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Species of the Day: Anegada Ground Iguana

The <u>Anegada Ground Iguana</u>, *Cyclura pinguis*, is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species[™]. Once distributed across the entire Puerto Rico Bank, this species is now restricted to the island of Anegada, with introduced populations on the islands of Guana, Necker, Norman, and Little Thatch.

Human encroachment and the introduction of non-native mammals, especially feral cats, have caused the decline of this species. Each autumn as hatchling iguanas emerge from their nests, feral cats prey on the naïve iguanas resulting in high juvenile mortality. Today the wild population is made up almost entirely of older adults; perhaps fewer than 400 Anegada Ground Iguanas remain in the wild.

A range of conservation activities are underway on Anegada, including establishing a proposed National Park, encompassing the core iguana area, and a 'headstart' facility which raises hatchling iguanas in captivity until they are large enough to be safely released. To date, over 100 iguanas have been released back into the wild with an 80% survival rate.









