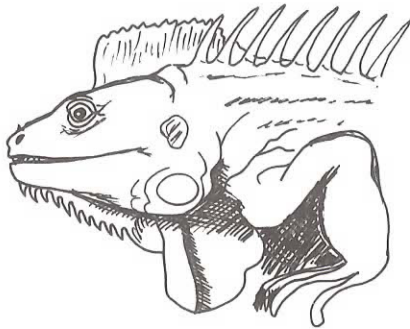


# L I Z A R D   L E T T E R S

## An Orange-Crowned Iguana

As a new member of the International Iguana Society, I am enjoying reading your journal. I am enclosing several photos of iguanas taken just outside of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, at Los Animos Beach in early January of 1994. I was hoping you could help me with a species/feature identification question regarding the iguana, Pancho, that I am holding in the photo. (Other iguanas were photographed at the same place at the same time, but none had the same unusual feature as Pancho). I would have assumed before my trip to expect to see many green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*), but wasn't sure if Pancho was a different species or just had an unusual and attractive mutation.



This particular iguana had an interesting feature, which may be sort of difficult to make out in the photo, but made him unlike any of the other iguanas I saw at the time in Mexico or have since seen in photos in various iguana books. This iguana had a ruffle like piece of skin (similar to dewlap skin) on top of his head, arranged like a crown that did not close in the back. It was not part of the crest of spines that began at the top of his neck. This ruffly crown-like head piece was mostly orange like the color on his tail and had a purplish band or stripe near the top. In any case, this "crown" on Pancho's head was attractive and unusual (in my limited experience with various iguanas) and it made me curious.

This particular iguana was responsible for fostering my interest in these fascinating creatures, and I am always eager to learn more about them. If you have any ideas about my question, let me know.

*Jane M. Steiner*  
West Palm Beach, Florida

*The bizarre "crown" described by you is unlike anything that we have seen or heard of. The lizard was indeed a green iguana, but the crown is clearly an aberration. It may be the result of a genetic mutation, but it could just as well be a developmental anomaly. — The Editors*



## Re: The Spineless Iguana

I read Julie Ziring's letter about her spineless iguana in the March 1995 issue of *Iguana Times*. When I was doing my undergraduate thesis on iguana feeding behavior, I bought two iguanas with black scabs covering their bodies. I think this was caused by poor living conditions while in the pet shop. After I had them a little while, their skin cleared. One healed perfectly with no scarring, but the other lost almost all his spines when the scabs were shed off. I think this affliction is common in pet shop iguanas, and is nothing to worry about once the iguana receives proper nutrition and living conditions.

Thank you for an excellent journal!

*Catherine Dickert*  
Gansevoort, New York

## Research In Iguana Times

I just wanted to take a moment to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading *Iguana Times*. The latest issue is good and your article on *Cyclura rileyi* is very interesting. The journal is becoming increasingly professional in style and substance. I hope that more researchers will use it to publish their studies in the future. Congratulations on a fine job; keep up the good work.

*Richard R. Montanucci, Ph.D.*  
*Clemson University, South Carolina*

We too hope that more researchers will consider *Iguana Times* (a.k.a. Journal of the International Iguana Society) as the outlet for their research. Because we want readers to better understand how research can contribute to the conservation of endangered populations and well-being of captive animals, we are now publishing research articles that are fairly general in scope (i.e., understandable), as explained in the editorial policies on the inside back cover. Nevertheless, before readers despair that the journal will become too scientific to understand, rest assured that we will continue publishing "popular" articles of highest quality. Thus, *Iguana Times* has become a unique journal that blends the best of both scientific and popular reading. — The Editors.

## Twin Rhinoceros Iguanas

On November 22, 1994, twin Rhinoceros iguanas (*Cyclura cornuta cornuta*) hatched [among] a clutch of 10 eggs. With a SVL of 95 mm and a total length of 270 mm, they were only 60 mm shorter than the normal iguanas hatched from the same clutch.

The twins left the egg in the same direction and they were linked together only with the navel-string on a single yolk sac. After the twins left the egg, I had to cut the navel-string so that they did not get hurt. On the second day I observed the young iguanas drinking water; one week later they took their first food. It is possible the twins will reach the same size as normal iguanas.

*Schmidt Jürgen*  
*Oftering, Austria*

We are familiar with three instances of twinning in iguanas. In 1988, a hybrid *Cylura nubila lewisi* x *caymanensis* produced a clutch with an egg containing twin hatchlings, in Florida. In 1990 we hatched a clutch of 7 eggs from a Cuban iguana, *Cyclura nubila* (see *Iguana Times*, Vol. 2, No. 1). Eight hatchlings emerged from the seven eggs. Both twins survived and were about 80% of the size of the other hatchlings. They were both oriented in the egg in the same direction and, at one point, both heads were pro-

truding from the egg side by side. Both twins were females; a friend has raised one in central Florida, and the other was raised in the Florida keys. This latter animal is normal but is slightly smaller than other iguanas her age. She has not yet laid eggs, although we have had Cuban iguanas lay eggs that hatched on their 4th year birthday. Lastly, we know of twin green iguanas (1 male and 1 female) born more recently in central Florida. We believe twins may reach the same size as their siblings.

Your successful hatching of twin rhinoceros iguanas is the first we know of. We hope you will raise them and keep us advised of their condition. Good luck! — R. W. Ehrig



Six year-old male, captive-born *Cyclura cornuta*.  
Photographs: Deborah Neufeld

**WANTED:** Back issues of *Iguana Times*: Vol. 1, Nos. 1-6, and Vol. 2, No. 1. Please contact Terry Gentry: 411 Fieldgreen Dr., Jonesboro, GA 30236; telephone (404) 477-1654.