



BELIZE

Experiential Learning in Belize

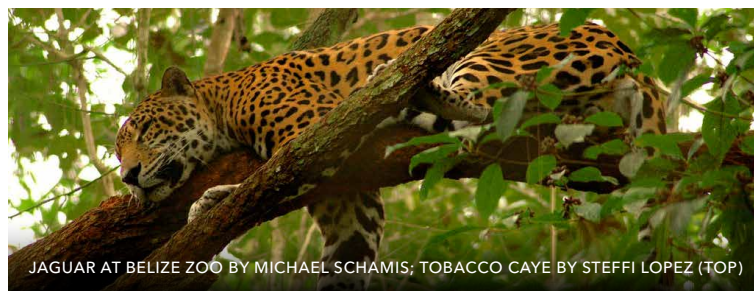
with Fayetteville High School

JUNE 18 – 25, 2023

Belize is home to a variety of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, from rainforest and tropical savanna to mangroves, coral reefs, and more. Examine and compare the country's different natural, unspoiled habitats during this 8-day learning adventure. Observe wildlife and hike in the foothills of the Maya Mountains, explore underground caves, and snorkel in the South Water Caye Marine Reserve for a firsthand look at marine biodiversity. As students learn more about the importance of Belize's natural beauty and its conservation, they'll also gain a deeper understanding of how these environments are connected and contribute to a series of service and research projects at the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center and on the Belize Barrier Reef, gaining a deeper understanding of how these environments are interconnected.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Receive an introduction to Belizean wildlife and the importance of its conservation.
- Work on a service project at the Belize Zoo.
- Explore the rainforests and unique geological features of St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park.
- Learn about the connection between inland activities and coastal environments.
- Observe and identify a host of marine life while snorkeling the Belize Barrier Reef.
- Participate in a reef clean-up project, working along a transect and recording data on the trash that's collected.



JAGUAR AT BELIZE ZOO BY MICHAEL SCHAMIS; TOBACCO CAYE BY STEFFI LOPEZ (TOP)



GEOFFROY'S SPIDER MONKEY AT BELIZE ZOO
BY MICHAEL SCHAMIS



GRAY ANGELFISH IN TOBACCO CAYE
BY J. CRAIGHILL PHOTOGRAPHY



YELLOW-HEADED PARROT BY LIZZY FOULKES

ITINERARY

DAY 1 | SUN | 18 JUN | WESTERN HIGHWAY

Upon arrival at the international airport, transfer along the Western Highway to the Tropical Education Center, adjacent to the Belize Zoo. The Zoo and Tropical Education Center are situated on 29 acres of tropical savanna and exhibit over 125 animals, all native to Belize. All of the animals living at the zoo were rehabilitated or rescued as orphans from poaching situations, the illegal pet trade, injury, or exposure due to habitat loss. Founded in 1983, the Belize Zoo has been internationally recognized for its outstanding conservation efforts and excellent simulated natural environments. After settling in at the dorms, there will be some time to explore the grounds before dinner. Please note all accommodations use shared bathroom facilities; there are no en suite bathrooms. Later, meet in the education center for a review of the course. This evening, take an exciting walk at the zoo to observe nocturnal wildlife like snakes, a Harpy Eagle, ocelots, pumas, and jaguars.

BELIZE ZOO'S TROPICAL EDUCATION CENTER

DAY 2 | MON | 19 JUN | WESTERN HIGHWAY

Today there will be a talk on the tropical savanna ecosystem, followed by hiking along trails for a firsthand experience of what you have learned. As you hike through the dense vegetation, observe the interactions between the ecology of the savanna and its wildlife inhabitants such as Yellow-headed Parrots, armadillos, and gray foxes. Other wildlife observations may include iguanas, peccaries, coatis, and a variety of tropical birds. Later work on a service project at the Belize Zoo.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

BELIZE ZOO'S TROPICAL EDUCATION CENTER

DAY 3 | TUE | 20 JUN | WESTERN HIGHWAY

Spend the full day working on a service project. Choose from monitoring the endangered Yellow-headed Parrot population, tracking tapirs, or fire management. This project includes working with local researchers to provide assistance with ongoing field research programs in Belize.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

BELIZE ZOO'S TROPICAL EDUCATION CENTER

DAY 4 | WED | 21 JUN | WESTERN HIGHWAY

After breakfast, leave the lowland savanna ecosystem to hike the foothills of the Maya Mountains and experience the rainforest. Visit the popular St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park, which is within the Sibun Watershed, and explore its forests and unique geological features. Also journey by inner tube into a sunken underground cave, approximately 300 feet wide and 100 feet



MAYA MOUNTAINS BY CHRIS H. FROM ENGLAND, CC BY 2.0

deep. This evening, enjoy a discussion on how inland activities within the Sibun Watershed affect coastal environments in Belize and around the world.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

BELIZE ZOO'S TROPICAL EDUCATION CENTER

DAY 5 | THU | 22 JUN | TOBACCO CAYE

This morning, check out and head for the coastal town of Dangriga, stopping at the Riverside Cafe for an opportunity to purchase supplies in the shops and produce market. The stay on Tobacco Caye includes meals, but you can purchase snacks here to bring with you. (There is also a small snack shop on Tobacco Caye.) Bid your mainland guide farewell and greet the marine



expert who will accompany you during the caye portion of your program. Board the boats and begin the ride out of the mouth of the Stann Creek River across 12 miles of turquoise lagoon. In approximately 35 minutes, arrive at the base for marine exploration among some of the world's richest biodiversity. The Belize Barrier Reef wraps around Tobacco Caye, providing safe and convenient access from shore. After lunch, have snorkeling gear fitted and receive a briefing on how to effectively use equipment and interact with the coral reef before beginning the first snorkeling experience on the reef. Later, enjoy some beach volleyball and then dinner. Tonight, the first classroom session is an introduction to natural resource management in Belize and the South Water Caye Marine Reserve protected area. Also receive an introduction to the waterproof fish ID cards that can be used during snorkeling if there is interest. Please note the sites and order of visits are weather-dependent and will vary according to conditions during your stay. Accommodations at Tobacco Caye are rustic, basic dorm facilities with shared bathrooms and cold-water showers.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

TOBACCO CAYE MARINE STATION

DAY 6 | FRI | 23 JUN | TOBACCO CAYE

Spend a full day exploring various sites. Start with a visit to Man O' War Caye, one of 11 Magnificent Frigatebird nesting sites in the Caribbean. Also snorkel amid the mangroves in Tobacco Range Atoll, where you may be able to see manatees, and on

Carrie Bow Patch Reef, a shallow patch where all the diversity of the Belizean waters is on bountiful display. Have lunch on South Water Caye, where seahorses are often found swimming near the docks, and enjoy some free time in the crystal-clear water. Visit the Smithsonian Institute Research Station on Carrie Bow Caye; if there are researchers, chat with them about their work. Continue snorkeling nearby sites based on energy level and preference, and then return to the island. After dinner, the second classroom session will focus on marine ecology and how mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs interact with the terrestrial environment and each other to create the marine world.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

TOBACCO CAYE MARINE STATION

DAY 7 | SAT | 24 JUN | TOBACCO CAYE

This morning, set out for a half day of snorkeling. If weather allows, explore the fore reef outside Tobacco Caye, the patch reef at Núñez Patch, and the Tobacco Caye Channel (south of the cut). The fore reef is an example of spur-and-groove formations. It's a bit deeper than the rest, but the bottom is visible at all times and it's an excellent chance to see the "real" barrier reef. South of the cut is a channel environment, going from mid-deep to shallow. This is a very diverse site and an opportunity to see bigger marine life cruising in the channel if it's present, including tarpons, turtles, and possibly even manatees or dolphins. Núñez Patch is a very shallow patch, and students will be focused on finding smaller sea life like lobsters, anemones, shrimp, and a variety of small fish. Return to the island for lunch. This afternoon, participate in a reef clean-up service project, working



along a transect for data purposes. Split into groups of three and take turns collecting trash and using a data slate to record the origin of items you collect, any surprising finds, etc. Back on shore, the trash will be weighed and the data slate notes will be collected. Discuss what you found, how plastic can harm the environment, and how the activity made you feel. Return to the lodge, with free time to snorkel from the shore, relax, or play a game of volleyball. After dinner, experience an exciting night snorkel in the lagoon. Step off the dock into a nocturnal world of cephalopods, moray eels, arthropods, and echinoderms.



Underwater lights are provided but must be turned off temporarily to observe the phosphorescent dinoflagellates.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER
TOBACCO CAYE MARINE STATION

DAY 8 | SUN | 25 JUN | DEPARTURE

This morning after breakfast, transfer by boat to Dangriga then by bus to Belize City for your flight home via Belize City International Airport.

BREAKFAST



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe

PRICING DETAILS

From \$2,295

Price includes:

- Dormitory accommodations with shared bathrooms
- Meals as indicated
- Non-alcoholic beverages with meals
- Sightseeing and activities as described, including entrance fees
- Full-time guide per region for duration of the program
- Private vehicle transportation and driver
- Snorkeling gear
- Post-departure travel protection
- All tips and gratuities
- Departure tax
- Carbon offset

Price does not include: international airfare estimated at \$689 from Fayetteville, trip cancellation insurance, drinks/snacks purchased on own, items of a personal nature.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel has purchased Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on a minimum of 10 participants in dorm occupancy. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to hold your space on this trip. This deposit is refundable minus \$100 until **March 15, 2023**, at which time final non-refundable payment is due.

Please note: Your participation as a traveler indicates acceptance of Holbrook Travel's Covid-19 protocols in place at time of travel. Holbrook Travel strongly recommends the purchase of trip cancellation insurance. Please note the purchase of Cancel for Any Reason Coverage or to exclude pre-existing conditions with Trip Cancellation coverage may require policy purchase within 10-14 days of your initial deposit, depending upon the provider.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO ENROLL:

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