

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Punta Gorda
Toledo, Belize



Ya'axché's BioBlitz returns to engage with MGL youths!

On June 24 and 25 of 2022, Ya'axché hosted its annual BioBlitz event under the theme "*Empowering communities, Conserving biodiversity, Connecting the world*". BioBlitz is a worldwide event dedicated to finding and identifying key species within a 24-hour period. The targeted taxa were bees, birds, mammals, macro-inverts, and tree species.

Sixty-eight (68) MGL youths were engaged from five communities in this year's event. Youths ages 12-25 learnt about Ya'axché's Science and Protected Areas Management programs work through these various biodiversity research and monitoring activities.

Participants recorded 1069 observations; a total of 220 species were identified including 107 birds, 19 bees, 14 mammals, 67 trees and 13 freshwater macroinvertebrates.

The highlight of the event included the sighting of spider monkeys and a striped hog-nosed skunk. Other field mark observations included those of a jaguar and red brocket deer tracks. The identification of a new species of Carpenter bee for the MGL was also recorded.

Ya'axché protects 151,000 acres of forests and its biodiversity. To strengthen its conservation efforts, the organization recognized the key role of community members and has established BioBlitz as an annual event to spread the awareness of biodiversity importance and build conservation stewardship towards a sustainable future.

Ya'axché extends a warm thank you to all participants, staff, and special invited guests, birders Matthew Sacul and author of *Birds of Belize*, Lee Jones, for taking part in this year's successful event. Ya'axché BioBlitz 2022 was supported by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and The Inter-American Foundation (IAF).

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"Harmony between nature and human development for the benefit of both"

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