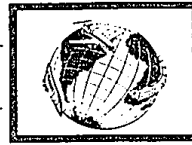


# Travel Scene



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O&E Thursday, March 1, 1990

## Spring in Michigan:

Although it seems like the middle of winter, it's time to start planning for spring and early summer events. After all, when the weather does break, you do want to hit the vacation trail running. And Michigan has a lot to offer.

Following is a list of events of happenings around Michigan for April, May and June.

Food events include the maple syrup festivals in Shephard, April 22-23 and Vermontville, April 23-25; the Mushroom Festival in Mesick, May 4-6; the National Mushroom-Hunting Championships in Boyne City, May 12-13 and the Battle Creek Cereal Festival, June 2-9, which culminates in the world's largest breakfast table.

Then, there's the Pasty Bake in St. Ignace, May 27, an attempt to bake the world's largest pasty for the benefit of the Guinness Book of World Records and of the spectators who get to eat it.

Fishing events include the Perré Festival in Caseville, April 21-22; National Trout Festival in Kalkaska, April 25-29; the Walleye Tournament in Midland, April 28-29; the \$35,000 Blue Water Fishing Classic Tournament (for trout and salmon) in Port Huron, May 4-6; the Bass Festival in Mancelona, June 1-3; the Trout Tournament in Charlevoix, June 8-10; the Smallmouth Bass Tournament in Bergland and Marenisco, June 9-10; the Walleye Tournament in Bellaire, June 15-17; the Pickerel Fishing Tournament in Alpena, June 29, July 4 and the Carp Rodeo in Union City, June 15-17.

Literary figures also come in for their share of glory. Owosso honors native son James Oliver at the Curwood Festival, June 1-2. Macatawa recalls that L. Frank Baum worked on the Wizard of Oz in the Lake Michigan community with the Oz Festival, June 8-10. And the same weekend, the Captain Pheggy Balloon Classic lifts off at the Crossroads Village near Flint.

Flower festivals are also in bloom, including:

- Blossomtime Festival, Benton Harbor, St. Joseph and surrounding communities, April 29-May 6, Michigan's oldest;
- Trillium Festival, Hoffmaster State Park, Muskegon, May 12-13;
- Tulip Time Festival, Holland, May 16-19, nationally known, and extremely popular;

## Golfing network makes trips fun

Golfers who travel around the country seeking new challenges on the greens and fairways will have an easier time of it by working with the Golf Travel Network.

Originally formed to offer Michigan golfers the opportunity to play golf year-round, the Golf Travel Network will serve as a one stop shopping center for golf travel.

"Because Michigan is noted as having one of the largest golfing populations, it made sense to collectively promote and offer Michigan golfers destinations world wide during our snow season," said John Kendall, president of the Network.

Serving as a Midwest promotions arm for several southern-based golf and resort properties, Golf Travel Network is able to offer Michigan golfers packages with attractive prices and high quality play.

For more information and a free brochure detailing golf travel and package discounts call (616) 271-6314 or write Golf Travel Network, P.O. Box 525, Suttons Bay, Mich. 49882.

Travel experts form Kendall Travel will find the maximum savings on airfare and lodging. A PGA professional will make recommendations for golfers' seeking special needs and a facilities and recreation expert will coordinate group functions.

Golf Travel Network will customize golf travel plans for individual, family and golf or corporate groups to golf resorts world wide.

The Network offers more than 300 destinations.

Offering expertise on several fac-

• Lilae Festival, Mackinac Island, June 1-10.

Other special events to keep in mind: • American Paintings — from Detroit's Richard Manogian's collection, Detroit Institute of Arts, March 21-May 27. One of the best collections of 19th century American art comes home. The DIA and the National Gallery arranged this show which has been hung in the National Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the San Francisco's DeYoung Museum.

• Buzzard Festival — Hell, May 5-6. Arts and crafts and real live buzzards.

• May Festival — Ann Arbor, May 9-12. The Los Angeles Philharmonic with Andre Previn performs in this 97th annual festival at the University of Michigan.

• Highland Festival and Games — Alton, May 26-27. A gathering of the Scottish clans in which pipe bands, dancers, fiddlers, and athletes from the U.S. and Canada meet, compete and celebrate.

• Frankenthum Bavarian Festival — Frankenthum, June 9-16. Eight days of gemutlichkeit, celebrating the town's German heritage, with German bands and food, old-world style crafts and nationally-known entertainment.

• Valvoline Detroit Grand Prix — Detroit, June 15-17. Indy cars hit the downtown streets for three days of intense racing with such well-known drivers as Danny Sullivan, Mario Andretti and Al Unser Jr.

• International Balloon Championship — Battle Creek, June 16-23. Balloonists from all over the world compete.

• International Freedom Festival — Detroit and Windsor, June 22-July 4. Millions in this town-nation celebration, the largest transborder festival in North America. More than 100 events, including NORH America's largest fireworks display, commemorate Canada Day July 1 and American Independence July 4.

• Thunder Bay River Canoe Races — Alpena and Hillman, June 30-July 1. Michigan's canoe racing association-sanctioned races in all classes including professional and amateur.

For more information about these events, write the Michigan Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 30226, Lansing, MI. 48909; or call 1-800-5432-YES. Hearing impaired call 1-800-722-8191.

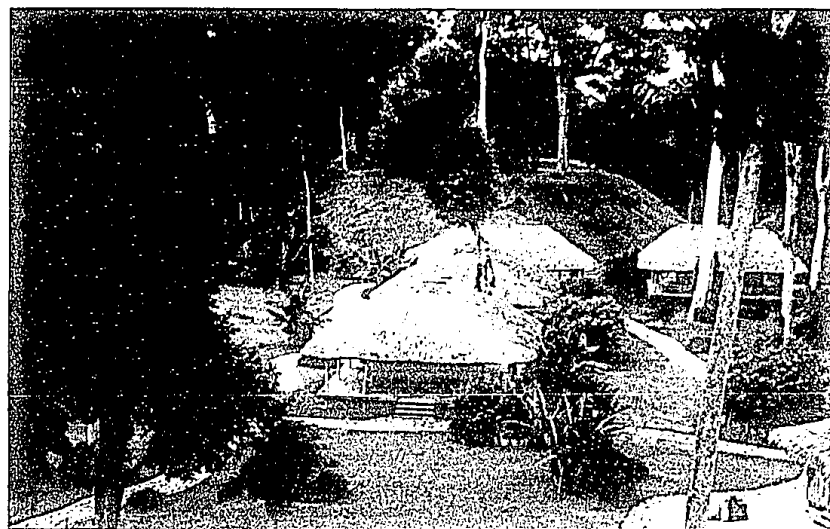
**For information on golf travel and package discounts, call (616) 271-6314 or write Golf Travel Network, P.O. Box 525, Suttons Bay, MI 49882.**

ets of the golf industry, Golf Travel Network's PGA professionals will advise individual clients on the playability of each golf course. In addition to assistance with course recommendations.

Prior to each facility becoming aligned with the Network, the PGA professional advisers played each course.

The Network also offer group travel accompanied by a PGA professional. The professionals will arrange for individual lessons, clinics and tournament play for each group. Among the resorts belonging to the Network are:

- Greencle Resort and Conference Center, near Orlando, Fla.;
- Saddlebrook Resort, Tampa, Fla.;
- The Sandpiper, a Club Med Resort, Port St. Lucie, Fla.;
- Sea Palms, St. Simons Island, Ga.;
- Dorai, Miami, Fla.;
- PGA National, Palm Garden, Fla.;
- Sawgrass TCP, Jacksonville, Fla.;



JOHN CASTLE

Belize offers some fascinating scenery, all a little on the wild side. Even the Chin Chich lodge, made up of thatched-roof cabanas, overlooks an ancient Mayan City.

By John Castle  
special writer

## BELIZE

### Jaguars pad green land of American wilderness

Monkeys chattered high in the treetops. On the muddy jungle floor lay the tracks of a large jaguar.

It didn't seem possible. I had left Birmingham that morning for my flight from Detroit Metro. Within eight hours I was watching jungle animals in the heart of a Central American rain forest.

My trip was inspired by the Programme for Belize, a group fighting to preserve the Belizean wilderness. Their fold-out painted a picture of a land rich in wildlife. The lure proved irresistible.

A month later I flew over Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula into the tiny Caribbean country formerly called British Honduras.

BELIZE IS THE size of Massachusetts, with the population of Warren, Mich. Most of its 165,000 inhabitants live in Belize City and half a dozen other towns, leaving the rest of the country practically uninhabited.

From Belize City, Javier's Air Service shuttled me 50 miles west to the jungle outpost of Colton Jug. Then I was driven deep into the rain forest to Chan Chich Lodge.

The lodge overlooks the ruins of an ancient Mayan city. Tropical growth crowds its thatched-roof cabanas. The fan out into the jungle. One of them yielded the tracks I saw on my first day there.

Studying jaguars was my main goal. These cats, the world's third largest feline, have intrigued me for years. Here was a chance to learn about them firsthand.

WILD CATS abound in Belize.

Scarcely a week goes by without someone at the lodge seeing a jaguar, ocelot or margay. The jaguars, called tigers by native Belizeans, are protected, so they've lost much of their fear of man. A maid recently watched in awe as one of the big cats emerged from the jungle and walked around the lodge in broad daylight.

Guide Gilbert "Jack" Vasquez had a closer brush. He was grooming a trail when a jaguar slunk out of a palm thicket and padded toward him.

"He was a big tiger, head like this," Jack said, making a circle with his arms. "I about and he sees me. Lucky thing he goes away."

Clearing trails is Jack's daily job. Belize's poisonous snakes, the dreaded fer-de-lance (fuknamed tommygo) and the coral snake, hide under dead palm leaves. Removing them makes the trails safer for hikers.

Bon constructors also infest Belize. They're so ubiquitous they even lurk inside the cities. One day the lodge's generator-driven clothes dryer stopped spinning. A boa had

wrapped itself tightly around the rotor.

I PROWLED THE jungle trails daily without encountering a snake. Unfortunately, that also held true for cats. I didn't see a single jaguar, but saw many signs of them.

One morning, hiking along a path toward Guatemala border, I came upon what looked like a wildcat convention. Ocelot prints peppered the mud. A few yards farther on were the saucer-sized tracks of a male and a female jaguar. Hand-made plaster casts of the prints let me preserve them for future study.

Cats were my main target, but not my only interest. I didn't balk when a birder offered to take me under his wing.

BIRDERS ARE birdwatchers who travel the world trying to see and identify as many bird species as possible. Ellis Knudson, of McLean, Va., was on a birding binge. He had already glassed 167 species at Chan Chich when I joined him for a daylong hunt.

Between tropical downpours, we

saw comical "banana-billed" toucans, laughing falcons that actually go "ha ha" at you, and rare ocellated turkeys. After dinner we drove his rented four-by-four along a narrow road to look for night birds. Almost immediately our headlights picked up eyeshine.

"My gosh," Ellis said, "a tapir." Not 20 yards away was Belize's national animal browsing nonchalantly on roadside bushes. The cowlike beast was shoveling food into its mouth with a flexible upper lip that resembled a small elephant trunk.

We watched helplessly. Neither of us had armed our cameras with flashguns.

LATER ON we saw a pair of eyes dancing across a field. The animal was a blur in our binoculars. We thought it was an ocelot, but later saw it was a gray fox.

Before leaving Chan Chich and the hospitality of hosts Tom and Josie Harding, I saw white-tailed deer, monkeys parrots, leaf-cutter ants and other jungle creatures. Crocodiles, coatis and kinkajous remained hidden.

Many animals were foreign to me. I kept hearing people talk about gibnuts. It came as a surprise to learn they don't grow on trees, but are jackrabbit-sized rodents called gacacs.

Red gibnut is a delicacy to chicleiros, those jungle hardened men who roam the tropics tapping sapodilla trees for the gumlike ichile used in chewing gum.

I SAW machete wounds on trees and thatched shelters made by chi-

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## Tips make your visit more enjoyable

Make your trip to Belize a do-it-yourself jungle adventure. Tailoring it to your needs is as easy as falling off a coconut tree. Some tips for a safe exciting trip:

• When to go — The most comfortable time is January to May, the dry season. If you must go during the summer, August is your best bet. It is less rainy. The annual mean temperature is 79 degrees, cooler in the mountains.

• Preparing to go — A passport is needed. No vaccinations are required, but you might consider malaria pills and shots for typhoid, hepatitis, tetanus, and flu. Consult your physician or the county health department.

• How to go — Continental Airlines has a flight from Detroit to Belize City, with a changeover in Houston, Texas. A round trip costs less than \$500. It could be less with special promotions.

• Where to go — Try Chan Chich Lodge in west-central Belize. Luxury accommodations (screened cabanas, hot showers, candlelight dining) in the heart of the rain forest. Call 1-800-243-8009 for reservations and transportation to lodge from Belize City. Daily single rate (room, meals) is about \$75.

Also consider Hotel Mopan in

Belize City. It's not posh, but is comfortable, colorful and inexpensive. A single room is approximately \$25 it is a haven for writers, naturalists, archaeologists and explorers. Proprietor Jean Shaw will help with travel plans and rental vehicles. Emory King's road guide is a must for this trip.

The jaguar preserve in east-central Belize is a rustic jungle camp.

Prepare to cook your own meals, sleep in a bunkhouse and use outdoor toilets. Take bottled water and canned food. Ask Jean Shaw (Belize phones: 73356, 77951) about travel conditions to preserve in Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Community Baboon Sanctuary at Bermudian Landing is a one-and-one-half hour drive from Belize City. Jungle trails yield close-up

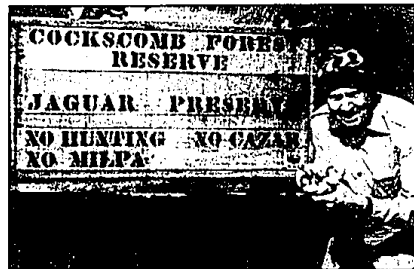
views of black howler monkeys. No tour costs, but donations cheerfully accepted.

Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary is a two hour drive from Belize City. It has birds, crocodiles, iguanas. Other animals also abound in the swamps, inland lagoons and waterways.

• What to take — Take your drivers' license and traveler checks. The exchange rate is \$2 Belizean for \$1 U.S. The prices are higher than Mexico because Belize imports everything. Also take a bottle of 100 percent deet mosquito lotion, a full water canteen, flashlight, Swiss army-type pocket knife, binoculars and camera.

• What to wear — Hat or cap, cotton slacks, long-sleeved shirts or blouses. Take medium-weight jacket and rain gear. Wear sneakers in town, boots or hiking shoes in the jungle. Casual clothing is in.

• What not to do — Don't drink or brush your teeth with unpurified water. Also don't take firearms, go off jungle trails or pick up insects or reptiles. Most importantly don't disturb the Mayan artifacts. Also watch the "sleeping policeman" speed bumps on the roads. You can break your axles on them.



John Castle ventured to the Cockscomb Forest Reserve in his search for the elusive jaguar.