

BELIZE BIRD RESCUE



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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# REFLECTIONS OF 2024

## *from the director*

We had a steady year with 271 intakes of 71 different species. The majority of intakes were parrots - orphaned, injured or liberated from the illegal pet trade. We released 143 birds throughout the year with 179 birds remaining at the centre at the close of the year.

We recorded 120 hotline calls that didn't require a BBR rescue. We can often talk members of the public through helping a bird in need without our intervention. It's so satisfying when they succeed and by far the best possible outcome for the bird. We are grateful to the Belizean public who generate the majority of our rescue calls, and a huge thank you to the transport network who saved BBR a staggering 5,800 miles of travel.

Speaking of travel, we were unbelievably lucky to receive a private grant to purchase a field vehicle for the yellow-headed Amazon project. The entire project was donor-funded and we were able to send a four-person team into the field for 4 months to conduct a country-wide population survey of this endangered parrot.

Financial matters are a constant focus for us and I made a concerted effort to reduce costs in 2024. Jose retired in June and we decided to employ a casual worker for essential maintenance. With enclosure building on hold for the second half of the year, materials costs were also reduced. Jose left us in excellent shape but we do have plans for future expansion - watch this space!

Thanks to your amazing donations of pellets and formula we reduced our purchase costs for those items, but as we all know, there is no such thing as a free lunch and our shipping costs increased accordingly.



I always try to keep administration costs to a minimum and do most of those tasks myself and I was grateful for few months of Sam's admin skills during the busy season. As always, Marianne helped with the social media, and Emi also joined us as a content creation volunteer.

Doctor Sophie donated her two week vacation to BBR and conducted health checks on every single bird at the center, as well as helping with releases and medical care. Additional volunteer help amounted to more than \$6,000 worth of expertise.

The generosity of donors and supporters keeps BBR alive. You help provide a better future for parrots removed from the wild, and for injured, orphaned or imperiled birds of all species. Your support of a rehab and sanctuary facility is a crucial element of enforcement and conservation success in Belize.

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, we 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 working with all indigenous and migratory species and exotic parrots.

Operating under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Belize Forest Department, the organizations' primary areas of focus are

- Rehabilitation for 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
- Provision of a wild-environment sanctuary for non-releasable parrots
- Raise awareness of Belize's wildlife laws
- Provision of a 24hr wildlife advice & rescue service
- Support the Belize Forest Department with the Captive Wildlife Program to prevent 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 & awareness*





# WHAT WE DO

## RESCUE

Birds face many challenges and threats in this world dominated by humans.

We deal with window and vehicle strikes, chopped nesting trees, domestic animal predation, rodenticide poisoning, evictions, entrapment and conflict in urban areas or farms, displacement through habitat destruction or fires, plus deliberate harm such as poaching and shooting, in addition to those naturally downed, orphaned, sick or injured birds.

## FACILITY PROVISION

Parrots in Belize are sought-after for the illegal pet trade. The provision of a rehabilitation facility for parrots liberated from this trade is crucial for effective enforcement by the Belize Forest Department. The rescue and rehabilitation for release of, not only parrots but of all bird species, sends a positive message of hope to the caring Belizean public.

## 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.

## MULTI-SPECIES

Although our primary focus continues to be the protection of our 9 resident parrot species, throughout our 20 years of operations we have admitted 228 different species. These include raptors, sea and waterbirds, forest and garden birds, toucans, woodpeckers, doves plus the occasional exotic, domestic or non-avian species.

## SANCTUARY

BBR is now home to more than 60 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.

## AWARENESS

Our awareness strategy is to reach as wide an audience as possible with a limited budget. We have prominent advertising on one of the country's major intersections and produce eye-catching and targeted literature throughout the year. We make multiple TV appearances and submit articles to the print and online media. Our social media presence is formidable!



## Parrots everywhere!

It's no secret that parrots are our primary focus. We work with orphaned, injured or downed wild birds, at-risk chicks extracted from nests, poached babies or those raised in homes as pets, and older former-captive parrots who have been surrendered by owners, confiscated by the Forest Department or escaped captivity. We received 96 parrots throughout the year: 30 white-fronts, 29 red-loreds and 24 yellowheads. The rest were a mix of Mealy Amazons, white-crowned pionus and olive-throated parakeets.

## Baby Parrots

68 of those 96 parrot intakes were babies requiring some kind of hand-feeding or weaning. Only 11 of them had clipped wings and will be with us for at least 18 months. A few were completely wild fledglings with 'failure to launch' after leaving the nest. They should be released by the middle of 2025. These wild fledglings are the most difficult to work with as they are not weaned and not self-feeding. We have to catch them and force them to eat. It's quite traumatic for all concerned but completely necessary, otherwise they would literally starve themselves.

## Wild Breeding Success

As always, our released white-fronted and red-lored parrots raised multiple babies. The trees around BBR were alive with so much baby begging we couldn't count them all! We still don't know where these birds are nesting, apart from one red-lored thrupple who nested in our neighbour's roof space. Thank goodness he was okay with them staying there until the chicks fledged and he could finally seal up the access point. The parents turned up with 2 babies and as of the end of 2024, they were alive and well and visiting the feeders regularly.





## Former-Captive Parrots

It is illegal in Belize to have a wild-caught captive parrot, although the Belize Forest Department may license a parrot that has been in captivity for some of time provided the owner provides the standard of care required for permitting. If the bird is recently captive or is not in good conditions, the bird is confiscated and brought in for rehabilitation. Many owners realise their bird should be returned to the wild and surrender them for rehabilitation. Some birds escape from their cages and are surrendered by those that find them. Far too many 'pet' parrots come to us because they are sick, or were injured by domestic animals.

## Sanctuary Intakes

One of goals for next year is to more clearly identify the sanctuary work at BBR. After our annual reassessment we currently have 66 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.

## Releases & Waiting

We gave 58 parrots their freedom in 2024 and at the end of 2024 we have 164 parrots in care, 63 are in permanent sanctuary and 101 are undergoing long-term rehabilitation for release.





## Yellow-headed Amazon At-risk Chicks

The yellow-headed Amazon parrot (*Amazona oratrix belizensis*) is an endangered subspecies found only in Belize. The chicks are much sought-after for the pet trade and our conservation efforts include assisting with nest monitoring and protection, hand-rearing of chicks, rehabilitation of former-captive adults and targeted outreach and awareness programs.

This year was our 10th year of the collaborative At-Risk Chick project. The TIDE rangers of Payne's Creek National Park and surrounding protected areas identify any chicks in the nest that are at-risk of poaching, predation or death through nest overcrowding or natural disasters. These chicks are extracted and hand-raised at BBR before release the following season back into the nesting grounds.

This year the rangers and our own Yellow-head Project Field Team rescued 13 chicks that would otherwise have perished. These plus 3 other rescued chicks were raised and are at BBR awaiting their release in April 2025.

The Field Team also helped to release the 11 chicks we hand-raised in 2023.

As of the end of 2024, BBR has released 192 endangered Yellow-headed Amazons.

141 hand-raised chicks and 51 rehabilitated former-captive parrots





## Yellow-headed Amazon Project

2024 was the 10th year of the yellow-headed Amazon at-risk chick program, and what a year it was! We received funding from private donors and individual supporters to purchase a field vehicle and to hire a 4-person team for 4 months to carry out a country-wide population assessment.

The team encountered some challenges with droughts and fires for the first couple of months followed by floods and mud for the remainder of the surveys. The fires altered the parrot's natural flight paths and damaged some nesting grounds, and then the flooding made many areas inaccessible other than on foot, which really slowed the team down. There were multiple instances of vehicles stuck in the mud and had to be rescued by trucks, tractors and even the British Army at one stage!

Despite all this they covered every one of the prescribed transects to duplicate the 2016 assessment, giving us a much-needed update to that initial survey which estimated between 1200 and 1600 of this unique sub-species of parrot remaining. The report is being compiled by the University of Belize Environmental Research Institute (ERI) and should be published in the first quarter of 2025. It will be interesting to see if the conservation efforts in place are making a difference to the decades-long downward trend for the yellow-head.

We are so grateful for the help, advice and support of the Belizean conservation organisations and protected area managers who worked alongside our field team and made their data collection possible.

Thank you to project sponsors [Caye International Bank](#), [Table Rock Jungle Resort](#) and [Holtzman Wildlife Foundation](#), plus all of our individual donors and sponsors for their generosity.





## Raptor Rehabilitation

We saw 30 raptor patients of 12 different species and as usual the majority were owls. 20 raptors were successfully released with 4 still undergoing rehabilitation as of the end of the year. Our newly refurbished raptor barn has been such a blessing and we even have one of our released barn owls nesting in the corridor, a seal of approval indeed.



## Waterbird Rehabilitation

We saw 42 waterbirds which included 4 new species for BBR – a uniform crake, a sora, a white-necked puffbird and an American (Caribbean) Flamingo. We also returned two red-footed booby fledglings to their home of Half-Moon Caye, which is always immensely satisfying after their 8-month long hand-raising and rehab. Our waterbird enclosure got a much-needed upgrade of a new pond-room giving us more enclosure space and a more easily managed pond.



## Toucan Rehabilitation

We received 14 members of the toucan family, two keel-billed toucans and the rest collared aracarís. All but one were ‘failure to launch’ fledglings or nestlings from fallen trees. Toucans are loyal to their flocks and family groups, and form tight bonds during rehab. We loved releasing the new family group of 9 young aracarís at BBR, and still see them around frequently.



## Songbirds & Forest Birds

We cared for 39 songbirds that came to us with various issues including cat-caught, vehicle or window-strikes, downed migrants, fallen nestlings, displaced by fires and even one caught in a fake Halloween spider-web. The wide variation in their husbandry, dietary and medical needs and their high-stress demeanor makes for a challenging group of patients. The majority come to us during the busy months of April to August adding to our challenges.





## Enclosure refurbishment

After such a busy year in 2023 we slowed down somewhat with construction. This was also Mr Jose's last year working with BBR. He's been with us for the last 11 years, building and maintaining our enclosures. Before he left to enjoy his well-earned retirement, he overhauled all of the platforms and feeders, made a batch of roost boxes and built us two last enclosures – a new parrot aviary and the pool room extension to our waterbird enclosure.



## Outreach & awareness

A French film crew visited to film our work with the yellow-headed parrots. The local TV stations interviewed BBR multiple times throughout the year on topics such as attracting birds to the garden, how to help wild birds during droughts and fires, our rescue and rehab work with all bird species, and the yellow-headed parrot project. We produced a poster on the importance of protecting the yellow-head and presented at two international online conferences.



143 Releases



272 Rescues

2024



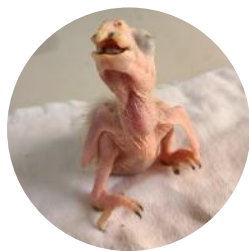
120 Hotline cases



22,000 Miles



71 species



68 baby parrots



112 in rehab care

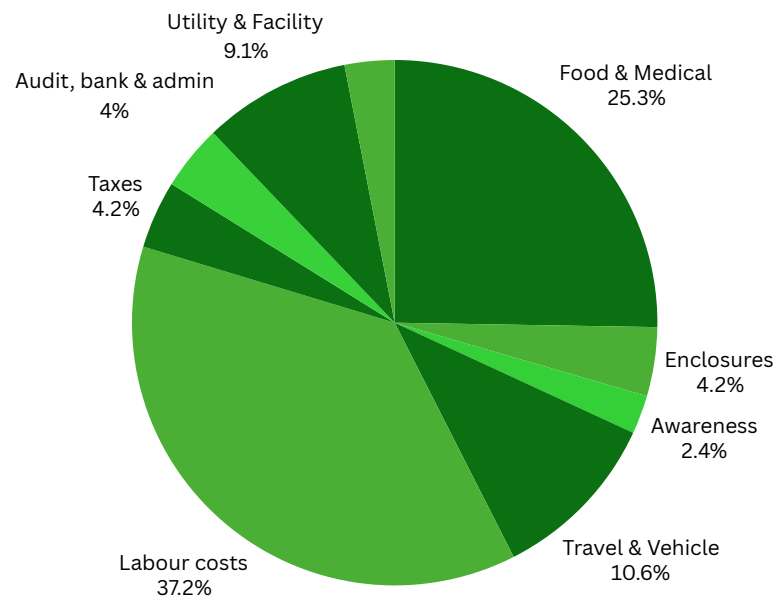


65 in sanctuary care

## HOW YOUR GENEROSITY WAS PUT TO WORK

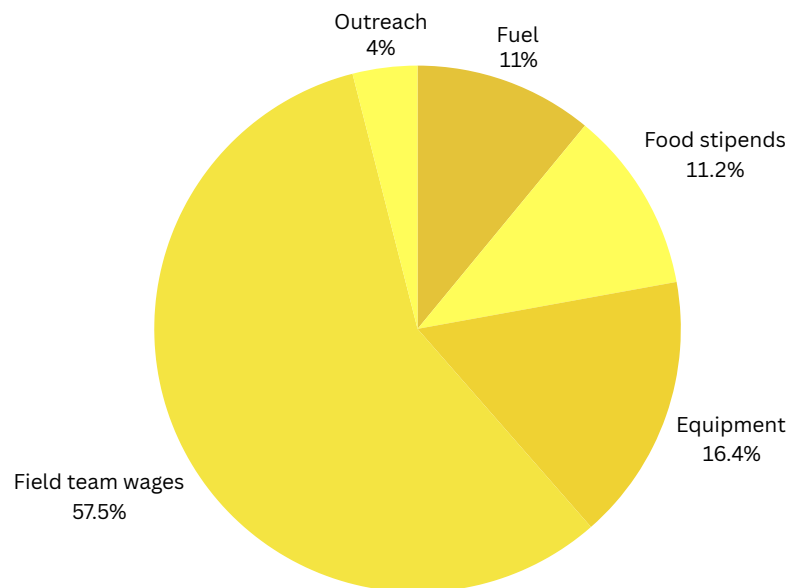
### GENERAL OPERATIONS

ITEM	AMOUNT USD
Bird food & veterinary	\$24,653
Enclosures & equipment	\$4,138
Outreach & awareness	\$2,317
Travel and vehicle	\$10,373
Rental of facility	\$0.00
Utilities	\$8,854
Payroll & staff costs	\$36,255
Shipping	\$2,993
Admin, audit & fees	\$3,909
Sales taxes	\$4,072
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$103,565</b>



### YELLOW-HEADED PARROT PROJECT

ITEM	AMOUNT USD
Team Wages	\$18,044
Food Stipends	\$3,510
Fuel	\$3,443
Equipment	\$5,152
Outreach	\$1,248
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,397</b>





## Income

Our 2024 income grand total of \$114,974USD provided funding for our conservation projects, facility improvements, staffing and operational support.

Our Global Giving family contributed \$16,831 to Belize Bird Rescue. Their generous response to our Giving Season campaign this December alone brought in almost \$6,000.

We were gifted a legacy donation from the estate of the late Mark Flood. His memory lives on in the birds he has helped.

2024 saw a 25% increase in donations compared to 2023, some of which can be attributed to the additional private grants for the yellow-headed parrot project, but the majority is testament to the confidence of our donors and our ever-increasing donor support.



## Income by Quarter (114,974USD total)

1st quarter \$20,320

2nd quarter \$36,926

3rd quarter \$31,847

4th quarter \$25,881

There is no question that your generosity is the lifeblood of this organization.

Our success is your success!

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support throughout 2024



## Friends of Belize Bird Rescue

A Florida Registered 501c3 supporting avian conservation in Belize, Friends of Belize Bird Rescue receive USA tax-deductible donations for BBR in Belize through their portals (Direct deposits, Zelle & Paypal). In 2024 contributions from 151 individual donors totaled \$74,900USD: a 20 % increase on 2023. Thank you to the Directors of Friends of Belize Bird Rescue for their regular grant disbursements and dedication to our cause!

## A new field vehicle

A private foundation grant gave us a brand new field vehicle for 2024 projects and beyond!

## Belize local support

Our local donors and sponsors are an impressive force. Corporate sponsors donated over \$5000 in cash and countless more in-kind donations as prizes for our Christmas Raffle & Silent Auction. They help with local merchandise sales, host donation boxes, display outreach materials and even provide a meeting point for us to pick up rescued birds. Thank you to each and every one of our local donors who helped us to reach our funding goals this year. For a full list of contributors visit [belizebirdrescue.com/partners-supporters](https://belizebirdrescue.com/partners-supporters)

## Thank you for our home

We are grateful to Rock Farm for continuing to provide BBR with a beautiful facility and rehab/release site, saving the organization \$6,000 per year. 20 years and counting!



## So much kindness

Donations come in many forms, and our in-kind contributions were fabulous this year.

Our rescue network donated 5,800 miles which amounted to 26% of our total rescue miles. Throughout 2024 the BBR trucks travelled 22,000 miles for rescues, releases, conservation work, vet trips and shopping.

The total value of donated time and expertise from volunteers, vets and rehabbers amounted to \$6,225. Wish-list contributors sent us \$4,600 worth of donated food, equipment and tools.

*Thank You*





JOIN.  
STAY CONNECTED.  
TAKE ACTION.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **BELIZE BIRD RESCUE**

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