



NANAIMO MUSEUM

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Media Release - Photo Safari Features Journey to Belize - October 7, 2009

For Immediate Release

When a typical, snow-bound Canadian dreams of heading to the tropics, it usually means a trip to the travel agent to book a flight. Not so for Nanaimo photojournalist Mark Corbett. His eight month sojourn to Central America last year began as an adrenaline induced, 10-day, 8,000 kilometre transcontinental road trip in his soft top Jeep.

When I started planning my trip, I thought I was going to fly to Central America, probably Costa Rica, so I could photograph some of the amazing wildlife down there and maybe volunteer for an environmental organization, he says. But that quickly changed when I got an email from a friend saying a group of them were driving down to Belize to start an eco-community. That was all the convincing I needed.

With adventure on my mind, I put it all on the line to go on my latest incredible journey, he says. My home, a thriving freelance career in Nanaimo, and most of my worldly possessions; they were all on the chopping block in order to appease my particular brand of restlessness.

On Boxing Day of 2007, Corbett would set off from Vernons Silver Star Ski Resort where he spent Christmas with his family, and would arrive 10 days later in the sun drenched Cayo District of Belize. From BC he would travel through Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, across the border into north eastern Mexico and finally down to Belize. It was a journey he claims should have been dubbed International Rally Driving 101.

For the next seven months, Corbett would live like a local as he helped establish the Better in Belize eco-community, and would later become a co-owner of a new eight room guesthouse in a beautiful little river town called Benque Viejo del Carmen.

During his time there, Corbett says he took thousands of photographs of this small, English-speaking Caribbean country most famous for jaguars, howler monkeys and other exotic animals as well as having the second largest barrier reef in the world.

Belize is also at the centre of the ancient Mayan culture complete with extraordinary archeological ruins from thousands of years ago. As a laid back and beautiful eco-tourism destination, it just doesn't get much better than Belize, says Corbett.

Wanting to share his adventures the best way he knows how, through photography, Corbett is hosting a photography extravaganza on Thursday, Oct. 29 at the new Nanaimo Museum in the Vancouver Island Conference Centre.

The event is called Mark Corbetts Wild 4 Life Photo Safari 2: BC to Belize and Back Again. Promoting it as a multimedia, multi-species photographic adventure, it will feature a fascinating slide show of his journey down to Belize and the seven months he lived there as well as his journey home via Western Canada. Also on the roster that night will be the unveiling of Corbetts Wild 4 Life on Vancouver Island, an exhibit and sale of his best work here at home.

Because of his love for wildlife, including the many species here on Vancouver Island, Corbett will be donating partial proceeds from the event to the North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre in Errington. As a way to keep things more interactive, Corbett has arranged for as many as seven animal ambassadors to be on hand at the

event including a barred owl, bearded dragon, box turtle, several parrots from the World Parrot Refuge in Coombs, and the star of the show, a white Arctic Wolf with icy blue eyes.

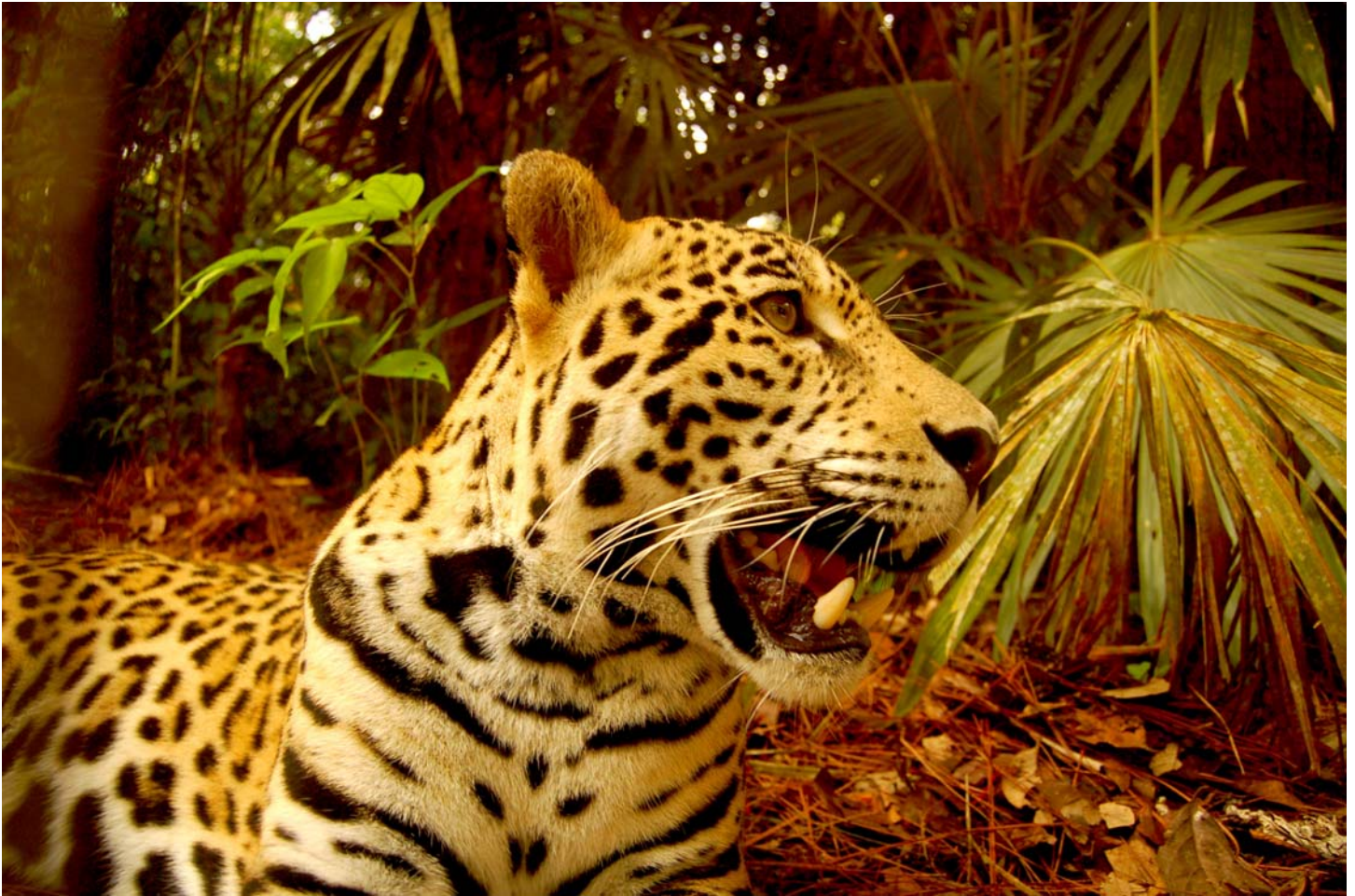
For the \$25 ticket price, attendees can also enjoy culinary works of art from Masters Touch Catering, a silent auction, live music by Read My Lips and friends, a grand prize draw for an accommodation package at the Benque Guesthouse in Belize, great door prizes and special prizes for the best dressed critter costume.

Advance tickets are now available at Nanaimo Museum, House of Indigo on Chapel St. and Island Veterinarian Hospital on Bowen Road, or by calling 250-619-8265. They will also be available at the door, but with a limited number of tickets, Corbett urges people to get them in advance.

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For more information, please call Mark Corbett at 250-619-8265 or email mark@wld4life.net.

Cutlines:



DSC 8524: Junior is a rescued one year old jaguar at the Belize Wildlife Refuge.



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DSC 6354: The archaeological site at Xunantínich, located near Benque, Belize, are among the most photographed in the country.



DSC: 3100: The Better in Belize team that drove from BC to Central America celebrate their arrival on the beach in Placencia along the caribbean coast.