

## IGUANA NEWSBRIEFS

### **Iguana Specialist Group Awarded Grant for Anegada Iguana Conservation**

The ISG received one of two \$15,000 grants from the Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action. This is the first year these grants have been offered and the ISG was extremely fortunate in having the Anegada Iguana project selected.

The project is titled: "Species Recovery Plan Implementation and Local Conservation Awareness for the Critically Endangered Anegada Iguana."

The award letter from David Brackett, Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission, noted that his office and the IUCN Species Programme "were impressed with the proposed activities outlined in [this] project proposal. We believe the project will make a marked difference to conservation efforts for this species. We also hope that, as one of the first projects to be awarded funding under this new initiative, [it] will generate interest and support for our ongoing efforts to replenish the Fund."

### **Grand Cayman Headstart Facility Upgrade 30 July – 13 August 2004**

As the first of this year's record number of Blue Iguanas began to hatch, "Team Blue," a group of international volunteers, arrived on Grand Cayman to ensure that animals would have new housing prepared for them at the Captive Breeding Facility in Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park (see also the article on p. 148). Assembled by John Binns of the International Reptile Conservation Foundation, the team included participants from the UK and the US, some of the latter representing US zoos as well as the IIS.

Several members of the team brought along equipment and donations, as did a number of enthusiastic Caymanian volunteers. From an initial prototype of four attached 4 x 4 ft cages, the group organized an assembly line, sawing lumber, notching and screwing pre-cut pieces together, and covering each completed unit with screen mesh. Others

were charged with the seemingly endless task of cutting cage doors and attaching hinges and bolts to the 102 units that were produced within a new compound. Even as the saws and power drills hummed, contractors were busy mixing and pouring cement for the construction of larger enclosures for a number of breeding pairs.

Meanwhile, in the current iguana housing area, other team members cleaned, repaired, and refurbished existing cages, making creative use of natural elements from the surrounding Botanic Park to enrich the cage environments. Within the larger breeding pens that had already been constructed, shovels and wheelbarrows were used to move rock, soil, and vegetation to improve the physical layout.

Even as new cages were completed, some were quickly furnished and their new tenants moved in, mostly two year-olds due for release in September into the neighboring Salina Reserve. Some members of the team undertook a quick survey of this rather rocky and forbidding



Anegada iguana (*Cyclura pinguis*). Photograph by John Binns.



Aerial photo taken after completion of Team Blue's efforts. Photograph by John Binns.

territory, followed later by a helicopter fly-over, during which several soil deposits were identified as possible nesting areas.

### IIS Members Survive Daytona Hurricane

Even Hurricane Charley didn't dampen the spirits of dedicated reptile lovers at this year's Daytona Beach Reptile Expo on 14–15 August. The International Iguana Society was on hand to share conservation information and tips on iguana care. Several new members signed on and a lot of people dropped by to renew existing memberships, chat, and hang out with our spokelizards. Jane Billette from the Mid-Michigan Reptile Rescue brought along Scrub, a Rhinoceros Iguana, Azul, a Blue Iguana hybrid, as well as Emma, Marilyn, and Picasso, three rescued Green Iguanas. Also delighting our visitors was Chuck, IIS President Joe Wasilewski's Cuban Iguana, who many long-time members will remember from cover photos in the *Iguana Times*.

Attendance at the Expo was down somewhat due to the weather this year. Hopefully everyone who couldn't make it this year will make it in 2005, when the auc-

tion will be run by the IIS in order to raise funds for iguana conservation. We're already making plans and collecting donated items to be auctioned. If you'd like more information about the auction or have items you'd like to donate, please contact AJ Gutman at [ctenosaura@cyclura.com](mailto:ctenosaura@cyclura.com).

Many thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who made this year's show so much fun! We hope to see you all again next year.

### Early hatch for Jamaican iguanas

2004 was a record early hatch, with 59 hatchlings emerging before September. Fortunately, Edwin Duffus had erected barriers surrounding the known communal nesting sites by the third week of August, so all of those hatchlings were collected. Rick van Veen, who is leading the field effort in the Hellshire Hills, brought 19 individuals to the Hope Zoo for "headstarting," attached small radio transmitters to another 18, and released the remainder in the vicinity of their hatch location. Preliminary results from radio tracking indicate that hatchling iguanas disperse away from nesting sites in random directions, and some individ-

uals immediately disperse considerable distances (up to several hundred meters). While not on the move, hatchlings appear to spend nearly all their time in trees and, after one week post-release, several individuals appear to be restricting their activity to small areas — suggesting that they may be establishing territories or home ranges. Unfortunately, the imminent arrival of Hurricane Ivan has interrupted data collection, as safety concerns have dictated that Rick leave Hellshire and return to Kingston. Radio telemetry work and monitoring of the remaining iguana nests will commence once the hurricane passes and he can return to the field.

### *Cyclura lewisi* Elevated to Full Species

Fred Burton (2004), based on mtDNA evidence reported in Malone et al. (2000) plus existing and new observations on scale characters, color, geographic and reproductive isolation, and phyly, formally recognized *Cyclura lewisi* (formerly *C. nubila lewisi*) as a full species (see also article on p. 148). *Cyclura nubila caymanensis* retained its subspecific status.



Dorsal view of head scalation typical of *Cyclura lewisi*. Letters identify scales used in comparisons with *C. nubila* and *C. cyclura*. Illustration by John Binns.

### References

- Burton, F.J. 2004. Revision to species of *Cyclura nubila lewisi*, the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana. *Caribbean Journal of Science* 40:198–203 (pdf file available at <http://www.caribjsci.org/>).
- Malone, C.L., T. Wheeler, J.F. Taylor, and S.K. Davis. 2000. Phylogeography of the Caribbean Rock Iguana (*Cyclura*): Implications for conservation and insights on the biogeographic history of the West Indies. *Molecular Phylogeny and Evolution* 17:269–279.