

Belize - part 3

Sunday morning, 15 December, we followed the recommendation of the Lewis family (from Friday night's restaurant conversations) to visit their Evangelical Bible Church in Belmopan. The children were practicing for their Christmas program rather than being in the two classrooms. The adults had their Bible study in the dining hall. They have been using the Answers curriculum, which I recognized as excellent, trusting the Bible's teachings from the first verse onwards. The topic for the day was the split of the nation of Israel into North and South because of the unwise decisions of the young King Rehoboam. The leaders guided discussions very well. The 10:30 worship service actually began somewhat later, as timing in developing nations can be flexible. The music and teachings and guest introductions were all done well. I had the impression that if I was in Belmopan for an extended period of time, perhaps teaching at the University as a guest professor, that I would want to be part of this congregation.



adult Sunday School class



Evangelical Bible Church, Belmopan



Gail walking to the Lewis's home



Sarita, Gail, and the Koreans



Steven at the right

We had been invited to have a mid-day dinner at the home of the Lewis family, near the University of Belize. The Koreans had also been invited. The food and conversations were excellent. Some of us guests helped with the cleanup, during which these interior photos were taken. Though not specified in our travel details (apart from attending church and having lunch somewhere), this result from Friday's invitation by the Lewis family made an especially good highlight for our vacation in Belize.

Then we drove west through Santa Elena and San Ignacio to the entrance road to Chaa Creek and the Belize Botanic Gardens. Twelve years ago this dirt road had potholes that were worse than the speed bumps. This year the road was smoothly graded and very much better. Ownerships were changed. Judy duPlooy was semi-retired but still met us to introduce us to our cabin for the next two nights. Her former restaurant is now Sweet Songs. This deck corner of the restaurant is where we enjoyed sitting for our two breakfasts. We could look into the forest jungle to see the birds, many of which could be seen close up when they came to feast on discarded fruit



on the tray seen beyond Gail's back.





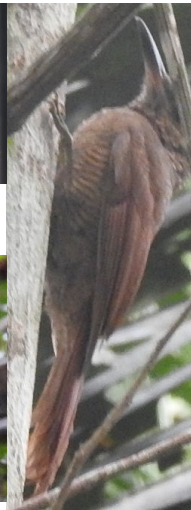
Black-headed Saltator



Collared Aracari



male Red-throated Ant-Tanager



Northern Barred-Woodcreeper



Lesson's Motmot



Motmot tail tip

The Motmot tail has this unusual extension of two of its feathers by a wire-like shaft (rachis).



female Red-throated Ant-Tanager

After breakfast we went next door to visit the Belize Botanic Gardens, built over many years by the duPlooy family (www.belizebotanic.org). For a couple of hours we admired the great variety of plants and trees which were labeled by signs and identified within a pamphlet. We did not walk all of the

available trails but did photograph a few of the birds.



entrance to Belize Botanic Gardens



Gail (red dot) dwarfed by bamboo grove



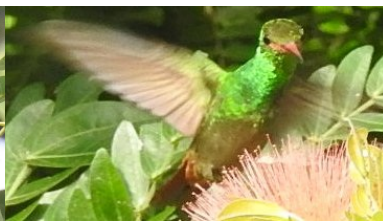
Flowers feed orioles and hummingbirds



Black-cowled Oriole



Masked Tityra



Rufous-tailed Hummingbird



entrance to Botanic Gardens cottage 12



boardwalk and our cottage 11

boardwalk entrance to our cottage 11

The boardwalk connected all of the cottages of Belize Botanic Gardens and those of the Sweet Songs Resort farther away. It was a convenient way to walk through this tropical rainforest jungle.



Our late Monday morning (16 December) destination was the Xunantunich Archeological Reserve of Mayan ruins. To get there cars and pedestrians must cross a small river on a hand-cranked tethered ferry. Twelve years ago the river was too high and swift and we were prevented from our intended visit there. There is a visitor's center with thorough descriptions. Thereafter a tour guide person is not needed but is available.



left side of large central field



right side of field, omitting middle



The tall tower is climbable; I did so.



side of tower



view down from top of climbing route



view to far end of site



side wall of tower



bats inside tower



iguana on tower side wall



Mangrove Swallow

From the tower top I was able to look somewhat down on this Turkey Vulture flying by. Back at the river there were several Mangrove Swallows in the air and resting. We had lunch at a restaurant near the ferry.

Then we went back to the town of Santa Elena to visit the La Loma Luz Hospital. The warehouse and headquarters of Project C.U.R.E. in Denver (Centennial) has in the



La Loma Luz Hospital in Santa Elena



lobby view



storage room

past sent 40-foot shipping containers of medical supplies and equipment to that hospital. Earlier this year they also sent a medical mission CURE Clinic team there. They built storage shelves for keeping the boxes of medical supplies in good order. I was able to photograph those shelves and the mark that I had placed on some of the box labels.



my mark in upper left

For Monday evening dinner we visited the Chaa Creek Resort, somewhat north of the Botanic Gardens. We did a daytime visit there twelve years ago but did not buy anything. There has been much new development of the Resort, and I did not recognize anything. We roamed the nearby trails and photographed some birds. When we had dinner, Gail and I were the only guests in the entire resort that evening.



restaurant at Chaa Creek Resort



Agouti

At the end of dinner we had conversations with the waiter. Somehow the question of local languages came up. So I gave him a

32GB flash drive with Jesus Film movies in English and Spanish. Then he

mentioned that his original language was Mayan. So I gave him the 16GB flash drive that included movies in that language.



Yellow-winged Tanager



Black-throated Green Warbler

Part4 of this report series covers 17 to 19 December as we went eastward across the country and then to San Pedro on the northeastern island of Ambergris.

Dr. Ed Holroyd
30 December 2019