

IGUANA NEWSBRIEFS

At Fairchild Tropical Garden, iguanas feast on the filet mignons and caviars of the plant world — rare and expensive plants sometimes brought from the other side of the world — much to the frustration of the horticulturists. “They like the prettiest and rarest flowers, so they’re obviously creatures of some discriminating taste,” said **Mike Maunder**, Fairchild’s director of horticulture. Park groundskeepers have tried many tactics to drive off the lizards, including spraying the plants with a chemical deer repellent, but the reptiles, who at Crandon happily gobble up toxic *Philodendron* leaves, were not deterred.

The lizards have only been nibbling on Broward County, with small populations at Flamingo Gardens, Snyder Park, The Bonnet House, and Easterlin Park in Oakland Park. “Right now we’re OK,” said **Ross Dovey**, director of Easterlin Park. “But it’s a potential problem I’m afraid will only get worse.”

— Daphne Duret,
Miami Herald,
31 July 2003

Anegada Iguana Population Assessment 2003

The IUCN Iguana Specialist Group (ISG) conducted a population assessment of *Cyclura pinguis* (Stout Iguana) on Anegada Island, British Virgin Islands from 14–29 June (see also *IGUANA* 10(2), June 2003). The International Iguana Foundation (IIF), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and private contributions by **John Binns**, **Joe Burgess**, and **George Waters** funded the survey.

Anegada is approximately 16 km long and 2–3.5 km



Each morning, the team members surveyed designated transect areas, battling dense brush and cacti in 100° heat. The habitat shown in this photograph is typical of what team members encountered during the survey. *Left: Joe Burgess, center: Sallie Davis, right: Roberto Maria. Photograph by John Binns.*

wide (about 39 km²). Although not a large island, it presented a significant challenge to the small team’s ability to properly survey the island in a limited amount of time. The strategy was to focus on the western half of the island. Any remaining time would be devoted to surveying the area between the central ponds and the southern, developed coast and some areas east of the Settlement. Results of East

End surveys conducted by Glenn Gerber, Binns, and others in 2001 would round out the data needed to estimate the total population size.

Formal results of the survey will be presented at the annual ISG meeting in the Turks and Caicos Islands this November. However, the status of *C. pinguis* on Anegada remains critical and population numbers appear to be in a continu-



The 2003 survey team: (back row, left to right) George Waters (IIS), Dr. Glenn Gerber (SDZ/CRES/ISG), and John Binns (IRCF/ISG/IIS); (front row) Roberto Maria (ZooDom/ISG), Kelly Bradley (Dallas Zoo/ISG), Tarren Wagener (Ft. Worth Zoo), and Joe Burgess (IIS). Lee Pagni (SDZ/ISG/IIS; not shown) periodically assisted in the survey, but his primary agenda was to interview local residents regarding Stout Iguanas in order to develop public awareness and school educational programs. Lee Vanterpool (National Parks Trust, BVI/Head Head-starting Keeper) and Sallie Davis, a member of an archeological team conducting research on the East End, also assisted the team. *Photograph by Tarren Wagener.*



One of the few photographs of *Cyclura pinguis* taken during the survey. *Photograph by Joe Burgess.*

ing decline. The core iguana area, Bone and Windlass bights, contained bulldozed access cuts, which have destroyed a number of known iguana burrows. Citron Bush, the site of Michael Carey’s research in 1968, in which he described healthy populations of *C. pinguis*, consisted solely of heavily disturbed habitat, with most of the damage caused by feral cattle and goats. Neither iguanas nor signs thereof were found. Overall, iguana sightings were few, especially disappointing to those team members who had never seen Stout Iguanas and who had traveled far and worked hard for no more than a fleeting glance of a disappearing shadow.

Current plans call for a limited release of head-started *C. pinguis*, presently held at the Anegada head-starting facility, on Fallen Jerusalem, a small island in the British Virgin Islands. If successful, this would provide a further hedge against the extinction of this species. As a part of that relocation plan, Gerber, Kelly Bradley, and Lee Pagni conducted a habitat survey on Fallen Jerusalem after completing the survey on Anegada. They found no feral mammals and the island appears to be an ideal location for release.