



American Crocodile  
Education Sanctuary

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



George (AKA “Croczilla”), *Crocodylus acutus*, American crocodile



# From the Founders: Compassion is Crucial in Croc~Human Conflicts



**ACES Founders: Cherie R. Chenot~Rose & Vincent R. Rose, Published Research Biologists & Expert Crocodilian Behaviorists**



**Captain Chris Summers, ACES's Croc Conservationist & Researcher**

*“People fear what they don't understand and hate what they can't conquer.”*  
~ Andrew Smith

**ACES's number one priority when responding to a crocodile call is human safety.** It has been seen over the years that the Belize Forest Department (BFD) has limited human and financial resources to address the numerous reports of human-wildlife conflicts, especially with problematic crocodiles in rural areas, towns, cities, and throughout the plethora of cayes. It is for this reason that ACES continues to invest in crocodile conservation efforts via education, research, rescues, and sustainable development of crocodile refuges in Belize.

## ***Determining Captivity on a Croc Call***

Once the animal's behavior is assessed, ACES determines whether the crocodile possess 'no immediate danger'; is a 'nuisance animal' that needs to be relocated, especially in situations where the risk of a croc-human conflict is high such as near resorts and public swimming holes; or, if the crocodile is 'problematic' and needs to be placed in captivity until it's further fate can be determined by the BFD, the final authority on all croc captures.

ACES defines problematic crocodiles as those animals where one or more of the following applies:

- The crocodile has attacked or is about to attack person(s) or pet(s);
- The crocodile is behaving aggressively towards person(s) or pet(s);
- The location of the crocodile makes it a threat to public safety; or,
- A nuisance crocodile has been captured and relocated more than three times.

Because released crocodiles tend to often return to sites of capture, dangerous problematic crocodiles are placed into captivity when possible.



CROC-HUMAN CONFLICTS RESOLVED BY ACES COUNTRY-WIDE IN BELIZE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	JAN-MAY 2017
Crocodile calls received & responded to	26	61	48	173	110	98	84	41
Nuisance crocs relocated	9	27	8	29	25	26	16	7
Problematic crocs relocated	2	6	5	7	8	2	5	0
Crocodiles rescued, rehabilitated, and re-released	3	10	21	67	91	45	21	6
Problematic crocodiles placed in captivity	5	3	5	5	4	2	5	5
Illegal and/or inhumane captive crocs rescued	0	22	1	6	1	4	2	0
Documented croc deaths due illness/ natural cause	2	1	1	4	7	3	0	0
Documented crocodile deaths due to man	16	3	6	5	8	4	6	5
Crocodiles found with bullet wounds	11	4	2	10	0	1	1	0
Live crocs found with tails chopped off by a machete for illegal sale of the meat	0	4	1	6	2	1	0	0
Other wildlife calls received and responded to	0	0	3	20	3	4	3	3
Reported crocodile attacks fatal on humans	UNK	UNK	0	0	1	0	1	0
Reported crocodile attacks non-fatal on humans	UNK	UNK	2	0	2	0	1	0

*Photograph by Conch Creative, San Pedro, Belize*





## Sanctioned by the Belize Forest Department ACES & RAZ are Croc-Conservation Partners

Thanks to annual funding from La Fondation Brigitte Bardot, ACES new expansion to, and partnership with, the Rainforest Adventure Zone (RAZ) currently includes two secured natural habitats for captive, injured and problematic, crocodiles. The facility currently houses eight freshwater Morelet's crocodiles, *Crocodylus moreletii*, and an injured American crocodile named "Jaws." Thanks to the Hygeia Foundation for Health, Science, and the Environment, Inc., an eco-friendly solar well pump provides continuous freshwater for both habitats. Located at Mile 16 along the Phillip Goldson Highway, Belize District, RAZ is a 129 acre protected adventure wilderness, with 40 acres of riparian forest, bordering the Old Belize River. In addition to Crocodilians, the Belizean society as a whole, including both government and non-government organizations, benefit from this partnership thru the strengthening of crocodile conservation efforts country-wide. ***The BFD stated, "this newly formed partnership between ACES and RAZ will institute an essential, educational, crocodile refuge for the short, medium, and long term protection of rescued Morelet's and American crocodiles in Belize."***

### ACES Jan 2016 - May 2017 Crocodile Long-term Captivity Numbers

STATUS	AMERICAN CROCODILES	MORELET'S CROCODILES	OTHER WILDLIFE
Captive Jan. 1st, 2016	8	14	0
No. of Animal Intakes	5	5	6
No. Eggs Intake	25	0	0
Non-viable eggs	16	0	0
No. of Captive Births	0	0	0
No. Captive Euthanized	0	0	0
No. Deaths in captivity	0	2*	0
No. Re-released	5	9	5
No. Transferred	0	0	1
Captive May 2017	8	8	0

\* Killed by a large adult, possibly hybrid, crocodile in captivity.





# Benefactor La Fondation Brigitte Bardot

## *Takes a Bite out of Extinction!*

January 11, 2017, ACES relocated a rescued American crocodile named “Jaws” from San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, to his new home at ACES’s Crocodile Sanctuary on the mainland. Jaws, a healthy adult male, was rescued by ACES in 2011 and is unable to successfully survive in the wild due to a human-inflicted injury. Already healed at the time ACES rescued him, Jaws’s lower jaw had been apparently chopped by a machete and broken when he was a juvenile. Fixing his jaw would entail a risky surgery which would likely not mend due to crocodiles’ strong bite force; hence, Jaws will need to remain in captivity. Jaws is an internationally famous crocodile having appeared on National Geographic, Polask, in 2013 while filming an episode of “Women at the End of the World,” with Martyna Wojciechowska about ACES’s crocodile conservation efforts in Belize.

*La Fondation Brigitte Bardot “is happy to help with the funding needed for the building of enclosures for rescued crocodiles, and supports ACES endeavours to save and to take care of crocodiles in Belize.”*

Once Jaws was prepared for his journey, Belize’s Quality Poultry Products, Ltd. volunteered water transportation to the mainland. Jaws was then transported via truck to ACES’s crocodile sanctuary located at the Rainforest Adventure Zone (RAZ). Jaws’s brand-new, natural, secure habitat was made possible by a generous donation from ACES’s annual benefactor La Fondation Brigitte Bardot (FBB), France.

Crocodiles are apex predators which are essential to the health of the World’s ecosystems. American crocodiles, typically a shy, timid species, become problematic when they are directly, or often indirectly, fed by humans. Considered to be as rare as Polar bears, American crocodile numbers are drastically declining in Belize.



*Jaws, ACES’s Ambassador of crocodile conservation in Belize, raises community awareness promoting a “croc-wise” way of life for all those living in crocodile territories.*

### NEWS LINKS:

[Jaws Makes the Move from San Pedro to Sandhill](#)

[Jaws: the Trouble Croc Relocated](#)

[San Pedro’s crocodile “Jaws” relocated to new ACES Sanctuary in Sandhill](#)



# Meet ACES's Daily Operations Manager in Belize Chris Summers, UK, Crocodile Conservationist & Researcher





# Croc “Finneous” Receives Life Saving Surgery

March 18<sup>th</sup>, ACES responded to a call in Boca Del Rio about a croc sighted with his mouth tied shut. The concerned citizen said it looked like the croc was dying, and sure enough, he was. Not only was its mouth taped & tied shut with wire, some serious wounds had been inflicted upon the poor croc’s neck by human(s). The wound was extremely deep and the unmistakable stink from infection assaulted ones sense of smell. The dying croc was placed into an emergency holding pen where ACES team tended to his health, regularly cleaning the wounds of infection and dead flesh, and force feeding him chicken loaded with antibiotics to help keep the infection from spreading.

ACES called upon the help of medical expert and Veterinarian Dr. Ines Ventura, San Pedro Animal Hospital, Ambergris Caye, Belize. Even though the thought of working in such close proximity to an adult croc caused a great deal of nervousness in the good Dr., a true animal lover she couldn’t say no to a creature in distress. She swallowed her fear and graciously volunteered her time to help save the croc we’ve come to know as Finneous.

Over the weekend when everyone had the day off, ACES staff, volunteers Amaury Mellier, France; Christina Manzi, USA; Ryan Ancona, ACES’s Croc Assistant, Belize; and Dr. Ines pulled Finneous the croc out of his emergency holding pen for a small bit of surgery. He was given a local anesthesia so he’d be as comfortable and pain free as possible. Then, for the better part of two hours, while being chewed on by sand flies and bothered by mosquitoes, Dr. Ines stitched up the croc’s gaping wound from the inside out. The surgery was as much a success as we could wish for and, only time will tell how well he heals. Hopes are high for this poor croc, and we will continue to do all we can to ensure his survival.

Crocodiles are God’s creatures too; and nothing, whether cute and fluffy or wild with big teeth, deserves to be tortured in such a way like this croc was. If anyone is having real issues with a croc, please don’t take matters into your own hands, Contact your local authorities. We at ACES would like to thank our tireless volunteers; our donors & annual benefactors; the public for their continued support of our cause; and, a huge thank you to Dr. Ines for her time and expertise.

*~Written by Chris Summers, ACES’s*

***“The procedure itself in my opinion could not have gone better. There was a lot of tissue missing and the end result looked really good. The wound was closed in three layers, muscle tissue was reconnected in 16 cross stitches with the thickest suture material we had available from SPAH. Before suturing local anesthetic was applied, which added comfort to the animal and speed to the person suturing, because the animal was not feeling the suturing it stayed quiet and that made things a lot easier,” stated Dr. Ventura.***

## NEWS LINKS:

[Disturbing cruelty towards crocodiles raise concerns for ACES](#)

[Finneous the injured crocodile undergoes surgery](#)



*Dr. Ines gracious donated her time. Surgery supplies, antibiotics, and additional care costs were funded by FBB. Thank you to all involved!*





# ACES Helps Critically Endangered Siamese Crocodile “Jerry”

**September 2, 2016, ACES, Vincent Rose, donated** his time, gear, and expertise to capture and relocate a critically endangered six foot Siamese crocodile named “Jerry” in the village of Baan Tuek, Sukhothai, North Thailand. Field surveys estimate that there are less than 250 wild, adult, Siamese crocodiles in our World today.

Given as a gift to a village in Sukhothai, Thailand over 5 years ago, Jerry has been housed in a small concrete “cell” with very little fresh water. Jerry's owners approached Boon Lott's Elephant Sanctuary - BLES, seeking a new home for their pet. That's when long-term BLES volunteer, David Owen, began fundraising for Jerry's transition to the sanctuary. David, born in Ontario, Canada, knew that he must find Jerry a healthier home. Worldwide, when animals like Jerry are relocated from poor living conditions they typically end up at breeding facilities or animal shows. David and BLES Founder, Katherine Connor, decided that the only way to ensure he wasn't sent to a breeding centre, research facility, or crocodile tourist attraction was to build an enclosure at Boon Lott's Elephant Sanctuary (BLES) where Jerry could live out the rest of his life in peace. Although BLES is an elephant rescue and rehabilitation facility, currently caring for 17 rescued elephants on 750 acres of land, the sanctuary has never turned its back on an animal of any species. The sanctuary is home to 25 dogs, 40 cats, 10 tortoises, 3 wild boar, 2 macaque monkeys, 2 cows, and soon, one crocodile.

*“Every life is important and every life is worth fighting for.”*

*~ David Owen*

Thanks to all of Jerry's donors, a grand new habitat has been completed at BLES! David, having reached out internationally to crocodilian conservationists all over the World since last April, requested Vince Rose of ACES, Belize, to lead Jerry's relocation to his new home to ensure the safety of Jerry and the team moving him. Vince safely captured Jerry from his tiny concrete prison and place him in the shade to collect scientific data and take Jerry's measurements. Jerry was then sexed to be sure he was a he; and then finally, with the help of the community, Jerry was transported to his new home at BLES. Everyone involved, including the children who decorated Jerry's new home for him, are all very excited to see Jerry to be in such a pristine habitat with sufficient fresh water so that he can freely swim about. David has been blogging Jerry's journey to sanctuary, which you can follow here:

<https://livefreethaihard.wordpress.com/2016/06/13/in-a-while-crocodile/>

<https://livefreethaihard.wordpress.com/2016/08/17/from-existing-to-living/>







# ACES & Lamanai Landings Hotel & Marina

ACES Team has trained the staff at Lamanai Landings Hotel and Marina (LLHM) in the Orange Walk District of Belize. At this location educational night time “safaris” are conducted whereby freshwater Morelet’s crocodiles are safely and humanely captured by hand

or with a soft rope; microchipped for identification; measured; sexed; and then re-released at the point of capture. This scientific information is providing the Belize Forest Department with essential crocodile population distribution information in the New River while educating locals and visitors alike on the importance of the species and how to safely co-exist. ACES crocodile identification system collaborates with all previous and ongoing crocodile research being conducted in the region by the [Lamanai Field Research Center](#).

“As owner of the RAZ and LLHM, I support the efforts of ACES which greatly helps to bring awareness to the plight of crocodiles in Belize. Belize’s crocodiles have historically been hunted and killed for their hides; and sadly, also killed just for the perception of their aggression. I find ACES to be a very important vehicle in educating both Belizeans and visitors in the importance of crocodiles and the need for their protection. Our partnership with ACES has been very helpful to our initiatives in promoting Belize and we welcome a continued relationship.”

*~David Gegg, Owner of RAZ and LLHM*



Vincent Rose, Center, with ACES’s Team at LLHM on the New River, Orange Walk.



## Amaury Mellier, ACES’s Intern & Volunteer from France

Amaury, a 23 year old French Biology student, is particularly interested in reptile conservation. Arriving in Belize for the first time three years ago, Amaury spent two months training with ACES as an intern. This past March he returned to Belize to assist ACES as a volunteer.

**“I was so glad to come back for new adventures and I couldn’t have any idea about how dense it would be this time again.”**

In a [Letter to the Editor](#) of *The San Pedro Sun*, Amaury recalls his encounters during his month long “voluntourism” with ACES. In addition to GPS’ing crocodile nests sights; rescuing croc eggs from nest that were raided by raccoons; stumbling across the gruesome sight of a poached crocodile’s remains; witnessing first hand the extraordinary aggressiveness of illegally fed crocodiles; and, assisting with a life saving crocodile surgery; Amaury spent three days at LLHM training ACES’s Team on entering pertinent scientific crocodile population data into an online document that is instantaneously shared with the Belize Forest Department and ACES.

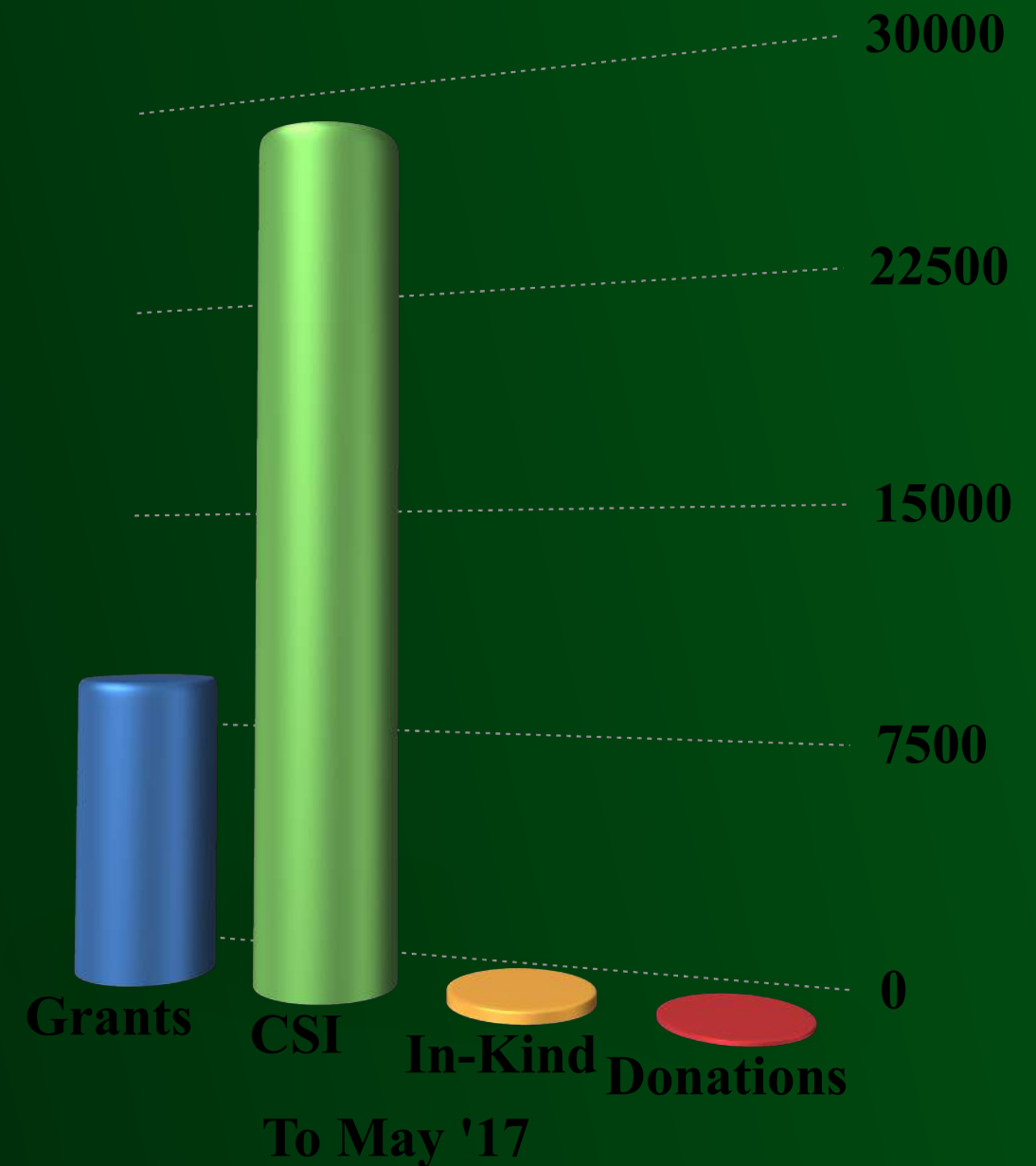
***Thank you Amaury!***



# Financial Statement

REVENUE & SUPPORT (BZD)	2016	May 2017
Previous Years'	10,961	3,406
Donations	580	150
Grants	0	9,405
In-Kind Revenue	5,945	400
CSI:Belize Revenue	45,533	26,770
<b>TOTAL Support and Revenue</b>	<b>63,019</b>	<b>40,097</b>
EXPENSES (BZD)	2016	May 2017
Equipment - tape, ropes, microchips, etc.	1,832	390
Captive Crocs Food & Care	4,601	1,216
Fuel & Oil	2,074	971
Equipment & Croc Habitat Maintenance	2,642	3,774
Educational Materials, Office, & Gov. Fees	2,834	979
New Construction Materials	10,200	0
Project FBB - incl. Captive Croc Care	3,132	7,847
Travel Expenses Croc Rescues & Relocations	6,780	8,436
Local Wages	19,573	9,082
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	<b>53,668</b>	<b>32,538</b>

Year End Dec. 2016 & Jan to May 2017



## ACES's Reaches 67 % Self-Sustainability!

Since ACES is non-profit organization, all proceeds from our highly educational hands-on crocodile excursions, **CSI:Belize (Crocodile Scientific Investigators) Expeditions**, goes directly towards crocodile rescues, research, education, and conservation in Belize. *Special Thanks to all CSI:Belize Patrons!*



# *ACES's Financial & In-Kind Benefactors Take a Bite Out of Extinction!*

## **Foundation & Annual Benefactors**

### **France**

La Fondation Brigitte Bardot

### **United Kingdom**

Rufford Small Grants Foundation  
Wildlife Aid Foundation, Simon Cowell

### **United Sates**

Brian Smarch  
Carol K. Hendry, in memory of  
Christopher Love  
Jeff Turley, in memory of  
Joshua Turley

## **Conservation Partner Supporters**

### **Belize**

Belize Bird Rescue  
Belize Forest Department  
Belize Wildlife Referral Clinic  
San Pedro Police Department  
Lamanai Field Research Center  
Lamanai Landings Hotel & Marina  
Rainforest Adventure Zone

### **Ecuador**

Tropical Herping

### **France**

Conserv-Action, Barbara Réthoré & Julien Chapuis

### **United States**

Belize Economic & Ecological Development Fund  
Crocodile Conservation Services, Bruce Schwedick  
Lafeber Conservation and Wildlife LightHawk  
Mesoamerican Ridge to Reef Alliance  
Optics for the Tropics

Volunteer Latin America

## **Private Contributors**

### **Belize**

Amanda Syme  
Ambergris Caye Belize Forum  
Ambergris Ambergris Caye South Watch  
Barbara Smalley  
Belize Animal Rescue, Gordon & Gillian Kirkwood  
Belize Water Services, Ltd.  
Billy Harmouch  
Caribbean Shrimp Farm, Ltd.  
Carts Belize  
Chris Summers  
Clifford Kirk  
David Gegg  
Dove, in memory of, & Lori Magy  
Grand Belizean Estates  
Gabriella Peralta  
Island Films  
Joanne & Josh Buettner  
Karen & Gary Mielcarek  
LoneStar Diner  
Mario Cervoni  
Marty Casado  
Maya Island Air  
Monica Davis  
Patrick & Kimmie Stiley  
Quality Poultry Products  
San Pedro Animal Hospital  
San Pedro Town Council  
TacoGirl  
The San Pedro Sun, Tamara & Ron Sniffin  
Tropic Island Air  
Yvonne Temsik

### **Czech Republic**

Libor Kopecny  
Barbora & Joseph

### **France**

Amaury Mellier  
David Oudjani

### **Germany**

Venessa Bono Contioso

### **United States**

Brad & Shepherd Philip  
Brian Smarsch  
Catherine Coleman, in memory of  
Cindy & Dave Simon  
Evan Sims  
Judith Chenot  
Kathy & Danny Hilderhoff  
Monica Davis  
Peter Lecuyer  
Piper Winston  
Sam Fields  
Violeta Tomsa  
Zoran & Patricia Tesic

## **Corporate Donors**

### **Sweden**

Meter Television AB, Linda Lindorff

### **Polask**

### **United Kingdom**

Double Act TV, Animal Planet USA  
Wildlife SOS, Animal Planet UK

### **United States**

Construction For Seniors, Ltd.  
GoogleAds  
Hughesnet  
Kramer Automotive Specialties, Inc.  
Techsoup  
Pro-ID Microchip Systems  
YouTube

## **Crocodilian Specialist Supporters**

### **Australia**

Charlie Manolis, PhD

### **Myanmar (Burma)**

Steven Platt, PhD

### **United States**

Damen Hurd  
Frank Mazzotti, PhD  
Thomas Rainwater, PhD

## **Wildlife Photographer & Croc Attack Documentarist**

Brandon Sideleau

### **International**

ACES's CSI:Belize patrons

*Thank You!  
Vince, Cherie, Chris,  
& the Crocs*



# Publications & ACES Future

Chenot-Rose, C., and Rose, V. (2015). American Crocodile, *Crocodylus acutus*, Population, Nesting, Hatchling and Habitat Assessment Update in Northern and Sandbore Cayes, Lighthouse Atoll, Belize. Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter 34(2): 22-25.

Steven G. Platt, Cherie Chenot-Rose, Vincent Rose, and Thomas R. Rainwater. (2014). Natural History Notes. *Crocodylus acutus* (American crocodile). Frugivory. Herpetological Review 45(1): 120-121.

Chenot-Rose, C. (2013). American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) Population Survey in Ambergris Caye, Belize. Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter 32(3): 12-15.

Chenot-Rose, C. (2013). American Crocodile Survey of Northern and Sandbore Cayes, Lighthouse Atoll, Belize. Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter 32(1): 7-10.

Chenot-Rose, C. (2011). American Crocodile Population and Habitat Viability Assessment and Conservation in Ambergris Caye, Belize. Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter 30(1): 16-17.

**ACES's Mission:** Founded in 2006, ACES is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of Belize's critical wetland habitats and protected species through scientific research and education in order to preserve wildlife for future generations. ACES is Belize's only crocodile rescue program operating under a three year Memorandum of Understanding with the Belize Forest Department, Ministry of Natural Resources. ACES responds to crocodile calls country-wide and works with both of Belize's species: the saltwater American crocodile, *Crocodylus acutus*, and the freshwater Morelet's crocodile, *C. moreletii*. ACES's number one goal is human safety. Nuisance crocs are relocated while problematic crocs, those that are aggressive, have attacked people/pets, or repeatedly return to a populated area, are placed into captivity. Rescued crocodiles are rehabilitated and re-released when able. **All crocodiles in Belize, including those in captivity at ACES, are the property of the Belize Government and decisions regarding their welfare are at the recommendations of the Belize Department of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development.**

**ACES's Goal** is educating individuals in order to help people understand crocodilian behavior and the important roles that crocodilians play in maintaining healthy eco-systems world-wide. Until now ACES's focus has always been in Belize, Central America. Truth is American crocodiles are named so not because they are expats from the United States of America, but because they exist in all of the "Americas," the southern Floridian habitats of North American, Central America, and the northern regions of South America. American crocodiles are a highly intelligent species of Crocodilian that is annually migrating to more northern areas of southwest Florida. Last year two *C. acutus* were documented in Lee County. For this reason, ACES is expanding to Southwest Florida, USA. ACES's ambition is to gain a better understanding of the species' world-wide population, and to educate the public on how to safely co-exist with these magnificent apex predators in order to help save our wildlife for future generations.

**THANK YOU to All of ACES's Supports! Your Help Takes a Bite Out of Extinction!**



*Cherie Chenot-Rose & Vincent Rose, ACES's Founders*

Belize: 011.501.631.6366 USA: 001.239.771.3252/3819

[www.AmericanCrocodileSanctuary.org](http://www.AmericanCrocodileSanctuary.org) ~ [GiveaCroc@comcast.net](mailto:GiveaCroc@comcast.net)