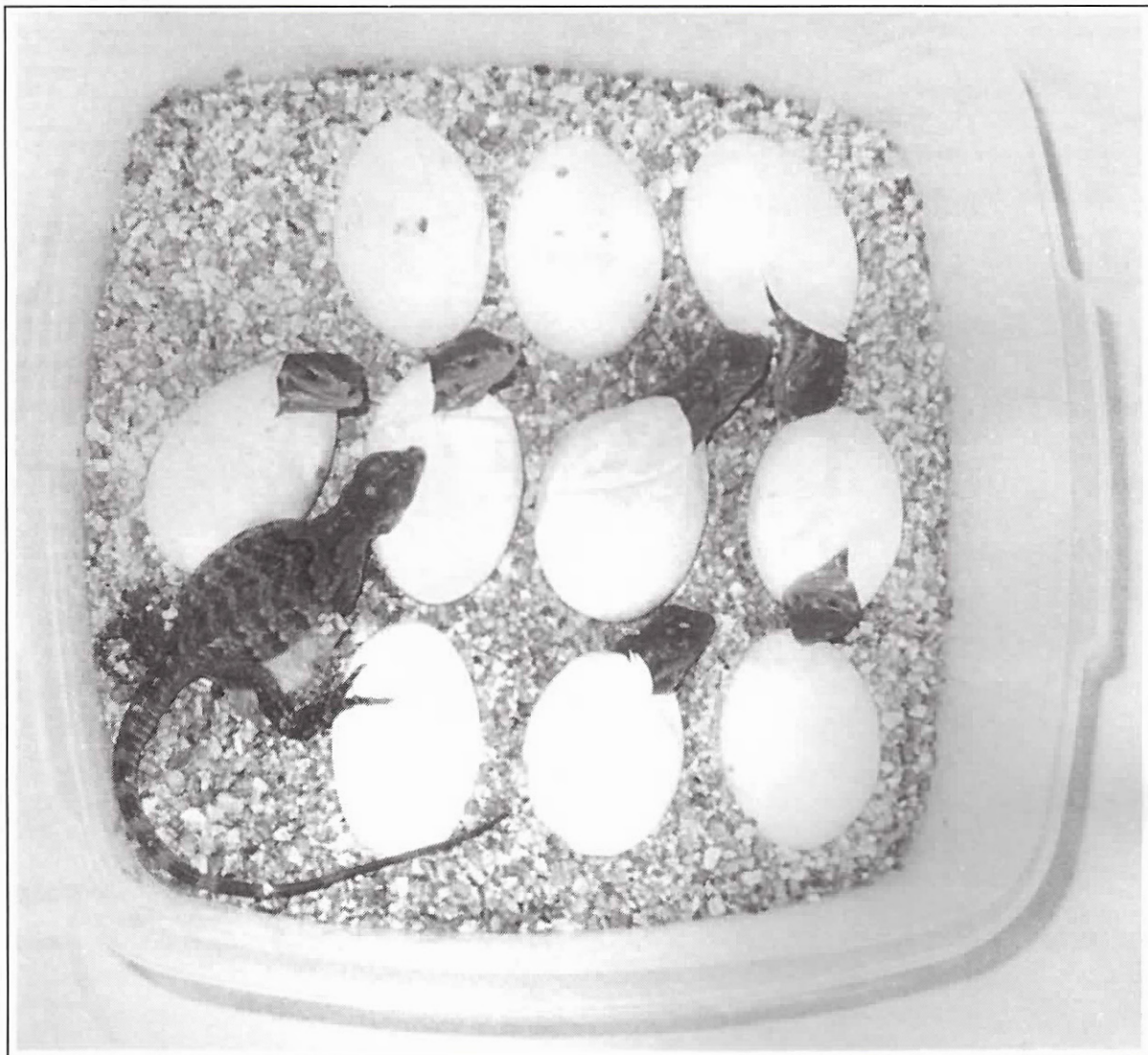


THE CAPTIVE HUSBANDRY AND PROPAGATION OF THE CUBAN ROCK IGUANA *CYCLURA NUBILA* PART 5. RAISING HATCHLINGS

ROBERT W. EHRIG

After eighty-five days of incubation at 87°F, fertile Cuban iguana eggs will begin to hatch. Eggs will begin to dent about 3-10 days prior to actual hatching and additional moisture will bead up on the interior of the Tupperware™ egg container. The neonates hatch over a period of 3-5 days. They will


slice a hole through the eggshell with their eggtooth, push their heads through, and emerge from the egg shortly after an arm is free from the shell. Once the young are free of the egg we will transfer them to a separate container. A 55 gallon aquarium with a screen top makes an excellent sub-



Hatching clutch of Cuban iguanas, *Cyclura nubila*. Photography: Ron Harrod.

stitute egg chamber. Several layers of brown paper with several limestone rocks placed on top, will provide many hiding areas for the hatchlings to adjust to life outside the egg. As more of their siblings join them, the hatchlings will dig and scratch. This is the period during which they would dig to the surface in nature. Rarely do they follow the same route as their mother's tunnel to the egg chamber (Wiewandt, 1978).

In most respects the hatchlings are miniature versions of the adults. They are, however, quite plump when first free of the egg. They contain a generous supply of yolk which must be absorbed before they begin to eat. Often the umbilical stem will still extend from the abdomen of the neonates. This will fall off shortly if left alone. If manually removed, the stem should be cut with a sharp scissors close to the abdomen. Careless removal may cause injury to the hatchling. The temperature of the room where the hatchlings are kept should be maintained at 84°F. After the neonates have been in the aquarium for 3-4 days, a photoperiod should be initiated. A 40 watt incandescent light will provide satisfactory light and heat. During this period the hatchlings will become noticeably thinner and will begin their first moult. After shedding, it is time to introduce food into the container. The first meal should consist of a small amount of a variety of greens very finely chopped. Romaine, spinach, mustards, collards, endive, etc., in various combinations is acceptable. After two days, a variety of other vegetables should be introduced into the diet until after a week or two when the list of food items should exceed a dozen. Food items must be very finely chopped to aid ingestion. We have added small amounts of ground up adult iguana feces to hatchling food, but we have detected no difference in digestibility than when we have not. Crickets or mealworms may be offered once a week, but should be used as a supplement. Fruit in small quantities may also be added to the list of diet items. At 3-4 weeks of age all hatchlings that appear normal are transferred to outdoor enclosures where they are exposed to natural ultra violet light. They are alert and active, exploring their world and starting to grow rapidly. Hatchlings will still spend considerable time hiding. Food is provided daily although hatchlings will often feed heavier on

alternate days. Water is provided every third day for half the day. Hatchlings will soak and defecate in the water so it will become dirty quickly. 

IGUANA RESCUE GROUP UPDATE

The Iguana Rescue Group has continued rescue, rehabilitation, and placement of iguanas including some out of state. To date over 55 iguanas have been placed.

Florida (Central-North-Gulf Coast)

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Poster Commemorates Jamaican Iguana Survival

Fort Worth Zoo is offering a beautiful full color poster of the Jamaican Iguana, *Cyclura collei*, which was unveiled at the recent symposium and workshop on the conservation of the Jamaican Iguana.

The poster is being distributed in Jamaica to heighten public awareness for the plight of this critically endangered lizard. Once feared extinct, the Jamaican Iguana was rediscovered in 1990, and a small remnant population still clings to existence in the forests of the Hellshire hills.

Superb in color quality, this 17" x 22" poster features 3 photographs of the Jamaican Iguana and its habitat. A limited number of posters are available for \$10 each plus shipping & handling. Proceeds generated will directly support ongoing field research and conservation efforts in Jamaica. To order, please send check or money order for \$12.50 payable to: Fort Worth Zoological Association, Rick Hudson, Reptile Dept., Fort Worth Zoo, 1989 Colonial Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76110