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ARCAS Wildlife Rescue Center First in Region to Earn Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries Accreditation

‘ARCAS is clearly one of the most outstanding rescue centers in Central America,’ says GFAS director

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is very proud to announce that the ARCAS Wildlife Rescue Center in Petén, Guatemala has achieved GFAS Accreditation.

"ARCAS is an exemplary example of all that a rescue center should be," said Patty Finch, executive director of GFAS, "and clearly one of the most outstanding in Central America. We were impressed with their solid infrastructure, their full-time veterinarians, the outstanding volunteer program, and their successful animal releases of species varying from parrots to monkeys."

The accreditation means ARCAS meets the comprehensive and rigorous definition of a true rescue center and is providing humane and responsible care of the animals, meeting rigorous and peer-reviewed standards for operations, administration and veterinary care established by GFAS, which is the only globally recognized organization providing standards for identifying legitimate animal sanctuaries and rescue centers. The accreditation status also provides a clear and trusted means for the public, donors and government agencies to recognize ARCAS as a credible rescue center, worthy of significant and continual financial support.

"We have just celebrated our 20th year anniversary rescuing wildlife here in Guatemala, and this accreditation comes at a good time as we look toward meeting the challenges of the future during these difficult times", states ARCAS Administrative Director Colum Muccio.

ARCAS has been working with the Humane Society International (HSI) for years, and just recently, with funds from the U.S. State Department, has made several improvements including the construction of a new quarantine wing for mammals, the development of and training of staff in new rescue and rehabilitation protocols, and the purchase of basic materials and supplies to help implement these protocols. "HSI is very proud that ARCAS has been approved for GFAS Accreditation. They work very hard to continuously improve and have always demonstrated great leadership. ARCAS is a model for the region and we would like to congratulate them for this latest achievement and urge them to continue working towards meeting and raising the bar on international standards with GFAS," says Jennifer Dinsmore, program supervisor for HSI.

ARCAS, the Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association/Asociación de Rescate y Conservación de Vida Silvestre was founded in 1989 in order to help combat the illegal wildlife trade in Guatemala. Its first act was to establish its Wild Animal Rescue Center in the UN-declared Maya Biosphere Reserve(MBR) in the northern Petén region of the country. Under a cooperative agreement with the Guatemalan government, it is recognized as the official destination for all confiscated wildlife taken from smugglers in the MBR. Since 1990, it has rescued over 7,000 animals of more than 40 different species, including scarlet macaws, mealy parrots, red-fronted parrots, spider and howler monkeys, margays, jaguars and coatimundis.

“ARCAS is a remarkable organization. Around the world, people care deeply about the species of the Mayan Forest. Thank goodness there is ARCAS!” states Finch. “I have personally contributed to their vital work, and I hope you will join me.” Visit <http://www.arcasguatemala.com/en/donations-form/donation>

About Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries

Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the sole purpose of strengthening and supporting the work of animal sanctuaries in the United States and abroad. The goal of GFAS in working with and assisting sanctuaries is to ensure they are supported, honored, recognized and rewarded for meeting important criteria in providing care to the animals in residence. GFAS was founded in 2007 by animal protection leaders from a number of different organizations in response to virtually unchecked and hidden animal exploitation of animals for human entertainment and financial profit. These founding leaders sit on the GFAS Board of Directors to continue guiding the organization’s work in a collaborative manner. They represent top leadership from Born Free USA, The Humane Society of the United States, World Society for the Protection of Animals, American Anti-Vivisection Society, National Anti-Vivisection Society, and International Fund for Animal Welfare. www.sanctuaryfederation.org.

About ARCAS

ARCAS is a non-profit Guatemalan NGO formed in 1989. It was originally created for a very specific and urgent purpose: to build a rescue center to care for and rehabilitate wild animals that were being confiscated on the black market by the Guatemalan government. Since its establishment, the ARCAS Rescue Center has grown into one of the largest and most complex rescue centers in the world, receiving between 300 and 600 animals of more than 40 species per year.

Since the establishment of the Rescue Center in Peten, ARCAS has branched out into other very necessary activities including environmental education, protected areas management, marine turtle conservation, sustainable community development, ecotourism and reforestation. At its Pacific coast site of Hawaii, it manages the most productive of the 21 sea turtle hatcheries in Guatemala, rescuing over 50,000 olive ridley and leatherback eggs per year. It is working to establish a 4,000 hectare protected area focused on the local mangrove wetlands and carries out yearly reforestations. Its Environmental Education Department, based in the Guatemala City office, reaches out to over 8000 children per year throughout the country.

ARCAS relies on the support of volunteers and donors from around the world that share it’s love of wild animals. If you would like to donate or volunteer, please contact us at arcasvolunteers@gmail.com.