

IGUANA NEWSBRIEFS



▲ *Brachylophus vitiensis* bred at Taronga Zoo

SYDNEY, AUS - A rare adult Fijian Crested Iguana, and his 2-month-old offspring on display during the announcement of the hatching of the baby iguana at Taronga Zoo, on World Environment Day, Thursday, June 5, 1997 in Sydney. Taronga has the only captive breeding program for the endangered species native to the South Pacific Island nation of Fiji.

The Pittsburgh Herpetological Society—July 1997

Reptile Smugglers Indicted

On January 31, 1997, the U.S. Justice Department issued the following press release: William A. Keefer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, and Jorge Picon, Senior Resident Agent, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, announced that Michael J. Van Nostrand, Dale Marantz, and Strictly Reptile, Inc., of Hollywood, Florida, were indicted by a Federal grand jury in Miami charging them in a thirteen count indictment with conspiring to smuggle various reptiles from Argentina into Miami International Airport in violation of the Endangered Species Act and CITES. Michael J. Van Nostrand, Dale Marantz, and Strictly Reptile, Inc. have also been charged with four counts of receipt, sale, and facilitating the transportation of two species of smuggled boa constrictors, Chaco tortoises, and Tegu lizards in violation of the smuggling statute, Title 18, U.S.C. section 545. In addition, four misdemeanors are charged against each of the defendants under the Endangered Species Act for their activities involving trade in protected species. Finally, the grand jury brought four felony charges against each defendant for violation of the Lacey Act,

a conservation statute that permits the United States to assist other countries and the international community by giving effect to their wildlife protection laws in the United States.

According to allegations of the indictment, the defendants engaged in a protracted effort to secure wildlife illegally from Argentina over the period from November of 1990 through April of 1992. The Indictment identifies six different species of wildlife allegedly smuggled into the United States by the conspirators, totaling over 750 specimens of boas, tortoises, turtles, and lizards. Because these animals are species of wildlife listed on Appendix I and II of CITES, they are prohibited from importation into the United States without first obtaining a valid CITES permit from the exporting country. According to the allegations of the indictment, at all relevant times, the three defendants failed to obtain or possess the required permits or certificates to engage in their trading and sales activity with respect to the specimens identified in the charges.

If convicted on all counts, Van Nostrand and Marantz each face maximum penalties of five years in jail for each of the nine felony charges against them and up to one year in jail on each of the misdemeanor counts. They are also subject to fines up to \$250,000 on each of the felony charges and \$100,000 on each misdemeanor count. The corporate defendant faces criminal fines of \$500,000 on each felony and \$200,000 on each of the misdemeanor charges. Additionally, the indictment contains five forfeiture counts which permit the Government,

upon a conviction in the case, to seize the proceeds of the illegal activity and any property derived therefrom. In the event the forfeitable property cannot be located, substitute property of the defendants may be seized and forfeited.

Mr. Keefer commended the efforts of the Special Agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Miami Resident Office, who investigated this matter on behalf of the United States.

United States v. Bronx Reptiles

Zachary W. Carter, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and Adam O'Hara, Special Agent in Charge, Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today the sentence imposed in a significant criminal wildlife case, United States v. Bronx Reptiles, Inc., 949 F. Supp. 1004 (E.D.N.Y. 1996). On December 17, 1996, Bronx Reptiles was convicted of unlawful importation of 73 Solomon Island frogs under inhumane conditions, in violation of the Lacey Act, 18 U.S.C. 42(c). The importation led to the deaths of all 73 of these rare amphibious animals, which the Lacey Act seeks to protect by requiring shipment under humane conditions. On Wednesday, Magistrate Judge Cheryl L. Pollack sentenced Bronx Reptiles to the maximum penalty permitted by law, \$10,000, and she additionally placed the company on five years probation to ensure prospective compliance with the Act's legal requirements.

Defendant Bronx Reptiles, located in Yonkers, New York, is one of the nation's largest wholesale importer

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of live reptiles, amphibia, and other wildlife for sale to the pet trade. In this case, Bronx Reptiles imported frogs in a box with none of the required careful packaging, and, most importantly, with no source of water. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animal Regulations provide specific guidance for packing frogs, stating that they "must be kept damp as they breathe through their skins; if their skins are allowed to dry, the animals will die quickly."

In her earlier decision, Magistrate Judge Pollack concluded that "[d]epriving a frog of sufficient moisture is virtually a guaranteed death sentence for that frog..." She rejected Bronx Reptiles' claim that it could shift the blame to the overseas exporter, holding that "Bronx Reptiles, one of the largest importers of its kind in the country and responsible for numerous shipments of amphibians and reptiles, was not only aware of the industry guidelines for shipping these types of animals, but was also very familiar with the regulation holding the importer responsible for ensuring that humane shipping conditions are used."

In announcing the sentencing decision in this case, Mr. Carter stated: "This conviction should encourage Bronx Reptiles and other wildlife importers to take all necessary precautions to assure that live animals are imported under humane conditions, which do not cause suffering or death to animals."

Mr. O'Hara stated that "the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is committed to enforcing the humane shipment provisions of the law which plainly hold

United States entities responsible for the shipping conditions from their overseas suppliers."

Jaws of Life— Westside iguana goes to Florida to have surgery

Munchiken the iguana was having trouble munching his leafy greens and tofu because of a jaw malformation that could have led to his death.

Instead of accepting that fate, Santa Monica resident Barbara Inatsugu boarded a plane with her 5-foot iguana and flew him to the College of Veterinary Medicine in Gainesville, Fla., where an exotic animal surgeon is performing groundbreaking procedures to repair the deformity.

For Inatsugu, administrative secretary to the Santa Monica-Malibu school board, deciding to send Munchiken across the country for a \$2,000 operation was a tough choice, but the only one she could make.

"I don't like putting him through the pain and the separation, but I could see him starting to waste away," she said. "He could have starved to death."

The spiky lizard is one of four green iguanas living with Inatsugu and her husband in their Sunset Park home, along with a sailfin dragon lizard, a cat named Apollo and a dog called Ayla. Munchiken joined the Inatsugu household about 10 years ago after the family purchased him as an inches-long baby from a local pet store.

Inatsugu noticed something was wrong with Munchiken several years ago, when his lower jaw,

or mandible, stopped growing. While the rest of his body continued to grow, the stunted jaw made it hard for the lizard to eat and, eventually, more and more difficult for him to breathe.

Worried, Inatsugu sought the help of Santa Monica veterinarian Frank Lavac, who referred Munchiken to veterinary surgeon Avery Bennet in Florida.

Inatsugu and Munchiken arrived in Florida on May 26. The iguana underwent the first of several surgeries on May 30. Bennet said Munchiken's jaw deformity is the result of a metabolic bone disease, a common ailment among iguanas living in captivity. Iguanas need high levels of calcium in their diet and exposure to intense ultraviolet rays, which aid their bodies in producing vitamin D. The vitamin D, in turn, helps iguanas digest the calcium, Bennet said.

During the initial surgery, Bennet cut Munchiken's lower jaw on both sides and affixed a horseshoe-shaped device that slowly is pulling the mandible outward. If the movement is slow enough, the bone will eventually fill in the gap Bennet created. To date, Munchiken's jaw has been pulled out about a half-inch, a quarter-inch shy of Bennet's goal.

Bennet had hoped to do a bone graft to fill in some of the space Wednesday, but an infection in Munchiken's jaw kept him from operating. Bennet said he'll wait several weeks for the infection to clear before scheduling more surgery.

Even now, with the jaw pulled out a half-inch, Munchiken's breathing has improved, Bennet said. The iguana is being fed through a tube until the

surgeries are complete.

What makes this procedure unique, Bennett said, is the use of the bone-lengthening apparatus, which works almost the same way a dental retainer does, by applying gentle, steady pressure.

Experts at the College of Veterinary Medicine, part of the University of Florida at Gainesville, believe this is the first time such a device has been used to repair an iguana's jaw.

If all goes well, Munchiken could be home within a month.

Source: Daily Breeze, 06/27/97

Iguana takes the wheel for man charged with DUI

June 13, 1997

CLEARWATER, Florida — (CNN) Forget Toonces the driving cat — here's Finley the driving iguana.

Heads were turning in Clearwater, Florida, Thursday when they saw a car apparently being driven by the 3-foot-long lizard, his claws clenched around the wheel.

Two plainclothes cops say they were among those doing double-takes, and they followed the car for a couple of miles until it pulled over.

They then found Finley's owner slouched down in the seat. He was arrested for drunken driving and taken to jail. Finley was taken to an animal shelter.

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Rhino Iguanas Breeding in England

We successfully hatched our *Cyclura cornuta* for the first time on 5 October 1991 after eighty-two days incubation. The female laid eight fertile and one infertile egg on the 15 July. Five eggs deteriorated rapidly succumbing to fungal growth on the shell and suggesting that the embryos had died only a short time after the eggs were laid. The surviving three eggs were incubated at temperatures about 90°F and hatched into one male and two females. These animals are now on show to the public.

On 27 September 1993, after an incubation of 71 days, two young *Cyclura c. cornuta* hatched and these have now been identified as

two females. Again the incubation temperature was 90°F+. The female originally laid seven eggs and four eggs were incubated at a lower temperature. These eggs plus one egg incubated at 90°F+ failed to hatch.

Since then, only one more clutch of eggs was laid in 1994 and all eggs failed to hatch. Mating behaviour is a regular occurrence in our *Cyclura* colonies and we are hoping this year will be a successful one for us again.

9 April 1997
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NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

IIS Helps Utila Iguana

On 22 July, 1997, the International Iguana Society donated \$400.00 to help support the Utila Iguana Conservation and Research Project organized by Dr. Gunther Köhler in Frankfurt, Germany.

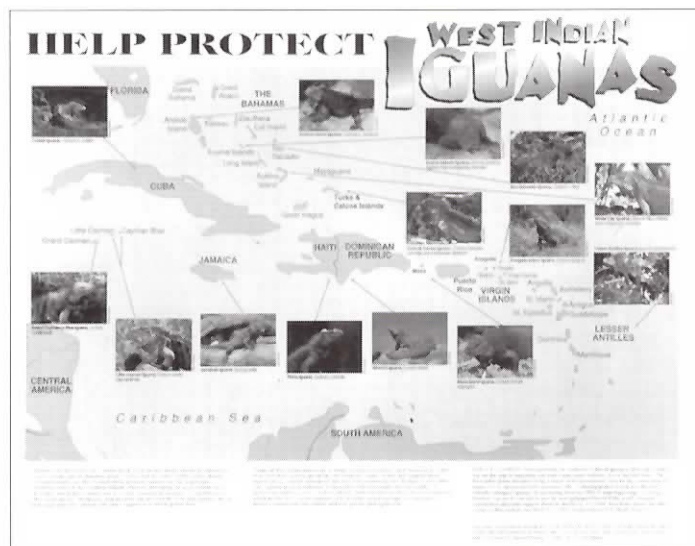
The project on Utila island, Honduras will further the conservation efforts for *Ctenosaura bakeri*.

The contribution will be put toward the salary of an iguana warden hired to enforce the ban on hunting of the iguana.



Iguanas of the West Indies Poster

The Fort Worth Zoo announces the publication of a beautiful new poster highlighting the conservation of Iguanas of the West Indies. Featuring rare and exceptional color photographs of 14 of the 18 *Cyclura* and *Iguana*, this high-quality poster measures 20 x 26 in. and is printed on a heavy-duty paper stock suitable for framing. Produced to assist the IUCN/SSC West Indian Iguana Specialist Group in promoting the preservation of these endangered lizards, all proceeds from the sale of this poster will help to fund critical iguana research and conservation projects throughout the Caribbean. Posters can be obtained in the U.S. for \$13.00 including postage and mailing tube; international orders are \$16.00. Checks or money orders (in U.S. currency) should be payable to the Fort Worth Zoo. Mail requests to:



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