

# The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

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**FREE**

## The National Tourism Awards

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This was the tenth year of the National Tourism Awards. While the awards are normally announced in January for the previous year there was a delay this year as the Belize tourism industry welcomed Seleni Matus the new Director of the Belize Tourism Board. Changes were made to the selection process and this year's award winners were voted on by past guests, customers, travel company partners and online social networks; in fact anybody with a knowledge and interest in Belize's tourism product.

The awards have ten categories and Toledo had four finalists in three of these. Both the Maya Ant and Bee Group and Cotton Tree Chocolate from Punta Gorda were finalists for the Small Vendor of The Year award with Cotton Tree Chocolate eventually placing as runner up to Tutti Frutti, the excellent Italian gelateria in Placencia. Likewise the Battle of the Drums was one of four finalists for

the Cultural Award of the Year losing out to The Three Kings who were boosted by



Staff of The Lodge at Big Falls receive their award. From Left: Rob Hiron, Cordelia Choco and Steven Choco

censed small hotel that captures the essence of warmth and homeliness, displays customer - service excellence, utilizes environmental best practices and sound management". The lodge was represented at the awards ceremony at The Belize Biltmore Hotel by owner, Rob Hiron who was accompanied by their guide Steven Choco and Steven's partner Cordelia Choco who has delighted guests at the lodge with her cooking for the past six years. Everyone at the lodge was thrilled that their hard work received

Photograph courtesy of Spooners 1Hr MiniLab & Studio

the documentary film of the same name. Of course, two of those three kings, Florencio Mes and Paul Nabor are also natives of Toledo. The winner of the Best Small Hotel of the Year was The Lodge at Big Falls. The award is for "a li-

this recognition.

The lodge opened in 2003 with six thatched cabanas and plans to expand its capacity this autumn with the addition of a further two units so that more guests can enjoy the hospitality of Big Falls.

## Howler Monkey Research Team in Toledo

The Black Howler monkey is an endangered species, with its population limited to Belize and small areas of Guatemala and Mexico. However, Toledo District, with large areas of rainforest and national parks, is home to a healthy, large population of howler monkeys. Although something of a privilege, it's not uncommon for visitors to hear the New World's loudest animal during

their stay. It is estimated the howlers' roar can be heard for up to three miles!

In June a team from George Mason University in Virginia visited Toledo to conduct the first ever Howler Monkey research in the forest areas surrounding Punta Gorda. Led by Dr Sylvia Vitazkova and her assistant, PG-born Ray Castellanos, the team conducted a

preliminary population survey of the monkeys, and collected faecal samples to further assess the general health of the various troops.

Sylvia explained "We wanted to study howler monkeys living close to an urban population and assess the effects this has on the monkeys, but also how

*Continued on page 8*



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**Contact Toledo BTIA** at the Tourism Information Center, Front St., Punta Gorda Tel. 722-2531  
E-mail [btiatoledo@btl.net](mailto:btiatoledo@btl.net) **Chair:** Rob Hiron  
**Secretary:** Yvonne Villoria **Treasurer:** Dona Scafe

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# Destinations: Nim Li Punit

Now that the Southern Highway has been completed the site at Nim Li Punit is more accessible than ever. It is located just north of the village of Indian Creek with its entrance off to the right when approaching from the north. It is one of the more modest archaeological sites in terms of the size of the standing structures but the site is most well known for the abundance of carved stelae discovered there.

The visitors' centre houses a number of these including one 9 metres in length. It is the largest carved stela in Belize and the second largest in the Mayan world. This stela depicts some of the history of the region and one of its rulers whose elaborate head-dress gives the site its modern name which translates as "Big Hat".

Within the excavated areas of the site further stelae have been left in their original locations and are protected by palm thatched roofs. The Mat stela is part of the south group and is depicted on the face of the Belize two dollar note although its location is not identified there.

The archaeological reserve covers 121 acres in total of which just a few have been cleared and excavated. One can only wonder about how much more awaits discovery. The same is true at Lubaantun and throughout much of Belize leading to the conclusion that so far just a small proportion of Belize's archaeological secrets have been unearthed.

The warden is Adriano Mas from Indian Creek village. Mr Mas has worked here for the past nine years. At weekends he tends his own plantation. He is presently serving as alcalde (local magistrate) for the village so his evenings are pretty busy too. Walking through the site with Adriano it is easy to see why this location was inhabited. Present

day Indian Creek village lies at the bottom of the hill and then to the east lies the vast expanse of the coastal jungle plain. This extends right up to the water's edge in Port Honduras. The sea and cayes, ten miles distant, are all clearly visible from the site.

Ancient Nim Li Punit would have had easy access to the sea and the ancient salt works at Punta Negra. Westwards they would have had trade access with modern day Guatemala through the valley occupied by the modern villages of San Antonio, Santa Cruz and Pueblo Viejo. Inscriptions on stelae point to political and social links with Copan in Honduras about two hundred miles to the south.

Like so many archaeological sites in Belize Nim Li Punit is carefully tended by the warden and his assistant and large forest trees grow among the ruins.

Nim Li Punit is a wonderful place for birding either early in the morning or towards dusk. Groups of a dozen or more keel-billed toucans have been seen. A parrot and a pale-billed woodpecker may fight over a nesting hole excavated by the woodpecker but coveted by the parrot. It is a great spot to see many of the species that live below the canopy of the rainforest.

Nim Li Punit was opened to the public in 1976. In 1986 Richard Leventhal, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, opened up Tomb 1. The last major excavation and consolidation took place in 1998 but there will be some work going on at the site from May to July this year.

## Information

Nim Li Punit is open 365 days a year.

Opening hours: 7am to 5pm

Entrance Fee BZ\$10

Telephone 665-6126



The mat stela at Nim Li Punit as reproduced on the Belize \$2 note



Adriano Mas in the Visitor Centre



Tomb 1 excavated in 1986



The South Group with stelae and tombs protected from the elements by thatched palapas



The ball court at Nim Li Punit

# Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Venue / Time	Other Info
28 August	<b>Launch of September celebrations</b>	Central Park / 7pm	
4 September	<b>Queen of the Bay beauty contest</b>	Sports complex / 7pm	Tickets on sale before and at the door.
9 September	<b>Fire engine Parade Karaoke competition</b>	Through the main streets of Punta Gorda/ 7pm Central Park/ 9pm	
10 September	<b>St George's Caye Day</b>		
16 September	<b>Tribute to a Belizean Patriot</b>	Parish Hall /7pm	
18 Sept	<b>Basketball Game</b>	Sports Complex / 7-10:30pm	Tickets at door
19 Sept	<b>Ecumenical Service Football Marathon Fishing Tournament</b>	Central Park / 7-8am Union Field / 10am-6pm Benancio Petillo Park / 10am-6pm	Entrance fees payable for football and fishing
20 Sept	<b>Family Entertainment Concert Flag Raising Ceremony</b>	Central Park / 7-10pm Central Park / 11:45pm	
7th Nov	<b>Wanaragua (John Canoe) Dance Contest</b> Showcase of talent from which judges will decide who performs at Battle of the Drums	Venue to be confirmed / 7pm start	For more information about all Battle of the Drums events, phone 621-0140
11th Nov	<b>Ms. Yurumein Contest</b> Garifuna women display their creative talents	Parish Hall / 7pm	Adults \$5 Children \$3
12th Nov	<b>Battle of the Drums Anniversary Food &amp; Fete</b> Celebration of Garifuna food and music	Rooftop, PG Sports Bar/ 7pm–2am	\$25 per person
13 Nov	<b>Toledo Tourism Expo TOLTEX</b> Displays of crafts, food, music and other tourism related products and services in Toledo	Central Park, Punta Gorda/ 9am–5pm	Free event
13 Nov	<b>Battle of the Drums</b> Exciting evening of entertainment as drumming groups from around the region compete for top prizes	Punta Gorda Football Field/ 7:30pm start	Adults: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Students: \$7. Reserve seating: \$20
14th Nov	<b>Paranda Top 10</b> Live radio broadcast focusing on local Paranda music with live performances	Sunset Terrace, Beya Suites, PG	

## Toledo Cacao Festival 2011

Next year's Cacao Festival will be held from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May, with its winning blend of cacao and culture, including inland and marine tours, arts and crafts, archaeology and music. The Festival opens with its signature Wine & Chocolate evening, featuring chocolate delights from Belizean chocolatiers. Mark your diary now, and check out [www.ToledoChocolate](http://www.ToledoChocolate) for information, or contact the Toledo Tourism Information Centre. CacaoFest is calling you! The Cacao Festival Committee includes volunteers from BTIA Toledo, Ya'axche Conservation Trust, the Toledo Cacao Growers Association, and other community groups and individuals. If you would like to be a part of Cacao Festival 2011, volunteering time and skills, please contact Sulma Hernandez at the Toledo Tourism Information Centre. 722-2531

## The Lodge at Big Falls

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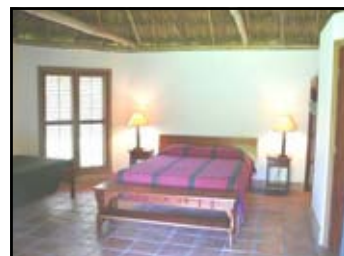
Email: [info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com](mailto:info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com)

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## Restaurant Guide

Name	Address	Cuisine	Phone	Opening Hours
Coleman's Cafe	Big Falls Village, near the rice mill	Belizean	720-2017	Daily: 11:30- 4pm & 6- 9pm [ Reservations Preferred ]
Earth Runnins' Café and Bukut Bar	Main Middle Street, PG	Belizean/ International	702-2007 600-9026	Wed-Sun: 7am-2pm & 5-11pm
Fajina Firehearth Food	Front St, PG	Local Mayan Food	666-6144	Mon–Sat: 7am–7:30pm. Closed on Sundays
Gomier's Restaurant and Soy Centre	Alejandro Vernon St, near PG welcome sign	Local & international vegetarian / Seafood	722-2929	Mon-Sat: 8am-2pm & 6-9pm. Closed Sundays
Grace's Restaurant	Main St. PG	Belizean/ International	702-2414	Daily: 6am-10pm, including holidays
Hang Cheong Restaurant	Main St, PG	Chinese	722-2064	Daily: 10am-2pm & 5pm-midnight
The Lodge at Big Falls	Big Falls Village, near the rice mill	International/ Belizean/ Middle Eastern	671-7172	Daily: 11:30am – 2pm & 6:30 – 9pm [ Reservations Required ]
Machaca Hill Lodge	Wilson's Road	Pan Central American and International	722-0050	Lunch: noon-2:30pm. Dinner: 7:30-10pm. [Reservations preferred]
Mangrove Restaurant	Cattle Landing, by the curve	Belizean / International	722-2270	Daily: 5pm-10pm. [Reservations preferred]
Marenco's Restaurant & Ice Cream Parlor	57 Main St, PG	Belizean/Seafood/ Ice Cream/ Snacks & pastries	702-2572	Mon-Sat: 9am-2pm & 5-10pm. Sundays: 5-10pm
Marian's Bay View Restaurant	Front St, south of the market by the sea	East Indian/ Belizean	722-0129	Mon-Sat: 11am – 2pm & 6 – 10pm Sun & Hols: noon – 2pm & 7 - 9pm
Martina's Kitchen	BTL parking lot, PG	Belizean	623-3330	Mon-Sat: 7am-3pm. Closed on Sundays
Mom's Restaurant	Queen St, PG, by the park	Belizean	620-1607 661-1359	Mon–Sat: 6 am–2 pm & 4–9 pm Closed Sundays
Rainbow Cafe	Queen St, PG, by the park	Belizean	631-2309	Mon–Sat: 7am–2pm. Closed on Sundays
Rainforest Cafe	Big Falls Village, just south of the bridge	Belizean	669-0080	Daily: 10am–10pm
Reef Bar & Restaurant	Front St, upstairs by the market	International/ Belizean	625-8652	Daily: 10am-2pm & 4pm-midnight. Closed on Tuesdays
Sho's Local Restaurant	Entrance to Blue Creek Village	Belizean/ Catering	668-6540	Mon-Sat: 7am–8pm. Closed Sundays. Group reservations required
The Snack Shack	BTL parking lot, PG	Breakfast & lunch/ Snacks, shakes, juices & pastries	702-0020	Mon-Sat: 7am – 3pm. Closed Sundays
Waluco's	Opposite TIDE pier in Hopeville	Belizean/East Indian/Seafood/ Catering	670-3672	Mon-Thurs: 7am-2pm & 5-10pm. Weekends: 7am-late

## Wat's Cookin?

### Annatto Fish

Annatto is commonly grown throughout the tropics for use as both a culinary flavoring as well as a coloring agent—including in cosmetics, giving rise to its popular name of the lipstick tree! Visitors to San Miguel village can easily see the annatto bushes growing in fields along the roadside, as well as throughout the Toledo district.

The annatto seeds are the main ingredient in recardo—a paste used in Belizean cooking which,

combined with additional ingredients, makes a great marinade and rub for fish, shrimp, chicken and pork.

- 2 tsp red recardo
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 1/4 tsp chili flakes
- 2 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1 tbsp beer or tequila
- Juice of 1 orange (or 2 tsp orange squash)
- 2 tsp finely chopped cilantro
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg

Mix the recardo with the olive oil to make a paste, and then work in the remainder of the ingredients. Smear the paste on to the fish steaks or fillets and leave to marinate for 30 minutes. Then drizzle with a little extra marinade just prior to cooking.

Cook in a foil covered dish on a fairly low heat until the fish is tender and flakes easily but is still moist.

*Recipe kindly donated by Kate Morton of Hickatee Cottages.*

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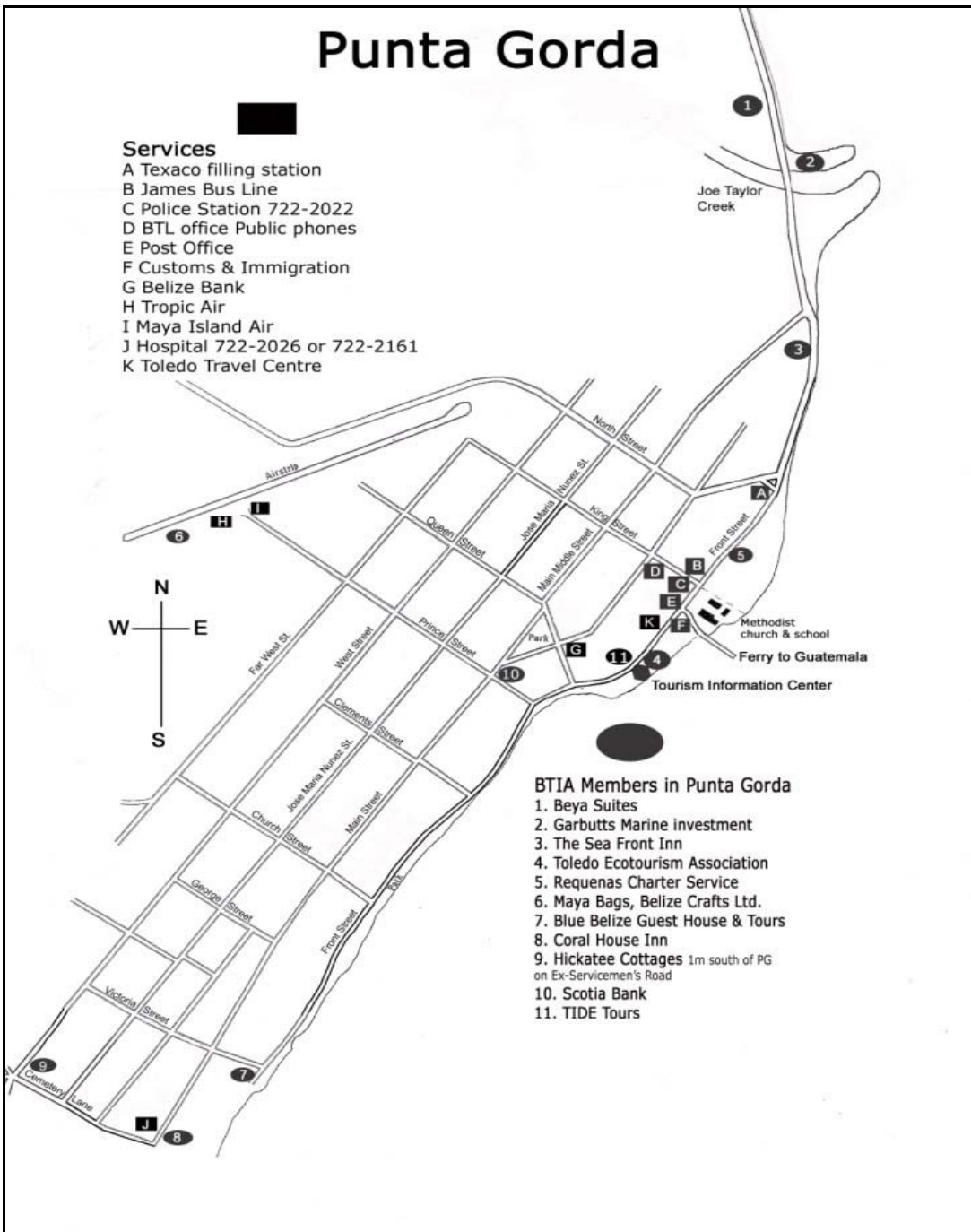


P.O. Box 135, Punta Gorda,  
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**BTIA Toledo Welcomes New Members in 2010**

Membership in BTIA Toledo has grown in the past year and during that time we have welcomed:

- ◆ The American Crocodile Education Centre (ACES)
- ◆ The Maya Ant and Bee craft group
- ◆ The Fajina Craft Centre
- ◆ Seiko Vieira and
- ◆ Chrisbel Perez as individual members

**How Do I Join BTIA?**

Visit [www.btia.org](http://www.btia.org) to read about BTIA and all the other membership benefits and to download an application form. Complete the form and hand it in to Sulma Hernandez at the Tourism Information Center on Front St. BTIA meets monthly on Wednesdays at the Tourism Information Center on Front Street. Be a part of BTIA and make a practical contribution to the economic development of Toledo District.

## Natural History of Toledo: Queen Conch

The Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) is a species of large, edible sea snail that can be found within the Port Honduras Marine Reserve (PHMR).

The Queen Conch is a gastropod, a soft-bodied type of mollusc, which is protected by a hard outer shell covered in spines, to deter predators. The shell is made from calcium carbonate which the conch extracts from the sea water, and the shell of an adult conch can range in size from 15-31cm long (5.9-11.8 inches).

Adult conchs live in seagrass meadows and on sandy areas of the sea bed, while juveniles are found in shallow, inshore seagrass meadows. Queen Conchs are herbivorous, which means they eat only plants, and they can be found feeding on seagrass and seaweed species.

Conchs are dioecious, which means that each individual is either a male or a female. After internal fertilization, females lay eggs in gelatinous strings on bare sand or within seagrass beds, which then coil up to form egg masses.

Females can produce 5 to 10 egg masses per season, each containing up to 400,000 eggs, depending on environmental conditions and food



availability. Eggs hatch as swimming larvae which live in the water column and are transported by currents. After 28 days the larvae settle amongst shallow seagrasses and seaweeds and shell devel-

opment begins. After 2-3 years, when the shell reaches 15-20cm (5.9-7.8 inches) long they move to deeper seagrass beds. After 3.5 years, Queen Conchs reach maturity, stop growing and begin to reproduce.

Queen Conch is an important commercial species in Belize, yet numbers have declined in recent years. In order to protect populations, and sustain the fishery, a number of conservation measures have been introduced, including a closed season and size limits.

The closed season for Queen Conch runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> every year. During this time, it is illegal to catch Queen Conch throughout Belize. Queen Conch reproduces between March and October each year, with the peak being from July to September, and the closed season is in place to ensure that mating occurs. Size limits are also in place and it is illegal to catch Queen Conch with a shell length smaller than 7 inches (17.8cm).

*Continued on page 13*

# Tour operator: Garbutt's Marine

Garbutt's Marine is a tour operator offering all manner of sea based tours and activities including diving, snorkeling, fly fishing, sea kayaking, nature spotting and island hopping. The company supplies all the necessary equipment for each tour.

Garbutt's Marine is truly a family run business. The family includes Sandra (Mom), Dennis, Scully, Oliver, Elizabeth and Ewert. The Garbutts have been

looking after visitors to the district for many years out on Lime Caye, for which they have a long term lease. They extended the

business in 2005 to include a convenient base at Joe Taylor Creek in PG. This is where most tours and transfers originate and equipment for the tour operation is stored. Dennis plans to set up a dive shop out on Lime Caye before the winter season but the Joe Taylor Creek office will remain the hub for the business.

Lime Caye is a three acre jewel at the southernmost end of the Sapodilla Cayes, which are themselves at the southern tip of the barrier reef. Lime Caye is actually closer to the coasts of Honduras and Guatemala than Belize. There is an immigration post on Hunting Caye (a half mile north of Lime) which handles visitors arriving from other countries. The area is popular with all the surrounding countries for its pristine beauty as well as its abundant fishing grounds.

Dennis Garbutt is a dive master, licensed tour guide and general man-



*Scully prepares for a bit of fly fishing*

ager of Garbutt's Marine. He offers PADI certified dive training for novices. For experienced divers, Dennis offers two-tank dives to the most exciting parts of the southern reef; wall diving and exploring unusual coral formations along the reef. There are spawning areas for the great schools of Nassau Grouper which arrive at certain times of the year. The magnificent whale sharks are sometimes seen here during the spring spawning season. Dennis has worked with various conservation organizations, including Earth Watch, and



*Idyllic Lime Caye*

has an enormous store of knowledge about the natural history of the area.



*Scully, Sandra and Dennis Garbutt*

He has a core of loyal fly fishing fans who come down from North America to Toledo each year specifically to fish with him. While visiting Lime Caye recently, Scully showed Howler staff a large shoal of bone fish close to the beach. Tarpon and Permit are the other catch and release sports fish which attract fishermen to Toledo district



*Laid back Island accommodation*

each year. The Garbutts' two largest boats are moored in Placencia and bring visitors directly to Lime Caye from the peninsula. From either Placencia or Punta Gorda, the trip to Lime Caye takes 75 - 90 minutes.

Sandra is the chef on Lime Caye and also looks after the four cabins used for overnight guests. Some guests are only based on the island for the day but other groups will stay from 3 to 7 nights. Everything is provided for guests while on the island. Sandra prepares mouth watering meals morning, noon and evening as well as between-meal fruits and snacks. Of course being a small island surrounded by the Caribbean, it's not surprising that fresh fish is often on the menu. It doesn't come any fresher than this! All meals are home cooked with local ingredients and include things like fresh conch stewed with yellow ginger, steamed vegetables with coconut rice and fresh fry jack & johnny cakes with bacon and eggs.

There are four guest cabins on Lime Caye. One sleeps five, one four and two are for couples. One has an en-suite bathroom while the others have shared

outdoor facilities. This is best described as island rustic and you will not find air conditioning,

TV or a cell phone signal (they use radios and GPS plus there is a phone for emergencies on nearby Hunting Caye).

The Garbutt family have eight boats of different sizes available for day trips. Scully, a licensed tour guide, is the fly fishing expert and one boat is modified especially for this activity.



*Cozy treehouse cabin built for two*

Electricity is produced by a generator and the Garbutts have two fresh water wells. There is a sense of having found that desert island where Robinson Crusoe lived. The two couples cabins sit high on posts by the sea and feel almost like tree houses. When you walk out onto your verandah in the morning, you are greeted by sand, sea and sky. This is truly about getting away from it all; relaxing and laid back. Shoes are optional.

Dennis says the original idea was to concentrate on fly fishing but they soon branched out to include snorkeling and diving. The Sapodilla Cayes sit in a protected reserve and there is a wealth of natural history to learn about here.

For example, Loggerhead and Hawksbill turtles lay eggs at night along the sandy beaches of these cayes. Sandra points out markers placed near current nesting sites on Lime Caye, to protect them until the eggs hatch in about sixty days.

Snorkeling is the most popular activity these days, with fishing next and diving the third. However, with more marketing, Dennis expects the dive operation to be a big growth area in the future.

A website is in the works but not yet completed. To find out more about tours offered by Garbutt's Marine and to make reservations, email Dennis at: [garbuttsmarine@yahoo.com](mailto:garbuttsmarine@yahoo.com) or call on 722-0070 (calling from the US please add the prefix 011-501 before the local number). If you are already in the district, ask your hotel about booking tours with Garbutt's Marine.

## BTIA TOLEDO MEMBERS 2010

Business Name	Email	Phone	Contact Person
American Crocodile Education Sanctuary	acesnp@hughes.net	665-2762	Vince & Cherie Rose
Belize Crafts Ltd, Maya Bags	belizeexecutivedirector@mayabags.org	722-2175	Desiree Arnold
Beya Suites	info@beyasuites.com	722-2188	Lisa Avila
Blue Belize Guest House & Tours	info@bluebelize.com	722-2678	Dan Castellanos & Rachel Graham
Coral House Inn	coralhousebelize@yahoo.com	722-2878	Rick & Darla Mallory
Cotton Tree Lodge	chris@cottontreelodge.com	670-0557	Chris Crowell
Chrisbel Perez	<a href="mailto:cuxlinha@live.com">cuxlinha@live.com</a>	630-7673	Chris Perez
Cuxlin Ha Retirement Village	cuxlinha@hotmail.com	501-614-2518	Dona Lee Scafe
Dem Dats Doin	demdatsdoin@btl.net	501-722-2470	Yvonne Villoria
Fajina Craft Center of Belize	fajina.craft.center@gmail.com	666-6141	Candelaria Pop
Garbutt's Marine Investment Co.	garbuttsmarine@yahoo.com	604-3548	Dennis Garbutt
Hickatee Cottages	cottages@hickatee.com	662-4475	Ian & Kate Morton
The Lodge at Big Falls	info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com	671-7172 / 614-2888	Marta & Rob Hirons
Machaca Hill Lodge	info@machacahill.com	722-0050	Brian Gardiner
Maya Ant and Bee Group	mayaantandbee@gmail.com	662-1139	Ofelia Cal
Requena's Charter Service	watertaxi@btl.net	722-2070	Julio Requena
Romero's Charter Service	rcharters@btl.net	722-2625/2924	Francis Romero
Scotia Bank	elvis.perez@scotiabank.com	722-0098/0099	Elvis Perez
The Sea Front Inn	larry@seafrontinn.com	722-2300	Larry & Carol Smith
Seiko Vieira	<a href="mailto:seikovieira7@gmail.com">seikovieira7@gmail.com</a>	665-5394	Seiko Vieira
Sun Creek Lodge	suncreek@hughes.net	600-8773/614-2080	Bruno & Melissa Kuppinger
TIDE Tours	info@tidetours.org	722-2129	Karel Kuran
Toledo Eco-Tourism Association	teabelize@googlemail.com	702-2119	Vicente Sackul / Reyes Chun
Toledo Tour Guides Association	<a href="mailto:ttgabze@gmail.com">ttgabze@gmail.com</a>	660-3974	Dennis Garbutt
Tranquility Lodge	info@tranquility-lodge.com	677-9921	Sheila & Rusty Nale
Tumul K'in Center of Learning	tumulkin_tourism@yahoo.com	608-1070	Rosemary Salam

### Howler Monkey Research

#### *Continued from Page 1*

monkeys can be affected by farming and particularly whether there is disease transmission between domestic animals and monkeys."

The research was conducted primarily along Ex-Servicemen/Boom Creek Road (heading south-west from Punta Gorda towards the tiny Boom Creek village on the banks of the Moho River) and visually identified eleven troops in the forest on both sides of the road. Further troops were noted at ACES Crocodile Sanctuary and a small troop between Punta Gorda and the former Voice of America site.

Sylvia extolled the virtues of citizen science, and how we can all help with scientific research. "Guests at Hickatee Cottages monitored the howler monkeys for three months ahead of our visit, noting any physical sightings and the size of troops, as well as recording the times and approximate location of any howling activity. They collected over 500 records, giving us a good idea of the monkeys' home ranges in advance, saving us what might have been several days trekking in the area to locate the various troops. Local residents can also

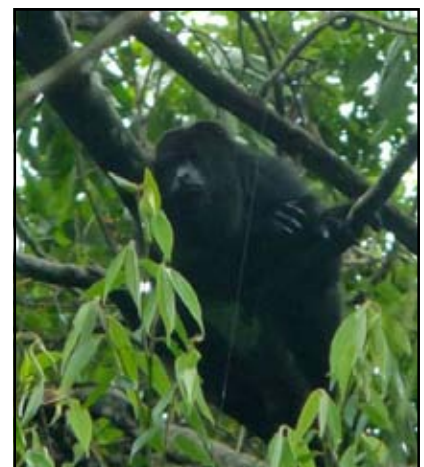
participate by making a note of the time, direction and volume of howling when they are at home."

She said "On the positive side, the monkeys we observed in the area looked significantly larger than those found in the north of Belize which suggests they have access to good habitat and adequate food, although some early faecal analysis indicate the potential transmission of parasites from cattle to the Howlers. Of most concern though is the rate of habitat destruction through logging and clearing of forest for cattle farming – incidentally, this clearing also causes soil erosion and flooding of the road, and the formation of puddles, which are perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The high level of nocturnal howling was something of a surprise to us – howlers are usually diurnal, and, although howling can be heard at night, this level of nocturnal vocalization could be an early indication that habitat loss is reducing the size of their territories and that home ranges may be starting to overlap, so that the howlers have to delineate their territories more frequently.

"Habitat destruction is probably the biggest threat facing Black Howlers: they use trees as food sources, as travel routes, and for sleeping, and

even selective logging will reduce the usability of their home range. We know that the Forestry and Police Departments have only limited resources to monitor logging, but grass roots enthusiasm for the development of the area as a nature trail and educational resource could dramatically help reduce the level of habitat destruction by deterring illegal loggers."

Sylvia, Ray and the research team will be returning to Punta Gorda next year to continue their field work. In the meantime, anyone interested in participating in the 'citizen science' monitoring of howler monkeys in their local area should contact Ian Morton of Hickatee Cottages on 662-4475





# Accommodation: Tranquility Lodge

The new owners of Tranquility Lodge are no strangers to Belize having lived here for the past eighteen years. Sheila and Rusty Nale have lived in Belize City as well as in the Orange Walk district where they gained their first experience within the tourism industry as assistant managers at Lamanai Outpost Lodge. From there they moved to San Pedro where they managed the Mayan Princess hotel for twelve years. So they bring a wealth of great experience of the Belize tourism industry with them to Toledo.

In Ambergris Caye Sheila was the general manager running the front of house and marketing while Rusty stayed in the background as facilities and maintenance manager keeping everything working and running smoothly. Down in Toledo they have slipped into those same roles so that Sheila is the public face of Tranquility Lodge while Rusty has been employing his skills renovating their existing facilities and constructing three new thatched casitas. Two are complete and accommodating



*Tranquility Lodge*

They were attracted to Toledo by the opportunity to own and develop a place of their own and Tranquility Lodge in Jacintoville seemed ideal. They began by re-modelling the place from top to bottom. The four ground floor rooms below the restaurant all got new furniture and upgraded showers in their en-suite bathrooms and now include air-conditioning, cable television and i-pod dockers. The comfortable new casitas with their cohune thatch roofs have a more rustic feel to them

but all include ceiling fans, screened windows and en-suite hot showers.

The lodge is set in three acres of tropical gardens and there are a further seventeen acres of forest with trails and an abundance of birds and orchids. Jacinto Creek winds through the property and the lodge is lucky to have a natural swimming hole on a bend of the creek just a short walk from the lodge itself.

The lodge's nightly rates include breakfast and they also offer lunch and dinner to their overnight guests. They can accommodate meetings and workshops.

Sheila says that she is still constantly impressed by how much greener and wilder Toledo is than many other parts of the country. She is still working her way through all the tours that visitors to Toledo enjoy and as she does

so is struck by how each feels one step more interesting than similar offerings in other parts of Belize. So Sheila is in no doubt about the po-



*Re-modelled room with king bed*



*Thatched casita*

guests while a third is under construction.

## PG Humane Society

Punta Gorda will soon have a registered Humane Society. A small group of animal lovers is getting the organization started and creating a website ([www.puntagordahs.org](http://www.puntagordahs.org)) and Facebook page (search for Punta Gorda Humane Society).

The first clinic in Punta Gorda is being planned. At this event services like spaying, neutering and general health care for pets, including worming and immunization, will be available at affordable prices.

At this time we seek donations to cover the costs of getting the organization registered. For a \$50 donation you will get one year's (individual) membership. For a \$100 donation, you will receive a family (or individual) membership for 2-6 people. A donation of \$200 (or

more), will make you a patron of the organization (for an individual or family) while a business will receive one year's corporate membership. As a corporate member, you can have your logo and website link added to the Humane Society's website. Any size donation is greatly appreciated and all donors will have their name added to our website in recognition of their support.

We hope that animal lovers will offer their support. We are also seeking volunteers to help assist with the preparations of the first clinic. To make a donation or for further information please email [puntagordahs@gmail.com](mailto:puntagordahs@gmail.com), or telephone:

Anne Brorsen- 663 4061, Joanna Monk - 607 2241, Karel Kuran or Nicola Foster - 628 2138

**THE MISSION** of the Punta Gorda Humane Society is to improve the lives of animals, especially pets, through education and affordable medical services administered by qualified health care professionals.

We aim to help people provide a responsible and healthy environment for their pets, and to rescue animals in need.



## TRANSPORT SCHEDULES

### Schedule of Flights from Punta Gorda To Belize City and from Belize City To Punta Gorda

Flights stop at Placencia & Dangriga

Depart Punta Gorda	Arrive In Belize City	Service Provider	Depart Belize City	Arrive In Punta Gorda	Service Provider
6:45am	7:45am	Maya Island Air	8:00am	9:00am	Maya Island Air
7:00am	8:10am	Tropic Air	8:30am	9:30am	Tropic Air
9:30am	10:30am	Maya Island Air	10:00am	11:00am	Maya Island Air
9:40am	10:50am	Tropic Air	10:30am	11:30am	Tropic Air
11:30am	12:30pm	Maya Island Air	12:30pm	1:30pm	Tropic Air
11:35am	12:40pm	Tropic Air	2:30pm	3:30pm	Tropic Air
1:35pm	2:45pm	Tropic Air	2:30pm	3:50pm	Maya Island Air
4:00pm	5:00pm	Maya Island Air	4:30pm	5:30pm	Maya Island Air
4:00pm	5:00pm	Tropic Air	4:50am	6:00pm	Tropic Air

### Schedule of Buses leaving Punta Gorda

Departs from Punta Gorda	Arrives in Belize City	Service Provider	Type of Service
3:50am	10:30am	James Bus Line	Regular
4:50am	11:30am	James Bus Line	Regular
5:50am	12:30pm	James Bus Line	Regular
6:00am	10:45am	James Bus Line	Express
7:50am	2:30pm	James Bus Line	Regular
9:50am	4:30pm	James Bus Line	Regular
11:50am	6:30pm	James Bus line	Regular
1:50pm	8:30pm	James Bus Line	Regular
2:50pm	9:30pm	James Bus Line	Regular
3:50pm	9:15pm	James Bus Line	Regular

### Boats To & From Puerto Barrios , Guatemala

Service Provider	Dep. Punta Gorda	Arrive in Puerto Barrios	Dep. Puerto Barrios	Arrive in Punta Gorda
Requena's Charter Service	9:30am	10:30am	2:00pm	3:00pm
Pichilingo	2:00pm	3:00pm	10:00am	11:00am
Marisol	4:00pm	5:00pm	1:00pm	3:00pm
Memo's	1:00pm	2:00pm	3:15pm	4:15pm

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

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# Arzu on Medicinal Plants: Apazote

Many Belizeans who attended grade school during the late thirties and early sixties still recall drinking a mysterious aromatic and pungent tasting green concoction at the start of every school year; and they vividly remember the effect it had on their bodies. What they drank was oil of *Chenopodium*, an in-

naturalized throughout the world and known as *wormseed* in Europe and the United States. The Creoles, Maya, and Garifuna within the circum-Caribbean, all use Apazote as an intestinal cleanser for adults and children. Many Garifuna remember being given Apazote by their parents for worms and

parasites or expel them, Apazote has the unique ability to do both.

Herbal worm treatments are more effective when taken during the phase of a waxing moon. Intestinal parasites are weaker and easier to dislodge from the intestines during this time. Apparently,



testinal worm killer that was so fierce; it was listed for this use in the US pharmacopeia. Few were aware that they were being naturally de-wormed of intestinal parasites with their own home-grown herbal remedy of Apazote (*Chenopodium ambrosioides*).

Apazote, *Chenopodium ambrosioides*, is an aromatic herb that grows from two to three feet in height. The whole plant gives off a strong and distinctive odor, making it easier for the mind to remember. It has multi-branched stems covered with small, sharply toothed oblong leaves. It bears numerous small green flowers in long clusters along its stems, and produces thousands of tiny seeds. Among its other unique features is that Apazote is annual and perennial, very easily spread, and even easier to propagate from the numerous seeds it produces.

Apazote is native to Belize and the tropical regions of Central and South America; where it is commonly used as a culinary herb, and much appreciated as a medicinal plant. It has been widely

stomach problems in their youth. It is used in local cuisine as a leaf vegetable and a flavoring in beans and soups to guard against flatulence.

Garifuna people include Apazote in their ritual baths to remove hauntings, attachments, and evil spirits. Local farmers have long used it for repelling insects as they chop grass. They wrap a sprig of the herb around their wrist and wear it as a bracelet before going in the bush. The dried herb is also burnt for smoke to drive mosquitoes and insects away. It is so effective, that extract of Apazote remains the active ingredient in many agricultural pesticides.

Medicinally, Apazote is called Wormseed, an herbal remedy revered for its actions against intestinal worms, and a master of parasite removal amongst traditional healers. This herb comes endowed with the inherent intelligence to kill and expel intestinal parasites, and functions as a mild laxative to help expel dead worms and parasite carcasses from the body. Whereas most herbal parasite remedies either kill the

it is the timing of the Apazote taking that determines its affectivity.

## Deworming with Waxing Moon Protocol

For enhanced effects, wait for a waxing moon. (Just three days before a full moon) and do the following: Take equal parts of Apazote, Mint (one half ounce each), and add to a liter of boiling water. Cook for five minutes and let sit for an additional ten minutes, and then strain. Drink one cup before bedtime and one cup before eating in the morning. Do this for seven days. On the seventh day, take a mild laxative (like castor oil, bizi nut, or cascara sagrada) to help evacuate the bowel of the dead worms and eggs. Repeat this protocol 28 days later, (on the next waxing moon) to address any worm eggs that may have survived and hatched.

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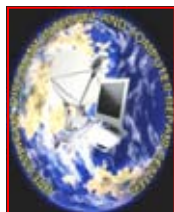
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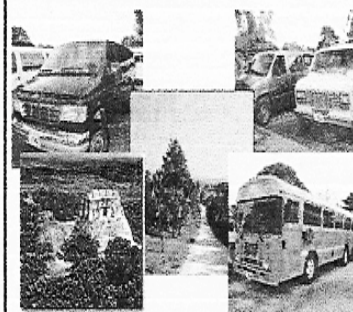
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## Southern Voices

### Armando Choco

Armando Choco is General Manager of the Toledo Cacao Growers Association where he has worked since his graduation from the University of Belize. He studied Business Administration with a view to a career in economics



**Have you always lived in Toledo, Armando?** Yes, I was born and raised in San Pedro Columbia. It is a peaceful and for the most part a very secure place to bring up a family and it is so rich in resources. I studied in secondary school in Punta Gorda and in UB in both Belmopan and PG. My present job represents a change of direction from my intended path but I have met so many hard working farmers committed to creating a better livelihood for themselves and their families and have been inspired by them.

**What are the most significant changes you have seen in Toledo in your lifetime?** I think the way that more and more young people are struggling to improve themselves and reaching tertiary education. This is especially true among the Mayan communities where it is something new and now most people working in businesses and NGOs are local which is very positive.

**Are you optimistic about the development of tourism in Toledo?** I am. I think of the owners of tourism businesses as stewards and they have established a mindset that we are going to establish sustainable tourism. These stewards as I call them will have an influence on the young and future development and help ensure that we can make good incomes without depleting resources.

**What could the government do to promote tourism in Toledo?** They need to give greater emphasis to improving infrastructure like paving the road to Guatemala or more locally improving access to Lubaantun which has a very poor road in and needs improved parking. The vendors also need to be better organized and have their own stalls for displays.

**What can PG Town Council do to support tourism?** The Council needs to participate more and recognize the role that the Belize Tourism Board, BTIA and the Tour Guides Association are already taking. If they participated more they would be able to generate even more ideas of their own.

**Reef or rainforest, Armando?** That is not easy. My backyard is the rainforest and I have only recently begun to go to the

cayes with some friends for the first time and developed a great affection for the reef. When I put on my snorkel it is like a rainforest on the bottom of the ocean. But in the end I have to come down on the side of the rainforest.

**And if a tourist can only visit one place in Toledo which would it be?** Well, despite my last answer I would tell them to go and visit the reef and take a fishing trip with Scully Garbutt who has so much experience to share. When I went I was like that first time visitor and it was an unforgettable experience.

**Which is your favourite month or season?** May. It is the month when we buy a lot of cocoa beans and I am very happy when the amount of beans we buy increases. It feels good to be buying ten to fifteen thousand pounds of cocoa beans per month. And of course we now have the CacaoFest in May when we celebrate chocolate.

**What is your most memorable experience with a wild animal?** When I was five years old my two girl cousins and I went with my grandma to harvest beans and bring them home. We left home at five and should have been back by ten in the morning. On the way back we started arguing and having fun and at a fork I decided to take a parallel trail home. After a short while I stepped on a log. It felt cold and wet and when I looked down I saw it was a snake which was stretched across the path. It was about six inches in diameter. I stayed there with my foot on the snake and shouted and waited for my grandma to come and rescue me. I cried all the way home. My cousins and I still laugh about it.

**What is your favourite Belizean dish?** I really like hudud which is a Garifuna dish. We buy the fish and plantain and coconut and make it at home. Also "boyos" which are like tamales. The tortillas are baked and we use meat from a pig's head.

**What are your plans and hopes for TCGA in the future?** Well we now produce 50 metric tons a year and aim to triple that to 150 tons.

**That sounds ambitious.** Not really. The 50 tons we harvest now come from just 30% of the acreage. The trees are already in the ground and we just have to wait three or four years before we reach that target.

We want TCGA to be a sustainable and vibrant industry in the south by increasing both membership and also productivity. Between 2003 and 2006 membership increased from 230 to 900 members and since then acreage has increased from 400 to around 3800 acres at present. TCGA improves the income and livelihood of subsistence farmers and we are well on our way to achieving these aims. Our ultimate aim is to provide high quality beans to both the international and domestic markets. Right now our focus is on improving productivity and our education programme covers cacao biology, high yielding tree selection, grafting, orchard maintenance and post-harvest methodologies like fermentation and drying.

**Thanks, Armando** Any time, Howler

## Where to get your copy of The Toledo Howler

- ◆ BTIA Tourist Information Center, Front St in Punta Gorda
- ◆ Tropic Air and Maya Island Air terminals throughout Belize
- ◆ Business premises of BTIA members in Toledo (see list page 8).
- ◆ Tropic Air office in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.
- ◆ Requena's Charters office in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.
- ◆ Placencia Tourist information Center, Placencia Village
- ◆ Gas stations on Southern and Western Highway
- ◆ Online at: [www.belizefirst.com](http://www.belizefirst.com);  
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Aerial view of a bend in the Rio Grande near Machaca Hill Lodge.

Photo courtesy of Karel Kuran.

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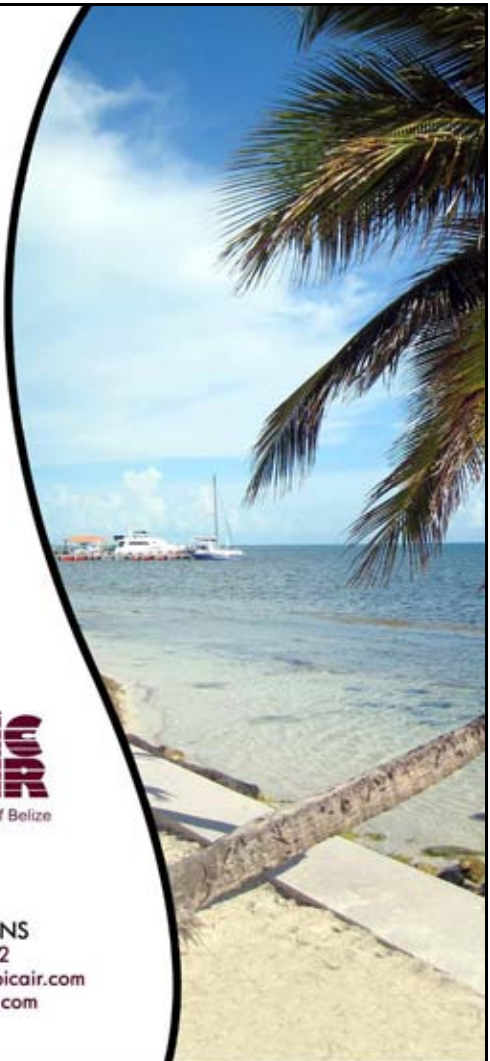
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## PHOTO OP

West Snake Caye,

Port Honduras Marine Reserve, Toledo District.

Photo courtesy of Karel Kuran

[www.karelkuranphotography.com](http://www.karelkuranphotography.com)

## Queen Conch *Continued from page 6*

This is to ensure that conchs reach maturity and reproduce at least once before they are caught.

If you are snorkelling or diving in PHMR in the next few months keep your eyes open for Queen Conchs, you may see egg masses amongst the seagrasses and seaweeds and if you are really lucky you may spot a small juvenile conch in the seagrass. In order to help protect the population of Queen Conch in PHMR there are a few rules we can follow. Please remember: don't take conch during the closed season, don't take undersized conch (less than 7 inch shell length) and don't take females that are laying eggs.

If you would like more information about Queen Conch please call into the TIDE offices or contact us by email or phone.

Article by:

Dr. Nicola L. Foster, Senior Marine Biologist.

Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE),

[nfoster@tidebelize.org](mailto:nfoster@tidebelize.org), Tel: +501 722-2274.

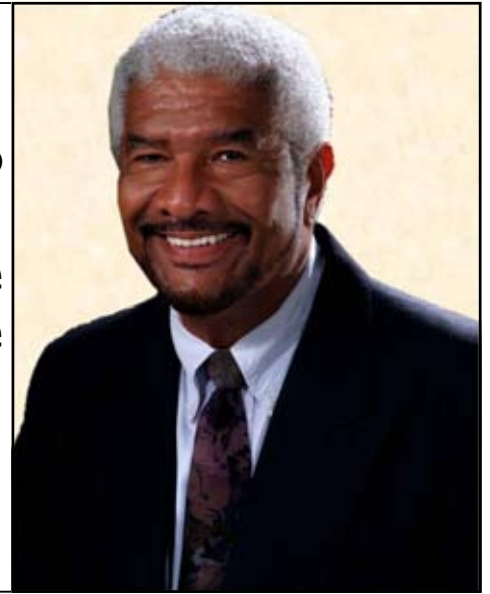


Peekaboo I see you! Photo by Alex Tilly



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This 30 acres property currently has 20 acres cultivated. It has 6,000 mature Cacao-bearing trees and 700 mature orange trees. In addition, the Owner has planted a substantial number of Mahogany trees and a wide assortment of fruit trees and crops. The property is on relative high grounds and is accessible by an all weather feeder road, about 3 miles away from the highway. To top it off, it has a practically inexhaustible source of well water complete with hand pump. This is an incredible bargain that won't last for long! Price reduced from 180,000.00BZD/90,000.00US to 140,000.00BZD/70,000.00US



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# Toledo's Changing Birdscape Lee Jones

It should be apparent to anyone over the age of ten that the Belizean landscape is constantly changing—the most recent change being the completion of the Southern Highway.

Associated with this and other developments—the latest resort, access road, crop farm, shrimp farm, logging enterprise, dam, or village expansion—is the accompanying loss of another piece of rainforest, pineland, savanna, mangrove swamp, or unspoiled beach.

But these losses do not occur in a vacuum. Each is accompanied by an increase in farmland, orchards, plantations, manicured lawns, garbage dumps, reservoirs, ponds, and marshes. So, it is not surprising that the types and numbers of birds in Belize would be in constant flux. As some get squeezed out others take their place. The net result would appear to be an increase in open-country species and a decrease in forest species, and to a large extent—but not always, this has been the case.

Taking advantage of these new, generally more open “habitats” over the years have been such now ubiquitous species as the Great-tailed Grackle, Bronzed Cowbird, various seedeaters, pigeons and doves, and on a more local level, a variety of shorebirds, waders, ducks, and other waterfowl. At the other end of the spectrum many of the larger hawks and eagles, game birds, terns, and most recently, the Scarlet Macaw, are losing ground or have been lost altogether as their habitats have diminished or blinked out.

Locally, the most recent additions to southern Toledo District have been the White-tipped Dove and Eastern Meadowlark. Only 5-6 years ago, the closest to P.G. you could expect to see a meadowlark was the savannas north and east of Medina Bank.

Now a few can be seen in the fields around Big Falls, at the old V.O.A., and even in town around the airstrip.

When I arrived in Belize in late 1992, the thought of a White-tipped Dove anywhere in Toledo District was out of the question. First noted along the access road to Aqua Mar Shrimp Farm in 1999, and on the Punta Gorda Christmas Bird Count in 2004, it has now spread throughout the district wherever regenerating woodlands and citrus groves are found.

If you have a copy of the Wood, Leberman, and Weyer checklist of the Birds of Belize produced in 1986, you will notice that the Yellow-faced Grassquit is listed as “rare; 1 record”. But these little green seedeaters with black and yellow facial markings are now a common sight along roadsides and in villages and towns south of Belize City. Another, more exotic open-country bird that has spread northward through the country from Guatemala and Honduras, beginning in the 1970s is the White-winged Becard, a bird of the forest edge. While not as common as the Grassquit, it has spread northward all the way to Orange Walk.

Other species that have only recently arrived in Belize but which are likely to become widespread within a decade or so are the Crested Caracara, Shiny Cowbird, and perhaps the Inca Dove. White-winged Dove and Red-billed Pigeon, two species unrecorded in Belize



The Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivacea*) A rarity in Toledo in 1986 and now common.

prior to the 1960s, are now abundant in the northern part of the country and are beginning to turn up regularly in Toledo District. The Bronzed Cowbird, which was only a winter visitor prior to the 1960s, is now an abundant year-round resident nearly countrywide, including most of Toledo District.

The Crested Caracara has recently reached Belize from two directions, first from the Yucatán in the north and more recently from Guatemala in the south. Three of these exotic carrion-eating falcons have appeared in Toledo in the past three years. Reports from northern Belize, however, have been trickling in since the 1980s, and in 2008 a pair first nested at Running W Farm near San Ignacio, producing two young.

*H. Lee Jones is based in Punta Gorda, Toledo. He is the author of “Birds of Belize” the definitive guide to birding in Belize and the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Belize.*

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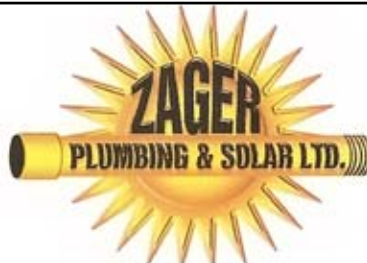


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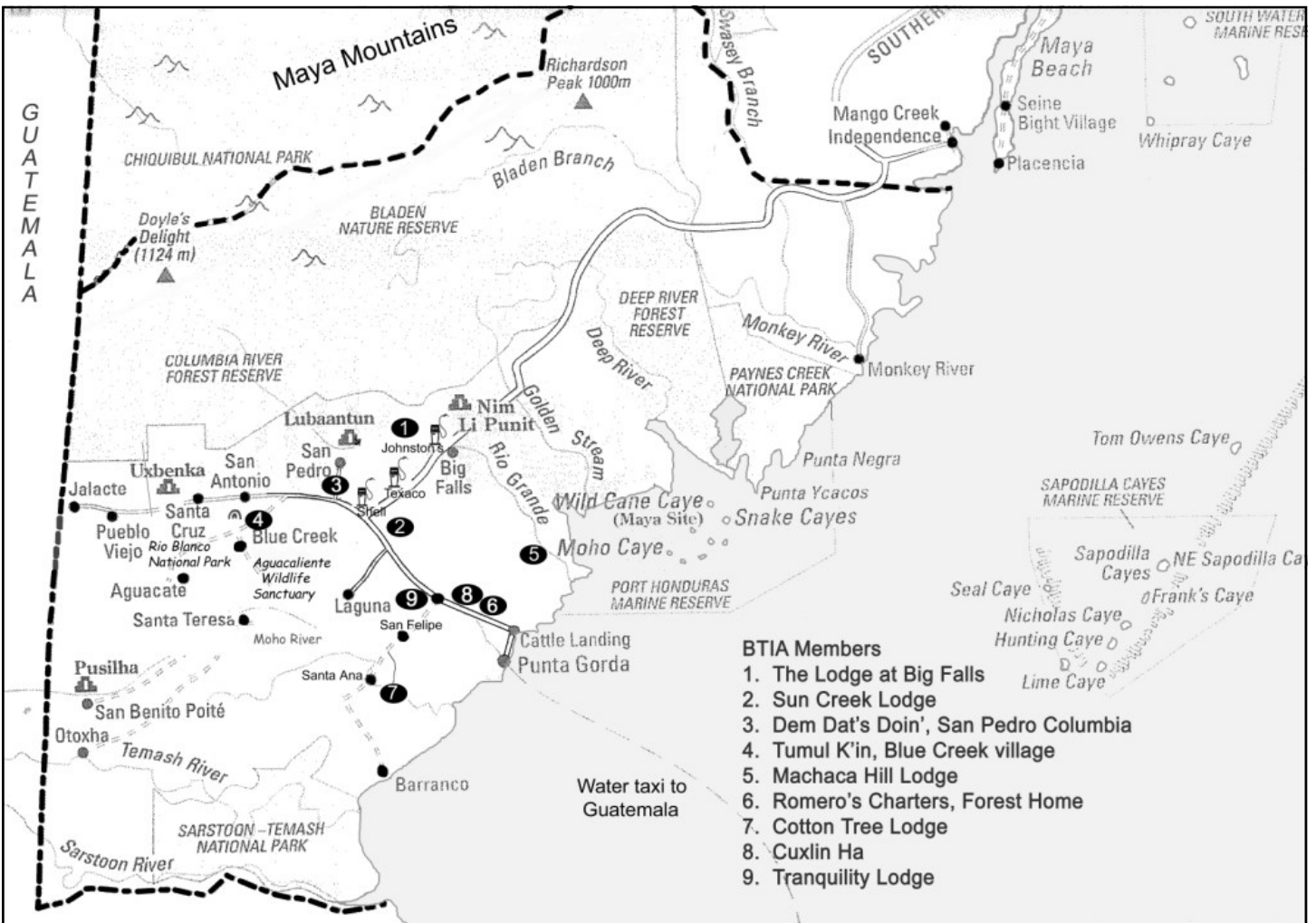
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