

book should attract the broadest readership because all of the topics included are applicable to reptiles and animals other than iguanid lizards.

The book is well-produced, with a solid binding, tight editing, and a general absence of typographical errors. The tables and graphical illustrations are uniformly unambiguous and informative, and the black and white photographs are clearly reproduced. A small complaint: reproducing some of the latter in color would have been nice. Although the volume had its origins in a symposium held over six years prior to publication, the chapters are remarkably up-to-date, and this distinguishes it from many other symposium volumes that have seen long delays between the oral presentations and publication. Of the 906 references in the Literature Cited, 218 (24%) were published in 1998 or later, the most recent in 2003. In fact, for students of iguanid biology, the Literature Cited section will be a treasure.

I have only one major complaint about the book: the title, *Iguanas: Biology and Conservation*, is misleading. The bulk of the book (and the entire section on conservation) concerns West Indian iguanas, primarily a few species of *Cyclura*. Fijian Iguanas are barely mentioned, only one (of five) species of Chuckwallas is discussed in detail, and none of the 17 species of Spiny-tailed Iguanas are addressed beyond their inclusion in the checklist.

This may reflect the origins of the book in a symposium held in 1997, when Mexican biologists were just beginning to study various aspects of the biology of Spiny-tailed Iguanas, or it may reflect the interests of the editors, all of whom have emphasized West Indian Rock Iguanas in their own research, or both. Regardless, the book would have benefited from contributions on, at least, the conservation status of a broader range of iguanid genera and species. As it stands, subtitling the book "*Biology and Conservation with Emphasis on the West Indies and the Galápagos*" might have been appropriate. In this one respect, the new book does not match its predecessor.

Like the Burghardt and Rand volume, this book is intended primarily for the professional biologist who studies lizards, but it will be of interest to others as well. Private breeders of iguanas will find much useful information in the chapters on ecology and behavior. Conservation biologists and, indeed, anyone with an interest in these fascinating lizards will find the chapters on conservation interesting and informative. Hopefully, in a decade or so, a third volume in this budding series will more fully acknowledge the diversity within the family Iguanidae.

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Iguanas in Wonderland: The Depiction of Reptiles in Children's Literature

Johnston, Tony. 1995. *The Iguana Brothers: A Tale of Two Lizards*. Illustrated by Mark Teague. Blue Sky Press, New York, New York. 30 pp. Cloth, \$15.95.

Laden, Nina. 1995. *Private I. Guana: The Case of the Missing Chameleon*. Illustrated by the author. Chronicle Books, San Francisco, California. 26 pp. Softcover, \$5.95.

Krailing, Tessa. 1998. *The Pet Sitter's Club 8: Where's Iggy*. Illustrated by Jan Lewis. Barron's Educational Series, Inc., Hauppauge, New York. 94 pp. Softcover, \$3.95.

Snicket, Lemony. 1999. *A Series of Unfortunate Events, Book 2: The Reptile Room*. Illustrated by Brett Helquist. HarperCollins Publishers Inc., New York, New York. 191 pp. Cloth, \$10.99.

Wiebe, Trina. 2000. *Abby and Tess Pet sitters: Lizards Don't Wear Lip Gloss*. Illustrated by Marisol Sarrazin. Lobster Press, Montreal, Quebec. 91 pp. Softcover, \$5.95.

As both a student and a fan of children's literature, I have long been fascinated by its ability to shape the imagination of readers young and old. I recently had the opportunity to spend some time in the children's book section of a well-stocked bookstore, where I came across a number of reptile-related works of fiction, which provide some very different representations of their animal subjects.

Two of these books were quite similar, featuring groups of children who are "pet-sitting" reptiles that escape from their enclosures. In *Where's Iggy?*, published in the UK, the iguana named in the title seems well cared for, housed in a large terrarium in a greenhouse and outfitted with a heat lamp, a climbing branch, and a water tray. However, the owner of the lizard instructs the children that Iggy "doesn't eat a lot, mainly cabbage leaves and bananas ... and crickets." So, where's Iggy? His loca-

tion seems irrelevant, since the thyroid problems, calcium-phosphorus imbalance, and liver and kidney diseases caused by his poor diet and lack of UV light are sure to lead to an early demise.

The reptile featured in *Lizards Don't Wear Lip Gloss*, a Canadian publication, is a Green Anole, whose husbandry is much more appropriate. Angus, the anole, lives in a well-appointed vivarium, with a heat lamp and a fluorescent UV tube, and the children are clearly informed that "Angus needs the vitamins the UV rays provide." The statement, "all lizards eat a diet that consists mainly of live insects," neglects herbivores, but at least the setup and diet described for Angus's crickets is suitable.

The plots of these books center on lizards escaping from their enclosures while the children struggle with crickets. In both cases, subsequent to the involvement of assorted rescue professionals, the animals are found perched on objects close to their habitats. Given the frequency with which pet owners need to be retrained in proper reptile care, I was disappointed at the incorrect and incomplete animal care information provided in these realistic stories.

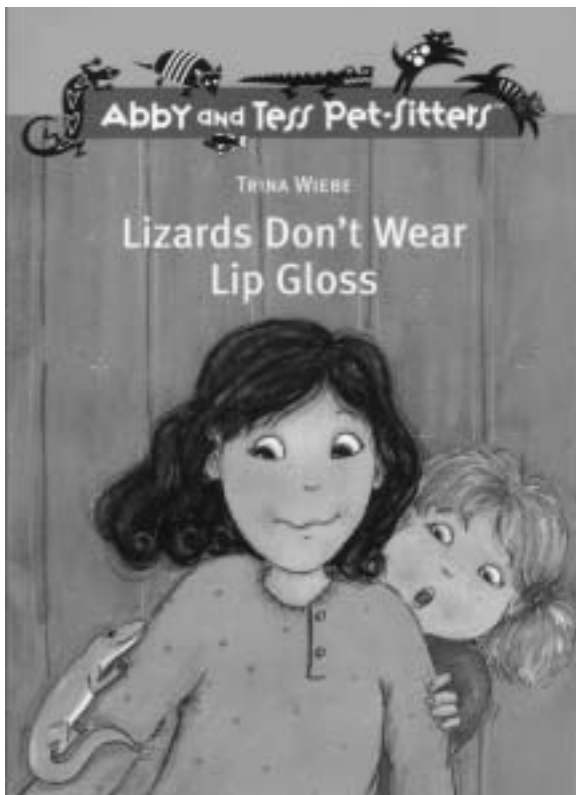
Another pair of books features iguanas as primary characters. *Private I. Guana: The Case of the Missing Chameleon*, is a tongue-in-cheek tale of a hard-boiled detective hired by Lizzy, a chameleon, to find her missing husband, Leon. After searching "over fields, under rocks and up trees," Mr. Guana ends up at the Lizard Lounge, "a slimy place where only the most cold-blooded reptiles hang out." As it turns out, Leon has been work-

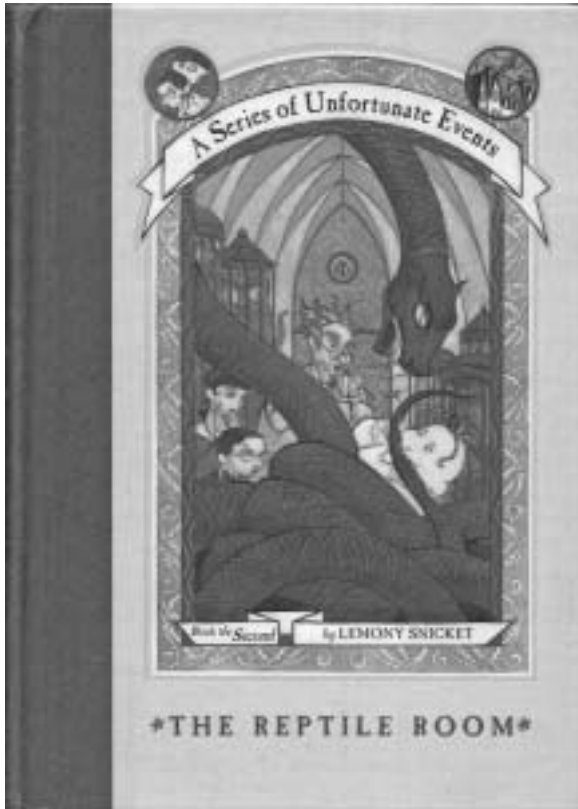


ing in drag at the Lizard Lounge, singing as "Camille" with the "Gila Girls," because he needed to express his "wild side." The illustrations by the author are hilarious and worth the price of the book. My personal favorite is of I. Guana at the Lizard Lounge with Sally(mander) the waitress, who, naturally, is asked, "what's a nice amphibian like you doing in a place like this?"

The Iguana Brothers: A Tale of Two Lizards features brothers Dom and Tom as they contemplate the philosophy of life. Dom is convinced by Tom to give up eating bugs because they will make him thin and pale and cause his tail to drop off. They further reject pigs and snakes and finally settle on a diet of flowers. Dom and Tom convince themselves that they are as mighty as dinosaurs, but end up rejecting rule of the stars for their own earthly kingdom and each other's friendship. A simple but positive story line, brought to life by Mark Teague's delightful illustrations, I was pleased to learn that the iguana brother's tale is to be made into an animated film.

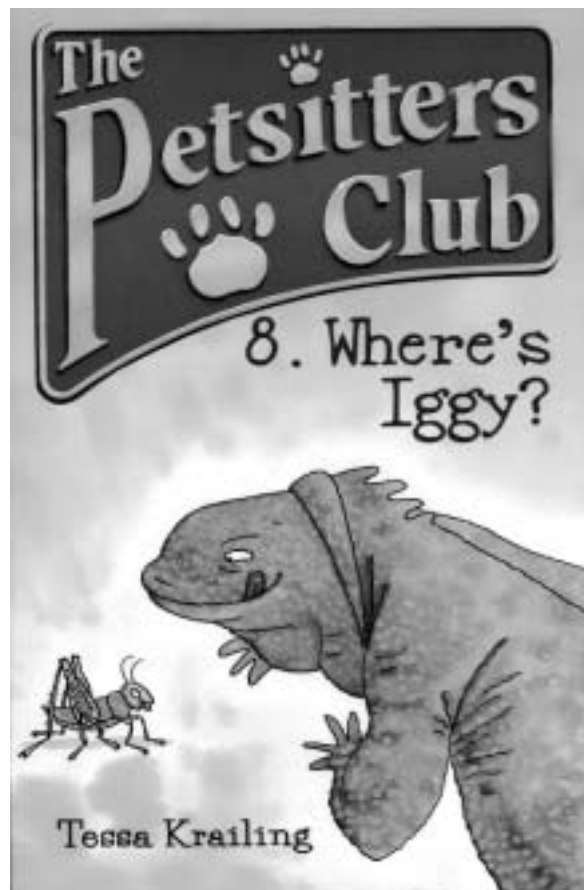
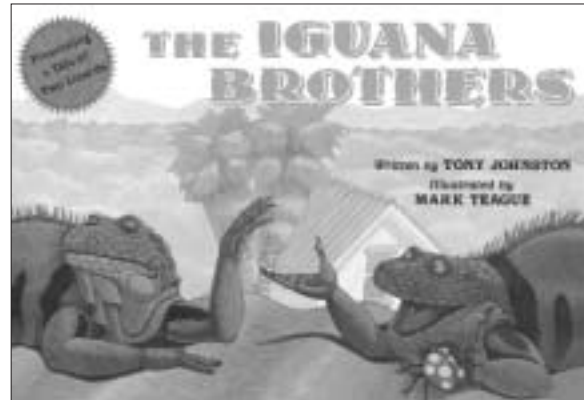
Although no iguanas appear in the story, my favorite among the books in this review is *A Series of Unfortunate Events, Book 2: The Reptile Room*, in which a very endearing herpetologist is a major character. The ten books that have so far been published in the series involve three orphan children, who are sent to live with assorted guardians in increasingly more appalling situations while they try to solve the mystery surrounding their parents' untimely deaths. The redundantly named Dr. Montgomery Montgomery is a famous herpetologist, who loves to make coconut cream cake. The Reptile Room itself contains a fantastic collection of animals, including the Alaskan Cow Lizard, a long green creature that produces delicious milk, the Dissonant Toad, the Irascible Python, and the Virginian Wolfsnake, which must "never under any circumstances [be allowed] near a typewriter." Despite his warning to the children that "no harm will come to them" in the Reptile Room, "if [they] take the time to learn the facts," the unfortunate scientist is murdered by arch-villain, Count Olaf, who injects him with venom from the Mamba du Mal.





The series is quite clever and features humorous wordplay and some very adult literary references as well as an intriguing mystery. The latter actually involves the true identity of the author, Lemony Snicket, and his relationship to the children in the novels. Starting with “the Reptile Room,” I found myself charmed by the characters and their misfortunes, and proceeded through the other nine volumes in the series, all of which are appealingly illustrated by Brett Helquist. The mystery of what became of Uncle Monty’s reptile collection has yet to be solved, and I eagerly await the next installment. Like any of the best children’s literature, I can certainly recommend this series to readers of any age.

Private I. Guana orders a plate of fried grasshoppers at the Lizard Lounge, however, he wears a trench coat and two-toned patent leather shoes, and is clearly not a real iguana. I feel much more inclined to forgive Ms. Laden for her portrayal than I do Ms. Krailing, whose “Iggy” is depicted as a real pet. Sadly, supposedly legitimate iguana care manuals are still advocating dog food and monkey chow for pet iguanas, but no legitimate excuse exists for perpetuating harmful information. Bugs, as Dom tells Tom, will indeed leave an iguana “thin and pale.” My highest recommendation goes to the mysterious Mr. Snicket. Although



Snicket’s reptiles are fairly preposterous, his herpetologist character embodies noble virtues: a good education, good manners, humor, and fondness and respect for animals.

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