

IUCN SSC Iguana Specialist Group

2019 Report



Chuck Knapp



Stesha Pasachnik

Co-Chairs

Chuck Knapp (1)
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Red List Authority Coordinator

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Location/Affiliation

(1) Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, Illinois, US
(2) Fort Worth Zoo, Fort Worth, Texas, US
(3) San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research, San Diego, California, US

Number of members

94

Social networks

Website: www.iucn-isg.org



Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN SSC Iguana Specialist Group (ISG) is to prioritise and facilitate conservation, science, and awareness programmes that help ensure the survival of wild iguanas and their habitats. To achieve this, we implement, advise and fundraise for programmes that include population surveys, protected areas management, invasive species control, field research, genetic studies, education and captive breeding/headstarting initiatives. Headstarting, in which hatchling iguanas are raised in a safe, captive environment until they reach a larger, less vulnerable size, is proving invaluable in rescuing several Critically Endangered iguanid taxa from the brink of extinction.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision improved status for many of our threatened species in Central America, the Caribbean, Fiji, and the Galapagos. Most of our programmes focus on species that are Critically Endangered (CR) or Endangered (EN) due to habitat alteration and invasive alien species (IAS). The Jamaican Rock Iguana (*Cyclura collei*) is a flagship species for our group and one of the most threatened species of iguana in the world. Efforts are underway to expand its area of occupancy through intensive IAS control efforts. Due to recent devastating events, intensive efforts are underway to prevent the extinction of Lesser Antillean Iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*) by hybridisation with Common Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*). Capacity building is ongoing for several species in Honduras, listed in a threatened category. Taxonomic work is underway to better understand the diversity within Iguaninae and thus guide our management and conservation actions.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: complete Red List assessments for 40 species of iguanas.

Plan

Planning: (1) complete action plans for 22 species of iguana; (2) compile and curate public outreach assets that can be modified and used by group members; (3) develop a rapid response protocol for assisting partners impacted by hurricanes.

Act

Conservation actions: advance the conservation and management of at least 50% of threatened iguana taxa.

Network

Membership: maintain and increase the use of the membership listserv by 50%.

Communicate

Communication: (1) publish four annual issues of *Iguana Specialist Group Newsletter*; (2) increase publications in the virtual library by 50 articles; (3) update the Invasive Iguana Position Statement.

Scientific meetings: convene four annual meetings.

Activities and results 2019

Assess

Red List

i. We intend to complete Red List assessments for 40 species of iguanas by the end of the quadrennium. We adjusted our completion year to meet the 20 March 2020 Global Reptile Assessment deadline. We originally miscalculated the number of assessments needed for this goal. Thirty-six Red List assessments will be completed by March 2020. (KSR #1)

27-year old male headstarted Jamaican Iguana (*Cyclura collei*) ready for release and radiotracking study
Photo: Stesha Pasachnik



Fijian Crested Iguana (*Brachylophus vitiensis*), subject of a revision to the Species Recovery Plan
Photo: Peter Harlow

Plan

Planning

- i.** Due to ambitious intentions of assessing the entire *Cyclura* genus, we will not meet our goal of completing action plans for 22 species of iguana. However, single species action planning continues and we have four action plans in progress. We are considering one additional action plan in 2020. (KSR #15)
- ii.** We have compiled and curated public outreach assets that can be modified and used by group members; however, due to capacity issues we have been unable to upload these resources to a central location. (KSR #18)
- iii.** Individual countries have developed response protocols for assisting partners impacted by hurricanes, but we have yet to develop a standard protocol due to differences in conservation needs and mitigation strategies. (KSR #18)

Lesser Antillean Iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*) on Petite Terre, Guadeloupe. The recent Red List assessment for this species showed a significant increase in threat level and was elevated to CR
Photo: Mathijs van den Burg



Act

Conservation actions

- i.** We have advanced conservation and management through research, outreach, and capacity building. Examples include: record number of hatchling Jamaican Rock Iguanas brought into the headstart facility, rapid response to the threat of an invasive species on Dominica, a reduction in endemic iguana consumption in Guatemala, public outreach concerning tourism and iguana feeding in the Bahamas, and an updated population estimate for the Utila Spiny-tailed Iguana (*Ctenosaura bakeri*). (KSR #12, 13, 24, 30, 31, 32, 34, 37)

Network

Membership

- i.** We saw a significant increase in usage of the membership listserv from both our general membership and our Steering Committee.

Communicate

Communication

- i.** Our 2016 newsletter was released in 2017. Our 2017 newsletter was released in 2018. Our 2018 newsletter will be circulated in 2020. We are hoping to release our 2019 newsletter shortly thereafter. (KSR #28)
- ii.** Six hundred and eighty-seven new articles have been added to our virtual library since the beginning of 2017. (KSR #28)
- iii.** Update of the Invasive Iguana Position Statement was completed in 2018. An amended version of our position statement has been approved and endorsed by The Bahamas National Trust. (KSR #28)

Scientific meetings

- i.** An annual meeting was held on Roatan, Honduras, in 2019. We will hold our 2020 annual meeting in Dominica. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

We thank the International Iguana Foundation (IIF), and their donors, for the financial support of seven projects conducted in 2019, totalling \$60,623, focused on iguana conservation in Central America, the Caribbean, Fiji, and the Galápagos. Further, we are grateful to the IIF for the End of Year campaign focusing on the restoration of the Goat Islands, Jamaica, which raised over \$40,000 for these efforts. We also acknowledge the efforts of Ty Park for organising the Iguanafest – a fundraiser to support iguana conservation in 2019. We thank those members who made donations in 2019 to our annual meeting travel fund, contributed to Red List assessments, and participated in other ISG activities. Lastly, we thank all those who attended our annual meeting on Roatan, Honduras, for their contribution in realising two conservation action plans for iguanas endemic to the Bay Islands of Honduras.

Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	1	
Plan	3	
Act	1	
Network	1	
Communicate	4	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 12, 13, 15, 18, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 37

KSR: Key Species Result