

Are pet birds allowed in Belize?

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I have answered this question at the bottom of my rant.

To bring a bird to Belize, one needs health documents (recent physical, blood test, etc) and there is a quarantine period (30 days) but it is a home quarantine.

Interestingly enough, we spent a day in the Wildlife and Forestry department recently. Then we drove down to Belize city to rescue five baby Barn Owls that someone had turfed out of their roof space.

As we were travelling with one of the officials we were talking about bird ownership in Belize. The government is going to be meeting very shortly on a proposed nationwide licencing program for all animals and birds. If you want a jaguar, then you will pay and pay dearly. You will also have a twice yearly inspection. Same for Macaws, Parrots, Toucans, etc. Hopefully a national chipping exercise will be carried out before the law is enforced. No registered chip and you are caught with wildlife, then a big fine. All vets will be issued with free chip readers, as well as forestry officials.

This is because it is illegal to keep any indigenous Belizean animal as a pet. Unfortunately the law is flouted, especially by government officials and expats who should know and act more responsibly. The police also almost never enforce the law.

Noteable instances include an American who keeps a monkey chained in his restaurant at Barton Creek in quite appalling conditions. Hotels that keep big cats imprisoned in small cages. A hotel that has chained spider monkeys and a host of imported birds as well as locally captured kept in a small aviary. We know who they are, it is just that they seem to have powerful friends who stop any enforcement of the law.

But the tide is changing.

Bird ownership of captive bred foreign species in Belize is legal only as long as you have a licence to import their bird. All indigenous bird species are illegal to own whether captive bred or not.

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