



**FLAAR**  
MESOAMÉRICA

- Review of our several days stay at -

# TORTUGAL

**BOUTIQUE HOTEL,  
RESTAURANT AND MARINA**

Río Dulce, Izabal



**Roxana Leal and Nicholas Hellmuth**  
**July 2021**



## **CREDITS**

The helpful individuals listed below are part of the FLAAR Mesoamerica research and field work team. The office research team are additional individuals in the main office in Guatemala City. Since each report is a different plant or animal, the individuals who assist in preparing the bibliography, species identification and botanical information category are, not the same for each report.

### **Author**

Nicholas Hellmuth  
Roxana Leal

### **Compilation of basic data from earlier zoologists**

Nicholas Hellmuth

### **Bibliography Team**

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Vivian Hurtado

### **Editor**

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### **Photographers**

Nicholas Hellmuth  
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### **Layout of this English Edition**

Jaqueline González

## **APPRECIATION**

### **For hospitality and assistance at Hotel Tortugal, Río Dulce**

Daphne Becker

### **Assistance for accommodations**

Wilmer Cuxum  
Leonel Xirax

### **Assistance on the boat trip**

José Jacobo Ardón Madero

### **PHOTO FROM FRONT COVER**

#### **Hotel Tortugal**

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.

## On June 18

We began our monthly expedition for our Livingston Biodiversity Project. This time our objective was to visit Río Sejá, Río Ciénaga and certain tiny islands filled with nesting waterbirds that are on the east side of highway CA-13 bridge. It is the first time we have explored this area of the Municipio de Livingston for this 15-month project (obviously we have been to this area many times in other years before the start of the project, but not up-and-down Río Sejá or Río Ciénaga). We are trying to find edible wetlands plants *Crataeva tapia*, *Diospyros nigra*, and *Pithecellobium lanceolatum*. Also, we wish to find and photograph birds like *Cochlearius cochlearius* (boat-billed heron) and *Nyctibius grandis* (great potoo bird).



On the way driving on highway CA-9 to Izabal we could see mountains with obsidian at km 25, then cactus and Flor de Mayo in the dry forest (km 80-120 of CA-9).

### **Hotel Tortugal**

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica,  
Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.

In Río Dulce we stayed at Tortugal Boutique Hotel, Restaurant and Marina. The Hotel is located on the north shore of Río Dulce to the west of the highway CA-13 bridge over Río Dulce.

#### Hotel Tortugal

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.

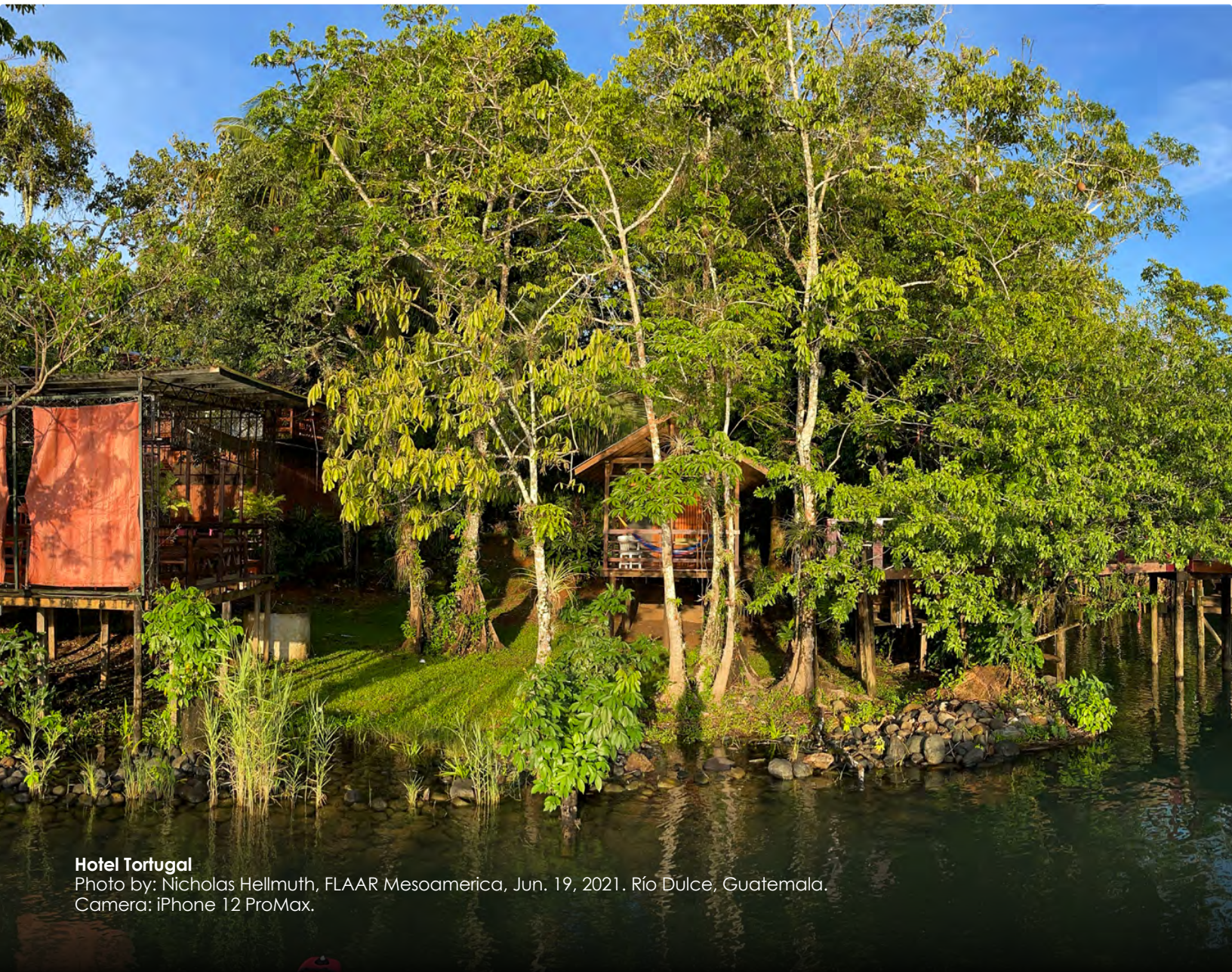


Since we know the owners of the cacao nursery and other forest products property adjacent to the hotel, we usually arrive by vehicle, passing through the town of Río Dulce then the aldea of Fronteras, Río Dulce. The normal way to arrive is to park your vehicle in the hotel parking space on the south side of the river and then the hotel lancha will bring you and your luggage to the hotel across the river. You can find more information on how to get there by entering their website: [www.tortugal.com](http://www.tortugal.com).

#### Hotel Tortugal

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.

Hotel and Marina Tortugal is an excellent place to rest and relax, with an incredible view of Río Dulce and nearby Castillo de San Felipe. In addition, it has different piers to dock your sailboat or yacht and a floating solarium, from where you can swim in the river.



**Hotel Tortugal**

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.



The restaurant has an extensive menu and you are sure to find food that you like. Both local and international cuisines are available, including vegan and vegetarian options. Food is served quickly by efficient and friendly staff. The restaurant area has a beautiful view of Río Dulce Bridge. In the morning you will be able to observe different species of birds flying through the place, in addition to observing the photogenic sunrise.

**Hotel Tortugal**

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021.  
Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.

El Tortugal offers different sizes, arrangement, and styles of rooms. You can find family lodge, honeymoon lodge, lodge to be private away from everyone else.



#### **Hotel Tortugal**

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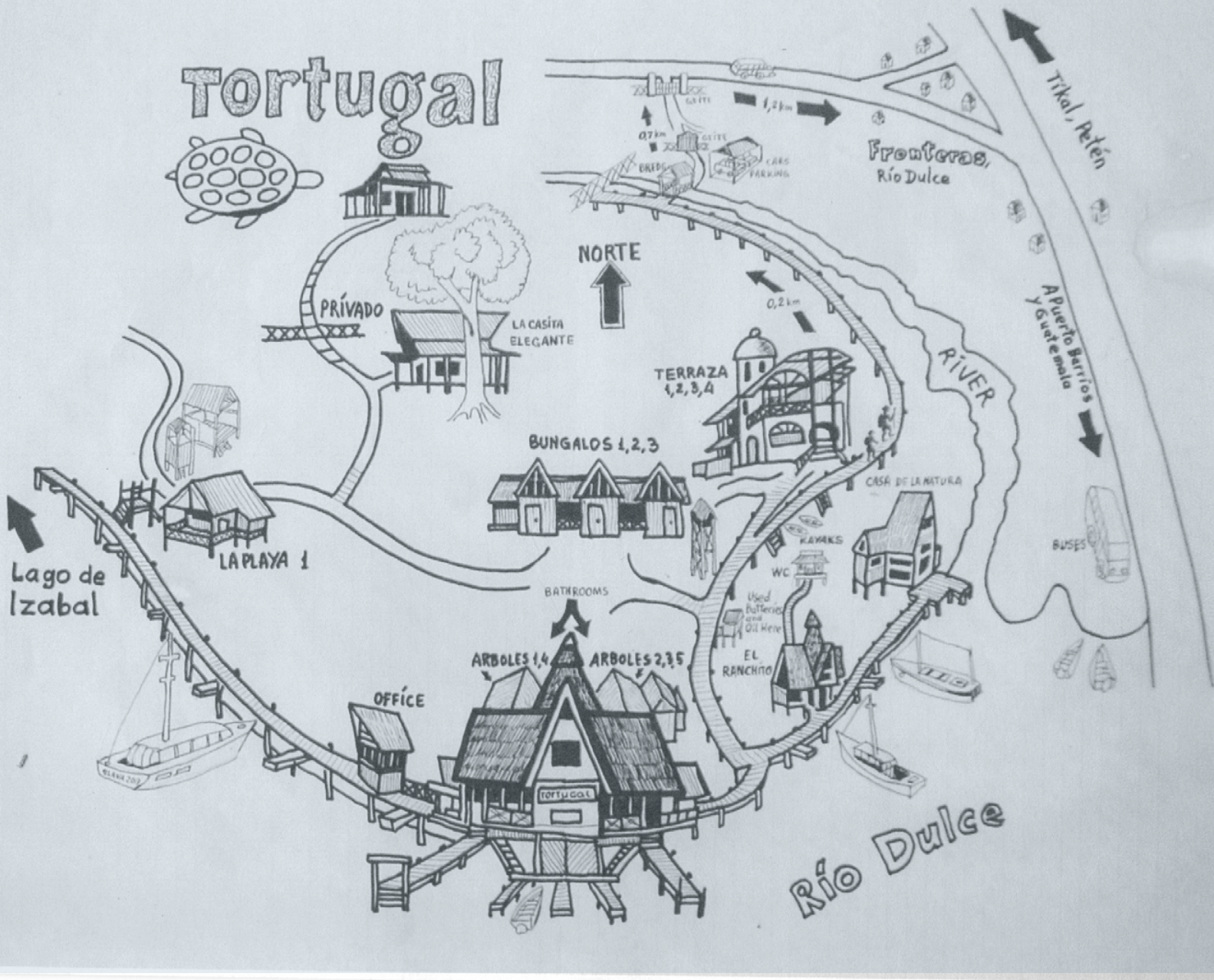
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**Hotel Tortugal**

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# Tortugal Hotel map



Naturally each bungalow has private bathroom, incredible views, fans, lamps, bamboo finishes, its own balcony and a lot of privacy. You can observe and listen nature from your room but also go out to explore. All rooms have views of the river or the jungle. The place is surrounded by natural beauty. Our field work team of six stayed in the Nature Lodge.



**Hotel Tortugal**

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica,  
Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.



This is one of a hundred “views into the rain forest wetlands” that you see as you comfortably walk along the raised wooden walkways through the hotel property.

**Mangrove swamp.**

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica,  
Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.



**Mangrove swamp.**

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.



***Rhizophora mangle.***

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica,  
Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.



***Rhizophora mangle.***

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica,  
Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.



**Araceae.**

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***Philodendron.***

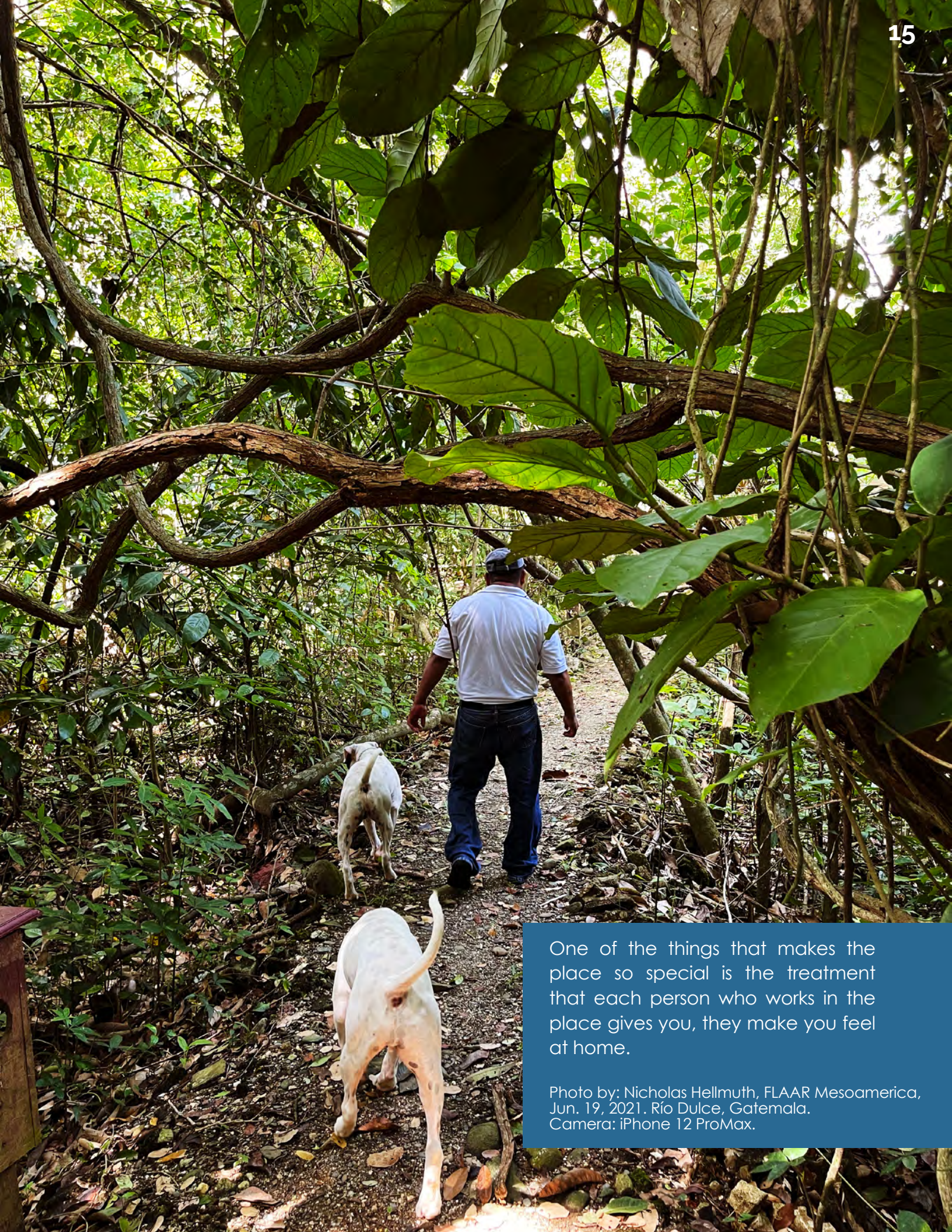
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Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
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***Rhizophora mangle.***

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021.  
Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.





One of the things that makes the place so special is the treatment that each person who works in the place gives you, they make you feel at home.

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021. Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax.

## We conclude this review with comments by David, one of our team:

“Tortugal Boutique River Lodge offers very good comfort and at the same time you feel you are living in a tree house. The rooms are available as double bed cabins or family size wooden houses with many beds, bathrooms and a view to the jungle and the river.

Food is delicious, well made, with local and international options. The staff is kind and is always available in case you need any extras, like towels or need to ask for anything. There is also an area for studying and reading, with many books available free to read in front of the river. I would estimate that you can also fish, because you can see many fish getting close to the dock.

Also, the owner, Daphne Becker, and the hotel managers, are keeping two lovely young dogs that interact with you when you are walking through the place, they are playful if you let them. These dogs are huge, but peaceful and friendly with each one of us.

The best part is how you feel surrounded by nature, and the certainty that you will have everything you need really close.



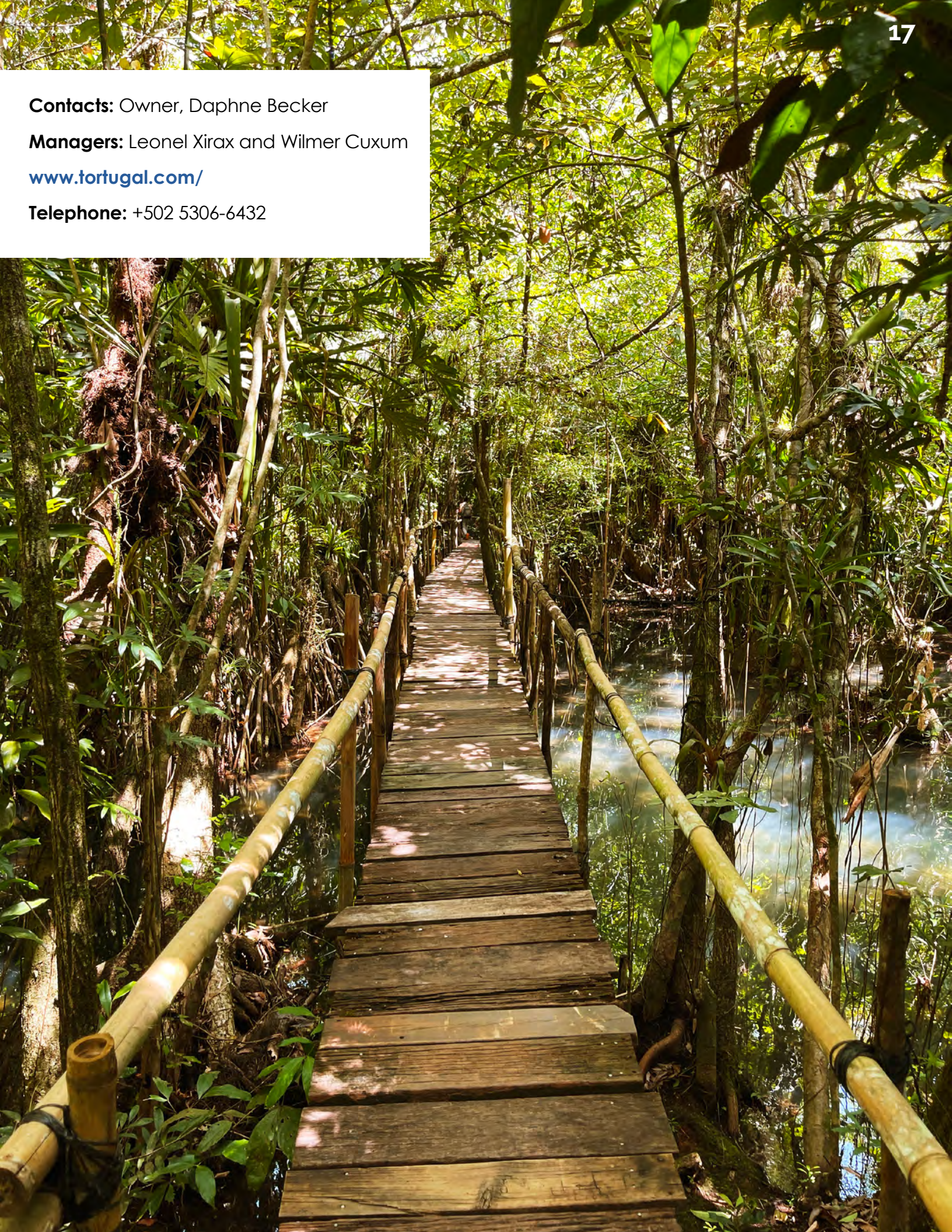
If you are visiting Río Dulce or on a way to Tikal or Yaxha, Peten from Guatemala City, this is the place to stay before you leave the Departamento of Izabal to enter the Peten (less than an hour from Rio Dulce and then another 2 hours to get to Tikal or Parque Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo)”.

**Contacts:** Owner, Daphne Becker

**Managers:** Leonel Xirax and Wilmer Cuxum

[www.tortugal.com/](http://www.tortugal.com/)

**Telephone:** +502 5306-6432



620000

650000

680000

710000

740000



1780000  
1760000  
1740000  
1720000  
1700000  
1680000



### Áreas naturales protegidas de Livingston



1760000  
1740000  
1720000

620000 640000 660000 680000 700000



**Izabal**

- 1. Área sin protección
- 2. Parque Nacional Río Dulce
- 3. El Higuerito
- 4. Área de Usos Múltiples Río Sarstún
- 5. Sierra de Santa Cruz
- 6. Biotopo Protegido Chocón Machacas
- 7. Reserva Protectora de Manantiales Cerro San Gil

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## To publish photographs

Hellmuth's photographs have been published by National Geographic, by Hasselblad Magazine, and used as front covers on books on Mayan topics around the world. His photos of cacao (cocoa) are in books on chocolate of the Maya and Aztec both by Dr Michael Coe (all three of editions) and another book on chocolate by Japanese specialist in Mayan languages and culture, Dr Yasugi. We naturally appreciate a contribution to help cover the costs our office expenses for all the cataloging, processing, and organization of the photos and the field trip data.

## For your social media

You can post any of the FLAAR Mesoamerica PDFs about the Municipio of Livingston on your Social Media sites; you can send any of these PDFs to your friends and colleagues and family: no cost, no permission needed.

We hope to attract the attention of professors, botanical garden clubs, orchid and bromeliad societies, students, tourists, experts, explorers, photographers and nature lovers who want to get closer, to marvel at the species of flowering plants, mushrooms and lichen that FLAAR Mesoamerica finds during each field trip each month.

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### PHOTO FROM BACK COVER

Photo by: Nicholas Hellmuth. FLAAR Mesoamerica, Jun. 19, 2021.  
Río Dulce, Guatemala.  
Camera: iPhone 12 ProMax,

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO FLAAR MESOAMÉRICA

The reports are a joint production between the field trip team and the in-house office team. So here we wish to cite the full team:

**Flor de María Setina** is the office manager, overseeing all the diverse projects around the world (including FLAAR-REPORTS research on advanced wide-format digital inkjet printers, a worldwide project for over 20 years). We also utilize the inkjet prints to produce educational banners to donate to schools.

**Vivian Díaz** environmental engineer, is project manager for flora, fauna projects (field work and resulting reports at a level helpful for botanists, zoologists and ecologists, and for university students). Also coordinates activities at MayanToons, division where educational material for kids is prepared.

**Victor Mendoza** identifies plants, mushrooms, lichen, insects, and arachnids. When his university schedule allows, he also likes to participate in field trips on flora and fauna research.

**Vivian Hurtado** prepares the bibliography for each subject and downloads pertinent research material for our e-library on flora and fauna. All of us use both these downloads plus our in-house library on flora and fauna of Mesoamerica (Mexico through Guatemala into Costa Rica).

**Sergio Jerez** prepares the bibliography of each topic and download the pertinent research material for our electronic library on flora and fauna. We all use these two downloads plus our internal library on Mesoamerican flora and fauna (Mexico through Guatemala to Costa Rica).

**Andrea de la Paz** is a designer who helps prepare the master-plan for aspects of our publications. She is our editorial art director

**Senaida Ba** is photography assistant for many years. She knows the Canon, Nikon and is learning the two new Sony mirrorless cameras. She prepares, packs, sets-up, and helps the photographers before, during, and after each day's field trip.

**Jaqueline González** is a designer who puts together the text and photographs to create the actual report (we have several designers at work since we have multiple reports to produce).

**Roxana Leal** is Social Media Manager for flora and fauna research and publications, and MayanToons educational book projects

**María Alejandra Gutiérrez** is an experienced photographer, especially with the Canon EOS 1D X Mark II camera and 5x macro lens for photographing tiny insects, tiny flowers, and tiny mushrooms. Work during and after a field trip also includes sorting, naming, and processing. And then preparing reports in PDF format.

**David Arrivillaga** is an experienced photographer and is able to handle both Nikon and the newest Sony digital cameras. Work during and after a field trip also includes sorting, naming, and processing.

**Juan Carlos Hernández** takes the material that we write and places it into the pertinent modern Internet software to produce our web pages (total network is read by over half a million people around the world).

**Paulo Núñez** is a webmaster, overlooking the multitude of web sites. Internet SEO changes every year, so we work together to evolve the format of our web sites.

**Valeria Áviles** is an illustrator for MayanToons, the division in charge of educational materials for schools, especially the Q'eqchi' Mayan schools in Alta Verapaz, Q'eqchi' and Petén Itzá Maya in Petén, and the Q'eqchi' Mayan and Garifuna schools in the municipality of Livingston, Izabal.

**Josefina Sequén** is illustrator for MayanToons and also helps prepare illustrations for Social Media posts and for animated videos.

**Rosa Sequén** is also an illustrator for MayanToons and also helps prepare illustrations for Social Media posts and for animated videos.

**Laura Morales** is preparing animated videos in MayanToons style since animated videos are the best way to help school children how to protect the fragile ecosystems and endangered species

**Heidy Alejandra Galindo Setina** joined our design team in August 2020. She likes photography, drawing, painting, and design.

**Maria José Rabanales** she is part of the team for editing photographic reports and educational material of Flora and Fauna since September 2020. She works together with others of the team to prepare the finished pdf editions of the material of the Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo Project.

**Alejandra Valenzuela** biology student is now part of Flora y Fauna's photographic report and educational material editing team since September 2020.

**Alexander Gudiel** designer who join the editorial design team on December 2020. He will combine the text, pictures and maps into the FLAAR Mesoamerica editorial criteria.

**Cristina Ríos** designer student who join the editorial design team on December 2020. He will combine the text, pictures and maps into the FLAAR Mesoamerica editorial criteria.

**Carlos Marroquín** is a USAC graphic design student who volunteered to do his professional practice with the Editorial Design Team. We are very grateful with people like him who join our team and bring his knowledge and work.

## Other publications of the fauna of Guatemala



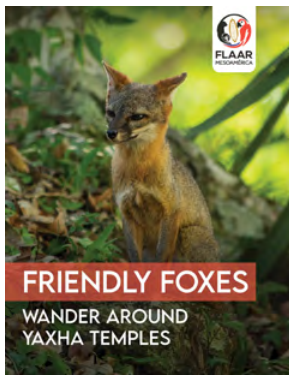
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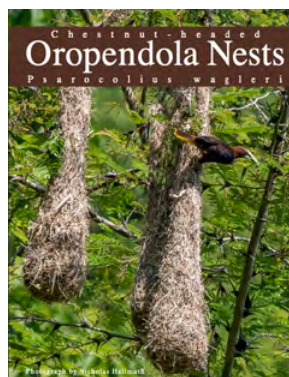
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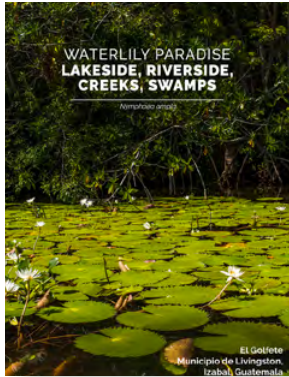
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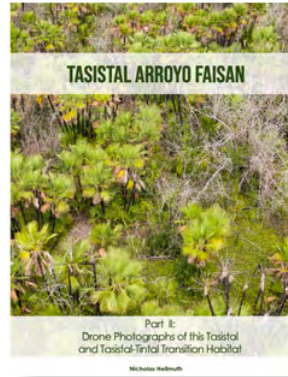
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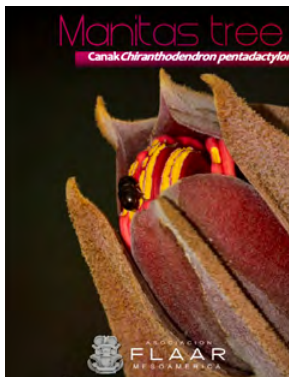
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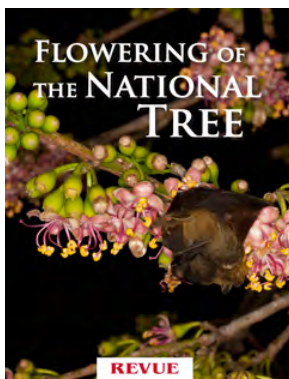
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# Other publications from National Park Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, Guatemala



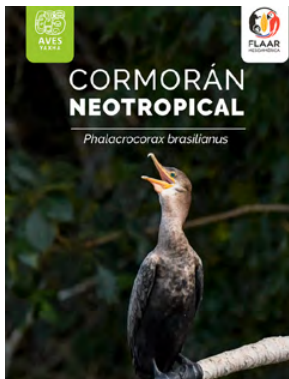
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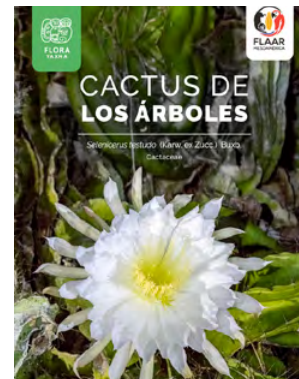
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