

# CASA

## Casa Avian Support Alliance

## Caging Construction and Preparation Underway in Two Locations at CASA

Mid- to late-dry season brings with it hatchlings and fledglings of numerous species. Sadly many of these new arrivals are found in need of care; some from natural circumstances, for example nests blown from trees or predator behavior, and others are displaced by human behaviors, such as local development or at its worse the predation of humans on wild birds for the purpose of commerce. This year has not been an exception and CASA was approached to receive baby owls and fledgling parrots, the former displaced from their nest, and the latter recently released from illegal capture.

As discussed at the Executive Board Meeting, held April 7, 2007 at Casa del Caballo Blanco, a primary goal for the 2007 fiscal year was the design and construction of caging to receive displaced avi-fauna as described above. The news received by the CASA Executive Board underscoring the immediate need for caging has required that the Board re-think the current schedule and process and to accelerate the construction of caging.

The revised program is being directed to two immediate needs a) temporary caging in the nursery/quarantine area of the Intake and Evaluation Building and b) improvement and preparation of the interior of the Rehabilitation Building to receive prototype permanent caging.

Caging in the Nursery/Quarantine area will be designed to accommodate hatchlings and fledglings in a stable, safe environment, to protect them from predators, and provide a location for consistent periodic feeding. The temporary caging, by virtue of the immediacy of the need and the actual purpose, is simple in design and construction. More permanent caging will follow.

The preparation and improvements in the Bird Rehabilitation Building will provide better access, internal divisions that will serve to segregate the *falconiformes* from the other orders, for example the *Psittiformes* and other smaller bird orders, and an improved surface treatment that will lend itself to better cleaning. Rehabilitation caging designs are currently underway and call for rectangular cage

variable in length, 30 inches in depth, and 2 to 3 feet in height, mounted on rails 2 to 3 feet above the floor, supported by four upright pipes at the corners. Each of these cages will be equipped in a manner that allows for the placement of a division that will effectively create two cages. This design will facilitate cleaning beneath the cage and reduce the opportunities for predation from the floor level.

Work in each area was begun during the first week of June and will be completed by the end of the month.

### Executive Board Meeting and General Membership Meeting Held April 7, 2007

The first Annual Board Meeting and General Membership Meeting of Casa Avian Support Alliance were held jointly on April 7, 2007, in La Sala, at Casa del Caballo Blanco.

A brief discussion of the topics discussed at the meeting and a listing of the individuals in attendance can be found on the CASA web site, [www.casaavian.org](http://www.casaavian.org), please reference the 2007 goals page.

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### Special Points of Interest:

- CASA WEB Page goes online—see back page
- CASA Biologists Returning in July
- Watch WEB page for upcoming Fundraiser event



## White-fronted Amazon Pair Observed Nesting in Palm at CDCB

April visitors at CASA/CDCB were treated to the antics of a nesting pair of White-fronted Amazons (*Amazona albifrons*). The pair appears to have established a nest in an abandoned cavity high up one of three palms that can be comfortably observed from the veranda of the first casita. Spotted in the late afternoon of April 9, one of the pair took-up observation from the entrance, craning its head and neck from the opening in the palm to watch any activity in the vicinity, while the mate foraged or perched in an adjacent palm.

Unlike the common night roost beneath the foliage of 'sleeping trees,' White-fronted Amazons typically nest in cavities of trees, old-woodpecker holes, and palms with rotten cores. Golden-fronted Woodpeckers are frequently observed on the palms, and it is likely that they are the architects and builders of the cavity adopted by the Amazons.

Breeding occurs in the dry season, and adults are known to introduce fledglings into the flock in late dry-season early wet season. These observations conform to the Belize climate pattern, as April is well into the Belize dry-season, and with the on-set of the current wet season in June, it is likely that any offspring have fledged and are now among the flock.

## CDCB and the CASA Program Recognized in Rainforest Alliance Bulletin

Casa del Caballo Blanco, a participant in the Rainforest Alliance/Programme for Belize Best Practices Sustainable Tourism Program, was recognized in Bulletin No. 3 (May 2007), for its efforts and involvement in the program; a description of the creation and primary purpose of CDCB as a host to CASA was described.

CDCB is pleased and proud to both be listed in the Eco-Index sponsored by Rainforest Alliance; CDCB on the Eco-Index Sustainable Tourism (<http://eco-indextourism.org/en/casa-del-caballo-blanco-en>), and CASA on the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative project listings (<http://www.eco-index.org/search/results.cfm?ProjectID=1023>).

## Nesting Boxes for Owls and Bats to Be Constructed and Installed during '07 Wet Season

Among the numerous on-going projects to be undertaken by Baldemir Manzanero and his son Ronnell, during the current wet-season, will be the construction and mounting of nest boxes for owls and bats. *Chiroptera*, the biological order of bats, are significant contributors to the mammalian biodiversity of Belize representing 71 species among eight families (Miller and Miller 2002).

Bat activity is significant with respect to the ecology of CASA, as they are critical to the pollination of plantains and apple-bananas, the distribution of seeds from digested plant material, and to a limited extent they aid in the control of the mosquito population, as certain species are known to consume 100s of mosquitoes per hour. Venerated by the Mayans and known as *Zotz*, bats were associated with night, death and sacrifice, and represented the fourth month of the Mayan 19 month *Haab* calendar, similar to our solar calendar. The calendrical glyph representing *zotz* appears as the leaf-nosed bat.



Bat God used as decoration pottery, Chama, from Dieseldorff in Tozzer and Allen

Owls, known to the Mayans as *Muan*, and associated with the 15<sup>th</sup> month of the Mayan solar calendar, are equally important at CASA, assisting in the control of the rodent population that might otherwise prey on the rehabilitating caged birds. Among the owls commonly observed at CASA is the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*), thought of by the Maya



Owl in flight, carved in wood, Tikal, House C, lintel, from Maudslay, III, PL.78, in Tozzer and Allen

to be royal messengers of *Xibalba*, the Mayan underworld.

Materials for the nest boxes will be obtained locally and the boxes will be constructed according to plans obtained from the Hungry Owl Project and from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources web page. In late July, when Biologists Wendy Dexter and Jeffery Alvarez return to CASA to perform the twice-yearly observations of the habitat restoration, they will select locations to mount the nest boxes. Plans for the owl boxes were obtained through the generosity and concerns for the well-being of owls globally from the Hungry Owl Project ([www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org)). Plans for the bat boxes were found on-line at

(<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/publications/bats/assembly.htm>).

The sponsors of CASA offer our thanks and gratitude to those organizations and the people that comprise them for their care and concern for wildlife worldwide.



Glyphs from [Animal Figures in the Maya Codices](#), Tozzer and Allen, 1910

Miller and Miller, [Results of a preliminary survey of the bats of the Mayflower-Bocawina National Park](#), December 10-11, 2002 Wildlife Conservation Society, Gallon Jug, Belize



Sunrise at CDCB April 2007

Birds are the farmers of the world,  
help us to help them  
to continue to sow their seeds

## CASA Plans Educational - Biological Tours in Eastern Guatemala and Western Belize

CASA sponsors are currently working with Jeff Alvarez, CASA biologist, to create a sequence of seasonal tours that will blend family adventure travel with the biology of eastern Guatemala and western Belize. Present planning looks to four tours annually – January, February-March, April and July; two sessions of seven days, and two of 10 days.

Each session will be fashioned around the variations that characterize the biotic community during the season of travel; each day of the session will consist of exercises and observations in a variety of locations ranging from world-class archaeological sites to natural ecosystems, for example rivers, savannahs, forest-jungle, including night observation walks and the placement and use of photo-trapping. Many days will include classroom presentations and discussions in La Sala at Casa del Caballo Blanco addressing field methods and techniques of wildlife observation and lectures on selected flora and fauna relevant to the particular tour.

Specific itineraries for each of the trips are currently being prepared and will be available on the CASA web page in the near future. Proceeds beyond costs will be contributed to CASA as a means to support the future development and operation of CASA.

## CASA/CDCB Joins Adventure Travel Trade Association

In April Casa Avian Support Alliance and Casa del Caballo Blanco, as a joint organization, became a member of the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) (<http://www.adventuretravel.biz/>); with this membership CASA/CDCB is listed not only with the ATTA but with [www.adventure.travel](http://www.adventure.travel), as well.

The new membership was viewed as an additional means to promote volun-tourism, eco-tourism, and avi-tourism to the growing numbers of individuals and families who wish to devote their leisure time to activities that are educational and intended to promote sustainability.

An unforeseen benefit of the ATTA membership was the introduction to Sara Widness and Dave Wiggins of Widness & Wiggins PR. “W<sup>2</sup>” was retained by CDCB in June to develop a communications strategy that will enable and facilitate CASA/CDCB in making itself known to a broader audience. Drawing on their lifelong careers in PR, marketing, and communications in the active travel industry W<sup>2</sup> will assist CASA/CDCB in publicizing the goals and mission of CASA, and the opportunities for the public to participate in that initiative.

CASA/CDCB welcome Sara and Dave.

Don't Leave me Behind...  
take me to the future.



## 10 Tips for Bio-diversity Conservation and Sustainability

1. Plant a tree so that local avi-fauna can nest, seek shelter and forage for food.
2. Plant a sunflower, or other plants that comprise bird friendly gardens, and watch the local avi-fauna gather food for their families, and by dispersing the seed create new gardens.
3. Study the bio-diversity in your community and - learn, conserve, and protect.
4. Restore habitat and watersheds whenever possible rather than develop.
5. Volunteer with local community organizations to assist with the care of avian wildlife or to participate in 'green activities' to learn ways to assist wildlife and to minimize your own footprint on the landscape.
6. Recycle all of your paper and plastics; make sure old batteries, like those from flashlights and shop tools, etc. are disposed of properly – not in landfills.
7. Avoid purchasing cans and bottles in six-packs with plastic collars; if you must, then be sure and cut each of the six enclosures so that birds, and other wildlife, will not become entangled and choke on them.
8. Minimize or discontinue the use of products containing toxic compounds that accumulate in our water supply and atmosphere and threaten wildlife habitats.
9. Reduce your use of critical resources by selecting products and vendors that manufacture with sustainability in mind.
10. Consider re-use and remodeling prior to new development.

## Casa Avian Support Alliance

Birds are the farmers of the world - help us to help them to continue to sow their seeds

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*Hola, Greetings from Gringo the name-sake of Casa del Caballo Blanco, If you missed the email, the web page for the Casa Avian Support Alliance is now on line at <http://www.casaavian.org>, or*

*<http://www.casaaviansupportalliance.org>.*

*Each quarter the web page will be updated with the most current newsletter and new bird lists will be posted. Links to prior newsletters can be found there as well. We hope you enjoy the web page and find it useful; any comments you wish to provide will be welcomed.*

*Jodi*



### Please Note

Bird sightings for the months of April, May, and June can be found on the CASA web site at the link located on the Habitat Restoration page

**MEMBERSHIP**—The Board of Directors for the Casa Avian Support Alliance (CASA) recognizes the value of interested individuals and organizations (both profit and non-profit), as a means to promote the goals of the organization. Memberships are not viewed as a primary source of income with respect to the sustainability of the NGO, but rather as a means to share the mission, goals and accomplishments of CASA with a broader public. Revenues captured from annual dues will be used primarily to support member related activities such as the Badge of Bird Program and the Quarterly Report to Members.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

REGULAR	Membership Description	BZE	US
Student or Sr. Citizen	Currently enrolled or graduated in last two -years	\$5	\$15
Individual	Individual on card plus one other	\$10	\$30
Family	Two or more	\$25	\$50
Participating Professional	Designed primarily for Veterinarians, Ornithologists, and Biologists involved in CASA's programs	\$30	\$60
<b>SUPPORTING</b>			
Affiliate	Members wishing recognition for affiliation	\$100	\$100
Advocate	Members that actively advocate the mission and goals of CASA	\$250	\$250
Patron	Members who wish to contribute to specific programs underway at CASA	\$500	\$500
Benefactor	Individuals who wish to support and promote the mission and goals of CASA	\$1000	\$1000
Guardian	Lifetime membership	\$2500	\$2500
Non-Profit Organization	Organizations with sympathetic missions and goals that would like to support and identify with CASA	\$250	\$250
For-Profit Enterprises	Enterprises who wish to support the mission and goals of CASA and be recognized for the contribution	\$250	\$250

The benefits of membership at the various levels are as follows:

All Regular Memberships receive a membership card, are invited to the annual meeting, receive a quarterly report, are enrolled in the "Passport Program," are listed in the membership directory, have the right to vote on issues put before the membership, and receive 10% discount on items offered in the gift shop.

Supporting Memberships receive the same benefits listed above and are recognized in the annual report for their contribution to the programs and activities of CASA