

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19th 2018

Punta Gorda

Toledo, Belize



Ya'axché involved students in learning about wildlife monitoring

On Friday 16th March 2018, primary school students in southern Belize took part in a conservation event which aimed at finding and identifying wildlife species over a short period of time. Ya'axché's BioBlitz event focuses on a number of trees, birds, mammals and freshwater bugs that are found easily in the surroundings of the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve.

The opening remarks to the half day event shared the importance of monitoring wildlife and involving young people in conservation. Thereafter, students were shown how to use a compass for navigation when out monitoring wildlife, microscopes to identify freshwater bugs by looking at small distinguishing features, binoculars to spot and count birds, camera traps to photograph wild mammals, and identification guides to monitor plants and trees within wild places managed by Ya'axché. Students were able to identify 29 bird species, 10 families of freshwater bugs, 5 wild cat species, 10 mammal species, and 6 species of trees.

This year, Ya'axché hosted 120 students from Bella Vista, San Isidro and Trio primary schools under the theme "Discover the diversity of wildlife". Since 2016, Ya'axché has engaged over 360 students and 38 teachers and parents in learning activities focused on wildlife and how to monitor them; and, they have valued the rare opportunity.

Ya'axché Conservation Trust has been empowering communities and conserving wildlife in southern Belize since 1998. Much of the organization's effort has focused on studying and protecting tropical broadleaf forests across three protected areas in Toledo. The Golden Stream Corridor Preserve, where the BioBlitz is held annually, connects the forests of the Maya Mountains to the coastal plain lowlands in southern Belize. Research has shown the private protected area is a biologically significant area, providing home to the iconic jaguars, tapirs, howler monkeys and great curassows among many others.

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