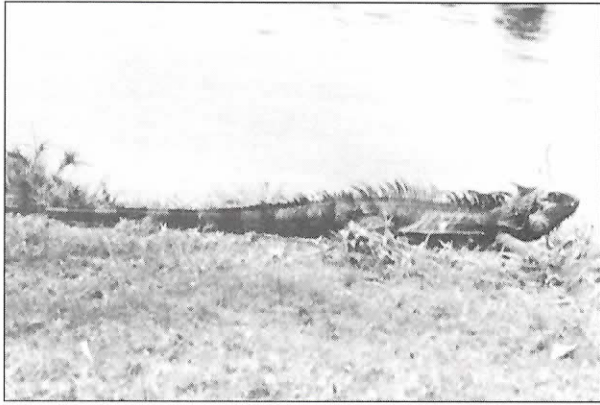


Iguana Updates from Puerto Rico

Back from Puerto Rico where, in April, we were glad to see the green iguana family (five including two adults) still at their location near a golf course.



They've been there for a decade, having survived Hurricane Hugo. Enclosed are photographs—not the quality of [IIS Board Member] Tom Wiewandt's work, but this iguana family is somewhat wary. It is hoped they remain unmolested, albeit dodging golf balls.

D. Scott and Shirley Gallagher
Mason, Ohio

P.S. The persons who shot iguanas on Mona Island in 1992 were not apprehended, but fortunately there has been no repeat of that heinous act.

Dear Dr. Rodda:

Thank you for taking the time to review *Iguanas: A Guide to Their Biology and Captive Care* [Iguana Times 3(3):14-18; coauthored by Dr. Fredric Frye and Wendy Townsend]. Indeed, it is a book for pet owners. Actually, Dr. Frye's and my "efforts" are indeed "integrated" in the book, with the integration beginning at the planning stages. Aspects of any successful "marriage" are the obviousness of two distinct individuals, plus the presence of an almost undetectable merging of those two. Apparently some readers assume the final chapter to be my only textual contribution. I should admit, you credit Dr. Frye with having said a few things that we said together, that I said, or that I suggested we say... At any rate, while I take issue with a number of your remarks, I am not interested in attempting to convince you of my thoughts on each of them.

An ever-increasing pool of knowledge about iguanas is desirable: I wonder if or when the scientific community will value the observations of non-scientists. Clearly, Dr. Frye does. Recall our acknowledgment in the beginning of the book: "We are...grateful to veterinary colleagues and their *iguana-owning clients* for sharing some of their experiences with these fascinating creatures."

As for the "mint on the pillow," anthropomorphism is again becoming a popular and controversial topic! No doubt you would agree, especially if you have read any of the work of Dr. Jane Goodall, Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, or John Berger (to name only a few). Then there is Carl Kauffeld's classic, *The Keeper and the Kept*. I like his citations of other authors and poets in relation to snakes. One in particular: "If anything could make a snake hater learn respect and admiration for this abused group of animals it would be the study of their eyes. The writer speaks from personal experience!" (from *The Vertebrate Eye*, by Gordon Lynn Walls).

What would you ask Mr. Walls about what he sees in a snake's eyes? That is his observation which I respect. If human beings do not start looking at other non-human beings without preconceived, prejudiced, tunnel-vision ideas, we will never reach greater understanding of animal species or individuals. All beings are qualified to look at and observe life and to discuss what is seen. One might call it "wonder" in the tiny iguana's eyes, one might not. It was my observation that the baby lizard was becoming more curious than afraid. Regardless, his eyes moved me. My interest is that iguana keepers deem their pets as quite capable of looking back at them; as capable of prompting compassion. People do not typically value what they do not understand, what seems remote or non-sentient. It is the masses of pet iguana-purchasing people who vote, who donate monies to conservation—or not. Those are the people who need to look at their pets, understand, and value them.

I am working on a book about green iguanas. It is not a husbandry or biology guide, and it is not purely "anecdotal." I look forward to the book you will write about iguanas.

Wendy Townsend
Callicoon, New York