

Will, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine student about his 2018 Belize Zoo visit: The partnership the Belize Zoo has made with Cornell VetMed facilitates a world-class veterinary opportunity for veterinary students, technicians and clinicians. What excites me most in collaboration of the veterinary specialties anesthesia, zoo/ wildlife medicine and dentistry is that it not only helps the animals at the zoo, but provides new insights and discoveries that contribute to veterinary medicine which may have not been found if not for this partnership.

For example, Cornell's dental team, Drs. Santiago Peralta and Lindsay Schneider, and veterinary technician Bethany Wright, were working on one of the zoo's Jaguars, Silvia. After a thorough dental exam including radiographs, they diagnosed tooth resorption, a common dental pathology of unknown cause in domestic cats. To their knowledge, this was the first documented case in Jaguars. With additional histopathologic information on the extracted teeth from this case pending, this could provide vital information on the cause of this disease in domestic cats as well as make this a notable disease to keep on the differential list in dental diseases of large felids.

This being my second consecutive year at the Belize Zoo, I saw just in a year's span how much the clinical facility's improved. Taking a more administrative role at the zoo this year, I was able to observe the ebb and flow of the new clinic. I felt that the improvements facilitated a strategic and logical flow equivocal to that of our hospital at Cornell. From premedication of the animal, to scrubbing and prepping in the preoperative room, to carrying out the procedures in the surgical suite, the overall process was organized, efficient and safe for the animals and humans involved. Additional to the operative aspect of the clinic, there's now an organized diagnostic lab where we ran fecals, blood smears, and spun down blood products in the centrifuge. This was the first year I have seen this done with every animal we worked on. This enabled us to make more directed diagnoses and treatment plans for the animals. Finally, there is now an organized pharmacy with the inventory documented and organized by amount, concentration and expiration dates for each drug. This enables the zoo and visiting organizations to coordinate on what medicine is in short supply so that certain supplies that are more difficult or expensive to get in Belize can be brought with those arriving groups.