

A Report on the IUCN/SSC Iguana Specialist Group 2003 Meeting Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands

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The seventh annual meeting of the Iguana Specialist Group was held in November 2003 in Providenciales (“Provo” to the locals) in the sunny Turks and Caicos Islands. Twenty-two representatives from the group met with officials from the TCI National Trust and the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR). Michelle Fulford-Gardiner, DECR, welcomed the group and stressed the importance of iguanas in the context of both biology and ecotourism. Allison Alberts, San Diego Zoo Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species (CRES), and Rick Hudson, Conservation Biologist, Fort Worth Zoo, served as moderators. Glenn Gerber, San Diego Zoo CRES, who currently is working with the endemic Turks & Caicos Iguana (*Cyclura carinata carinata*), was responsible for the venue and for organizing the development of a Conservation and Management Plan for *C. c. carinata*. Fred Burton, Blue Iguana Recovery Programme, and Quentin Bloxam, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, facilitated the conservation planning workshop held immediately following the ISG annual meeting.

Taxon Updates

Reports (see “abstracts” on p. 29) on current projects were given by John Iverson (Earlham College) on *Cyclura cyclura inornata* from the Exuma Islands, Fred Burton on *Cyclura lewisi* on Grand Cayman Island, Rick Hudson (for Peter Vogel, University of the West Indies) on *Cyclura collei* in Jamaica, Miguel Garcia (Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources) and Nestor Pérez (University of Puerto Rico—Río Piedras) on *Cyclura cornuta stejnegeri* on Isla Mona, Chuck Knapp (University of Florida and the John G. Shedd Aquarium) on *Cyclura cyclura* and Andros Island, Glenn Gerber and Kelly Bradley (Dallas Zoo) on *Cyclura pinguis* on Anegada, Lee Pagni (San Diego Zoo) on attitudes and perceptions regarding the conservation of the Anegada Iguana, Jan Ramer (Indianapolis Zoo) on *Cyclura ricordii* in the Dominican Republic, Victor Hugo Reynoso (The Technical Consulting Subcommittee for the Conservation, Management, and Sustained Exploitation of Iguanas in Mexico) on Mexican iguanas, Peter Harlow (Taronga Zoo) on Fijian iguanas (*Brachylophus fasciatus* and *B. vitiensis*), Glenn Gerber

and Allison Alberts on *Cyclura carinata carinata* in the Turks & Caicos Islands, Rick Hudson (for Robert Powell, Avila University) on Lesser Antillean iguanas, and Quentin Bloxam and Karen Graham (for Matthew Morton, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust) on St. Lucian *Iguana iguana*.

Conservation Management Strategies

Reports on ongoing management strategies included: (1) Jeff Lemm is making headway on a husbandry manual for West Indian iguanas. The group decided that the manual should be translated into Spanish upon completion. (2) The Morris Animal Foundation grant for *Cyclura* baseline health profiles was reviewed. Five taxa have been sampled and training provided for veterinarians in the Dominican Republic, Grand Cayman, and Jamaica. Extended funding is being sought to continue testing in perpetuity. (3) Updated IUCN Red List assessments are continuing. (4) Chuck Knapp and Rachel



Participants in the 2003 IUCN/SSC Iguana Specialist Group Meeting in the Turks & Caicos Islands. TOP: Rick Hudson, Sandra Buckner, Fred Burton, Quentin Bloxam, John Iverson, Catherine Malone, Jan Ramer, Allison Alberts, Bonnie Raphael, Miguel Garcia, Karen Graham. MIDDLE: John Bendon, Chuck Knapp, Peter Harlow, Victor Reynoso, Rick Van Veen, Joe Burgess. BOTTOM: Glenn Gerber, Lee Pagni.



Glenn Gerber and workshop facilitator Fred Burton discuss options for controlling the movement of cats between Water and Little Water Cay. *Photograph by Rick Hudson.*



ISG field trip to Little Water Cay, a popular tourist destination for viewing iguanas in the Turks & Caicos Islands. *Photograph by Rick Hudson.*



A male *Cyclura c. carinata* habituated to human activity looking for handouts near the tourist boardwalk on Little Water Cay. *Photograph by Rick Hudson.*



This boardwalk on Little Water Cay (LWC) provides access for tourists to experience iguanas in their native habitat and is the primary source of income for the TCI National Parks Trust. Unfortunately, cats have reached this tiny island and are beginning to affect the iguana population. *Photograph by Rick Hudson.*

Goodman are submitting reports on transmitter attachments to *Herpetological Review*. (5) For the purpose of assessing progress on the SSC Strategic Plan, a report of ISG contributions is being prepared for the IUCN. (6) The International Iguana Foundation (IIF) is resubmitting its proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for a Navassa habitat assessment grant. IIF grants for 2003 included support for work in St. Lucia, Anegada, Jamaica, Grand Cayman, and the Dominican Republic. (7) The newly developed ISG mission statement reads: *The Iguana Specialist Group prioritizes and facilitates conservation, science, and awareness programs that help ensure the survival of wild iguanas and their habitats.*

Management Plan Workshop

Quentin Bloxam and Fred Burton facilitated the development of a Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) for *Cyclura carinata carinata*. Ethlyn Gibbs-Williams, head of the TCI National Trust, introduced discussion and the following goal was established:

Conserve and restore populations and the geographic distribution of the Turks and Caicos Rock Iguana, and perpetuate it as a symbol of national pride and sound environmental management..

Some of the steps necessary to achieve this goal: (1) maximize genetic diversity, (2) control exotics (dogs, cats, rats, cattle, goats, donkeys, plants), (3) enact formal legislation to protect iguanas, (4) establish a system of protected areas, (5) control tourist-related development and tourist access to critical habitats, (6) achieve protection for additional habitats, (7) continue to monitor populations and translocations as necessary, (8) acquire better genetic data, (9) establish and maintain dialogue with developers, and (10) develop the necessary political will.

Future Meetings

In 2004, the ISG will meet in Fiji to develop species recovery plans for Fijian iguanas, *Brachylophus fasciatus* and *B. vitiensis*. Tentative plans for future years include Andros Island in 2005 and the Galápagos Islands in 2006.