

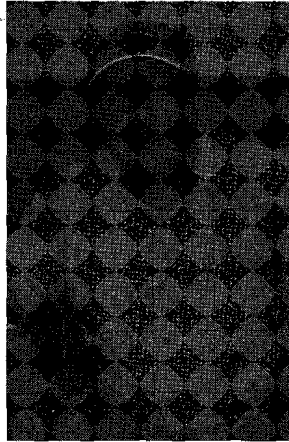
# Birder Certification Course sees successful year

Programme for Belize (PFB) this year held their second annual Birder's Certification Course at their Hill Bank Field Station in the Orange Walk District, in which 18 persons graduated.

Typically taken by tour guides, conservation group representatives and bird enthusiasts, the course delves into ornithology or the study of birds.

As such, students learned about the anatomy, physiology, migration and reproduction of feathered creatures.

**Program organizer**



*Efrain Cocom*

and Station Manager of the Hill Bank Field Station, Efrain Cocom, explained that the course is in its second year. First implemented in 2007, 18 persons



*Eighteen persons graduate from Birder Course.*

concluded the course with the hope that they would become better naturalist guides and as such attract more tourists to the country. But most importantly for PFB is that the course teach students bird conservation.

Cocom pointed

out that birds are considered to be an indicator species, one that gives a pretty good idea as to the health and condition of the ecosystem surrounding them.

The new awareness program was executed with the help of the

Massachusetts Audubon Society. Two instructors from Joppa Flats Educational Center in Newbury Port Massachusetts along with Philip Balderamos, the National Coordinator of the Small Grants Program of the United

Nations Development Programme of Belize, conducted, the course in two, intensive, three-day parts.

'The Certification Program is the equivalent of a college course and requires all students to do a project in order to graduate.

According to Cocom the projects that were turned in this year were interesting and reflected the different conservation interests being carried out in the country today.

Those interested in taking the course next year can contact PFB for registration information. Next year's program will be sponsored by the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), a sister conservation group.