



## INTRODUCED SPECIES

# First Record of a Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) on Andros (Bahamas): A Potential Threat to Endemic Bahamian Rock Iguanas

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On 26 September 2019, a business owner on Andros contacted me about a Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) that had been caught in the area of Morgan's Bluff (25°10'20.77"N, 78°01'46.06"W) on North Andros. The workers who caught the animal asserted that it had arrived on a barge carrying containers shipped from Florida. The iguana is being held in captivity at the business owner's establishment, where Lebron Rolle, an Education Officer at The Bahamas National Trust, photographed it (Fig. 1). Robert Powell confirmed the identity of the species from the photographs and a photographic voucher has been deposited in the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM VZP 936).

The business owner also informed me of reports from residents in the settlement of Lowe Sound about several Green Iguanas that have been seen in the area since Hurricane Matthew in 2016. According to those reports, a resident tried to catch one of the animals, but it jumped into the ocean and swam away. To date, no photographs of iguanas in the Lowe Sound settlement are available to confirm their presence there.

Green Iguanas are native across much of South and Central American and several islands in the southern Lesser Antilles (Krysko et al. 2007). They were first observed in The Bahamas in 1992 on Great Stirrup Cay in the Berry Islands (Knapp et al. 2011) and also have been recorded on Great Exuma (Buckner et al. 2012). Green Iguanas have been observed on New Providence, Grand Bahama, Cat Cay (Bimini), and Eleuthera (Knapp et al. 2011; Buckner et al. 2012; Lindy Knowles, pers. comm.).

The movement of plants and other products from Florida to Bahamian islands like Andros has been implicated in the arrival and establishment of several species of non-native reptiles including the Tropical House Gecko (*Hemidactylus mabouia*) and the Red Corn Snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*) (Johnson and Woods 2016). However, the presence of Green Iguanas on Andros is likely to have serious implications. Andros Island is home to the Andros Rock Iguana (*Cyclura cyclura cyclura*), an endemic and endangered subspecies of the Northern Bahamas Rock Iguana, which also includes the critically endangered Exuma Rock Iguana (*C. c. figginsi*) and



Fig. 1. Male Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) captured in Morgan's Bluff, North Andros. Photograph by Lebron Rolle.

the endangered Allan's Cay Iguana (*C. c. inornata*) (Knapp and Owens 2005). Research by Moss et al. (2018) asserted that Green Iguanas have been observed to hybridize with Rock Iguanas, potentially leading to the genetic extinction of unique endemic taxa. Without proper enforcement of biosecurity protocols at container ports and thorough inspection of containers, yachts, and other vessels from foreign countries, The Bahamas continues to be vulnerable to the establishment of additional invasive species and the expansion of ranges of previously established non-native and invasive species.

#### Acknowledgements

I thank Lehron Rolle, who provided photographs of the Green Iguana, and business owner, Mr. Eugene Campbell, for information on Green Iguanas on North Andros.

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