

# CASA

## Casa Avian Support Alliance

Volume 1 Issue 3

## CASA Sponsors Meet with Belize Forest Department Initiative Approved and MOU in Process

**Belmopan-** On Monday, August 21, 2006, Ernesto Garcia, Acting Director for the Casa Avian support Alliance (CASA), and Jodi and Vance Benté met with Mr. George Hanson of the Belize Forest Department (FD) to discuss the progress of the review and permitting of the CASA initiative. Mr. Hanson was pleased to report that he and Forest Department Staff, had completed review of the original proposal and the Response to Comments prepared and submitted by the initiative sponsors in mid-June.

Mr. Hanson commented that while there were some issues of concern, that following review of the Response to Comments, the FD has approved and supports the initiative, viewing it as a "national need" for the country, and will begin drafting a Memorandum Of Understanding that will describe the operation of the facility and the relationship between CASA and the Belize Forest Department. In the interim the Forest Department has provided a letter, dated September 5, 2006, citing their approval, which will enable the initiative sponsors to seek grants and funding to further develop and staff the facility. Mr. Hanson offered numer-

ous suggestions as to ways in which CASA will cooperate with, and enable various Forest Department projects, including the Internship Program in affiliation with the University of Belize, and annual youth camps to host youth from the islands and cayes so that they can experience the interior of Belize.

With respect to funding for the further development of CASA, Mr. Hanson strongly encouraged the sponsors to contact organizations such as the Protected Area Conservation Trust (PACT) of Belize, and the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI), US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Sponsors of CASA thank the Belize Forest Department; it's staff, and particularly Mr. George Hanson, for its support and encouragement; we look forward to many years of a cooperative effort to conserve the biodiversity of the Americas.



Mr. George Hanson (Belize Forest Department) discusses permitting of CASA with Jodi and Vance Benté

### CASA added to Eco-Index and Listed among WHMSI Projects

Casa Avian Support Alliance was recently added to the Eco-Index, a searchable list of conservation projects in the neotropics sponsored by Rainforest Alliance. Please visit the link at [www.eco-index.org/search/results.cfm?projectID=1023](http://www.eco-index.org/search/results.cfm?projectID=1023). CASA was also included among the projects listed under the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative, please visit [www.eco-index.org/migratory/tools/coordination2.cfm](http://www.eco-index.org/migratory/tools/coordination2.cfm). Our thanks to Rainforest Alliance, particularly Melissa Krenke, for considering and including CASA in their program designed to encourage conservation through communication.

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### Special Points of Interest:

- Programme for Belize in cooperation with Rainforest Alliance conducted a 'Green' audit of CDCB in July and August, results should be available soon.
- CASA/CDCB participated in BETEX 2006 and met probable Passport Program members and discussed Grant opportunities with representatives of Protected Area Conservation Trust (PACT).
- CASA relationship with Project Bird Watch, Seram, Indonesia, sponsors leads to early planning for a Belize eco-tour February-March 2007.
- Distribution of CASA newsletter to rely on internet.

# Sacred Heart Junior College Partners with Casa del Caballo Blanco

**San Ignacio** – On August 17, Mr. Daniel Gutierrez M. Sc., (Dean), Ms. Karen Link M. Sc, (Chair of the Science Department), and Mrs. Maria Mendez B.Sc. (Chair of Tourism Management) of Sacred Heart Junior College, Sixth Form program visited CDCB to discuss partnering/alliance relationships that would be of mutual benefit to each organization and assist with the further development of CASA. The mission of Sixth Form, much like the Junior Colleges of the United States, is to educate and prepare students for employment in the surrounding community.

CDCB has offered assistance in that regard by providing students hands-on experience at the newly developed eco-lodge. Students enrolled in the Food And Beverage training are provided exposure to the operation of a functioning kitchen, other students studying Tourism, are engaged in management and administrative functions, and yet others involved in Environmental Science are helping to further the reforestation effort and participate in the de-

velopment and grooming of interpretive trails on the lower portion of the property. Assistance with the reforestation and interpretive aspects of the local flora is an enormous contribution to the further development of CASA, as the lower portion of the property is being prepared as a sanctuary for released avi-fauna and a laboratory to study the biological sequence that occurs during the reforestation sequence.

Students have also been engaged in a variety of tasks that contribute to

CDCB's efforts to operate in a manner that will help to further reduce and control its environmental footprint. These tasks range from the monitoring of resources usage to preparations for waste separation that will ensure proper reuse, recycling and composting.

Casa del Caballo Blanco thanks Sacred Heart Junior College students and staff for their contribution to the development and the sound environmental operation of the eco-lodge, and the tireless contribution to CASA's efforts to restore a portion of the local environment.

Special thanks to Mr. Javier Gutierrez who has provided guidance and insights, and has been instrumental in arranging this much appreciated assistance.



SHJC students paint No Fumar (No Smoking) signs on fuel buildings as part of internship program

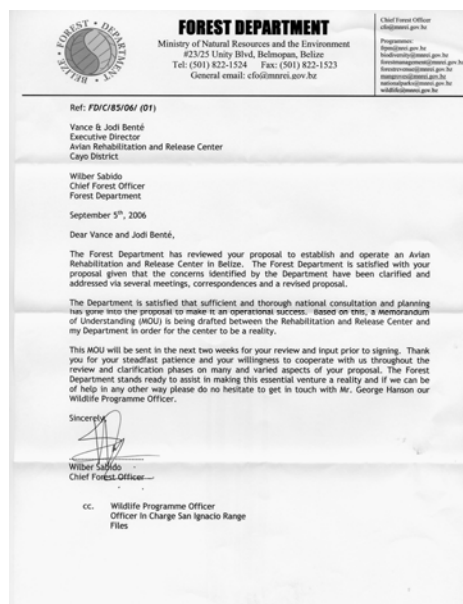
## Biologists Make Second Visit to CASA

**San Ignacio**— Jeff Alvarez and Wendy Dexter, wildlife biologists, returned to CASA in July to record the progress of the reforestation program. Permanent points of observation, identified during the initial January baseline observations, were relocated, and the surrounding flora and fauna recorded. More information about their visit will be provided in the next quarter newsletter.



A red-eyed tree frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*), observed in January 2006. Photo W. Dexter

Letter from Page 1



Text of letter can be read if increased to 200%

## Chiquibul Forest Conservation Plan Presented at FCD Meeting

**San Ignacio**— On August 25, 2006 Casa del Caballo Blanco hosted a meeting convened by Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD) to discuss the *Integrated Strategy and Project Plan to Conserve the Chiquibul/Maya Mountain Key Bio-diversity Area*.

As noted in the project description posted on the Eco-Index, "Friends for Conservation and Development is coordinating the planning of (this) four-year project ...The area targeted includes the Chiquibul National Park, [Bladen Nature Reserve](#), Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary/ Victoria Peak Natural Monument, and the Caracol Archaeological Reserve, as well as other buffer areas."

The objectives of the project as stated in Phase I of the project were to:

- Develop an integrated funding proposal for the management of two core areas in the Chiquibul/Maya Mountain Key Biodiversity Area.

## A Green Note

### CASA Newsletter to Rely on Internet Distribution

After a thorough and thoughtful review of the paper and ink consumed, and the expense of producing printed copies of the CASA Newsletter, the sponsors have concluded that future distribution of the newsletter will rely solely on the internet. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause our readers, however, in light of the mission and goals of CASA, and Casa del Caballo Blanco, it was concluded that printing of the newsletter was inconsistent with those goals. This approach also allows us to continue production in full-color and incorporate additional photographs.

### Chiquibul Forest Conservation

*Chiquibul from page 2*

- Explore and set in motion a bi-national effort for the conservation of the KBA.
- Promote an awareness and interest among key stakeholders about the importance of integrating a management program for the protected areas in the KBA.
- Obtain a co-management agreement between Friends for Conservation and Development and the Forest Department for the management of Chiquibul National Park.

The meeting was attended by members of FCD, the Belize Forest Department, and local stakeholders. The proceedings of the workshop conducted by FCD in May of 2005 can be reviewed at [http://www.eco-index.org/search/pdfs/970report\\_1.pdf#search=%22Chiquibul%20Forest%20Management%20Plan%22](http://www.eco-index.org/search/pdfs/970report_1.pdf#search=%22Chiquibul%20Forest%20Management%20Plan%22)

## Passport Program Continues to Develop

Discussions continue with organization sponsors from around the globe to build the CASA Passport Program. CASA sponsors are building alliances with wildlife rehabilitators, parrot experts, corporate vendors, and field scientists to:

- Increase awareness of undertakings of similar intent in other parts of the world
- Encourage conservation and continued education

## Collared Aracari (*Peteroglossus torquatus*)

One of three toucans common to Belize the Collared Aracari is typically observed in the midlevels to sub canopy of broadleaf forests. Approximately 16 inches in height it is classified as a toucanet. Aside from size the toucanet is characterized by a more pointed tail than the larger toucans. These highly sociable birds are usually found in small flocks and commonly roost in tree holes. The young are often fed by groups of adults.

Photograph by Fernando Tut



- Share knowledge and expertise among scientists, on-site teams and the general public

Currently, organizations being considered for participation in the program include facilities located in: San Rafael, (California), Flores (Guatemala) Seram Islands (Indonesia), Bahamas, Papua, (New Guinea) and Costa Rica.

CASA's sponsors had initially envisioned the program as consisting of six like minded organizations who would participate in a coordinated effort, throughout the world, to encourage eco-travel and communication as a means to the conservation of biodiversity.



Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinmans*)

Photograph by Fernando Tut

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

A reminder to our readers that a portion of revenues received from all paying guests at Casa del Caballo Blanco are donated to CASA.

## Bird Facts

1. How many days does it take for a barn owl eggs to hatch? \_\_\_\_\_ What do owls do with the young that die? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the height of a pygmy owl? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which raptor performs a courtship ritual that is called "cliff racing" and involves high speed diving and loops in front of their nest? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which hawk (both male and female) flies with "feet down" during mating season instead of up against the body? \_\_\_\_\_
5. The red-tailed hawk's eye sight is \_\_\_\_\_ Xs more powerful than a humans.
6. What is the name of the country where the poisonous hooded pitohui (pronounced PIT-a-hooey) was discovered? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where is the poison located on their body? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is their food source that contains the poison? \_\_\_\_\_
7. The poison of the hooded pitohui is more poisonous than strychnine, curare, and 10 time more powerful than fugu (japans puffer fish). True or False \_\_\_\_\_
8. What bird makes rapid, round-the-world flights on a regular basis when not breeding? \_\_\_\_\_ Which direction is it recorded that they circumnavigate the globe? \_\_\_\_\_ How frequently do they breed? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Name the largest species of bird in the world that can run up to 40 mph and can live to be 75 years old. \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the only pollinator of banana and Agave plant? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Why do vultures urinate on their feet? \_\_\_\_\_

Answers in next quarter's newsletter

# 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 namesake of Casa del Caballo Blanco, we are working on a CASA web page, in the mean time visit us at [www.casacaballoblanco.com](http://www.casacaballoblanco.com)*

Jodi



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
SUPPORTING			
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