



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE FIRST EVER INTERNATIONAL BLUE IGUANA DAY

13th May 2021 –

On Saturday, 8th May 2021, Blue Iguana Conservation (BIC), the National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) and International partners (from New Zealand to the USA) celebrated the first ever International Blue Iguana Day! The family-friendly event was held at the Blue Iguana Conservation facility located next to the QEII Botanic Park. Luke Harding, BIC Operations Manager, who spearheaded this initiative said, “Many people have enquired why it was an international day. Although blue iguanas are endemic to Grand Cayman, the project reach is truly global and has had assistance and input from many individuals and organisations all over the world, who have helped to fight to keep the blue iguana from extinction. The remarkable efforts of our partner institutions, past and present staff and volunteers have all been key in the success we have seen up to this point. Making it an international day was to recognise and celebrate that the efforts have not solely been on-island, and it is also a chance for Grand Cayman to show off to the world the natural treasure that is the blue iguana.”

Special guests included His Excellency the Governor Martyn Roper, who had the honour of cutting the blue ribbon to commence the event. There was also the unveiling of a plaque to honour Fred Burton, the founder of Blue Iguana Recovery Programme (BIRP) now known as Blue Iguana Conservation. “I was happy to see the Blue Iguanas getting their day in the sun in more ways than one, and turned up to show my support. The last thing I expected was to be given such a fine tribute for my part that started so many years ago. That was very kind. Nowadays I am glad to continue to help in whatever way I can, and I deeply appreciate the dedication of the BIC team who are leading the way forward from recovery to long term conservation success” said Fred.

“The National Trust for the Cayman Islands applauds our Blue Iguana Conservation team for all their hard work and dedication to the program over the past year. Luke and his team have done a tremendous job transforming the BIC facility in the last few months. They have done so much, with so little. This day highlights how important the blue iguana is to our environment and the job Luke’s team is doing to sustain them for generations to come. Hopefully, this will be the first day of many that we can gather here at the BIC facility to celebrate the blue iguana” said Olson Anderson, NTCI Chairman.

Over 150 guests attended the event enjoying activities such as Iguana Scientist for a day, face painting and feeding the blue iguanas. Guests were able to walk around the BIC facility and see our endemic blues up close. Ritz Carlton Grand Cayman was a proud gold sponsor of the event and Foster’s Supermarket sponsored refreshments. BIC Volunteers and Rotaract Club of Grand Cayman volunteers were out in full support. Kourtneigh-Michelle Nicholson, Rotaract Club President said their team was inspired to keep



working with BIC after they volunteered to assist with cleaning up the facility last November. They are currently doing a fundraiser for the conservation efforts, where 100% of the proceeds are for Blue Iguanas.

Stay connected with Blue Iguana Conservation by following the project on Facebook and Instagram: @blueiguanaconservation. If you are interested in supporting our work, whether through a monetary donation or as a volunteer, please email Luke Harding at bic@nationaltrust.org.ky

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About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organization whose mandate under the National Trust Law (2010 Revision) includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Cayman Islands for present and future generations.

About the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme

The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme began in 1990 with only 30 dedicated Blue Iguanas and the primary goal to restore the wild population to 1,000 Blue Iguanas, encouraging viable population in the long-term. Having met its primary goal in 2018, the initiative formally transitioned to the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme in 2019 with a new focus of sustainably conserving the native species of Grand Cayman.

About the National Trust's Environmental Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' environmental programme was founded on the concept that the protection of native plants and animals is best achieved by protecting the natural areas in which they depend.

About the National Trust Conservation Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' conservation programme strives to protect Cayman's native species and the habitats in which they live, and includes the endemic Blue Iguana of Grand Cayman, the Sister Islands Rock Iguana and Cayman's native bat species.