



American Crocodile Education Sanctuary

Belize, Central America

2012 Annual Report



This photo of crocodilian habitat in Ambergris Caye was made possible via donated flights by LightHawk

Our Mission

Crocodilian Conservation

ACES is a nonprofit organization permitted by the Belize Forest Department and dedicated to the conservation of Belize's critical wetland habitats and protected species, specifically crocodilians, through scientific research and education to preserve wildlife for future generations.



Our Methods

Research



Numerous hours of data collection comprised of various crocodile sighting surveys, tagging, and water quality sampling is providing crucial information to produce an essential assessment of the viability of American crocodiles and their wetland habitats in Ambergris Caye.

Education

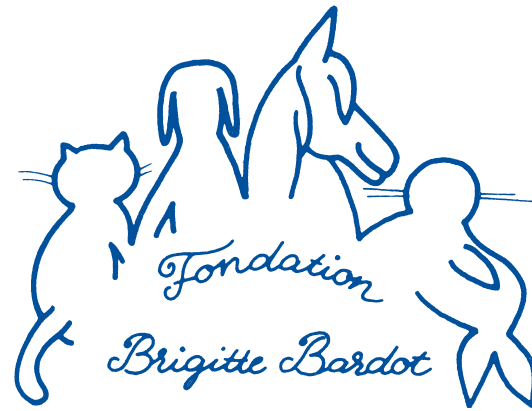


Working closely within the communities we have the opportunity to educate the public and school children about the importance of crocodiles in Belize's ecosystems and how to safely coexist with them, thus increasing understanding and reducing fears of crocodiles.

Rescues



Croc-human conflicts in Ambergris Caye are steadily increasing due to indiscriminate development and illegal crocodile feeding. Relocating nuisance crocodiles and placing problematic crocodiles in captivity helps to keep both humans and crocodiles safe. We also rescue injured crocs for rehabilitation.



Saving the lives of threatened American crocodiles, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation (BBF) generously donated 8500 euros to the American Crocodile Education Sanctuary (ACES) in Belize on June 14th, 2012.

The BBF “is happy to help with the funding needed for the building of enclosures for rescued crocodiles, and supports ACES endeavours to save and to take care of crocodiles in Belize.”

In 1986, Brigitte Bardot sold her home and jewelry and founded the Brigitte Bardot Foundation for the welfare and protection of domestic and wild animals. Fighting and defending animals rights, the foundation acts to heighten awareness, inform, relieve, and save animals around the world. Today, BBF is the leading animal protection NGO in France.

Crocodiles are apex predators that have been around for millions of years. American

Vince Rose, ACES Co-Founder, placing “Brigitte” into her new home. This 140’ x 70’ secure habitat can humanely house 4-5 more rescued American cros.



crocodiles are typically a timid species but become problematic when they are illegally fed by humans. As rare as Polar bears, American crocodile numbers are declining in their last stronghold, Belize. This funding from BBF will save the lives of ill, injured, and problematic crocodiles.

The new habitat is the largest, secure, natural crocodile habitat in Belize; and is currently the home to a rescued, female, American crocodile properly named “Brigitte.” Without this habitat she would have been killed by locals.

Personally, this donation is a stupendous honor for me. Even as a child I was an enormous fan of Mrs. Bardot. So much so that I named my first pet, a miniature poodle, Brigitte. To receive funding from such a prestigious foundation substantiates our tremendous efforts and sacrifices in saving crocodiles in Belize.

~ ACES Co-Founder, Cherie Chenot-Rose



Caribbean Shrimp Farm's air-conditioned transportation bus for visitors' comfort

Left to right: Howard Quigley, Panthera; Vince Rose, ACES; and Melanie Lambert-Anderson, Summerlee Foundation

New elevated boardwalk for kind crocodile viewing for visitors and crocodiles alike

ACES Educational Crocodile Eco-Sanctuary & Captain Hook's Restaurant At Caribbean Shrimp Farm, Ltd., Ladyville Belize

ACES at Caribbean Shrimp Farm Open

Learn about sustainable shrimp farming and how to toss a cast net. Enjoy tasting fresh, organic shrimp caught right before your eyes! Take delight in breath-taking 360° views from the restaurant and 50ft high bird tower, and stroll through pristine mangrove rainforest to see shards of Mayan artifacts. Say hello to George, the largest American crocodile in captivity in Belize. ACES volunteer teaches you about crocodiles and our conservation efforts to protect these magnificent creatures while you observe them in their natural environment. Admission fees help with crocodile conservation.

Summerlee and Panthera visit ACES

It was our pleasure to welcome Melanie Lambert-Anderson, Program Director at the Colorado Springs Summerlee Foundation. Melanie finally got to meet the very crocodiles she helped to rescue in 2011. "It was a pleasure working with Cherie as she always maintained the highest professional standards with me as well as with the local and international collaborative." ~ Melanie Anderson
This year, The Summerlee Foundation donated \$600USD to ACES via The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries for ACES to obtain Belize NGO status. We are patiently awaiting approval.

Elevated Boardwalk over Morelet's Habitat

The addition of the crocodile viewing boardwalk allows visitors to view crocodiles up close in their natural habitat, yet from a safe and secure platform. Visitors can now watch these incredible creatures swim, sunbathe, eat, and interact with one another while learning what makes them important for our environment and how we can live safely with them. The boardwalk also provides additional shade and cover to reduce stress on these rescued, captive, freshwater crocodiles. The boardwalk was donated by Caribbean Shrimp Farm, Ltd.

Our 2012 Supporters & Partners

Thank You!

Foundation Benefactors

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United States

SummerLee Foundation
Sarah Lamade White Foundation

United Kingdom

Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Conservation Partner Donors

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Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries
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Private

Belize

Ak'bol Retreat
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Ambergris Caye Belize Forum Ambergris
Ambergris Caye South Watch
Belize Water Services, Ltd.
Belizean Melody Art Gallery
Billy Harmouch
Caribbean Shrimp Farm, Ltd.
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Carts Belize
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Chuck & Robbie's Scuba
The Rum, Cigar & Coffee House
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Diane Campbell
Cowboy Doug's Pool Bar & Grill
Dove & Lori Magy
El Pescador

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Jungle Water Adventures
Kama Lounge & Bistro Bar
Lamania Outpost
Marco Gonzalez Maya Site
Marty Casado
Maya Island Air
Palapa Bar & Grill
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San Pedro Town Council
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Sunbreeze Hotel
TacoGirl
The Little Old Craft Shop
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Wahoo Lounge
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Corporate Donors and Matching Gifts

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Pulse Instruments
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YouTube

Special Thanks

Armando Ubeda, LightHawk
Bev Gabe, LightHawk
Chris Summers, Crocodile Conservationist
Jane Raymond, Rufford Small Grants Foundation
Joni Ellis, Optics for the Tropics
Melanie Lambert, Summerlee Foundation
Rosie Marshall, Pulse Instruments

Valerie Terrazoni, Brigitte Bardot Foundation

Crocodile Specialists

Dr. Adam Britton
Dr. Charlie Manolis
Dr. Frank Mazzotti
Dr. Thomas Rainwater

Wildlife Photographer & Crocodile Attack Documentarist

Brandon Sideleau

Crocodilian Parasitologist & PhD Student Researcher

Marisa Tellez

Conservation Partners

Belize

Belize Forest Department
Belize Wildlife Conservation Network
Belize Zoo
Doris Wilderness
Lamanai Field Research Center

Canada

Edmonton Reptile & Amphibian Society

Ecuador

Tropical Herping

United Kingdom

Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation

United States

Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries
Lafeber Conservation and Wildlife
LightHawk
Mesoamerican Ridge to Reef Alliance
Optics for the Tropics
Summerlee Foundation
Tomistoma Fund

Our Efforts

In 2012, the number of problematic crocodile calls we received decreased largely due to our educational outreach on how to safely coexist with these critical apex predators. Although the number of problematic crocodiles continues to increase, primarily due to developmental pressures and both direct and indirect crocodile feeding, the rate of increase has decreased. And, even though the number of re-releases doubled, bear in mind that the majority of these animals were sub-adults. With a survival rate of less than 1% reaching sexual maturity and reproducing, re-releases play an important role in the self-sustainability of the wild populations. Finally, the increase of crocodile deaths due to man is disconcerting.

ACES COUNTRY-WIDE	2010	2011	2012
Crocodile calls received & responded to	26	61	48
Nuisance crocs relocated	9	27	5
Problematic crocs relocated	2	6	8
Crocodiles rescued, rehabilitated, and re-released	3	10	21
Problematic crocodiles placed in captivity	5	3	5
Illegal and/or inhumane captive crocs rescued	0	22	1
Documented croc deaths due illness/ natural cause	2	1	1
Documented crocodile deaths due to man	16	3	6
Crocodiles found with bullet wounds	11	4	2
Live crocs found with tails chopped off by a machete for illegal sale of the meat	0	4	1
Other Wildlife calls received and responded to	0	0	3



Rescued by Vince, “Tia” suffered from a broken knuckle and dislocated hip. She was able to be rehabilitated and released by the Tamandua Refuge.



Flown to ACES via Tropic Air, “Orlando,” a freshwater Morelet’s crocodile, was dehydrated and severely emaciated.



Rehabilitated, “Orlando” is now healthy and very colorful. He will be placed in a soft release habitat to determine if he can safely survive in the wild.



Us and the BFD

On September 13, 2012, ACES signed its first Memorandum of Understand (MOU) with the Belize Forest Department, Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development. The MOU is an agreement between the BFD and ACES to work together in all crocodile conservation efforts.

These efforts include: training BFD personnel in safe crocodile handling techniques; the rescue and care of ill, injured, and problematic crocodiles at both our main facility, Caribbean Shrimp Farm in Ladyville, and the wildlife refuge we are establishing in San Mateo, Ambergris Caye; and, educating the local communities on how to live safely with these important apex predators.

Working together with the BFD, ACES prime goal for 2013-2014 is to complete the wildlife refuge in San Mateo and implement the presence of a BFD Wildlife Officer for Isla Bonita and its wildlife.



“Our department is more than happy for any sort of training from ACES when it comes to dealing with the crocodiles... ..I find the training most beneficial.” ~ BFD Wildlife Officer Rasheda Garcia- Sampson



Us and the RSG

Awarded a 2nd RSG Grant, “The American crocodile, *Crocodylus acutus*, population and habitat viability assessment and conservation in Ambergris Caye, Belize” will continue thru 2013.

This project continues to validate the highly threatened American crocodile, *Crocodylus acutus*, population; assess crocodile habitat sustainability; and rescue ill, injured, and problematic crocodiles in Ambergris Caye through daylight, spotlight and nest sighting surveys, kind crocodile tagging, and habitat assessments including water quality monitoring.

Along with random, recorded salinity levels, prime crocodile habitat will be evaluated by testing levels of Ammonia Nitrogen, Ammonia, COD, Nitrate, Dissolved Oxygen, pH, Phosphates, Potassium, Coliform bacteria, pesticides Atrazine and Simazine, and Mercury. These tests will identify possible water quality conditions in American crocodile



habitats which could be leading to the observed signs of possible illness in the species, such as the absence of teeth, skin discolorations, diaphanous teeth, sunken or severely bulging supertemporal fossae, abdominal bloating, and peeling scales/scutes.

Adult crocodiles found lacking teeth



Additionally, collected scute (tissue) samples will be exported for toxicity testing. Data will be utilized to monitor the population structure and distribution to continue to develop an effective management program for the conservation of the species and its habitat. The ultimate goal is to establish protected areas in Isla Bonita for crocodile nesting.

Our Financial Statement

Year ended December 2012

Contribute to Species Preservation

Support & Revenue	\$ Belize	Expense	\$ Belize	Assets	\$ Belize
CSI Revenue	\$4,722	Equipment - tape, ropes, etc.	\$1,732	Equipment & property	\$14,554
Donations	\$12,672	Croc Food & Care	\$3,320	Cash & Cash Equivalents	(\$15)
Grants	\$22,309	Fuel & oil	\$5,890	Total Assets	\$14,539
Fundraisers	\$1,050	Equipment Maintenance	\$1,956	Change in Net Assets	\$1,013
Intern Students	\$1,000	Administrative	\$4,968	Net Assets at beginning of year	\$19,292
Interest	\$55	Croc Education	\$640	Net Assets at end of year	\$20,305
Total Income	\$41,808	Construction Materials	\$2,188		
In-Kind & Volunteers	\$4,020	Labor	\$685		
Total Support & Revenue	\$45,828	PROJECT BBF	\$23,436		
		Total Expenses	\$44,815		

**Net assets are either temporarily or permanently restricted*

From the Founders

Founded in 2006, ACES primary goal is reducing croc-human conflicts and promoting safe coexistence between the species. Our ongoing research focuses on the long term monitoring of threatened, saltwater American crocodiles, *Crocodylus acutus*, and its habitats. Fundamental management strategies include: reducing conflicts and man-related crocodile mortalities through public education; protecting crocodile nesting habitats; monitoring mangrove, lagoon water qualities; providing refuge and professional care for ill, injured and problematic crocodiles; rehabilitating wild crocodiles for re-release when able; and most importantly, keeping people out of harms way through our crocodile relocation program efforts.

Thank you to all who support our work both financially and emotionally, for together we are taking a bite out of extinction! Only through working together can we save our species for our children.
GOD BLESS,

Cherie & Vince Rose

Gratefully Yours



Photo by Tatiana Jachyra

Our Future

San Mateo Wildlife & Croc Refuge



What's going on behind the new wood wall in San Mateo? ACES Wildlife & Croc Refuge is educating about wildlife conservation in Isla Bonita. Slowly transforming from an empty lot into Ambergris Caye's only wildlife refuge, interns and volunteers are creating a small holding facility for the island's ill and injured wildlife. The Mission is to provide Isla Bonita with a voluntary wildlife response team which quickly responds to all wildlife in need, rescuing, providing immediate attention, and then transporting the animal(s) as quickly and safely as possible to the appropriate mainland facility for professional veterinary care and rehabilitation under the direction of the Belize Forest Department.



Additionally, the refuge shall benefit the local community of San Mateo as visitors come for educational tours of the facility, and to see "Jaws" and other rescued crocodiles. The facility will have boat access only, providing paying customers for the local hand ferry. Additionally, local vendors will be welcome at the entrance gate. All fees will go back 100% to the facility to cover rescue costs and for future self-sustainability.

Donations are greatly appreciated and needed. In-kind donations of fencing and other construction materials are especially welcome. Monetary donations can be made directly to ACES via cash, check, or wire transfer to Belize Bank, Account No. 6550-8-26053 with Further credit to: ACES, Account # 630-22-21-5255

American Crocodile Education Sanctuary
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