

Animal Life: An estimated 22 animal species listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as rare or endangered make their homes within the boundaries of Cockscomb. They include the jaguar, ocelot, margay cat, collared peccary, jaguarundi, and tapir.

Bird Life: The country of Belize is home to an unusually high number of bird species -- 533 species in all. These include many brightly plumed species such as parrots, macaws, and keel-billed toucan, the national bird of Belize. Many of the birds found here migrate to Belize from North America for the winter, returning north every spring.

Plant Life: Classified as "secondary forest," Cockscomb is a biologically rich wildlands system where an estimated more than 3,000 species of plants thrive. Many rare and unusual species remain unclassified. Parkland includes a diverse mix of broadleaf evergreens such as mahogany, laurel, and cedar trees.

II. Current Park Personnel & Equipment

Cockscomb has a park director and three park wardens -- a staff of only four to monitor over 100,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat. As funding becomes available, additional guards must be hired to aid in the daily maintenance and patrol of the sanctuary.

Facilities include a warden's quarters, and a director's office and storage shed that were built last year. A badly needed headquarters building is now under construction and we hope to see it completed by later this spring.

Also under construction are several outbuildings and a solar powered generator. With the help of additional funding, these projects should be completely operational by summer, 1991.

You should also know that, despite the obvious lack of necessities, the park director and wardens remain exceptionally dedicated and committed to their work. But I fear their enthusiasm may wane under the demands of long hours ... the absence of badly needed facilities ... and lack of the personnel, basic equipment, and financial assistance necessary to perform their jobs.

It is extremely difficult to work in the unrelenting heat and high humidity of this region. Torrential rains are common. And the task of patrolling Cockscomb's vast and dense forests poses a unique set of problems.

The staff is performing well under the circumstances, and these people deserve a great deal of credit. But if WWF is truly committed to wildlife conservation in this park we must make every effort to provide this hardworking staff increased support, and the equipment and basic operational resources they desperately need to do their important work!

III. Cockscomb's Struggle for Survival

The wildlife of Cockscomb need defending today more than ever before.

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