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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Grand Cayman Blue Iguana

The stunning azure shades of the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana (*Cyclura lewisi*) are at their brightest during the breeding season. They remain dark grey when cold, camouflaging among their rocky habitat.

This species is endemic to Grand Cayman, where it is the largest native land animal, at 1.5 metres long. This also makes it amongst the largest lizards of the Western Hemisphere, and with a life span of over 50 years it is amongst the longest-living.

Since European colonisation, this iguana has faced intense threats including habitat destruction and predation by feral and free-roaming dogs and cats. By 2002, there were fewer than 25 adults surviving in the wild.

A captive breeding programme brought the species back from the brink of extinction, with iguanas released into protected areas. However, threats outside of these areas have intensified over the past decade, and the fragmented network of small protected areas is not sufficient to provide long term security for the species: for this, habitat will need to be restored and feral mammal populations controlled island-wide. Community involvement is also important – for example, local residents have assisted the conservation programme by harvesting wild plants to feed the iguanas in the conservation breeding facility.



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