

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 27, 2019

Punta Gorda

Toledo, Belize



## **BioBlitz: Engaging children in biodiversity research**

In southern Belize, over 120 primary school students joined an interactive BioBlitz event to learn about and participate in ongoing wildlife research and monitoring. On Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2019, primary school students from the villages of Bladen, Big Falls and San Miguel visited the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve for Ya'axché's 4<sup>th</sup> annual BioBlitz event.

Since 2016, Ya'axché Conservation Trust has been engaging students from communities within Ya'axché's focal area, the Maya Golden Landscape, on the importance of biodiversity and conservation through its BioBlitz event. Ya'axché hosts its events under the theme "Empowering communities, Conserving biodiversity, Connecting the world".

At the BioBlitz event, the standard six students learned how to navigate using a compass, use binoculars to spot birds, setup field cameras to photograph wild animals, and identify plants and large mammals. Ya'axché's BioBlitz focuses on a number of trees, birds, mammals and freshwater bugs, referred to as macroinvertebrates, that are found easily in the surroundings of the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve. The students and teachers value this educational experience. The event was supported private donors and the Protected Areas Conservation Trust.

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 the 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 that 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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**Ya'axché Conservation Trust**

20A George Price Street, P.O. 177

Punta Gorda, Toledo District

Belize

**Phone:** (+501) 722-0108

**E-mail:** [info@yaaxche.org](mailto:info@yaaxche.org)

**Web:** [yaaxche.org](http://yaaxche.org)