

Cyclura Species Rundown

Bonus content from the April 2010 REPTILES magazine article "Rock Solid."

by Tom Crutchfield

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The Cuban rock iguana is one of the more popular *Cyclura* species bred in captivity.
Photo by Tom Crutchfield

In herpetoculture today, only the rhino iguana and the Cuban rock iguana are bred with any regularity. I produce between 50 to 75 rhino iguanas annually. Over the years, I have bred four *Cyclura* species, including Cuban rock iguanas, rhino iguanas, Grand Cayman iguanas, and Ricord's iguanas. I have personally maintained every species except for the Jamaican iguana (*Cyclura collei*).

In zoos, there are a small number of *Cyclura c. figginsi* and *Cyclura ricordi* that just sit and wait to die. I have been told that there is no room to breed these two species because of other, more-critically endangered animals, such as *Cyclura lewisi*, *Cyclura pinguis*, and *Cyclura collei*. I've also been told that these *Cyclura* cannot be released into the private sector to breed. I believe that this is a big mistake, and not breeding them negatively affects the species as a whole. Many of these rare *Cyclura* should be bred and held in captivity in small numbers to offset any disasters in the wild. Most are relatively easy to keep and breed. Private herpetoculturists that can provide an appropriate environment for these lizards can partner with zoos to breed them.

All ground iguanas found in the West Indies are of the *Cyclura* genus, and all are classified as endangered. Currently there are nine species with seven subspecies recognized, making a grand total of 16 locale-specific lizards. Some of these species are down to less than 100 lizards living in the wild. I believe that all of these species would benefit from captive-breeding programs to act as reservoir for stock to prevent extinction in the wild.

Here is a species account along with a bit of information about each form in the wild

Cuban Rock Iguana (*Cyclura nubila nubila*)

Range: Cuba and surrounding cays

Status: Endangered

Wild Population: 40,000 plus

Lesser Cayman Isle Iguanas (*Cyclura nubila caymanensis*)

Range: Cayman Brac and Little Cayman islands

Status: Endangered

Wild Population: 15,000

Grand Cayman Isle Iguanas (*Cyclura lewisi*)

Range: Only a very small area on Grand Cayman Island has suitable habitat

Status: Critically endangered

Wild Population: 30

Jamaican Iguana (*Cyclura collei*)

Range: Hellshire Hills, a tiny area west of Kingston, Jamaica

Status: Critically endangered

Wild Population: 150

Turks and Caicos Rock Iguana (*Cyclura carinata carinata*)

Range: Many cays located around the Turks and Caicos Islands. There are no populations left on the mainland. This may be the most numerous of the nine species

Status: Endangered

Wild Population: May exceed 50,000 lizards

Booby Cay Iguana (*Cyclura carinata bartschi*)

Range: Booby Cay in the southern Bahamas (the Exuma Islands)

Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 1,000

Andros Isle Iguana (*Cyclura cyclura cyclura*)
Range: Andros Island
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 3,500

Exuma Island Iguana (*Cyclura cyclura figginsi*)
Range: Seven different populations located off the north end of the Exuma Islands in the Bahamas
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 1,500

Allen's Cay Iguana (*Cyclura cyclura inornata*)
Range: Two populations in the Exuma Islands in the Bahamas
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: about 1,000

Anegada Iguana (*Cyclura pinguis*)
Range: Anegada, Guana and Necker located in the British Virgin Islands
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: About 400

Ricord's Iguana (*Cyclura ricordi*)
Range: Disjunct, small populations in the Dominican Republic and possibly in small areas of the Artibonite River in Haiti
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 1,300

San Salvador Iguana (*Cyclura rileyi rileyi*)
Range: Seven cays off the island of San Salvador, with a possible handful on the mainland
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 500

Acklins Isle Iguana (*Cyclura rileyi nuchalis*)
Range: A few cays off Acklins Isle
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 1,300

White Cay Iguana (*Cyclura rileyi cristata*)
Range: South Exuma Islands in the Bahamas
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 200

Rhinoceros Iguana (*Cyclura cornuta*)
Range: Island of Hispanola
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 17,000

Mona Island Iguana (*Cyclura cornuta stegnegeri*)
Range: Mona Island
Status: Endangered
Wild Population: 1,500

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