



Wildtracks

Conservation, Education and Research

The Wildtracks Newsletter

Issue 04, 2016

Primate Rehabilitation Centre



Manatee Rehabilitation Centre



The Wildtracker



*Welcome to the World of
Wildtracks
Page 2*

*Welcome to the Jungle
Page 3*



Tony Rath

*The Bigger Picture
Page 6*

*Swinging into the Future
Page 7*



Eran Gissis

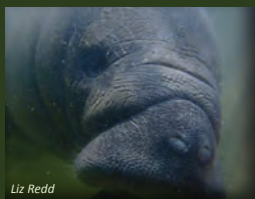
*The Manatees of
Wildtracks
Page 8*

*Ben's Return to the Wild
Page 12*



*Nursery Update
Page 13*

*Other News
Page 16*



Liz Redd

*To our Supporters
Page 18*

*Volunteer Blog
Page 19*



*In Memory of Peanut
Page 20*

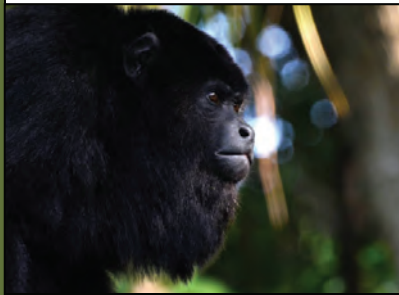


Eran Gissis

Wildtracks...P.O. Box 278, Belize City, Belize CA
office@wildtracksbelize.org
www.wildtracksbelize.org



Conservation and Research



Education and Outreach



Sustainable Development



Support



Welcome...

We are excited to be able to share with you the many wonderful things happening here at the Wildtracks Centre

A word about Wildtracks

Wildtracks is based in Belize, and has been active since 1990. It was registered as a Belize non-profit organization in 1996, and implements its activities through three primary Programme Areas:

- Conservation and Research
- Education and Outreach
- Sustainable Development

...supported by the fourth, the Support Programme, through volunteer work, environmental consultation, grants and donations.

Under the Conservation and Research Programme, Wildtracks hosts two of Belize's four officially recognized national wildlife rehabilitation programmes - one for primates, the other for manatees.

The Primate Rehabilitation Centre works with Belize Forest Department towards ending the illegal wildlife trade in endangered Yucatan black howler monkey and Geoffroy's spider monkey, and returning confiscated, surrendered and rescued primates to the wild.

The Manatee Rehabilitation Centre is also managed in partnership with the Belize Forest Department, and in collaboration with the Marine Mammal Stranding Network and the National Manatee Working Group. It provides facilities for all injured manatees and orphaned manatee calves rescued in Belize's waters.

Both rehabilitation programmes are focused on returning animals to health, and releasing them back into the wild once they have gained the skills necessary to survive.

We would like to thank all of you - volunteers and donors alike - for becoming part of the Wildtracks network! Your support is an essential part of every success story!

Welcome to the Jungle...



The Adventure, from Pre-Release to the Fireburn Reserve

In April and May, the Fireburn Tracking Team surveys potential release sites to ensure they are suitable for the year's howler monkey releases and begins the process of clearing trails and moving the previous year's release cages to the new release locations. By June the release sites are ready and the monkeys are prepared for the move from the pre-release enclosures at the Wildtracks Primate Rehabilitation Centre to Fireburn.

The howler monkeys are kennelled and travel by vehicle and then boat to Fireburn. From there the kennels are transported to the release sites, slung between bamboo poles carried by Team members.

This work can be exhausting, and often takes a few very sweaty hours, with additional Wildtracks volunteers joining the Tracking Team, switching frequently to relieve sore shoulders and backs. The members of the full time Fireburn Tracking Team however, seem inexhaustible, trekking steadily on.



Molly Davis

At Wildtracks the annual Yucatan black howler monkey releases each June are a defining point for all of the hard work the entire Wildtracks Team has done over the previous year.

First days. June arrives and the release troops are moved to the Fireburn Reserve, where they are kept in their release enclosures for three days to allow them to get used to the new sights, smells, and sounds of the Fireburn forest. During this time the Fireburn Tracking Team is expanded to include the primary carers of the release troops and the research team. The Tracking Team and researchers prepare for the intense field work of the post-release monitoring period, while the primary carers spend their days keeping as close to the rehabilitation schedule as possible, walking up to 20km a day to feed the troops and observe their condition. Mornings for the entire team come early, breakfast is cooked before daybreak, lunch is packed and eaten in the field, but the evenings are full of laughter and surprisingly delicious food.

Release Day! Each release troop is designated a tracking team, each team including one experienced local tracker, a researcher, and a minimum of one Wildtracks volunteer. The teams prepare for Release Day - checking GPS, CAT field phones, and filling water bottles. On reaching the first release site, Wildtracks Director Paul Walker gives directions and everyone settles into their places. The enclosure door is then opened.

Post-Release Monitoring. Once the monkeys leave the enclosure, post release monitoring starts immediately with people assigned to follow individual monkeys in case the troop scatters. Generally, after the initial excitement of release, the troop will gather in a food tree for the rest of the day. From then on, post release tracking settles into a routine. The Post-Release Tracking Team wakes up early in the morning, before dawn, to locate the released troop before the howlers wake up. They then spend the day observing the troop's behavior, tracking their movements, and collecting data, to inform the next year's releases. Once the monkeys begin to settle for the evening - around dusk, the Team records their location and begins their trek back to the Fieldbase where they will relax and prepare for the next day. Nothing feels better than a bucket shower hauled from the well after a long day of tracking! For the next 90 days the Tracking Teams will spend every day monitoring the released troops. During this time the Team has a unique chance to be a part of something bigger than themselves, nature rebuilding - an endangered species recovering and ecosystem services re-establishing!

The Fireburn Experience..

For anyone who hasn't been a part of the monkey's care or release preparations, you might not realize how much time, effort, and man-power goes into the culmination of a single day.

Three troops were released in 2016 - Hobbes' troop of five and two pairs (Teddy and Tilley, and Jazz and Little Pea). Wildtracks partnered with Shipstern Conservation and Management Area which lies immediately to the north of the Fireburn Reserve. Shipstern was selected as the release site for one of the troops, with Shipstern Rangers joining the Fireburn Tracking Team. Kristin Traywick reported from the release site..

The days leading up to the release had been gray and rainy, but the weather was in our favour for release day. In the long boat ride from Wildtracks to Fireburn, I enjoyed the sunshine and breeze, before I began the long walk to the release sites to meet up with the rest of the team.

Once gathered near the first release site, we waited on the trail as Paul decided who would be near the enclosure for the release of Hobbes' troop. The number of people at each release is kept to a minimum to minimize impacts on the monkeys being released. As one of their primary carers, I was asked to open the release enclosure door - a surreal moment for me. When we reached the enclosure, the troop seemed pretty relaxed, but as soon as I started sliding the latch, we knew they were ready, eagerly waiting by the door. Once the Tracking Team was in place, I opened the door and the monkeys rushed out. It was incredible to see them exploring their new habitat. The five monkeys scattered into the tree canopies at first, but then re-grouped and have been very cohesive. They've been seen eating, sleeping, and playing together by the tracking teams - becoming wild, free monkeys.



It's hard to explain what it felt like to see these monkeys wild and free again. Many of them have been kept as illegal pets, then in rehabilitation care for up to four years. To be a part of their rehabilitation process and then see them up in the trees where they belong is by far the most amazing thing I've ever been a part of. I want to thank Paul and Zoe for all the hard work they do for all of the endangered species they care for, and also for including me on such a momentous day for the three monkey troops. It's a day I will never forget!

Little Bean

No matter how well you prepare, when you're releasing rehabbed animals, sometimes they just aren't ready for the wild. Within minutes of the release doors opening, it was apparent that Little Bean was less ready for the wild than her troop mates - nervous, wandering away from her troop, and coming to the ground. The decision was made to bring her back to Wildtracks. Little Bean will now spend the next year at Wildtracks preparing for her second release.

The 95% post-release survival rate Wildtracks has, is achieved by ensuring that all monkeys are assessed as individuals, and monitored for their readiness for the next step. If they are not ready, they are then given the extra time they need.



Living Wild and Free - Assessing Release Success at Fireburn

Fanny Tricone

I came to Wildtracks in 2015, to conduct the first long-term post-release assessment of the Wildtracks Yucatan black howler monkey reintroduction into Fireburn Reserve. The goal of this project was to assess the status of howler monkeys released from 2011 to 2014, and of reintroduction success, measured through assessment of survival, reproductive success, condition, troop composition, and location. The first days of the project were challenging, with 28 monkeys I had never seen and couldn't identify. Far from being discouraged, I was ready to take up the challenge. Well-armed with my camera, a GPS, and the knowledgeable Fireburn Tracking Team (experts at finding and identifying the monkeys), I started exploring Fireburn, looking for howler monkeys.

Tracking them at Fireburn was an amazing experience. Learning where they had established their territories, what their favourite trees were, getting to know their personalities and behaviours, how they interacted with each other, watching them howl in the tree tops... all that made me feel very close to each of them. I didn't know them during their time at the Wildtracks, but I had the chance to watch them living as free monkeys and it made this project really special. Seeing these animals - most taken from their families, injured, and traumatized to be sold into the illegal wildlife trade, now living their monkey lives, bonding and playing with their partners and raising infants in the wild, is incredibly special. The majority of these monkeys would have died if they had not been rescued. Now however they have a new chance thanks to people who cared - people who reported them, people who rescued them, and people who worked with them through rehabilitation. To be a part of that dream was a great experience, and makes me realize how every life counts in the fight to save a species.

After the end of the project I couldn't wait to graduate and return to Fireburn. What a surprise it was to discover the presence of wild born monkeys! Fifteen wild born infants have been proudly reported by the Fireburn Tracking Team up to November, 2016 and this is just the beginning of their stories! Each year, Wildtracks provides more troops of rescued and rehabilitated monkeys an opportunity to return to the wild and build a life, free and safe!

Identifying Howlers in the Wild

"I took photos of each individual monkey we located, putting a name to it and noting the troop it was associated with, quickly becoming familiar with each individual - learning who was with who, and who had infants."



The howler monkeys each have unique howls (shown in the sonograms above) useful for identifying who you are hearing and where they are in the wild!

Fanny also compiled an identification key using photos of monkeys faces and genitalia (below). While faces are useful for identification - they don't tend to be the end you see in the field!



Belize's North East Biological Corridor

Benefits of Biological Corridors

*Decreased likelihood of local
species extinction*

*Reduces incidences of human /
wildlife conflict*

*Reduces in-breeding as wildlife
can move through connected
forests, improving genetic
diversity of populations*

*Lowers incidence of disease
within wildlife populations*

The Bigger Picture

Whilst the Manatee and Primate Rehabilitation Programmes hosted at Wildtracks do contribute significantly towards the conservation of endangered wildlife in Belize, Wildtracks' work encompasses so much more than just wildlife rehabilitation.

Behind the scenes, and not as visible on social media, Wildtracks builds collaborative partnerships with the Belize Government and NGO's alike towards improved conservation outcomes. The focus is not only on trying to return endangered species to the wild, but also on addressing the causes of wildlife decline. Targets include ending the illegal wildlife trade, improving sustainability of natural resource use, and strengthening long term protection and management of key areas for wildlife - areas that species at risk can call home for years to come.

Part of this work is a collaborative partnership towards the development of the North East Biological Corridor (part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor) - which includes the Fireburn Reserve, the primary reintroduction site for the Yucatan black howler monkey.

With over 60% of its forests intact, Belize is considered the "Green Jewel" of Central America, but it is important to ensure that the forest and its connectivity remains for years to come. The Mesoamerican Biological Corridor was initiated in 1997 to promote wildlife conservation and forest connectivity between protected areas in Central America. Forest corridors and forest connectivity are extremely important for many species, including the two species of endangered primate found in Belize - Geoffroy's spider monkey and Yucatan black howler monkey. As land clearance for development and agriculture increases, wildlife populations find themselves isolated in forest fragments, leading to weakened gene pools, starvation, and increasing human / wildlife conflict. Monkeys, for example, are forced to come to the ground and cross open fields and roads in attempts to reach larger forest patches, putting them at risk from being attacked by wild predators or dogs or hit by cars.



Nick Hawkins

Swinging into the Future...

Planning for Wildtracks' first spider monkey releases

Wildtracks has successfully reintroduced 50 Yucatan black howler monkeys with a success rate of 95% through the first year of life in the wild, making it one of the most successful reintroduction programmes in Latin America for this species. The organization is now aiming for the same level of success for Geoffroy's spider monkey.

Geoffroy's spider monkeys live in fission-fusion societies, with the size and composition of the social group changing as time passes. The spider monkeys merge (fusion) into larger groups of 20 - 40 monkeys, often sleeping in one place, or split (fission) into smaller groups to forage for fruit and leaves during the day. They require extensive areas of forest to ensure availability of fruiting trees throughout the year. Finding suitable forest for them in the Belize has become increasingly difficult as the deforestation rate increases, primarily as a result of the increasing agricultural footprint.

Rehabilitated primates can't just be released anywhere. There are strict guidelines - the site needs to be one within a species range with an ecosystem capable of sustaining them, but one where they are not currently found. Rehabbed primates, especially more aggressive species such as the Geoffroy's spider monkey, would be at a disadvantage against wild primate troops. It is also critical that the impacts leading to their local disappearance are no longer present.

Wildtracks has also been assessing the Geoffroy's spider monkey troops housed at the Centre, using a series of ethograms to measure behaviours and compare them with that of wild spider monkeys. This data will help in deciding which troop is the best prepared to head back into the wild for the first release.



Eran Gissis

To ensure there is a suitable release site, the Wildtracks Team treks kilometres through the Fireburn Forest and down into Belize's North East Biological Corridor. They are looking for forest with the perfect combination - good forest structure, essential fruiting tree species, accessibility, and distance from nearest community, - everything needed for the first release site for the Wildtracks spider monkeys. The day is long and hot, and the trek takes many hours...

Once back at Wildtracks, well into the dark night, the Team relaxes and celebrates... they have found a potential site! There are many steps between now and the planned releases - more assessments, research, careful planning, and raising funds. But for today.. success!



Eran Gissis

The Manatees of Wildtracks

Mitch and Lucky continue to do well in the Lagoon Enclosure and to astound volunteers with their amazing friendship. Known affectionately to the team as “The Boys”, they are constantly together, barrel rolling, enjoying their time in the mangroves and even drinking their bottles at the exact same time. They never seem to be apart! In the upcoming months the two will be fitted with their GPS trackers and begin the Soft Release Phase. It will be interesting to see how soft release differs with two manatees instead of one. Will they be more independent from the start? Will they still spend their time together, or choose to spend more time individually with more space to roam? Only time will tell!

L.C. (Lucky Charley), rescued by the TIDE Team in Punta Gorda, now spends her days in the brand new Large Pool (thank you to everyone who donated towards construction of this pool at the beginning of this year!). Her recovery has been slow but steady, and she is beginning to heal from her boat strike injuries. When LC first arrived at the Wildtracks Centre, she had no interest in food - not eating on her own for the first four days. Now she has a healthy appetite, keeping the Manatee Team constantly collecting buckets of seagrass.

Her collapsed lung, a result of the boat strike, is still damaged, though it is improving. The Team has aspirated her lung cavity twice, and will be performing the procedure once more - which should provide the final push needed to help her lung to heal.

Twiggy is Wildtracks’ only repeat intake into the Manatee Rehabilitation Programme and is completely recovered from the lung infection and weight loss that brought her back to Wildtracks. Now a very round and happy manatee, she weighs well over 600 lbs and has finished the antibiotic treatment for her respiratory infection. She will be fitted with her GPS tracker before the end of the year, with plans to re-release her in the upcoming months. A big thank you to everyone - from the fishers who called in worried about a skinny manatee in the lagoon, to the volunteers and staff who worked tirelessly to ensure Twiggy’s return to full health.



Emma Farlow



Fanny Tricone



Susan Mosey

The Duchess, officially the first manatee to ever admit itself to the Manatee Rehabilitation Programme, arrived on November 1st 2016. She appeared outside the gate of the Lagoon Enclosure at the end of October in very poor shape - emaciated, with the bones in her head and back painfully obvious, and suffering from a respiratory infection. While the Team was deciding the best course of action to bring her in, she disappeared into the mangroves. Using the drone, she was located again and it was decided that guiding her into the Lagoon Enclosure would be the most effective and least stressful option for her. A fence was built out at right angles to the Lagoon Enclosure and she was gently guided along it towards and through the open gate by the Manatee Team.

She was moved into the Large Pool, where she is recovering from her critically low weight and improving in strength and condition. She has several old injuries, one to her tail and one to her flipper, but there was no clear indication as to why she had become so critically thin. With intensive care, re-hydration, medications and a highly nutritious diet she is gradually regaining her weight, though still has an estimated 300-400 lbs more to regain! She's not safely out of the woods yet, but is clearly moving in the right direction already.



Emma Farlow

Technology Supporting Conservation - the Wildtracks Drone

This year, with the assistance of Save the Manatee Club and a private donor, Wildtracks was able to purchase a drone - a DJI Phantom 3 Pro, adding an important tool to the Manatee Conservation toolkit. The new drone makes it easier to search for and locate injured / orphaned manatees, and is also an invaluable tool for monitoring manatees after release. It has been put to the test several times already this year - from monitoring Ben during and after release to helping the Team locate the Duchess!



Emma Farlow



Celeshia Guy

A Beacon of Hope...

"Hope doesn't always come as a knight in shining armour... it may come as a new born manatee washed ashore and found two days after a disastrous hurricane. A beacon of hope in a time of disaster." - Jamal Galves

In August, 2016, Hurricane Earl made landfall near Belize City bringing a tidal surge of 7 feet, sweeping ashore boats, wood from broken docks and buildings - and a newborn manatee calf.



Eran Gissis

Separated from her mother by the Category One hurricane soon after birth, Hope was deposited more than 250 meters inland. She was discovered alone and surprisingly un-scarred in subsiding flood waters two days after the storm, and rescued by Jamal Galves (Sea to Shore). He transported her to Orange Walk, where she was transferred to Wildtracks who, with the help of their partners the Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD), transported her the rest of the way to Sarteneja and Wildtracks.

Now in Belize's Manatee Rehabilitation Programme, she is the smallest manatee rescued in Belize to date. The average weight of a new-born Antillean manatee is generally around 45lbs, and most newborns are 1m or slightly longer. This little calf weighed in at 24lbs upon arrival, with a total length of 87cms from the tip of her nose to the tip of her tail. It is thought that this young manatee may have been born early as a result of the storm. Her future at Wildtracks is bright as she is feeding well every three hours and is cared for by the extremely dedicated Wildtracks Manatee Team.

Thank you to everyone involved in her rescue and care!



Emma Farlow

Khaleesi's Soft Release...

Khaleesi arrived at Wildtracks in 2013 weighing only 39lbs. Wildtracks Directors, Paul and Zoe, were the only ones who could get her to feed, crawling into the water with her every three hours - day and night! After a slow and exhausting start to her life at Wildtracks, Khaleesi began to gain weight and accept new carers - starting with Manatee Team Leader Jaimy. She began to enjoy grazing on seagrass and other greens and was eventually introduced to other manatees at the Rehabilitation Centre - first Mitch and Lucky, then Twiggy.

Over the subsequent three years she has grown in size, personality, and confidence, and is now taking the final step towards her release back into the wild - soft release into the lagoon. After Khaleesi was microchipped (standard procedure for all of the manatees at the Wildtracks Centre) and fitted with her GPS tracking tag, she was led by Jaimy into the Lagoon. Ever the princess, it took several tries and much coaxing before she would leave the Lagoon Enclosure but she is now enjoying her life in the open lagoon. Spending her days getting to know the area, eating seagrass, and building her confidence, she is beginning to spend more and more time exploring the seagrass patches away from her carers.

In time, Khaleesi will be free to come and go from the Wildtracks Lagoon Enclosure without a carer, returning morning and evening for a tasty "manatee milkshake". This gives her carers an opportunity to assess her condition, ensuring she is healthy and is finding enough seagrass to maintain her weight.

In the upcoming year, providing she continues to do well in the Soft Release stage, Khaleesi will be released, with the Team monitoring her activity for six months to a year after release.



Tony Rath



Tony Rath



Emma Farlow

Homecoming...

Ben's Return to the Wild

Eran Gissis

Arriving at Manatee Rehabilitation Centre on June 2nd, 2015, Ben had a long road to recovery ahead of him. He was a young adult manatee and had been badly injured by a boat strike, with huge propeller wounds and a partially collapsed lung, he floated on his side. These injuries made it difficult for him to dive and feed. Over the course of his ten months at Wildtracks, Ben's propeller wounds healed and his lung re-inflated. Able to swim level, he was once again also capable of submerging himself under the water - an important thing for an animal whose food grows on the sea floor! Where he once floated, miserable and in pain in the Large Pool, he began to dive down, spending much of the time under the water, showing the Wildtracks Team that he was indeed ready for release.

On April 15th, 2016, he was weighed and measured, fitted with a GPS tracking tag and loaded into the Wildtracks boat. He was transported through the lagoon system and out into Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, to the shallow release site. A second boat followed behind, containing the Manatee Post Release Tracking Team and equipment. Arriving at the release site, the boats were anchored and the Wildtracks drone was launched. The boat containing Ben was filled with water, slowly sinking it until the boat was below water level, allowing Ben to be guided out to freedom. Moving beyond the island and past the boats, Ben moved towards the life he came from - wild and free!



Jamie Tambor



Eran Gissis

Where do the Wildtracks' manatees get released?

Manatees get released into Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS), a marine protected area managed by the Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD), under a co-management agreement with the Belize Forest Department. CBWS was designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1998 specifically for the protection of the globally endangered Antillean manatee. It has been highlighted as a significant mating and calving area, important to the regional manatee population.

Aerial surveys conducted by Wildtracks and SACD with Lighthawk have shown an estimated population of 75 manatees in the Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary seascape (including Ben!) with congregations of up to 20 manatees at the resting holes - very exciting for the survey team!

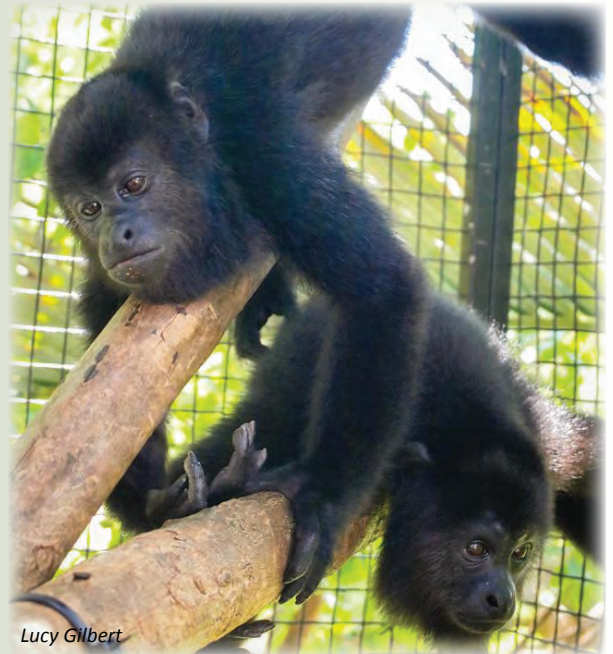
Nursery Update...

The Nursery Unit is a hive of activity - monkeys chuckling, howling, and tumbling over each other in the enclosures, with carers playing mother, teacher, chef, maid, and referee throughout the day. The days start early, with each nursery monkey waking with the sunrise, full of energy and ready to play. Every monkey in the Nursery Unit has its own story.. But here they come together to form new troops - troops that will one day return to the wild.

Molly arrived in July, 2016 as a result of the illegal wildlife trade. Her owners had unintentionally given her a near lethal dose of de-wormer and, she was rushed to the Belize Wildlife and Referral Clinic (BWRC) for treatment. Luckily, BWRC was able to save her and she is now happily integrated with the rest of the Nursery group at Wildtracks.

Roxie was spotted one afternoon with her mother near Black Rock Lodge. The next day, she was found alone on the ground - a small scrap of a monkey far from ready to live on her own. After an intensive, but unsuccessful search for her mother, the decision was made to bring her to Wildtracks. A tiny monkey with huge personality, she is now integrated into the Nursery Group, spending her days with Annie, Anerie, Clifford, and Molly.

Clifford was four months old when he arrived in July, 2016. He arrived with a badly injured hand, with three fingers nearly severed and necrotic. Clifford was rushed to the Belize Wildlife Referral Clinic and into surgery, where Dr. Isabelle and her team attempted to save the remaining finger and his thumb. Twenty four visits to the vet later, Clifford is doing amazingly well. BWRC did indeed manage to save the rest of his hand (thank you Dr. Isabelle and the BWRC staff), and his climbing skills are rapidly improving as he plays in the Nursery Enclosure with the rest of the group.



Lucy Gilbert



Eran Gissis

Sean was surrendered at the beginning of November. In relatively good condition, but lacking in confidence, he is learning to be more outgoing through his carers and now that he has completed his quarantine he has been integrated with Ivy.

Ellie, currently the only spider monkey in the Nursery Unit, is proving to be a typical spider monkey youngster - opinionated, energetic, goofy, and a handful for her carers. Ellie was surrendered by the family who owned her after they realized it was illegal to have her and that her bites were only going to get worse as she got older. Soon she will be starting integration with Selva and Mikaila, two of the more matronly spider monkeys in the Spider Monkey Complex.



Nursery Update... Ivy's Story

Ivy has been at Wildtracks since September, 2016, one of the many victims of the illegal pet trade to end up at the Primate Rehabilitation Centre. She was reported to the Belize Forest Department, discovered tied to a tree in Salvapan, near Belmopan, (Belize's capital city), and was confiscated. On arrival at Wildtracks, it was clear she was in very poor condition. She tested positive for giardia, and was taken to Belize Wildlife Referral Clinic where x-rays showed a broken leg and foot, injuries that were estimated to be about a month old. Most shockingly, the x-rays also showed six air rifle pellets lodged in her body, legs and tail.



Unfortunately, injuries such as Ivy's are not uncommon in monkeys coming from the illegal pet trade. For most young monkeys to be caught, the mother must be shot, the infant

of proper nutrition - most illegal howler monkey pets are thought to die within the first six months of being captured. Ivy, however, is one of the lucky ones. She is now at the Primate Rehabilitation Centre, healthy and happy! She is enthusiastically eating her fruit and browse, and enjoying her special milk formula. She and Sean, the newest arrival, have been integrated to form the new Nursery Troop.

Thank you to the Belize Wildlife Referral Clinic!

The medical care from the team at the Belize Wildlife Referral Clinic has saved the life of not only Ivy, but many of the monkeys who have entered the Primate Rehabilitation Programme from the illegal primate pet trade here in Belize. Some of these monkeys are still currently in rehabilitation,

such as Clifford, Molly, and spider monkey Izzie, and some are living free in the wild again, such as Spartacus (who was the inspiration for their logo!) and Livy (who is successfully rearing an infant in Fireburn).

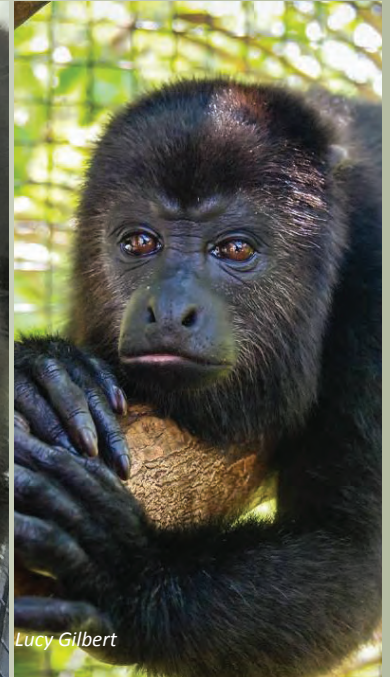
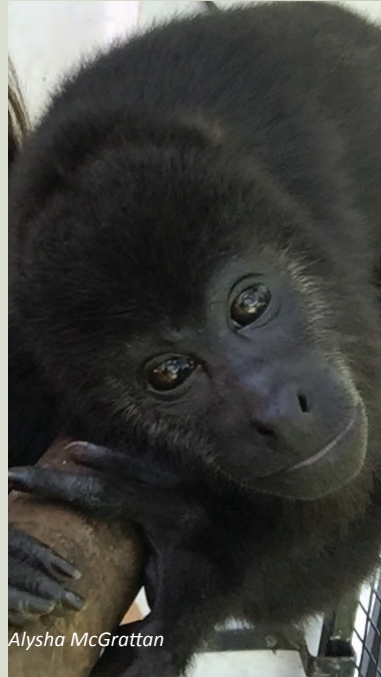


BELIZE WILDLIFE & REFERRAL CLINIC
A Wildlife Rescue & Teaching Clinic

Thank you to Dr Isabelle and her team for helping us to ensure a fighting chance for Belize's endangered primates!

Nursery Update...

Annie, arrived in July 2015. This young howler monkey had been attacked by dogs, with bites on her tail that were becoming necrotic. Despite efforts to save all of it, two thirds of her tail had to be amputated. This raised concerns as to whether or not she would be releasable. Luckily, Annie has recovered fully and has far exceeded everyone's expectations. She is now an expert on using her feet as a substitute for her tail, and has perfected her huge leaps across the enclosures. She has now been integrated with Roxie, Clifford, Molly, as well as **Anerie**, another young howler monkey surrendered by a family in December, 2015, who had become aware of the illegality of keeping her as a pet, and were willing to let her have a chance to go back to the wild. A lively youngster, she loves to play tag with the other howlers. A trademark gap in her front teeth gives her an infectious smile as she runs around the Nursery Enclosure. She will then collapse in a tired heap, often falling asleep in a hammock with Annie.



Moving forward...

Cas and Kamal, the rambunctious pair of young spider monkeys, arrived in September, 2015 and January 2016 respectively, and are both doing incredibly well. Cas who, as an infant, was being kept in a banana crate under a kitchen table in a rural community before rescue, spent the first months after his arrival building his confidence and quickly winning the hearts of all his carers during the day shifts and, typical of any infant, driving them crazy through their night shifts.

When Kamal arrived, his condition was worse than any other spider monkey arriving at Wildtracks. Emaciated, he was barely able to move, was terrified of the slightest movement made by his carers, and had an extreme case of scabies that left his skin cracked, hairless, and flaky. Kamal made a relatively quick recovery through his 30 day quarantine, gaining weight steadily on a diet of milk, browse, and fruit - with a particular preference for grapes. Cas and Kamal were introduced to each other and immediately

bonded, spending their days playing, wrestling and cuddling - improving their climbing and social skills. Being together from such a young age has enabled them to rely less on their carers and more on each other, an important step in wildlife rehabilitation. The two have now made the move from the Nursery Unit into a Forest Enclosure, where they are becoming increasingly independent.



Other News..

In August, Wildtracks participated in the Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation (MSBC) XX Congress, presenting in several of the sessions. The annual MSBC Congress is important in bringing researchers and conservationists together from across Central America, providing an excellent opportunity to learn of work being conducted across the region and the challenges faced as Central American countries struggle to maintain their natural wild areas and wildlife.

Wildtracks Director Zoe Walker was honoured to be asked to give the Key Note address for the Primate Symposium (Simposio Primates Mesoamericanos 2016). She focused on threats to primates in Belize, national strategies that provide the conservation framework for in-situ management of these species, and interventions that address the wildlife trade in primates.

Deforestation and forest fragmentation are of increasing concern in Belize, with much of the lowland forest rapidly being transformed into an agricultural landscape. The local illegal wildlife trade has also been responsible for primates being taken from the wild. So how does this small country ensure that it meets its commitments to continued viability of its primate populations? This presentation looked at the current challenges, and present and future strategies for ensuring that Belize's two primate species continue to thrive.

Molly Reeve (Wildtracks USA) also presented at the Primate Symposium on behalf of Wildtracks, covering the context, approach, and methodologies for primate rehabilitation at Wildtracks from confiscation / surrendering through to, and including, post-release monitoring, focusing on the Yucatan black howler monkey. The primates received at Wildtracks go through a structured rehabilitation process for eventual release back into the wild. For the howler monkeys in particular, this provides an added conservation boost through use of rehabilitated monkeys to reintroduce a viable population of this endangered species within its former range, in north east Belize.

Zoe Walker also presented on "Improving protected area effectiveness through system-level management in Belize" at the MSBC Protected Areas forum. The presentation focused on a joint initiative on behalf of the Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development, the Belize Fisheries Department, the Belize Forest Department and Wildtracks. Despite being a small country with limited human and financial resources for investment in protected areas, Belize has a National Protected Areas System of over 103 individual sites. Managing such a large number of individual protected areas is challenging and can be inefficient. Approaching management of protected areas as isolated units, limited by their boundaries, doesn't always address their role within the larger landscape or seascape. The National Protected Areas System Plan (2005) recommends that managers of adjacent protected areas with similar species, ecosystems, stakeholders, and threats work more closely together as a single unit– the presentation explored what this means and how can it be achieved, using the Northern Belize Coastal Complex as an example.



Introducing Wildtracks USA

Wildtracks USA, is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that funds frontline, results-oriented conservation projects. With a commitment to ensure that funds are deployed where they can do the most good, donors are able to make tax free donations to Wildtracks Belize through Wildtracks USA. Wildtracks Belize is proud to be Wildtracks USA's first partnership.

Wildtracks Belize relies on donations to keep everything running - from feeding manatees and monkeys, maintaining enclosures, building new pools and enclosures to house incoming animals to equipping and keeping our post release tracking team in the field. All of these things are critical to the continued success of our rehabilitation and release programmes.

We are incredibly grateful for all of the support we have received to date, whether it is donations or volunteer hands on work, we couldn't achieve the successes we do without you. Now, through Wildtracks USA, you can make tax free donations. Join the Wildtracks team!

Contact:
Development Coordinator Molly Reeve
at www.wildtracksusa.org to learn more!



Wildtracks Outreach

The Wildtracks Outreach Team participated in eighteen outreach events in 2016. From education and awareness events at Wildtracks to education days at local schools and outreach at national events... The Wildtracks outreach footprint is expanding! These events have enabled Wildtracks to reach out to many thousands of people in Belize, from hunters and farmers to children, students, tour guides and professionals, in partnership with the Forest Department. These outreach events provide an important opportunity to increase awareness of Belize's wildlife legislation, the steady decline in wildlife, and the importance and roles of healthy wildlife populations to people.

In 2017, Wildtracks will continue to expand its Outreach Programme, participating in twelve national expos alone, as well as an increased number of educational days and outreach events both locally and nationally.



To our supporters...

Thank you
for another
amazing
year!



The New Large Pool

In January, with the arrival of LC, it was clear that the Manatee Rehabilitation Centre at Wildtracks was in desperate need of a second Large Pool. An urgent fundraiser was launched and donors rapidly responded, raising US\$5,270 (Bz\$10,540) (a impressive third of the total cost) towards the construction of the pool. Once construction was completed it was immediately put to use to house LC.



The New Generator

It may not be as awe-inspiring as successfully rehabilitating and releasing endangered howler monkeys or rescuing manatee calves. It may not seem as impactful as building critical spider monkey enclosures...

...but you, our fantastic Wildtracks supporters, raised the funds for a reliable generator that makes all the above possible when the solar power can't cope!

Thank you for making the difference!



Save the Manatee Club

Save the Manatee Club, through fundraising and the Wildtracks' Amazon wishlist, have provided Wildtracks with USD \$8,000 in milk formula, supplies, and equipment for the Manatee Rehabilitation Programme.

These items have been key in the continued success of the Wildtracks Manatee Rehabilitation Programme.

Thank you Save the Manatee Club!

Sarteneja Flood Relief Fund

At the end of 2015, the village of Sarteneja was hit with extreme flooding, water levels rising over 5ft in some areas. Houses were flooded and families left without food, clean water and somewhere dry to sleep. The Wildtracks Outreach team, in partnership with the Sarteneja Village Council, launched an appeal to raise money for mattresses, medical and building supplies, and other emergency needs. Wildtracks supporters responded overwhelmingly, raising Bz\$10,512 to enable the Village Council purchase 28 mattresses, 4 washing machines, 5 stoves, 2 gas tanks, and provide medical assistance to 3 families affected by the flooding.

Thank you for all of your support for Sarteneja in a time of extreme need!



Volunteer Blog..

Mallory McClain

If someone was to tell me five years ago that, at age 18, I would be spending three months in the Belize jungle rehabilitating spider monkeys, I would have simply laughed and maybe said a quick, 'I wish'. Now that I am here - I could not imagine being anywhere else in the world. I have had a passion and love for the health and welfare of animals since a young age. I have always dreamed of one day being a part of a rehabilitation center. For the most part, I thought it was a pretty far-fetched idea to travel to a foreign country to work for one. I assumed I was to do what all recent high school graduates do - jump straight into college. But, thanks to a past volunteer, I found Wildtracks. Wildtracks has been a home to me for almost three months and there has never been day when I have regretted my decision to join the volunteer team.



Coming to Wildtracks I kept an open mind but I really wanted to work specifically with the manatees. I started immediately working with them and loved every minute I was able to spend on the 'Mana-team'. Alysha (Primate Programme Manager) asked me one day if I would be willing to meet some of the monkeys to potentially work with them. I said yes, obviously (but really, who says "No" to Alysha?), and that day met Cas and Kamal, two young spider monkeys. I can honestly say I have never worked harder for anyone or anythings' attention than I did for Cas. Once he finally accepted me, it was one of the greatest days and fondest memories I have here. Turns out, I am totally a monkey person - specifically a spider monkey person. I currently work with Ellie, the most recent young spider monkey brought into Wildtracks who, because of her young age, requires intensive hands-on care, as well as continuing my work with Cas and Kam. Each young spider monkey has such a unique and incredible personality. I am thankful I have had the opportunity to work with not only the manatees, but also these three most incredible spider monkeys.

Being part of the Wildtracks Team has taught me many things, both animal and non-animal related. I now have the skills to properly get monkey poop out of clothes with limited resources, take an excellent fecal sample, and make impeccable spider monkey noises. I can also sleep through anything - from dogs barking, to the roar of the howlers. Thank you, Wildtracks! Among these great life skills I have acquired, I have had the opportunity to learn about conservation. It is beyond fascinating to listen to Paul and Zoe and hear the stories of the work they have been and continue to do. I have absolutely loved that aspect of being at Wildtracks. The learning experiences you encounter here are endless. The idea of leaving here, which one day will sadly come, is a hard thought to bear. I cannot imagine my mornings starting without a 'gooooood morning' from Paul followed by a huge monkey hug from my crazy, little monkey, Ellie. My time here has been well worth all of the monkey poop down my back and every trip up and down the stairs to the nursery.

Update: Mallory has now extended for another two months..
Thank you Mallory!



In Memory of Peanut

Life is full of ups and downs.

Peanut, like many of the intakes into the Primate Rehabilitation Programme, was a victim of the pet trade - torn from the wild at a young age, he arrived at Wildtracks when he was only three months old. In his years at the Centre, Peanut grew from a tiny, willful infant into a large and impressive sub-adult, though his antics continued to make all that knew him laugh. Peanut and his troop were released in June, 2015 after completing the rehabilitation process.

In February, the Wildtracks Team was conducting routine patrols in Fireburn and came across Peanut in a tree with a tayra - a large weasel-like animal, above him. The two had obviously been fighting, and Peanut had several deep cuts, and was not fully using his right arm and leg. With the light fading, the Team was unable to catch him, so returned the next morning. He was located, caught and brought back to Wildtracks. Once back, he perked up despite his injuries, rehydrating, and eating banana and grapes, so there was optimism that he would heal with quiet and time. It was therefore a shock to everyone the following morning when Paul went to assess whether he would need to go through to the vet, to find that at some point during the night he lay down on his blanket, and then died in his sleep. The cause of death was likely to be blood loss and shock from the injuries.

Peanut had been successful in supporting himself in the wild for close to eight months, and apart from his very recent injuries, was in amazing shape. In literature, tayras have been reported attacking sub-adult males - and Peanut was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Peanut had a special place in the hearts of the many people who worked with him throughout his rehabilitation process and, though the time he spent in the wild was far too short, we are glad to have been able to give him the opportunity to enjoy freedom.

Peanut, along with the other Yucatan black howler monkeys released into Fireburn, are part of something bigger - more than just the difference the Wildtracks Primate Rehabilitation Programme makes to their individual lives. They are part of ensuring a future for a globally endangered species. Changing the way communities feel about wildlife - from destruction to stewardship, and continuing to bring hope. Hope that every effort, every person, and every animal can make a difference. That everyday, the future for the world can be a little brighter.

Peanut - We will miss you....

