

# Booby Cay Update

Joe Wasilewski

We arrived on Booby Cay on 20 October 1998 at 0830 hours. It was a windy day and the one and a half-hour boat trip was rough. There were around two hundred flamingos on the sand flats at the SW portion of the island. As we landed, a pair of peregrine falcons flew off. Approximately twelve Australian pines, *Casuarina*, were also present. Before camp was made, a survey was initiated. It was determined that we would walk completely around the island and attempt a systematic survey of iguanas. Three size categories of iguanas were documented: *adult*, *sub-adult*, and *juvenile*. Upon initiating the survey, a fourth class was entered: *unknown*, for animals that were heard and, but not seen. The first leg of the survey took place from our landing, south to the SW tip, back north to the small interior pond

(salinity 54 ppt). We recorded 20 adults, eight sub-adults, three juveniles and one unknown. We set up camp and continued to survey, recording an additional 45 adults, 19 sub-adults, four hatchlings, and seven unknowns, for a total of 110 iguanas counted. We observed iguanas utilizing many different habitats and terrains on the island: sandy beach, rocky beach, sandy, sparse, vegetated areas, areas densely vegetated, rocky areas, and open areas.

The iguanas utilized sandy areas, and holes between rocks for their burrows. Most of the iguanas were on the ground or lying on top of the rocks, although seven animals were seen in the trees and bushes up to six feet off the ground. Salinity was measured in the large interior lake on the island and ranged from 68 to 72 ppt. During the survey,



Adult male *Cyclura carinata bartschi* on Booby Cay. Photograph: Joe Wasilewski



Hatchling *Cyclura carinata bartschi* perches on a rock on Booby Cay. Photograph: Joe Wasilewski

thirteen goats were seen on the NW side of the island. There were also several weanling rats and an adult rat, *Rattus rattus*, seen at different areas on the island. Many species of birds inhabit Booby Cay, including, but not limited to osprey, black whiskered vireo, and palm warblers. Several species of shorebirds, vireos and warblers, were observed, but have yet to be identified.

A hatchling *Cyclura carinata bartschi* was captured on the survey, measured, and released. Two adult males were captured and released on 20 October 98. The following day was spent capturing six more *Cyclura c. bartschi*, four males and two females. All animals were measured, microchipped, and had blood drawn. Anywhere from 0.5 to 2.0 ml of blood was drawn from the animals and two samples were fixed for each. The blood was taken to Nassau and placed under Eric Carey's supervision.

A sign informing people of the protected status of the Booby Cay iguanas was erected on the island during this visit.

We were unable to complete the survey of the eastern portion of Mayaguana due to time restrictions, but plan to survey that area during our next trip to Booby Cay.

The trip was an overall success, despite the bad news of the *Casuarina*, goats, and rats inhabiting the island. Measures can now be taken to guarantee removal of the injurious species, thereby ensuring survival for the *Cyclura c. bartschi*.

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