides (CPR/ First Aid and White Water Rescue); Institutional strengthening of the TTGA through self-financing mechanisms, including rental equipment; promotion and development of tourist attractions, enhanced relationships and networking among certified guides; Improved Marketing of local tour guides and the natural and cultural attractions.

Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve

Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve, part of Belize's Barrier Reef World Heritage Site, is the most southern of the marine protected areas in Belize, and encompasses the southernmost tip of the Belize Barrier Reef. Covering an area of 38,595 acres(approximately 15,619 ha), the Marine Reserve surrounds fourteen privately-owned palm fringed sand or mangrove cayes, some considered to be among the most scenic within Belize.



migrating birds, as they travel south to their wintering areas, whilst the sandy beaches attract both nesting turtles and human visitors, the latter accessing the area from Punta Gorda as well as from communities on the Guatemalan and Honduran coastline.

The reef structure is considered geomorphologically unique in this region as the area lies on a fault line and has been shaped by the influence of tectonic activity. The outer portion of the reserve is characterized by shallow water reefs which occur as a fringe around the cayes, with water depths often less than 15 feet. The drop off east of the cayes is gently sloping, in contrast to the near vertical walls further north and surrounding the outer coral atolls. The lagoon area is characterized by silt, sand and shallow sea-grass beds. Hunting Caye provides a base for the reserve staff, and a research facility for the University of Belize and visiting students and researchers. Also based here are staff of Fisheries Department, and an outpost of the Belize Defence Force/Coast Guard.

Biodiversity Evaluation

The Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve has been designated as one of seven components of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Site, in recognition of the uniqueness of its contribution to Belize's reef system. The waters of the Marine Reserve provide protection for at least twenty three species of international concern, recognized under the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable (IUCN, 2010),

Continued on page 18



sustainable livelihood practices, including reducing poverty among vulnerable populations; and (2) Civil society Empowerment, including expanding stakeholder networks, establishing partnerships and building capacities. The TTGA recognizes the importance of supporting training capacities for its Members who utilize the marine resources and as well as terrestrial resources for their livelihoods as both are intricately linked.

The distinctive hook shaped reef structure forms the end of the Belize Barrier Reef, and is unique within the Caribbean region. Here, coral biodiversity is at its highest in Belize, although impacts from increasing visitation and from agricultural runoff from the coastline to the south are thought to be reducing the viability of the coral and its ability to recover following bleaching. The littoral forest provides an important connectivity point for

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Grace Restaurant and Hotel

Grace's Restaurant and Hotel is located in the central area of Punta Gorda town at the corner of King Street and Main Street. It is close to the James Bus Terminal and the boat dock for Puerto Barrios and Guatemala. It is right down the street from the banks, market and park. It is a great spot to sit back, relax, and sip on a cold drink while enjoying the view of the town's activities. You can either choose to be seated in the opened air patio or in the air-conditioned dining area.

Grace's Restaurant and Hotel is locally owned by Ms Grace Coleman, a prominent business woman of Punta Gorda Town.

She became the owner of Grace's Hotel in 1993. It then had only twelve small rooms but has since been restructured to satisfy the needs of its guests. It now has fifteen rooms, each with private bath, single or double beds, hot and cold showers, cable TV, fan or air-conditioning

holidays. On 31st August, 1997 Ms Coleman opened her own restaurant to meet the needs of the locals and travelers. Starting with a small restaurant with seating for only twenty, the restaurant



have since expanded and remodeled to seat up to one hundred and twenty customers. Grace's restaurant is open from 6:30 am to 10:00 pm daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

You can start your day at Grace's Restaurant with full breakfast with eggs, bacon, sausages, refried beans and its famous fluffy fry jacks or have something lighter like a plate of fresh fruits. Grace's menu also offers a wide range of dishes. These range from Belizean specialties such as

other international dishes such as chow mein, burgers, quesadillas and fried chicken. Meals are prepared with fresh vegetables and fruits from the local market. Their staff are all Belizean from Punta Gorda town offering nothing less than excellent service to their customers.

Throughout the years Grace's Restaurant has hosted events such as birthdays, wedding receptions, parents' night for graduates, conferences, workshops and other group activities. A few local groups such as the Punta Gorda Rotary Club, the East Indian Council, and other Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have all held meetings at Grace Restaurant. You will need to call or email in advance to make a reservation for a special event.

As one of the very few Belizean owned places in the town, Grace's Restaurant and Hotel takes great pride in their service to customers and the quality of their products. They look forward to serving both locals and tourists and see that they all get the best of what they have to offer.



and Wi-Fi. There is also a dormitory with eight beds which would suit a large family or groups. The third floor of the hotel offers amazing views of the town centre, the Maya mountains and the Caribbean Sea.

During the first few years as a hotel owner Ms Coleman saw the need for a restaurant. Her hotel guests both locals and foreign tourists could not find a place to eat especially on Sundays and

stewed chicken, rice and beans and fried fish, to a variety of dishes made with shrimp, lobster and conch. They also serve an assortment of



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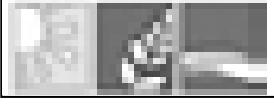


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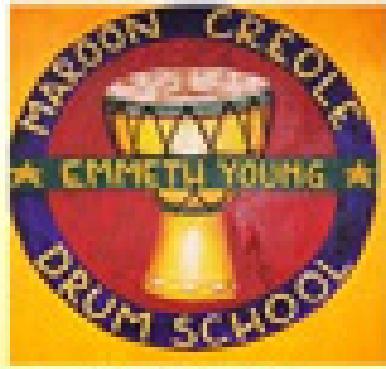
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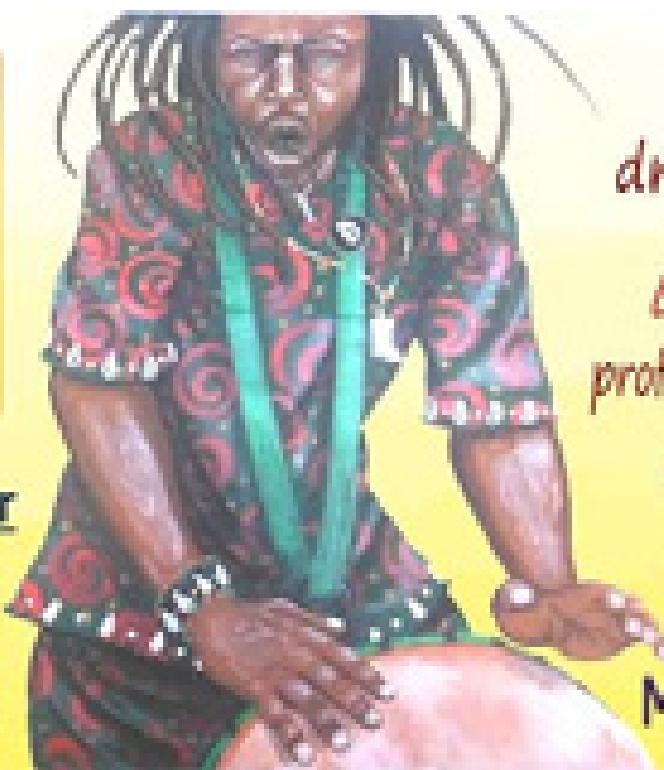
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Mix beef & stout and ground foods in large pot, add water to cover, bring to slow boil
Sautee 1/2 lb butter, 1 lb onion, 1 head of garlic, 1 lb tomato, 3 tbsp Ixcacao Ground Cacao powder, salt, black pepper, and local grind pepper to taste. Add 1/2 cup milk and 3 tbsp whole wheat flour to thicken.
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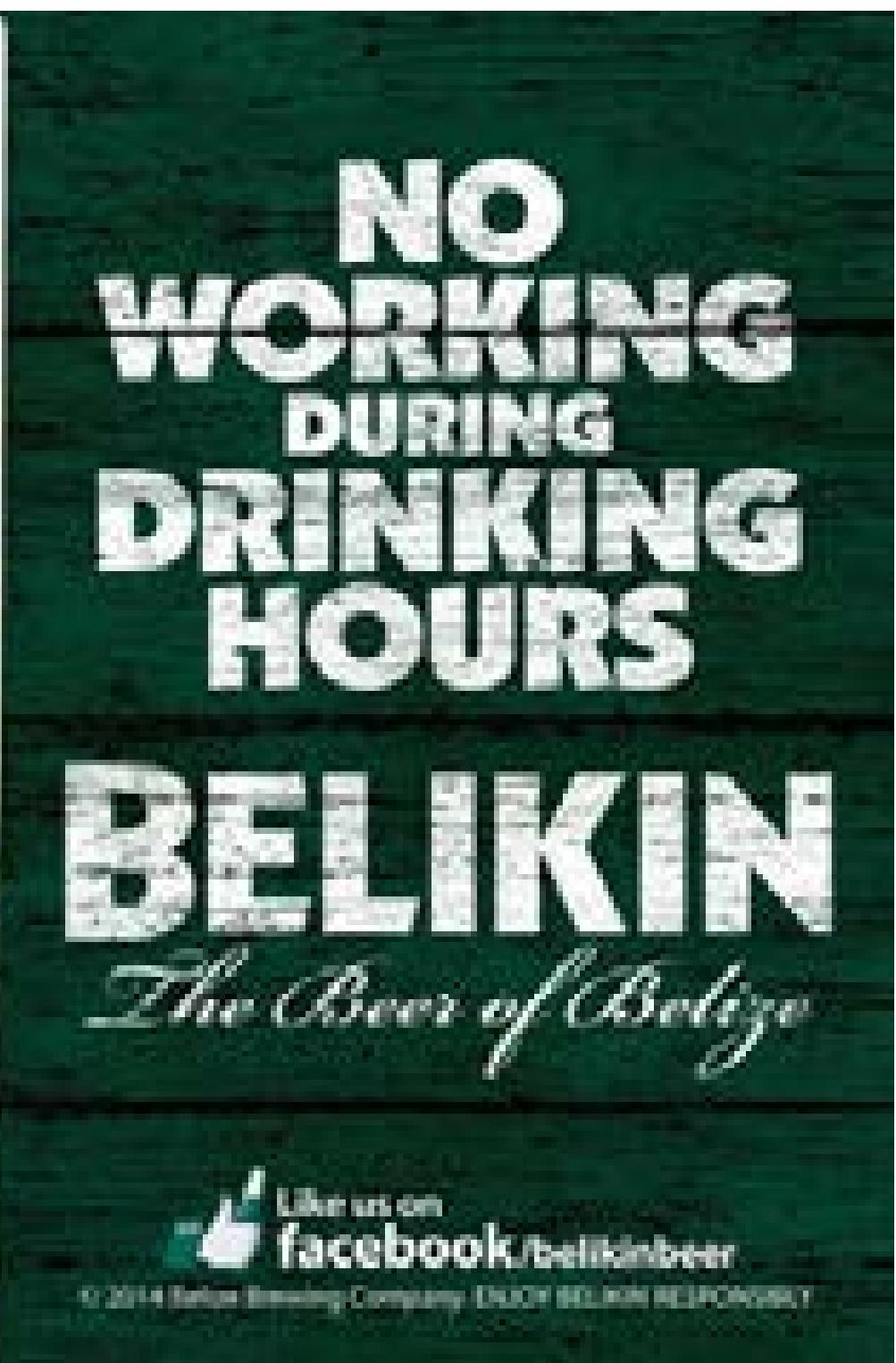
Sweet Category
Competition Choco-
late Festival 2014

2 cups cake flour
1 1/2 c sugar
2/3 c cocoa
1 1/2 baking soda
1 salt
1 1/2 c chocolate stout
1/2 c shortening
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla

Beat all ingredients on low for 30 seconds. Beat for 3 minutes on high. Bake at 350 in 3 round 9 1/2" layer pans for 35-40 mins.
Frosting: beat 1/4 cups Baileys and 1 tsp vanilla in 1, 12 oz tub of cool whip.

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Don Owen-Lewis: The Way We Lived Then

Continue from page 1

everything else they got out of the jungle or from travelling peddlars, cobaneros. They were almost one hundred per cent subsistence farmers but when I went to Crique Sarco I employed men to put up the house for me and stuff like that. I started a cash economy I guess. They didn't get much. I paid a \$1.50 a day for labour. That was the going rate. There just wasn't money in circulation. Most families did exactly the same things. The only barter they had was for their labour so that they would help their neighbours, with thatching for example, and when the time came the labour would be returned. The "fajina" system was them all getting together to clean the village and trails round about which was quite different. Maybe an old man would make hammocks and somebody would be extra good at making axe handles but families generally lived in the same way.

"The odd person had a cow or two. They would grow beans and things like that that they sold to the Marketing Board. They had to take their produce down to Punta Gorda where they had their mill. The Marketing Board had little two-wheeled thrashing machines with a gasoline engine and if there was the demand they would bring up one of these machines and help to thrash their rice. Mostly they would take them to places like Pueblo Viejo and Columbia. There weren't many villages in those days; there was a total of eleven. Crique Sarco, Otoxha, Dolores and Aguacate down near the Temash. The rest of them were up the San Antonio road. San Antonio, Columbia, San Miguel and Santa Cruz had just started. San Jose had not yet been established. Pueblo Viejo had been around for some time and of course Big Falls did not exist then.

Medicine and Health

Bush doctors used to serve an apprenticeship and an apprenticeship would be many years. Some bush doctors were very good but they often did not pass on their knowledge and it died with them. There was a belief among the Maya that a bush doctor as well as being a doctor and healer also knew something about the dark side, so if somebody died suddenly or something funny happened they would tend to look at the bush doctor. Quite a lot of them got run out of their villages and quite honestly I don't think it was justified at all; it was just people's imagination. Modern bush doctors do not know as much. Antibiotics and malaria drugs put bush doctors out of business because they were so much more effective and a lot of the knowledge has been lost. Some of them were exceedingly good and I have seen some remarkable cures using bitter medicines and leaves from the jungle, putting poultices on wounds and sores. Once I was paying a visit in Otoxha and I had a doctor along with me, an English fellow and somebody told us about a lady who was sick and we went to see her and she was in this bush house sitting in a hammock with her foot propped on a stool and a little boy was there with a fan keeping off the flies because the stink in this place was awful. She had given birth a couple of weeks before. Presumably it was gangrene, I don't know but the doctor took one look at it and he says bring her down to the hospital. I said Ok I'll get some men and we will carry her down. And she said, "No, I'm not going." "Why?" "Because you will chop off my foot. What use is a Kek'chi lady with only one leg?" The doctor said to me "It's the only

thing to do. Amputation." There was some bush medicine in a glass beside her and some leaves covering the sore because she was already being treated by the bush doctor who was a very good one. So we left and I saw her about a month later and she said "Look at my two feet".

Courtship and Marriage

Sometimes a boy who liked a young woman would go to her father and ask for work but not insist on payment and there was a kind of mutual understanding that after a time the father might agree to the match.

Somebody would speak for the boy. He would never speak for himself. He would always ask an older person to speak on his behalf. He would probably tell his father about the girl and ask him to ask for her hand. Or perhaps the father would suggest that a girl was suitable because he was friends with her family.

They would always ask three times. The first time they would come and ask the girl's father for her hand but he would not give an answer and only say he would think about it. All the houses had a little shrine, usually to Esquipulas, the black Christ. The father of the boy would leave a dollar bill by the shrine and then come back again the following week.

The two men would have a similar discussion and the boy's father would check to see if the dollar bill was still there. And then he would return a third time and the first thing he would do would be to check to see if the dollar bill was beside the shrine. If it was then this was bad news but if the bill had disappeared then the match was approved.

They would then fix a date and the wedding would take place accompanied by chicken caldo for all the invited guests.

It was not usually a church wedding because there was no priest but was considered just as binding. Priests would sometimes try to persuade the couple to legitimize their partnership but that sometimes had the effect of splitting up the couple because it disturbed the power relations between the couple. One priest told me that he had given up trying to persuade couples to get married because the result was often the opposite of what was intended.

The bride's father would then help the young man build his house and help him thatch it and the boy would continue to work for his father-in-law for at least a year after the marriage took place.

Law and Disorder

In my day there wasn't any alcohol in the villages. It wasn't allowed except on Catholic feast days when everybody got drunk; men and women and there would be fights but most of the time it was pretty peaceful. Two or three times a year the alcalde or major domo (the leader of the local Catholic congregation) would go down to Punta Gorda and request the District Commissioner's permission to buy five gallons of rum which would be brought back to the village for sale on the approaching feast day. They would invite the neighboring villages to come and help drink it and they would keep on drinking until it was finished....women dancing with their poor baby hanging down their back. Chicha was an illegal local brew made from corn and sugar that was also made.

At other times the villages were harmonious places with law administered by the alcalde who could fine people up to twenty dollars that was a lot of money in those days and if they couldn't pay they got locked up in the cabildo and they were given a job to do in the village digging drains or something of the sort and it was a very efficient system. The transgressions were often to do with women; looking at the women when they were bathing or going into somebody's house when the man was away...but stealing didn't happen. Nobody had a lock on the door and people just didn't steal.

I had a room in the Punta Gorda rest house and I never locked it. I had a bed in there with sheets and blankets and a Primus stove (single burner gas ring) and tins of soup. I could come in at night and light my little Primus stove, peel a few potatoes, open a tin of corned beef and I had an instant meal. Nobody interfered. Now it's getting worse and worse every year." *To Be Continued in February '15 Issue....*



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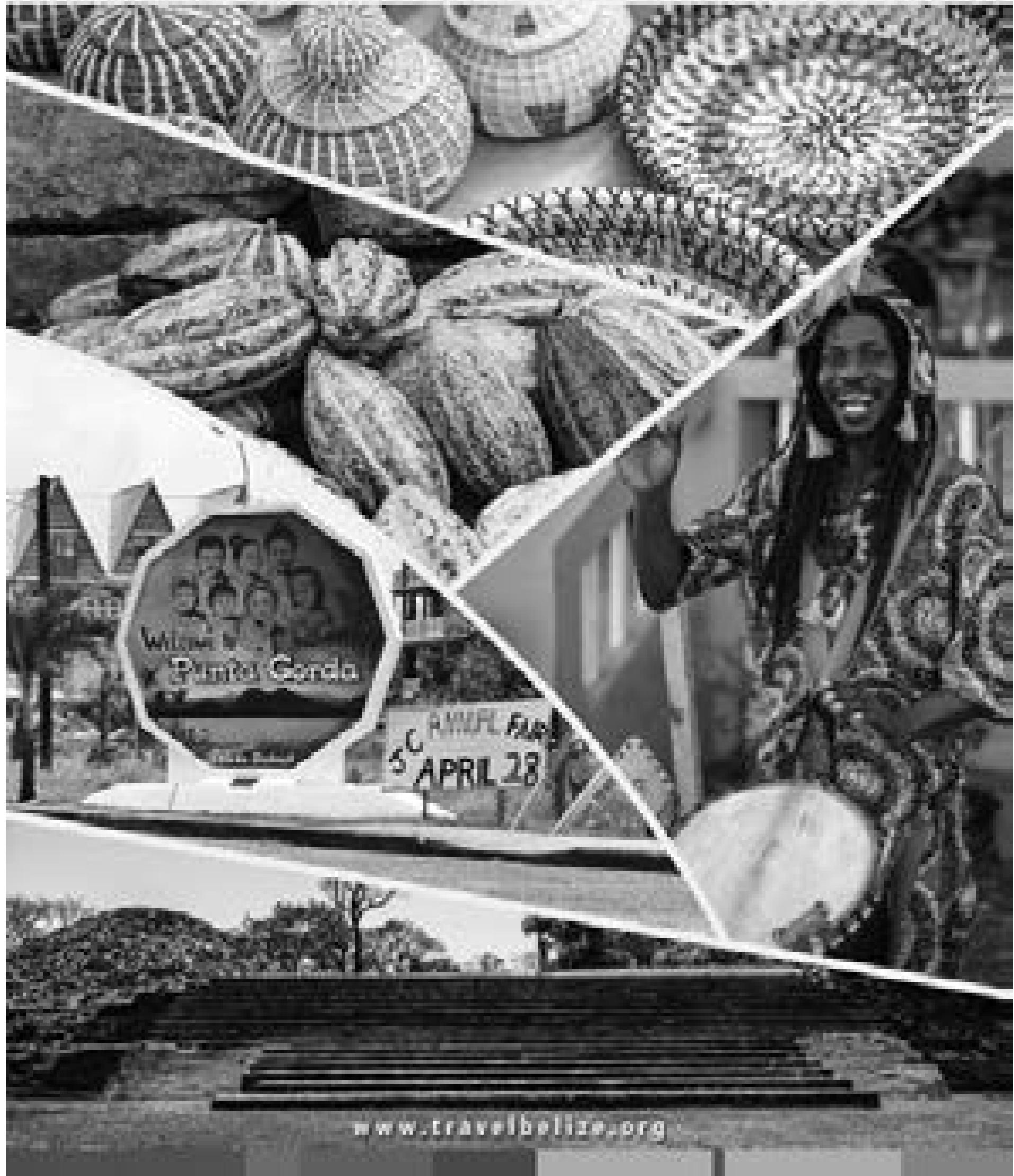
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Urban Birding

When it comes to birds, there's not a whole lot to see around Punta Gorda. Right? **Wrong!** Consulting eBird, the global, user-friendly participatory bird database developed by Cornell University, I see that I have accumulated over the



Yellow Crown Night Heron

years 226 species *within Punta Gorda Town*. That's a remarkable 40 percent of all the birds in Belize! And if you add in Orange Point, Hopeville, and Cattle Landing, I've tallied 340 species, well over half of all the species recorded in Belize. So, don't think that, because you may have limited mobility, birding doesn't have much to offer.

Now—today, not tomorrow, is a great time to start learning your birds and seeing what you can find in your neighborhood. As I write this, we are approaching the peak of fall migration. Migrating birds tend to pile up along the coast. On a good day, if you are really observant, you could be exposed to close to a hundred species within a few blocks of these between Cattle Landing and Orange Point. Of course, seeing and identifying all 100 species is another thing. But the point is, there are many, many birds in and around P.G. this time of year, and with practice and exposure, you could run up quite a list—and learn a lot in the process.

The Belize Audubon Society has been sponsoring an annual Urban Bird Watch in Belize's major metropolitan areas the past few years, and

yes, that includes P.G. ***The Punta Gorda Urban Bird Watch this year will be held on Sunday, 12th October.*** Come out and join us. We will be meeting at the Uno Gas Station at 6 a.m. for a three-hour walk. I look forward to seeing you there. Even if you cannot make it, or this issue of the *Howler* arrives too late, there are plenty of good birding places you can visit on your own, with your family, or with one of P.G.'s several experienced birders.

Starting at Cattle Landing and working your way south, you might want to drop by the football field at the curve and say Hi to the dedicated team of hawk watchers. You can't miss their big sign and portable shelter, right at the turn in the road. This marks the second year the Belize Raptor Research Institute has sponsored a Fall Raptor Watch in P.G. A dedicated team of volunteers spends eight hours a day, seven days a week in October, November, and early December counting migrating hawks as they fly past Cattle Landing on their way south. Last year they recorded an impressive 8,457 individuals of 32 species of hawks.

To give you an idea how much remains to be learned about bird migration right here in P.G., the most commonly encountered raptor last fall by the hawk watchers was a stunning 817 Mississippi Kites, a species that was not even known to be in Belize until fifteen years ago when two were seen passing over Hopeville. This species nests in the southern United States and spends its winter in South America. To get to and from their breeding and wintering grounds they migrate by the thousands along the backbone of Central America, but what we know now that we didn't know fifteen years ago is that a small but significant number of slightly off-track birds pass through southern Belize on their way south. What else about birds and their migratory habits in Belize remains to be discovered? I know of several as yet unsolved mysteries—perhaps the subject of a future *Howler* article.

Moving south from Cat Landing, the Hopeville shoreline is an excellent place to observe terns, gulls, pelicans, frigate birds, egrets, and herons. Joe Taylor Creek at the south end of Hopeville is the only place in town with a healthy stand of mangroves. These trees sup-

port a year-round heron roost. Reliable all year are the Yellow-crowned Night-Herons and Green Herons, along with a scattering of Great Blue and Little Blue herons and Great and Snowy egrets. Add to this in winter considerably more of the former four plus a truckload of Cattle Egrets and a handful of Tricolored Herons and you have a night-time guest list of well over a hundred birds. Every evening, just after sunset, you will see birds flying into the roost from inland feeding sites, and if you are an early riser, the reverse around sunrise as birds leave the roost to go fishing. During the day, if you peer quietly inside the small patch of mangroves by Garbutt's Marine, you might discover one or more Green Kingfishers, or even a minuscule 5-inch-long American Pygmy Kingfisher, sitting on the low branches and aerial roots of the red mangroves quietly waiting for the next unsuspecting small fry to pass by. The dirt road just on the P.G. side of the bridge will take you back into the thicket of lower-stature mangroves that fringe the creek, and eventually into the rainforest beyond.

During the winter season you've probably noticed that the wharf at the Uno gas station serves as a convenient resting place for Royal and Sandwich terns, Laughing Gulls, and an occasional Brown Pelican or Great Blue Heron. This is a great place to see these species up close and personal, since they have become accustomed to all the human traffic around the dock.

The entire length of Front Street through town



Spot-breasted Oriole

is also a good place to see birds, especially from September through April.

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The Added Touch

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Advanced Skills Training for Toledo Guides

Continued from page 11

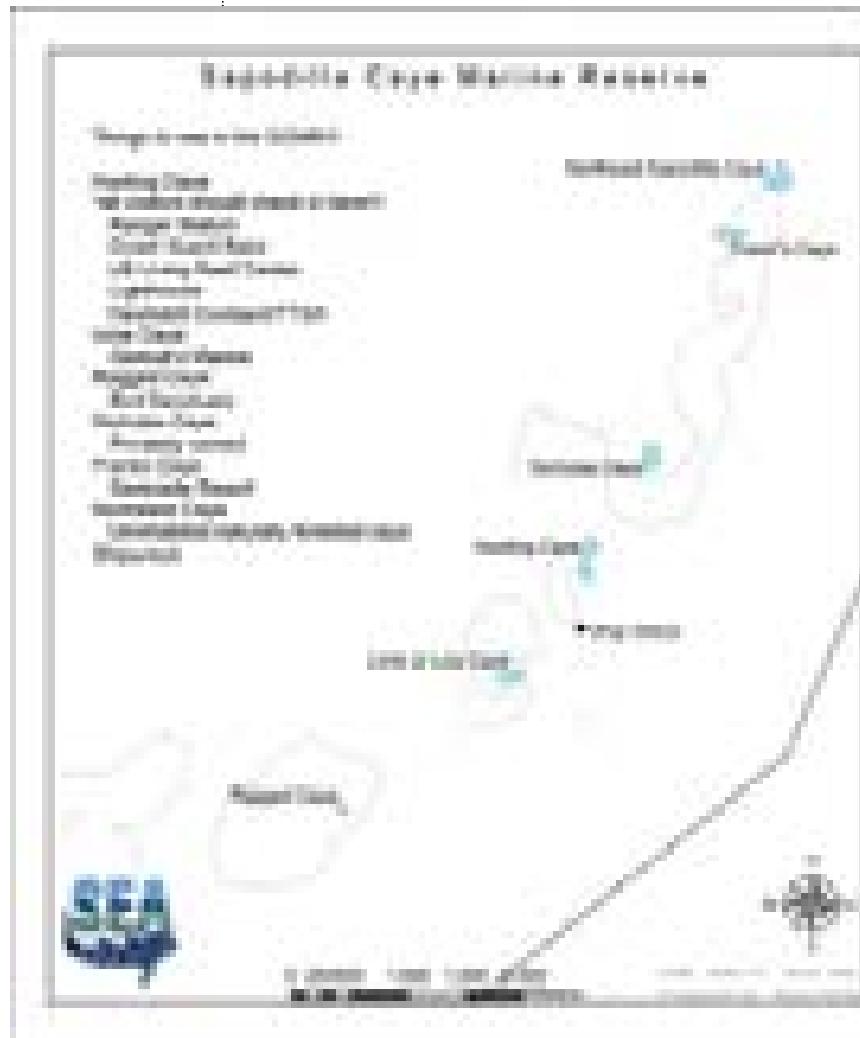
including five species of coral, three species of turtle, fourteen species of fish and the vulnerable West Indian manatee. A number of the cayes have been highlighted for their historical importance in provided nesting sites for Hawksbill and Green Turtles and crucial to the survival of these species within the region. Whilst nesting populations are currently considered to be stable, they are greatly reduced compared to historical records.

The Marine Reserve is considered a high eco regional priority with its unique reef formation and the high diversity of species in the area. Also adding to its importance is the presence of three spawning aggregation sites (Nicholas Caye, Rise and Fall Bank and Seal Caye) for the Nassau Grouper and for the national and regional viability of several commercial fish species. The general trend of spawning populations at the aggregation sites is considered to be decreasing.

The cayes, whilst privately owned and, to a lesser or greater extent, developed still support some mangrove, littoral forest and herbaceous beach vegetation, important for migratory birds.

Landscape context

Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve lies within the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, and is a component of the system level management unit of the Southern Belize Reef Complex, a seascape planning unit that also includes South Water



Caye, Gladden Spit and Silk CAYES Marine Reserves and Laughing Bird Caye National Park. The Sapodilla Cayes have long been used by Guatemalans, Hondurans and Belizeans for swimming, snorkelling, diving and fishing. Despite their remoteness these cayes are easily accessible by sea and there is an increasing number of visitors from Punta Gorda. Small cruise ships also stop by the cayes. Tourists and commercial fishers are the two main users of the Sapodilla Cayes.

Whilst fishing has been declining due to unsustainable practices, tourism is becoming increasingly important in generating income for the Toledo District. Local fishermen from Monkey River, Punta Negra and Punta Gorda have been operating within the reserve area from temporary camps on the cayes for approximately thirty years. Whilst the Sapodilla Cayes were once considered a prime fishing area, illegal fishing activity by Belizean and foreign fishermen has resulted in smaller catches.

History of Establishment

The Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve was first officially declared through Statutory Instrument 117 of 1996 under the Fisheries Act (Amended 1983), as part of its inclusion in the designation of Belize's World Heritage Site. The area was also highlighted by the Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan which pushed for the protection of the area due to its critical importance for Hawksbill Turtle nesting. This has more recently been revised (SI 50 of 2009) to update the management zones for the area.

Urban Birding

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Dumbstruck Green Heron at Joe Taylor Creek

Both the resident species and migrants hang out in the mango, almond, sea grape, and other trees that line the waterfront. And if you look closely as you pass the police station and Methodist school, you are likely to encounter a half dozen or so small sparrows. These are not just ordinary sparrows, they are House Sparrows (also called English Sparrows). They originated in the Old World, were imported into New York 150 years

ago, and have since spread on their own throughout the temperate regions of North America south to the northern fringe of the tropics. They apparently do not do as well in the tropics, however, and a two-block section of P.G. around the police station and a similarly small area around the Dangriga police station are the only places in Belize where they have maintained tiny but persistent populations. (What is it about police stations anyway? Better protection, perhaps.) Although they have been in P.G. now for thirty plus years, they have yet to spread beyond the market at one end and Grace's Restaurant at the other.

Finally, at the south end of town you may encounter a few new species around the Coral House Inn and cemetery. Here, if you look closely, you may find Belize's newest resident, the Spot-breasted Oriole. This gaudy orange-and-black species with a flash of white in its wings arrived in P.G. seven years ago from Honduras and Guatemala, where it has been gradually spreading westward along the coast with the opening up of the forests. Because this species prefers park-like settings with scattered large trees, it is my candidate for the ultimate urban bird with its bright, showy plumage and clear, melodious song.

So get out there and see what you can discover!

And before I forget, this year's annual Christmas Bird Count will be held Saturday the 3rd of January. As in the past, we will meet at Nature's

Way Guest House at 7 p.m. the evening before the count to assign teams and areas to cover on the count. Those who are interested in learning the results of the count immediately afterward are welcome to meet again at Nature's Way Saturday evening between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. for the count compilation. And you do not need to be an experienced birder to participate. The event is open to all.



House Sparrow Sentinel and its inquisitive chick

Members of the Toledo Tour Guide Association

Abraham	Coleman	Punta Gorda	John	Young	Punta Gorda
Agapito Anastacio	Pop	Hicattee	Kenworth	Martin	Punta Gorda
Andrew	Caliz	Big falls	Lionel	Martin	Punta Gorda
Abraham	Coleman	Punta Gorda	Lorenzo	Coc	Cuxlin Ha
Alex Neftali	Leonardo	Punta Gorda	Mario	Chub	Santa Teresa
Alfonso Ralph	Zuniga	Monkey River	Mario	Choco	San Miguel
Alvin	Loredo	Barranco	Martin	Ack	San Miguel
Antonio	Rash	Crique Sarco	Marvin	Escobar	Bella Vista
Antonio	Shol	Golden Stream	Manuel	Bolon	Big falls
Bicente	Ical	Blue Creek	Manuel	Cucul	San Benito Poite
Bradford	Johnston	Forest Home	Mikhail	Daniels	Punta Gorda
Bruno	Kuppinger	Sun Creek	Nasario	Ack	Santa Teresa
Christina	Ack	San Miguel	Nathaniel	Mas	Indian Creek
Daniel	Castellanos	Hopeville Punta Gorda Town	Neville	Smith	Punta Gorda
Desmond	Ramirez	Punta Gorda	Norman	Budna	Jacintoville
Dennis Lloyd	Garbutt	Punta Gorda	Oliver A.	Garbutt	Punta Gorda
Emmanuel	Chan	Hopeville Punta Gorda Town	Patricia	Nightingale	Punta Gorda
Elvis	Tush	Aguacate	Pedro	Chub	Santa Teresa
Elizabeth	Menjagre	Santa Anna	Perfecto	Cholom	Big falls
Estevan	Choco	Big falls	Prince	Hew	Punta Gorda
Feliciano	Pop	San Pedro Columbia	Randolph	Parham	Punta Gorda
Felix	Cus	Aguacate	Rafael	Bul	Aguacate
Florencio	Baki	Big Falls	Rosalio	Sho	Blue Creek
Francisco	Tush	Aguacate	Rosendo	Coy	Indian Creek
Gabriel	Choco	San Miguel	Santiago	Sam	San Pedro Columbia
George Ivan	Coleman	Hopeville Punta Gorda Town	Sipriano	Canti	Golden Stream
George Wilhem	Alford	Hopeville Punta Gorda Town	Silvano	Sho	Blue Creek
Guillermo	Avila	Punta Gorda	Silvestro	Cus	Aguacate
Gustavo	Requena	San Pedro Columbia	Thomas Lester	Garbutt	Punta Gorda
Heraldo	Pop	Blue Creek	Timothy	Shol	Punta Gorda
Isidoro	Sho	Blue Creek	Venancio	Ack	Santa Teresa
Ivan	Sho	Blue Creek	Vicente	Ack	San Miguel
Jason	Guy	San Pedro Columbia	Victor	Jacobs	Punta Gorda
Jose	Mes	Santa Cruz	Wilfred Winston	Mutrie	Punta Gorda
Juan	Cho	San Felipe	William	Ack	Blue Creek
Note:			Yovanny	Leonardo	Punta Gorda

The Tour Guide Listing is for guidance and use by Tour Operators.

Visitors are advised to use only the services of Tour Operators that have satisfied the licensing and insurance requirements of the Belize Tourism Board aimed at ensuring visitor enjoyment in a safe and legal environment.



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SKETCH MAP OF THE TOLEDO DISTRICT

(© Belize Tourism)



Toledo Youth Empowerment Project

With funds
from the US
Dept of
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US Embassy



The goal of TYE is to empower youth in and around Punta Gorda to ensure a peaceful and secure society. The project started in November with 60 youths whose personal capacity was increased. 32 are now starting to set up their own small businesses, 5 will get skills training, and 13 are going back to get their high school diploma.

Issues include

- Self Esteem
- Anger Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Leadership
- Communications
- Business Planning
- Humans and the Environment
- Civic Pride
- Public Participation

Plenty
Belize

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