

## IGUANA SMUGGLING OUT OF CONTROL

IIS has received numerous recent reports of smuggled iguanas entering the U.S. pet trade. Last year, as many as 230-300 endangered rhinoceros iguanas are believed to have been smuggled through one south Florida reptile dealer alone. Many of the smuggled iguanas were thin and emaciated, some even having cactus spines imbedded in their skin. The impact of these and other illegal activities may render many natural iguana populations unrecoverable. Sadly, most of these animals soon die in captivity, victims of stress and improper care—not to mention unrestrained greed. It seems unfathomable that the perpetrators continue to get away with these illegal acts. An article in the December issue will detail some recent smuggling activities, explore ramifications of the exploited iguana populations, and offer suggestions as to how iguana enthusiasts can help put a stop to these shameful misdeeds.

Source: IIS members

## NEW IGUANA SPECIES RE-DISCOVERED!

Just a year ago IIS member **Gunther Kohler** published the discovery of a new species of spiny-tailed iguana, *Ctenosaura flavidorsalis*, in Honduras. This year he has described

yet another species, from Campeche, Mexico, which was named *Ctenosaura alfredschmidti* in honor of a well-known herpetologist. The lizard was described on the basis of a single specimen collected in 1962 and observations of eight live iguanas studied at the same locality in October 1994.

Source: Salamandra 31(1):1-14.

## IGUANAS EXPLODE ON HOT VOLCANIC ROCKS

We have a third-hand (or thereabout) report of a bizarre happening that recently occurred in the Galapagos Islands. Sometime earlier this year, a volcanic eruption occurred on Fernandina that lasted for several months. Apparently, as the molten lava cooled after flowing to the seas, marine iguanas ran onto the rocks, possibly seeking warmth—obviously in excess of anything within their experience. So quickly did the heat expand the air in their lungs and digestive tracts that the iguanas simply “popped” before they could escape. Iguanas are well known for their tendency to gulp air when disturbed, which may have contributed to the gruesome effect. Evidently some land iguanas died as well. We hope to learn firsthand details in the near future.

Source: Galapagos Travel, San Juan Batista, California

## SAN SALVADOR IGUANA REDISCOVERED ON HIGH CAY

In the last issue of *Iguana Times*, Hayes et al. reported that the San Salvador rock iguana, *Cyclura rileyi*, is now restricted to seven small cays (although a few lizards persist on the main island). The iguana was considered extirpated on High Cay and on six additional cays. However, during a June 1995 symposium held at the Bahamian Field Station, IIS member **Sandra Buckner** and several colleagues

discovered fresh iguana tracks on High Cay, the largest of the offshore cays (see photo below). As a consequence of this exciting find, participants at the IIS Conference/Expedition (see inside front cover) in November will devote some time searching for the lizard(s) to collect (among other data) blood samples that should offer more insight on genetic diversity within and between the isolated populations.

Source: Sandra Buckner, Nassau, Bahamas.

