

IUCN SSC Iguana Specialist Group

2020 Report



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Co-Chairs

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Location/Affiliation

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Number of members

90

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 or Endangered, 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. COVID-19 has increased the threats to some iguana species, because of increased economic hardship resulting in increased iguana harvesting. Other populations have suffered from reduced research and outreach activities. We hope to be able to combat these threats and improve conditions during the next quadrennium.

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.

Vulnerable Piebald Chuckwalla, *Sauromalus varius* assessments for the Gulf of California iguana species were added to the Red List for the first time in 2018
Photo: Bradford Hollingsworth



Near Threatened Slevin's Chuckwalla, *Sauromalus slevini* assessments for the Gulf of California iguana species were added to the Red List for the first time in 2018
Photo: Bradford Hollingsworth



Vulnerable Catalina Chuckwalla, *Sauromalus klauberi* assessments for the Gulf of California iguana species were added to the Red List for the first time in 2018
Photo: Bradford Hollingsworth

Activities and results 2020

Assess

Red List

i. We completed 40 Red List assessments (2018–2020). (KSR #1)

Plan

Planning

i. Priorities shifted to focus on individual plans instead of a genus-wide plan, which slows the process but increases likelihood of completion. (KSR #15)

ii. Resources were gathered to compile and curate public outreach assets, but we are behind schedule on database construction. (KSR #18)

Act

Conservation actions

i. We have advanced the conservation of 50% of threatened iguana taxa. (KSR #12, 13, 24, 30, 31, 32, 34, 37)

Network

Membership

i. We maintained and have increased the use of our listserv by 50%.

Communicate

Communication

i. We completed the 2017 and 2018 newsletters and are currently working on the 2019 newsletter. (KSR #28)

ii. We have uploaded an additional 766 publications to our online library. (KSR #28)

iii. We updated our Invasive Iguana Position Statement. (KSR #28)

Scientific meetings

i. We have held an annual meeting each year, with our 2020 meeting being a virtual zoom event. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

We thank the International Iguana Foundation (IIF) and their donors for the financial support of seven projects awarded in 2019, totalling US\$ 60,623, focused on iguana conservation in Central America, the Caribbean, Fiji, and the Galápagos. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all these projects are ongoing into 2021. In addition, the IIF held an emergency funding cycle in 2020 supporting four projects in Central America and Fiji, totalling US\$ 19,881, to combat COVID-19 related impacts on iguanas. Further, we are grateful to the IIF for the End of Year campaign focusing on protecting the last stronghold for *Iguana delicatissima* on Dominica, which raised over US\$ 40,000 for these efforts. We also thank those members who made donations in 2020 to our ISG fund for future meetings, contributed to Red List assessments and action plans, and participated in other ISG activities. Lastly, we thank all those who attended our annual meeting virtually for presenting project updates, taking part in lively discussions, and contributing to the preliminary discussions concerning a regional Conservation Action Plan for *Iguana delicatissima*.

Summary of activities 2020

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	1	
Plan	2	
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