

IGUANA NEWSBRIEFS

Hybrid Galapagos Iguanas

During a field trip in March 1993, a supposed marine and land iguana hybrid was discovered on Plaza Sur. Morphological measurements, including weight, snout-vent length (SVL; measured to the nearest 1 mm from the anterior tip of the snout to the anterior edge of the vent), head width (measured at the widest part of the head), and jaw length (measured from the angle of the jaw to the tip of the snout), were taken from the hybrid and from 10

adult male and 10 adult female marine iguanas. Morphological measurements in the land iguanas were adopted from Snell *et al.* (1984) and Snell & Christian (1985), and were based on larger sample sizes. Blood (50-100 μ l) was collected from the tail vein of the presumed hybrid, from 10 morphologically typical marine iguanas, and from 10 land iguanas from Plaza Sur. Since this study was part of a larger project on the population genetic structure of the Galapagos iguanas (Rassmann *et al.*, 1997), blood samples were also available from most other major land and

marine iguana populations in the archipelago. Total DNA was extracted from the samples in a standard salt extraction (Bruford, Hanotte & Burke, 1992).

The presumed hybrid iguana was detected about 200 m inland, in close vicinity of both marine and land iguanas. The animal was an adult male (presumably >10 years) with 422 mm snout-vent length (SVL), but weighed only 2200 g and thus was in poor condition. The iguana's body size exceeded that of the largest marine iguana sampled on this island (a male with 377 mm SVL), but fell within the range of body sizes of the adult land iguanas from Plaza Sur. The relative size of the dorsal head scales was slightly larger in the putative hybrid than normally observed in the land iguanas, that they did not fully resemble the prominent pyramid-shaped scales of the marine iguanas. Also, its head was slightly more elongated than that of the marine iguanas, with a proportion of jaw length/head width of 1.34 compared to 1.24 in the marine iguanas. Perhaps the most conspicuous characteristic of the supposed hybrid was its coloration. The basic colour was not the rusty brown-yellow as found in the land iguanas, but resembled more the grey-black of the marine iguanas. However, it had prominent dorsal stripes of lighter colour, which are generally only present in young marine iguanas, and are not known in the land iguanas.

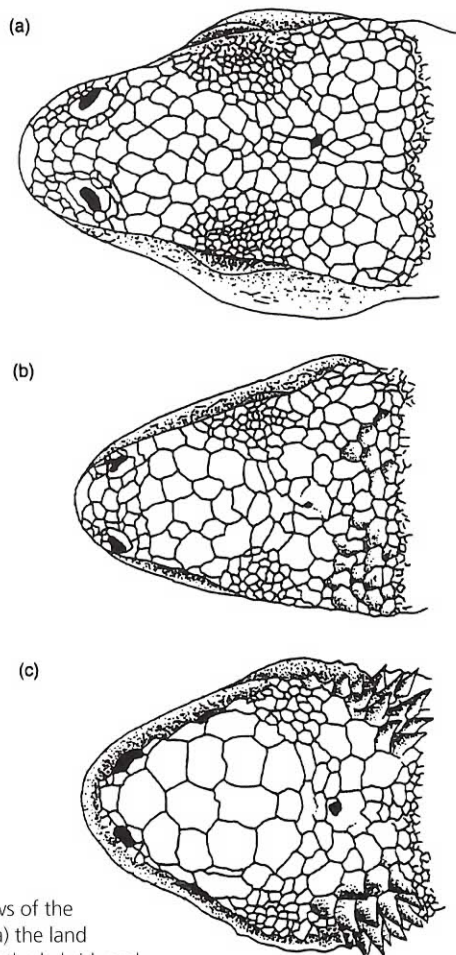
EXCERPTED FROM: Hybridization between the Galapagos land and marine iguana (*Conolophus subcristatus* and *Amblyrhynchus cristatus*) on Plaza Sur. K. Rassmann, F. Trillmich, D. Tautz. *Journal of Zoology*, The Zoological Society of London (1997) 242: 729-739.

Illegal Reptile Trading Conviction/Imprisonment

February 3, 1998.

One of the nation's largest reptile import companies, Hollywood, Florida-based Strictly Reptiles Inc., yesterday had its export-import license revoked for five years for smuggling more than 1,500 rare reptiles into the United States, the federal government announced.

In July 1997, the company and its owner pled guilty to charges of conspiring to violate the Lacey Act, a federal law that protects endangered wildlife, by purchasing Indonesian reptiles between 1993 and 1995. Yesterday, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revoked the company's license in connection with the plea. The company's owner and President, Michael J. Van Nostrand, is currently serving an eight month prison sentence followed by eight months of home confinement as part of his guilty plea. Under the plea agreement, Van Nostrand also had to pay nearly \$250,000 to the World Wildlife Fund to implement a government supervised restitutionary program to protect specific habitat in Indonesia that is home to the very creatures that were illegally trapped and smuggled. Additionally, the agreement bars the company and its owner from trading, selling or handling any endangered or threatened wildlife, as well as, certain species specifically identified in the agreement for five years. "This case shows that those who rob a nation of its rare and endangered wildlife out of personal greed will be brought to justice," said Lois Schiffer, Assistant Attorney General in charge



Dorsal views of the heads of (a) the land iguana, (b) the hybrid, and (c) the marine iguana. The land iguana has proportionally smaller and less conical scales than the marine iguana. The hybrid has intermediate characteristics between both types. The head sizes are not proportional to each other.

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of the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "Trafficking in endangered wildlife is prohibited under U.S. law and international treaty, and will not be tolerated." Thomas E. Scott, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, where the case was prosecuted, said "this case represents the finest in international environmental enforcement: cooperation among enforcement agencies to protect irreplaceable species, effective and timely punishment of the violators of conservation laws, and a creative effort to mitigate the harm from the criminal conduct. I commend the agents, both here and abroad, who contributed to this resounding success." Van Nostrand and his company conspired to purchase Frilled Dragons and Fly River Turtles they knew were exported in violation of Indonesian law. Van Nostrand and his company also pled guilty to purchasing Argentinean reptiles, including Argentine Boas, Chaco Tortoises, Rainbow Boas, Red-footed Tortoises, Tegu Lizards, and Yellow-spotted Amazon Turtles, all of which they knew were smuggled into the country in violation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international treaty designed to protect wildlife from over-exploitation. The Indonesian chapter of the World Wildlife Fund will be responsible for operating the restitutionary program, which will focus on initiating, expanding, improving and maintaining wildlife projects in the Lorentz Strict Nature Reserve located on Irian Jaya—the Indonesian portion of the Island of New Guinea. The Lorentz

reserve is home to the Frilled Dragon and the Fly River Turtle and other protected species often imported by Strictly Reptiles. Because all Indonesian national parks and nature reserves suffer from funding shortages, the restitutionary funds will be used for practical programs such as training and certifying park guards and conservation bureau staff, providing critical equipment, and setting up "mobile awareness teams" to work with communities near the project sites to increase awareness about habitat protection and the illegality of poaching reptiles and other species. A portion of the funds also will be used to help communities, which often depend upon the income from wildlife poaching, to develop alternative means of earning money which are consistent with conservation goals. The investigation was conducted with the cooperation of authorities in the Netherlands, including the Netherlands National Police and the District Office of the Public Prosecutor at Breda. The Netherlands National Police helped spur the investigation by providing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with audiotapes from electronic surveillance of Dutch reptile dealers revealing that protected Indonesian reptiles were being laundered through the Netherlands and shipped to Strictly Reptiles Inc., falsely labeled as captive bred to give them the appearance of lawful imports.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

**International Iguana Society
Annual Treasurer's Report
10/1/96 Through 9/30/97**

INCOME

Contributions	403.00
Dues Collected	7,917.00
Goods Sold	951.78
Interest	98.99
TOTAL INCOME	9,370.77

EXPENSES

Advertising and Promotions	60.00
Annual Conference	20.00
Box Rental	36.00
Conservation Assistance	960.00
Cost of Goods Sold	81.93
Foreign Checks	13.84
Government and Professional	211.25
Iguana Times	
Postage	2,399.07
Printing	7,162.65
Supplies	39.29
Contract Labor	568.20
Office Expenses	
Telephone	659.54
Office Expenses-Other	241.35
Renewal Notice	18.70
Returned Check	30.00
Uncategorized Expenses	82.86
TOTAL EXPENSES	12,584.68

TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSES -3,213.91

Reported by Carl Fubri, Treasurer

REMINDER

With this issue of Iguana Times your membership in the International Iguana Society expires. We thank you and appreciate your support. Your membership dues support projects on behalf of many iguana species. We encourage you to renew your membership today.

For 1998, membership dues are \$25.00 for individuals and \$35.00 for organizations (which receive double copies of *Iguana Times*). Please write RENEWAL on your check, payable to International Iguana Society. Send to I.I.S., P.O. Box 366188, Bonita Springs, FL 34136

