

THE CAPTIVE HUSBANDRY AND PROPAGATION OF
THE CUBAN ROCK IGUANA, *CYCLURA NUBILA*
PART 2. CAPTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN A
TEMPERATE CLIMATE

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In temperate climates, the Cuban Rock Iguana, *Cyclura nubila*, may be housed in an iguana room. The iguana room may be a well sealed and insulated green house or atrium, a spare room, or a section of a room partitioned in a manner so that the warmest or sunniest section is available to the lizard.

As stated in Part I (*Iguana Times*, Vol. 1, no. 3), a pair of mature iguanas are comfortably housed in an enclosure 8 ft. x 8 ft. (2.43 x 2.43 m). The room should have a southern or southeastern exposure. Windows are desirable. They allow some light to the animals and stimulate seasonal changes that are triggered by the shortening and lengthening of daylight hours. Windows must be well sealed and weather stripped to prevent iguanas from being exposed to cold drafts. A sturdy, heavy screen can replace the glass during the warm months allowing iguanas direct access to sunshine and thereby providing ultraviolet light they need.

Several hours or more of direct sunlight daily during three to four months, of the year are very beneficial to captive iguanas in temperate climates. This allows the iguana to store vitamin D₃ within its tissues which in turn allows proper calcium absorption. Ultraviolet light promotes vitamin D₃ formation which permits calcium and other nutrients to be extracted from the iguanas vegetable diet. Absorption of these elements enables the iguana to grow properly, have good bone development, and thrive.

Full-spectrum indoor lights, such as Vita-LiteTM are necessary for Cuban iguanas to meet their ultraviolet light requirements when direct sunlight is not available. Incandescent lights may be used in conjunction with ultraviolet lights to provide a "hot spot." This will attract lizards to an area where basking will allow maximum ultraviolet absorption. A large rock carefully placed under lights provides a natural platform for sunning. Lights should always be mounted in such a manner that animals will not be burned while basking.

Living plants are also desirable in the indoor iguana habitat. They may help freshen air in the captive environment. Large plants in 10 gallon or larger containers are suggested. Plants should be washed thoroughly and heavily watered prior to placement within the iguana room. This will leach any pesticide residue that may be present.

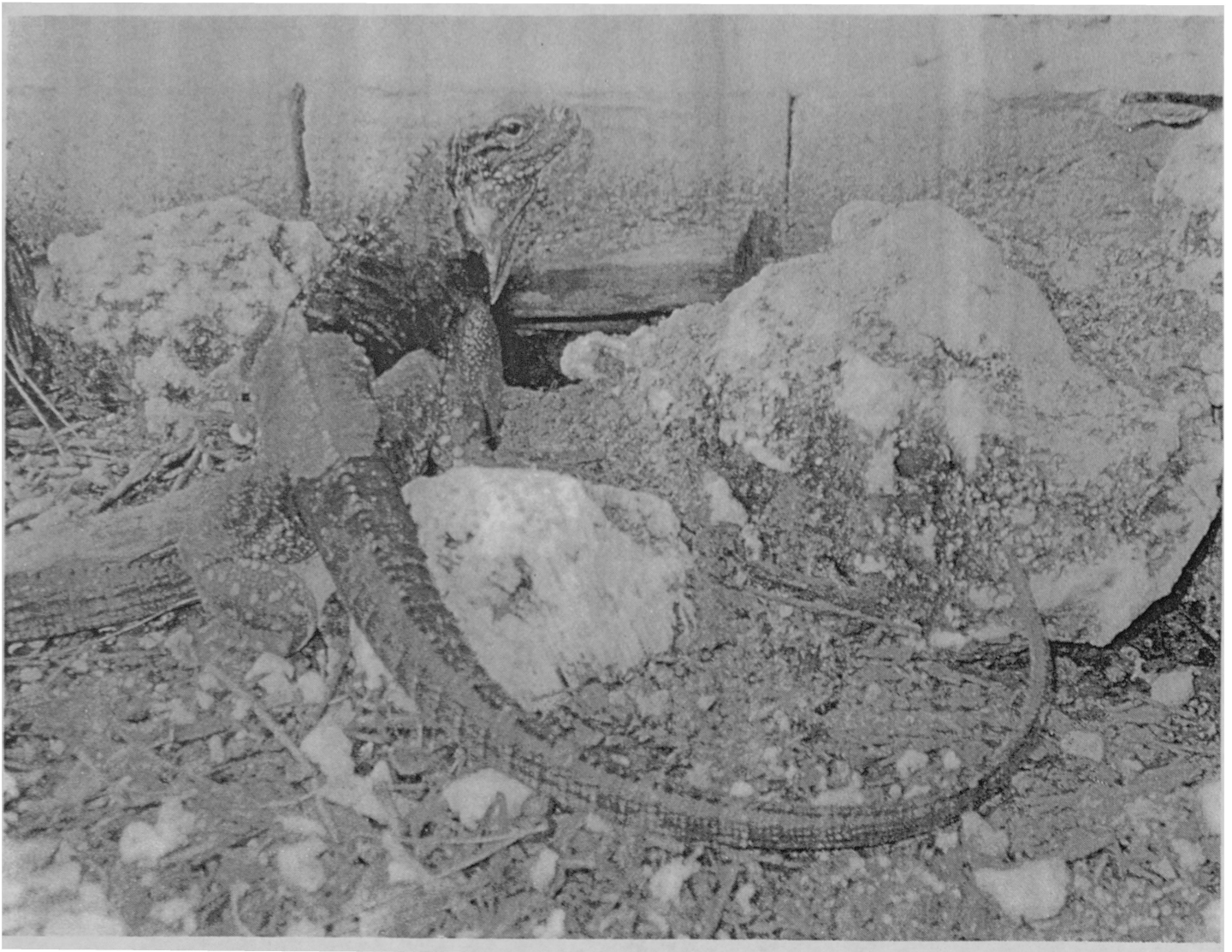
Fresh water should be available to the animals. Wooden boxes, large enough for iguanas to hide in, should be placed on the floor to the rear of the enclosure. This allows animals a refuge from any social pressure or perceived threats. Iguanas can be very individualistic in their behavior patterns. What affects one will sometimes elicit no reaction from another.

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Allan's Cay Signs

As reported in the last issue of the *Iguana Times* (Vol. 1, no. 3) I.I.S. has embarked on a conservation project on behalf of the Allan's Cay (pronounced key) iguana, *Cyclura cyclura inornata*. The informational signs were transported to Ft. Lauderdale from Big Pine Key by Capt. Ron Harrod. There, they were loaded aboard the diving boat, "The Sea Dragon" (an appropriate name) for the long trip to the Exumas. Recent reports of iguanas being swung by their tail by mischievous visitors to the cays make the installations of these signs all the more urgent.



Cuban Rock Iguana, *Cyclura nubila* female and den. Ron Harrod photo.